

object, to-night, was to ask ourselves whether, being by modern knowledge, and the subtle change in all our sentiments which has accompanied it, driven out from the shelter afforded us by an assumed supernatural revelation, we could find, through science, by our own rational faculties, anything like a religion in our own minds and the Universe. And if we are religious in any known sense of the word, we have found—let me put the matter plainly—that the answer to this question is No. And we have found that this is so for a very much deeper reason than any that was generally adduced even twenty years ago. Unbelievers formerly contented themselves with denying that our own minds or activities survived the dissolution of the body. Science now has carried into our hearts the yet more destructive conviction that not one of our activities—except for the fact that we are conscious of it—is our own at all; and that our consciousness itself, itself a mere momentary product, identifies itself with them for a moment only, and then is lost once more in the universal and unconscious mind. Our own activity, in short, is a part of the universal activity with which our consciousness thrills, but under which it is really passive. Our wills, our desires, our aversions, are forces; but they are forces of cosmic nature, like the chemical repulsions and attractions which keep molecules apart, or which unite them. Just as the conscious individual mind grows out of a larger unconscious individual mind which is behind it, so does the unconscious individual mind gradually grow out of the Universe. And now, my dear Alistair, let me return to your own philosophy. Except in one particular ours is the same as yours. The Universe, said your friend Hegel, is a thought of the Supreme Being. We say the same thing, altering only a particle. We say not that it is *a* thought of the Supreme Being, but that it is *the* thought: and we add that, so far as we know, this universal thought is unconscious; but that at separate points it attains a momentary consciousness in ourselves."

"Precisely," said Mr. Hancock. "So far as we know—
No. 34. XII. 1.—JULY 1903.