

We have great confidence in the capabilities of our Anglo-Saxon mother tongue. The language with which Shakespeare and our English translators of the Bible have accomplished such marvels must have resources which are not easily exhausted. There can be but little excuse, as a general rule, for those authors who, writing for English readers, turn our noble language into an uncouth and scarcely intelligible jargon, by the importation of crude and unassimilated phrases into it from other tongues, living and dead. It must, however, be confessed that it is not always easy to express the technicalities of modern scientific thought in pure English without considerable circumlocution. This fact may be alleged in extenuation of what will probably be regarded by lovers of pure English as the most serious fault in the style of this noble volume. It is stately and grand, its rhythm often rising to the dignity of a magnificent oration, but it is not always English. It is just a little over-loaded with hard technical phraseology, though it is only just to the author to say that this is confined chiefly to the opening chapters of his book.

The object of this article, however, is not to criticise the style of the book, but to reproduce, with as much simplicity and perspicuity as may be, some of the arguments and conclusions of the author on some of those points which may be supposed to be most interesting to the general reader. Of course, it will be impossible, owing to the inexorable limitation of space, to enter into details; those who desire a fuller understanding of the several points touched upon in this article must examine the volume for themselves.

The very first thought suggested by the title of this book is, that there are conceptions of the world which are not Theistic. The Theistic conception, of course, is that which is founded upon the recognition of the existence of God; the Atheistic conception is founded upon the denial of this truth; and between these two comes in the Pantheistic conception, which partakes of the nature of both, but is identical with neither of these. Pantheism admits the existence of God, but it denies His personality; it affirms His existence, but it neutralizes His affirmation by denying the existence of anything else but Him. "According to this view, God is the universe itself: beyond and