

BETTER.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

The following letter to the New York Sun by Rev. Francis P. Duffy is an able exposition of the relation of religion to science, and of science to religion. It is as follows:

"I know that in many instances editors are loth to publish letters expressing a dissent with their opinions but in the case of the Sun I ask with confidence for the opportunity of expressing frankly my strong disagreement with certain opinions in your editorial of Sunday last, in which you sum up the Catholic controversy which has been carried on in your columns.

"Concerning that controversy I have nothing to say. It is closed; and were it open, I would be far from desirous of taking part in it. But you yourself have opened a question of far greater philosophic import by raising the inquiry whether the attempt to effect a conciliation between ancient faith and modern scientific thought is not an attempt to bring together two essentially contradictory views and theories of the world—the religious and the scientific, the supernatural and the natural, faith and practical demonstration."

"Now however various may be the views held by Catholics concerning the teachings, positive or speculative, advanced by modern investigators, all Catholics hold, (and, indeed, are not Catholics if they do not hold) that there can be no contradiction between the truths attained by the human reason and those revealed by God and interpreted by infallible authority.

"The supernatural and the natural are not contradictory, but are complementary systems. The religious is not opposed to the scientific view of the world. Their spheres are in large measure independent. The empirical sciences, we are told over and over again by their votaries, are restricted to the domain of facts. It is an absurdity to say that a scientist is bound by his science to reject the miraculous. For the scientist, as such, every happening is a fact to be taken on its own evidence, and the unusual has as much right to consideration as the commonplace.

"The position that exceptions to the natural law are impossible is not a scientific but a philosophic one. The whole matter of ultimate interpretation belongs not to the physical sciences but to philosophy, and to philosophy the Catholic Church has always made a confident appeal. It is true that systems of philosophy vary and that some exist which attack the foundations of religion, but he would be a very bold or a very ignorant man who would deny coherency or reasonableness to that ever dominant philosophic system which finds in its interpretation of the world room for God, Purpose, the Soul, Freedom, Duty, Immortality.

"So if it be said that the physical sciences do not discover these things, the only answer St. Thomas can make is to say, resignedly, 'Well, what of it?' And if it be said that physical science discredits these things, I answer that the spiritual is not rejected by physics, but by a purblind and beggarly metaphysics, which just now attempts to masquerade in its garb.

"The giants of physical science have never considered that their knowledge of the material universe called on them to deny the existence of the world of spirits. The greatest names in science are ranged on the side of a religious philosophy—Bacon, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Boyle, Pascal, Pasteur, Stewart, Stokes, Tait, Herschel, Wallace, Newcomb, Gray, Dawson, and hundreds of others eminent in all branches of science. In fact, even a man like Tyndall, who is generally rated as a materialist, has done a very real service to spiritualistic philosophy by attempting to explain everything on the basis of physics. He failed, and fell back on agnosticism. This is but a sorry attitude for any man to take in the face of questions of such importance. It is on the very points where Tyndall says 'I don't know' that we say 'I know' or 'I believe.' But he and Virchow and others have done much to destroy what, as Dr. Martineau reminds us, Cicero in his time already noticed as the plump assurance of the materialistic school, whose adherents rose to speak 'as if they had freshly arrived from the councils of the gods.' One representative of the school still remains with us, deserted by all his former supporters, but gifted in more than

ordinary measure with the assurance of his school and making up in cocksureness and ferocity for the strength which his case lacked in authority or argument. It is Prof. Haeckel, that infallible guide of half-baked intelligence. But I need scarcely insist with your readers who have an opportunity to follow up the progress of thought in our day that one who follows Haeckel is, for the philosopher no less than for the theologian, a poor creature in the outer darkness.

"The great truths, therefore, of natural theology have an absolutely reasonable basis in philosophy and are not a whit disturbed by the advances of natural science. But Christianity is not simply a natural religion; it is in addition a revealed religion. It must defend not only the spiritual but the miraculous. You are perfectly right in asserting, as you so often do in your editorials, that no man can be a Christian who rejects the supernatural or the miraculous. But here we must distinguish; it is one thing to deny the possibility of a miraculous event and another to question whether it really happened. There is a principle of economy in these matters; and Catholic exegetists and scientists are supposed not to fall back on a supernatural cause when a natural cause will explain the event. I believe that miracles not only have happened, but actually do happen in testimony of divine truth; but if any alleged miracle were brought to my notice, whatever faith I might have in it personally, I would feel bound to investigate the facts carefully before I would speak of it as a miracle.

"Thus in the canonization of saints a learned and zealous priest is appointed for the purpose of attacking the evidence of extraordinary power and sanctity in the candidate. Popular speech has dubbed him the devil's advocate, but the Church reveals her attitude on these questions by calling him the counsel for the faith.

"As a Catholic, then, I am bound to believe that supernatural interventions in the course of the world are possible, and in many definite instances have actually occurred. Now, if anyone takes a high a priori tone with me and says they could not have occurred, I reply that his conclusions are based on a false philosophy—if, indeed, they have any basis except unreasoned prejudice. But if he attacks the evidence for what I allege to be a supernatural fact, then, indeed, I must listen to him. And it is precisely here, where positive Christianity states the occurrence of supernatural facts, that the fields of religion and science overlap.

"When the discoveries made by investigators in sciences such as history, astronomy or geology seem to run counter to the narrative given by the books of Revelation, what attitude am I, as a Catholic, to assume? I may deny the accuracy of the statements made by the scientists or wait until they refute one another, as not infrequently happens; or I may examine the sacred records and see whether they may be interpreted in accordance with the new teachings; or I may inquire whether the account they give was written for a historical or for a moral purpose; or, keeping within the limits set down by authoritative teachings, I may reconsider my opinions concerning the nature, extent and purpose of inspiration.

"To one who knows anything of the history of theology within the Church there is nothing unusual or alarming in all this—no sacrifice of principle, no timorous change of front, no loss of self-respect, no relinquishing of essential truth. It has happened before—it will happen in future generations, when the problems of this are happily settled.

"The progress of human knowledge always tends to modify theological opinions concerning religious truth, but the definitions of the Church stand unchanged and secure. We should not regret the destruction of personal convictions, however cherished they may have been: nor should we be alarmed when we see an apparently indigestible mass of facts and theories confronting the Church. That mighty living organism has had such dishes set before her more than once, and timid souls have lacked confidence in her, but slowly and calmly she has assimilated whatever

of truth was to be found in them, and rejected the errors, leaving them behind on the rubbish heap of defunct theories.

"I may not in my own day see this reconciliation completed. I may have my difficulties as to just how it will be effected in some points, owing to the limitations of the human mind, every theory has its residual difficulties. They have their function as trials of faith, to make our confidence in God more meritorious, and as stimuli to mental activity to keep us from degenerating into a mere passive receptivity concerning questions which should absorb our deepest thought. But I know that what were difficulties to our ancestors in the faith are cleared up for us now, and that the controversies of the past have led us into a fuller understanding of the truths of God, natural and revealed. And both this knowledge of the past and my confidence in the Word of God as interpreted by the Church—which I set higher than the flickering light of my own mind—give me assurance that all that is true and good in the present mighty movement of human inquiry will in another generation find its place in the majestic and coherent body of truth, which the Church Catholic presents in the name of God to wandering and wavering mankind.

"We need, therefore, have no fear of the future and no worry in the present, except as to the attitude we should take in the present period of transition to do our little share toward insuring the ultimate triumph of the whole truth. But I look on the extraordinary activity of the human mind in the present time not only with equanimity but with rejoicing.

"I regret, indeed, that so many noble minds in our generation should devote themselves so eagerly to a single branch of knowledge as to suffer atrophy of their higher religious natures;—I have a sort of half contemptuous pity for those second rate souls who are so affected by the 'psychological climate' in which they live as to give up Christian beliefs because they think it an indication of independent thought to do so, when in most instances it indicates merely lack of thought; and I sympathize deeply with the gentle, timid souls who are disturbed by every difficulty, as if the history of the Church were not a continuous record of difficulties overcome by the indwelling Providence in her.

"The movement must go on; and it will, in God's time, produce its harvest of good. When the results are all in, I expect that many theological opinions, unauthorized interpretations of the Scriptures, lines of argument and favorite analogies will be modified. But much will be gained. The natural sciences will no longer be kept in the false position of seeming adversaries of religion; the teaching of the Church on the inspiration of Scripture will have received a fuller elucidation, and we may have attained more magnificent views of God's mode of creation. The practical victories of modern science will have bound the whole world closer together; the inevitable failure of the attempts to construct a philosophy without a soul or a system of morality without a God will incline the human mind once more toward the infallible Church, and she will have a better opportunity than ever before in her existence to carry out the commission of her divine founder, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

"I have been insisting in the course of this letter on the distinction between matters of faith and theological opinions, on the latitude of independence given to Catholic investigators. But I have no wish to minimize the unchangeableness of revelation and the need of faith. Opinions and dogmatic definitions develop, but revelation remains unchanged. No new revelation is given and the Church cannot add one jot or tittle to that committed to her. But she can grow in understanding of it, with new developments of human knowledge, and new stirrings of human needs, she states more and more definitely, as far as the inadequacy of human language permits, the content of revelation.

"Catholic theology advances not at random, determined solely by environment, but in accordance with the living and guiding principle which resists essential changes and advances to a stage of perfection marked out by God Himself. It takes from the environment what is suited to its nature and rejects the unfit. As Cardinal Newman says of the Church:

"Wherever she went, in trouble or in triumph, still she was a living spirit, the mind and voice of the Most High: 'sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions,' claiming to herself what they said rightly, correcting their errors, supplying their defects, completing their beginnings, expanding their surmises, and thus gradually by means of them enlarging the range and refining the senses of her own teaching."

"The Church, therefore, does not see an enemy in the philosopher or scientist who investigates the great questions of the universe. She does not condemn intellectual speculation in her own body. She welcomes it as a sign of life and progress. The boldest of her thinkers are among the greatest of her saints. She sees, indeed, especially in times of transition, adopt a policy of repression toward her eager sons, who would hurry the process of assimilation. Considering it broadly, one can scarcely doubt the wisdom of this policy. It is founded on knowledge of the mutability of human opinions, and keen psychological insight into the mental capacities of the great mass of mankind, whose spiritual welfare she exists to serve.

"How far, in any given case, as in the present juncture, such a policy is necessary or wise cannot be discussed here, as it would bring up the controversy which you have closed.

"But such a policy must not be interpreted as implying any fear on the part of Catholics that the truths of revelation and of science will be found to be contradictory. The Church of faith and of mystery gives us knowledge of truths beyond the scope of human reason, and outside the realms of natural law, but she never requires us to do violence to our reason or to deny a clearly ascertained fact. When all the evidence is in and the questions are thoroughly threshed out, God's Church will be found to emerge triumphant from the struggle, and will be giving a clearer outline of her doctrines in the very language of those who fondly imagined they were working her destruction.

"The generation which sees this accomplished will have its own trials to faith. Trials to faith there will always be, until faith is rewarded with the full light of truth which radiates from the beatific presence of God."

A GREAT ARTIST LOST

The blowing up of the Russian battleship Patropovlovsk, which entailed the death of the great Admiral Makaroff, has been considered one of the most signal marine, or navy disasters of modern times. For Russia it meant more than the loss of a naval engagement. But as much as Russia suffers in the death of Admiral Makaroff, the world suffers still more in the death of the great artist Verestchagin. The venerable painter, who always painted his scenes from life, was on board the flagship at the moment of the fatal explosion, and he went down with the seven hundred and their great leader.

Verestchagin was one of the greatest, if not the greatest of the world's living military artists. His works are well known in America, both through Black and White reproductions and the exhibition of his pictures at the Chicago World's fair. Though a military artist, Verestchagin devoted his life to portraying not the glories but the horrors of war. His pictures have done more than the orations of orators and the verses of poets and the essays of the ablest writers in bringing home to the world the ruthlessness and barbarism of war. He "was not an impressionistic faddist," who sat in his studio and painted imaginary scenes to point the moral of the blessings of peace and the awfulness of war. He went everywhere with the Russian troops on their campaigns, and the powerful realism of his works made it far superior to any imaginary scenes that could be depicted.

One of his greatest and most widely known pictures is called The Apotheosis of War. It represents a pyramid of skulls on the Turcoman desert with a solitary raven standing sentinel on the apex—the only living thing amidst the silence and desolation of death. The skulls are so wonderfully painted that one would imagine life still lingered inside them and their sightless eyes looked up to heaven in a fearful appeal against the calamity of which they were the victims. Verestchagin's brush has done far more than all that Tolstoi has ever written to bring home to the civilized world the real horror of war. He stripped it of the glamor of romance and revealed the stark hideousness which the "pomp and panoply" of armies so thinly veils. The death of such an artist, as the direct consequence of war itself, may go a long way, when this struggle is over, to bring about peace or at least a strong movement in that direction amongst the powers of the civilized world. Russia could ill afford the loss of Makaroff, but humanity can less afford that of Verestchagin.

EVOLUTION.

SOME COMMENTS BY "CRUX."

It has been more than once my intention to take up the question of evolution, and to show, to the best of my ability, and in brief a manner as possible, the utter failure of the most able men of the materialistic school to scientifically prove the pet theories of evolutionists that the origin of all existing matter, life and being consists of atoms and forces, the former acting upon the latter. Just as I was about to put my intention into execution, I came upon a splendid piece of reasoning, in an article written years ago, and signed "C. J. Armistead," and which conveys far more clearly and far more exactly my own arguments than any words of mine could ever do. In the course of these few comments I will borrow some of that writer's language, placing it between quotation marks.

Huxley believes that besides matter and force there is a third thing in the universe, to wit, consciousness, which is neither matter nor force, nor any conceivable modification of either. This is an admission, in itself, that if followed to its logical conclusions, must inevitably end in the incomprehensible, in the existence of a something that science cannot demonstrate and that demands some species of Revelation to explain. The evolutionist takes us back by degrees, unwinding the tangle of existence, until he brings us to a point in some uncalculated period of remoteness, at which no organized structure existed and no life was to be found. The curtain then drops on all that can possibly be known; behind that curtain everything is unknown "and all speculation about it is unscientific and unprofitable." Here I quote from the author above-mentioned: "We may," he writes, "if we choose, cherish the belief that God created out of nothing the primordial mist out of which all things have been evolved. About that matter science has nothing to say, because it implies a mystery, and mysteries are things that she does not deal in."

So far as science is concerned we have thus reached the limit of all possible knowledge of the past. Science does not pretend to go beyond that point, and yet she admits that there must be something in rear of that limit.

If the non-luminous nebulous matter that filled the universe, leaving no space for conscious life, or spirit, or will, "had been created by God, it had shut Him out so completely from the space it occupied that science has never been able to detect the slightest trace of His connection with it in any way whatever. There was nothing anywhere but lifeless atoms of matter ready when the time for it came to be acted upon by force."

Here then our evolutionist, with the torch of science in hand, leads us back into the dim and misty period that yawns, like an abyss, between the "knowable," and the "unknowable." At that line he pauses, and if he attempts an excursion into the region beyond, his torch is extinguished and he becomes lost in vagueness, mysteries and contradictions; if he brings aught back with him, it is the bare handle of the extinguished torch, with which he blackens and renders more and more incomprehensible that which might have been dimly discernable when the feeble light yet flickered in his hand. He returned certainly with the statement that beyond the line where science has no power of demonstration there are two factors—atoms and force. But how does he know that there existed these two factors? Only visible phenomena, or rather phenomena perceptible to the senses, are the subject matter of science: with the invisible and intangible science has nothing to do. "That is the very reason," writes our author, "why it is asserted that God, and all such impalpable things as the mind and soul, as entities distinct from matter, should not be allowed to enter as factors into any problem to be solved by science."

If the infidel, or agnostic, or evolutionist, or whatever he desires to be styled, cannot admit of God, the soul, the mind, the will, merely because they cannot be seen, nor tasted, nor felt, nor heard nor smelt, because, in a word, they are not perceptible to any of our human senses, for the same reason he cannot assume the existence of atoms or force. They are as great a mystery as the soul, because they defy all scientific demonstration, even as does the spirit.

Huxley admits that he does not understand how an atom can exist. You cannot see, nor weigh, nor measure, nor taste, nor feel an atom. Let me

now follow the exact words of the writer from whose article I have already quoted. He says that: "it is not even certain that they (atoms) have ever had any existence at all, except in a theory devised to account for the phenomena of matter. Thus evolutionists banish from the domain of science all immaterial substances, because they are invisible, intangible, impalpable, while at the same time they demand that their theory shall be allowed to commence with a whole universe of atoms that can no more be seen, or touched, or accounted for than a soul can be. This is an inauspicious beginning for a theory which is designed to show us how to reason consistently."

Now let us turn from atoms to force. Even supposing that the infinitesimal atoms that floated irregularly through space actually did exist, and that they constituted what is called chaos, we may fairly ask whence came these atoms? And how came they to unite in the formation of the first material object out of which all nature has evolved? The evolutionist settles the former question by saying that it is beyond the power of science to demonstrate their origin, and he replies to the second one by saying that force brought them together and shaped them according to nature. Yet their great authority, Huxley, admits that he cannot conceive how force acts any more than how atoms exist.

"We know nothing whatever of its origin," says our author, "or of its nature, nor can we say positively that it has any existence at all apart from the presence and action of a living intelligence and will to put it and keep it in operation. It belongs, if anything does, to the domain of the 'unknowable' things. It is just as impossible to see, touch, or weigh it as it is to perform these operations on the soul. It is true that we speak of feeling or of measuring a force. But what we really feel is that which the force puts in motion. The force is something that is assumed to account for the motion, just as in the spiritualistic philosophy spiritual phenomena are accounted for by predicated the existence of the soul. Here again evolution goes beyond what is seen and known in search of an invisible cause for it, and it thus does the very thing that its advocates condemn in those who find in the will of God the cause of all things. They assert that the idea of His present personal connection with the universe is a mere figment of 'the scientific imagination,' and it may be just as true that bodies move because God wills that they should as it is that our limbs move at the bidding of our wills. The choice of an invisible mysterious impersonal force, to take the place of a personal God in the control of the universe, seems to be wholly arbitrary. It certainly cannot be justified by the plea that it enables us to deal only with that which is visible and tangible, and therefore really understood. It cannot be claimed for it that it has the advantage over the Christian genesis of involving nothing that goes too far beyond the limit of human vision to be fully comprehended and clearly explained."

Now that we have gone back as far as atoms and the force that brought them together, there remains one more question. Even were we able through science to demonstrate by measurement or otherwise, that impersonal force, I ask the evolutionists, whence comes that thing you call force? It is a power that you cannot see, nor explain, but the effect of which you perceive; so is God a power that we cannot see, nor hear nor weigh, nor measure, and the results of whose action ar will we perceive. Since, then, it is but a question of one mystery against another, both beyond the domain of human science, which is the more rational? Is it more reasonable to accept the theory of a Supreme Being with a Divine will, as the first cause of everything and as made manifest in the universe and through revelation, or to believe in an impersonal something that cannot be explained, that is evidently an effect and not a first cause; and that defies science and has not even revelation to establish its existence? The evolutionist removes God and leaves a blank in His stead; at least, before he can expect us to accept his theories, he should be ready to give us something as good, if not better than that of which he robs us. Let him prove the non-existence of an Ens Creativum before he asks us to play the "dog and the shadow" with our Faith.

Kerwin, O.M.I., of the stry, is dangerously ill street Hospital.

going on among the University for the re-Rose Danis, the elder-who was burned on the destruction of the

osing funeral was that of Isidore Cote, paymaster of the Works Department, was in his sixty-ninth year suddenly on Friday. He was well known all over where branches of the Department are to be

Most Reverend Dr. MacRedmond.

ge, received this week: Dr. MacRedmond, also, died last week at Cork. His Lordship, of Birr, in King's about 68 years of age, was an ecclesiastical training College in Paris, and a synod, where he read a course. Ordained in 1860, his first mission at Bourmes, near Roscommon, he was for a Toomevara. Then he to Nenagh, being ap-then Bishop of Killaloe, he was appointed Prebysan College, Ennis, later he was promoted of Killaloe and appoin-of the diocese. In Dr. MacRedmond was Bishop of Killaloe. The Most death of the Most Episcopate. His Lord in illing health since had been staying at or about two months. he was attacked with later on developed pneumonia, to which succumbed, as already