

CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

THE MUDDLEMENTS OF SCIENCE—SO CALLED.

IT is said with great reason in the opening chapter of Dr. Temple's Bampton Lectures, "Science, which certainly ought to insist upon demonstrating every assertion which it makes, is charged with giving the rein to the imagination and treating the merest speculations as well-established facts." Considering the insolent tone adopted by certain scientific persons in regard to revealed religion and religious literature, it is advisable now and again to turn their battery of scorn upon themselves, and for the sake of young people especially, to expose the vain pretensions to infallibility so generally made by a class of scientific writers. The genesis of the human race has always been a difficult one to explain on any theory constructed on scientific principles, for true science demands *demonstrated facts*, and in this case the facts are *all on the side of the Bible*. A distinguished astronomical expert has however framed a new theory which kills off, he fancies, the Mosaic narrative. He proves, he says, that the southern half of the world was first cooled down, the whole earth having been at one time a mere ball of fire. He affirms as confidently as though he had witnessed the operation, that on the southern hemisphere man was developed as soon as he ran no risk of scorching his feet. According to the standard of this class of "scientists"—horrid word, this theorist's reasoning is sound, his scientific knowledge absolute, no wonder then that to the sceptical his conclusions are demonstrated. There is a slight oversight however in the opinion of non-scientific people, which is this,—he forgets to mention where man originated, how the germs survived the terrific heat of the burning globe on which they burst into growth as human beings—of course this to a scientific person of this class is a mere detail, still we should like a little light thrown upon this detail! We are reminded of an incident at a lecture we once attended. The learned speaker was showing with the aid of a lot of so-called scientific jargon and cant, for science has its cant terms, that man was developed from a germ. He pictured a pond which gathers water all clear, then gradually is seen to fill up with vegetation,—this he gave as an illustration of the manner of man's development. A rustic hearer got up and asked leave to put a question, he said, "Maister, how long be I to wait by that puddle to see a man come up?" The audience saw the point and the lecturer was too confused to make any further impression.

Another eminent writer, Mr. R. A. Procter, has blown the Southern Hemisphere theory all to atoms by the dynamite of scientific logic. Mr. Procter has proved, so he says, that it was not the *South* but the *North* half of the world that was first cooled down. Mr. P's reasoning and Mr. P's facts, and Mr. P's figures and Mr. P's science who can dispute? But he also omits that little detail about man's origin! These theories are literally as far as the Poles asunder from each other, and from the logic

and facts and science of another authority of equal learning!

We simple people must leave the North theorist and the South theorist to fight it out. But, while fighting, we really must ask them not to insult us, because we decline to accept both their contradictory theories! Seeing the row going on, a third highly distinguished scientific, also infallible person, comes to join in the fight, who, like a modern Ishmael, raises his hand against every man, who is not a believer in his notions. He says all this North and South poles discussion is nonsense anyway; for man must have been first seen near the *middle* of the earth, near the Equator, and that he was developed out of an inferior animal. This sounds somewhat stale, we read speculative stuff of this kind near half a century ago. But the modern scientific person is great on resurrecting dead theories and galvanizing defunct speculations into a semblance of life! This expert in reply to the crushing remark that not a vestige of any such animal as links man to the lower creation, has ever been found, replies, "Ah! wait a bit, wait until the new railway is cut from Suakim to Berber, and in the cuttings, as sure as fate, there will be found some skeletons of the missing link!" This is no exaggeration, the very words may be seen in "Knowledge" for January last. So, to take only what science tells us with its latest breath we have these infallible declarations, 1st, Man first appeared at the South Pole; 2nd, Man must have appeared first at the North Pole; 3rd, There can be no doubt man first appeared near the Equator. It is no doubt highly presumptuous for one not scientific to speak on such a topic. But we must beg these three infallible experts to come to some agreement before casting stones at us for not bowing down and worshipping the great god modern Science, a god with as many heads and mouths as any heathen monstrosity. Another equally ludicrous scene of confusion is now visible in the geological camp. We have lived in Siluria and chipped for Trilobites in our daily walks in the land over which Murchison was playfully crowned king, have seen the most instructive and interesting phenomena of geology lay naked and open to the eye without travel or work, and know how we were taught to believe in certain rocks being of "fire" origin and others of "water" origin. The man who did not believe these elementary facts was regarded as an idiot. But, the fire origin of certain rocks has been demonstrated to be a foolish mistake. What every geologist, since geology was invented, has regarded as indisputable, is now known to be positively an absurd theory. All the text books and treatises and papers read before British Associations and elsewhere, which assume that certain rocks were once in a state of fusion and cooled down to their present form are of no more scientific value than Jack and the Bean-stalk. Yet in spite of all this assumption of infallibility and of the absolute certainty of what has been proved to be the baseless fabric of a factless theory, and of the violent contradictions of experts, scientific persons go on impudently speaking of

Science as beyond criticism, and scientific knowledge as alone worthy the serious attention of mankind. The old lines convey a needed lesson to scientific dogmatists.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring
For shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
But drinking deeper sobers it again."

The depths of God's work in creation cannot be sounded by man, there can never be anything but a "little learning" acquired by any human being, but a *little common sense* may be attained, and a *proper degree of modesty* would be found not destructive of scientific accuracy.

We would respectfully ask those "scientists" who sneer at revelation to seek after these excellent gifts, they will aid science much by investigating more thoroughly and speculating less wildly.

A PRESBYTERIAN ON THE BAPTISTS.

IN the July number of the *Century*, an "open letter" writer, says:

"Christian Union, both essential and organic, is greatly retarded because many Christians refuse to accept the plain teaching of God's word, and the conclusions of the highest scholarship regarding the subjects and act of baptism. Baptists hold that Christ alone can make laws for His Church; and that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. They believe that this word teaches with unmistakable clearness that believers are the only subjects of baptism; and that baptism is immersion."

Now, all the world knows that in these matters, other Christians hold, and Presbyterians, among others, plainly declare just what this Baptist represents as the great faith of his denomination—namely, "That Christ alone can make laws for His Church; and that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice." Therefore, if they differ from Baptists, why? This writer says: They "refuse to accept the plain teaching of God's word," etc. To "refuse to accept the plain teaching of God's word," they must know that teaching. And if, as his writer charges, they believe that God's word does not teach what they practice, as to the mode and subjects of baptism, then they are all hypocrites, acting in opposition to "conviction and conscience." To brand them all the more deeply and darkly, as living in the impenitent practice of known sin, he says of God's word: "More explicit are its utterances on these subjects than regarding the divinity of Christ, or any article in the orthodox creeds." That is, as he means: Believer's baptism and by immersion—to the exclusion of all other modes and subjects—are more explicitly taught in God's word, than is the divinity of Christ, or any other doctrine! Is this true or not? All other Evangelical denominations accept the divinity of Christ as a teaching of God's word, and hold that it is heresy not to accept it. So clear is the teaching of the Bible on this subject. Now, as this writer says, the baptism of believers only, and immersion as