

the wickedness that was to come. The necessity therefore on which Mr. Chesnelong eloquently dilates is apparent, and is likely to be still more manifested as Atheism or Agnosticism advances: for whether there is any real distinction between Atheism and Agnosticism or not, Agnosticism must be as much as Atheism the grave of practical religion. But it is not enough to show the social necessity of religion. DeMaistre shows that an infallible Pope would be very convenient, but we do not accept this as a demonstration that an infallible Pope exists. What is needed, and very urgently needed, is a demonstration of Theism such as should satisfy those, now numerous enough, and not in France alone, who have ceased to believe in Revelation. Attempts have been made to furnish such a demonstration, we know; but for the most part on metaphysical lines; and, with all due respect for metaphysics, it must be said that nothing metaphysical produces practical conviction. Let M. Chesnelong, if he be a great religious philosopher as well as a great religious orator, devote himself to that task.

—The *Contemporary* for June has a profound article on the Theology of Dante. We cannot help suspecting that in Dante, as in Browning, mystical interpreters see more than is there. Beyond doubt, however, he is a perfect representative of mediævalism, theological, philosophical and political. When you have read him, with a part of Thomas Aquinas, and the lives of two or three saints, and when you have seen the cathedrals and the castles, you know what the Middle Ages were. But we are irreverent enough to think that Dante, if he has fed the imagination with his terrible pictures of hell and purgatory, has done Christianity no small wrong by presenting God as the keeper of torture-houses which are to those of the most fiendish of Italian tyrants, such as Eccelino di Romano or a Bernabos Visconti, what eternity is to a day. The inscription over the gate of the Dantean hell, saying that it was erected by Eternal Love, seems to Carlyle—at least he says