

words which are not limited to a particular philosophy or religion—I do not now confine my language to the philosophy or religion of Comte—for this same conception of man is common to many philosophies and many religions. It characterises such systems as those of Spinoza or Shelley or Fichte as much as those of Confucius or Bouddha. In a word, the reality and the supremacy of the spiritual life have never been carried further than by men who have departed most widely from the popular hypotheses of the immaterial entity.

Many of these men, no doubt, have indulged in hypotheses of their own quite as arbitrary as those of theology. It is characteristic of the positive thought of our age that it stands upon a firmer basis. Though not confounding the moral facts with the physical, it will never lose sight of the correspondence and consensus between all sides of human life. Led by an enormous and complete array of evidences, it associates every fact of thought or of emotion with a fact of physiology, with molecular change in the body. Without pretending to explain the first by the second, it denies that the first can be explained without the second. But with this solid basis of reality to work on, it gives their place of supremacy to the highest sensibilities of man, through the heights and depths of the spiritual life.

Nothing is more idle than a discussion about words. But when some deny the use of the word 'soul' to those who mean by it this consensus, and not any immaterial entity, we may remind them that our use of the word agrees with its etymology and its history. It is the mode in which it is used in the Bible, the well-spring of our true English speech. It may, indeed, be contended that there is no instance in the Bible in which Soul does mean an immaterial entity, the idea not having been familiar to any of the writers, with the doubtful exception of St. Paul. But without entering upon Biblical philology, it may be said that for one passage in the Bible in which the word 'soul' can be forced to bear the meaning of immaterial entity, there are ten texts in which it cannot possibly refer to anything but breath, life, moral sense, or spiritual emotion. When the Psalmist says, 'Deliver my soul from death,' 'Heal my soul, for I have sinned,' 'My soul is cast down within me,' 'Return unto my rest, O my soul,' he means by 'soul' what we mean,—the conscious unity of our being culminating in its religious emotions; and until we find some English word that better expresses this idea, we shall continue to use the phraseology of David.

It is not merely that we are denied the language of religion, but we sometimes find attempts to exclude us from the thing. There are some who say that worship, spiritual life, and that exaltation of the sentiments which we call devotion, have no possible meaning unless applied to the special theology of the particular speaker. A little attention to history, a single reflection on religion as a whole, suffice to show the hollowness of this assumption. If devotion mean the surrender of self to an adored Power, there has been devotion in creeds with many gods, with one God, with no gods; if spiritual life mean the cultivation of this temper towards moral purification, there was spiritual life long before the notion of an immaterial entity inside the human being was excogitated; and as to worship, men have worshipped, with intense and overwhelming passion, all kinds of objects, organic and inorganic, material and spiritual, abstract ideas as well as visible forces. Is it implied that Confucius, and the countless millions who have followed him, had no idea of religion, as it is certain that they had none of theology; that Bouddha and the Bouddhists were incapable of spiritual emotion; that the Fire-worshippers and the Sun-worshippers never practised worship; that the pantheists and the humanists, from Marcus Aurelius to Fichte, had the springs of spiritual life dried up in them for want of an Old or new Testament? If this is intended, one can only wonder at the power of a self-complacent conformity to close men's eyes to the native dignity of man. Religion, and its elements in emotion—attachment, veneration, love—are as old exactly as human nature. They moved the first men, and the first women. They have found a hundred objects to inspire them, and have bowed to a great variety of powers. They were in full force long before Theology was, and before the rise of Christianity; and it would be strange indeed if they should cease with the decline of either. It is not the emotional elements of Religion which fail us. For these, with the growing goodness of mankind, are gaining in purity and strength. Rather, it is the intellectual elements of religion which are conspicuously at fault. We need to-day, not the faculty of worship (that is ever fresh in the heart), but a clearer vision of the power we should worship. Nay, it is not we who are borrowing the privileges of theology; rather it is theology which seeks to appropriate to itself the most universal privilege of man.

FREDERIC HARRISON.

Mr. Bright has been having rather a lively time with the Bishops. In a speech at Rochdale, with the old ring of earnestness and strength so characteristic of the man, and an eloquence worthy even of his palmy days, he boldly attacked the Established Church, and among other illustrations of its baneful influence, pointed to a speech of the new Bishop of Truro, and the intimation it gave of his purpose to suppress Dissent. Two or three days passed, and then a "member of the Conference" at which the speech was delivered, interposed to throw his shield over the diocesan, and to state that though the reporter had condensed his powerful address into an exhortation to "combat Dissent with its own weapons," yet the printed copy of the address contained no such expression, nor any other indication of the feeling attributed to Dr. Benson. The next day came a still more emphatic repudiation of the statement from the Bishop himself, and that was followed by a manly letter from Mr. Bright, making the *amende honorable* in a way which ought to have ended the controversy, and which appeared to us far beyond anything which justice or courtesy required. It has been followed, however, by a series of homilies from a class of writers who are eager to prove their own wisdom and moderation by administering chastisement to an extreme man like Mr. Bright, "who is becoming, don't you know, quite an agitator again."—*The Congregationalist*.

The Marquis of Hartington's speech marks an epoch in the history of Disestablishment. It does not mean that the Liberal party is going to make religious equality a "plank" inch platform, or even that those grievances about which the noble Marquis feels so keenly, under which the "Free and Dissenting" Churches in Scotland are suffering, are to be immediately redressed, or that England is soon to be the only part of the United Kingdom in which an Establishment is to be left standing. But while we take very moderate views as to the immediate consequences of his declaration, we do not therefore attach to it the less importance.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CANADA, Viewed in its Civil Aspects.

I want to say a few words by way of preamble, or explanation. I am fully aware that not a few condemn the course I have taken, and do still take, in this question of the Roman Catholic Church. They are excellent persons, I have no doubt; they are very fond of quiet, even though it has to be purchased at a great price; they would rather go a good way round to escape a difficulty, than take the right and straight path where they will have to face and fight it down. And they are quite indignant at being disturbed. They take it as a personal affront that one should dare speak out his mind, or seek to unsettle things that they may get a better settlement. Others again cry out *cui bono?* You are in a minority; these are old standing abuses; the government is all for a party; public spirit is dead and can hardly be galvanized into the semblance of life; British sentiment is but a boast; you can do no good in that way; don't try. Now, I quite see that those gentlemen have a right to their opinions, and to the free expression of them. If they choose to bear the unnecessary ills of life, of course they must. But, then, I have also the right to exercise my own gifts and graces, even if they differ from those of the majority. I find it as hard to be quiet and submissive before what appears to me to be injustice, as it is for some of my friends to rouse themselves to speech and action when they are sure that wrong is done. A part of this arises from the nature of me; a part from my education. A true English nonconformist can hardly be other than opposed to any ecclesiastical ascendancy. In England I was opposed to the state church—not as it concerned her creeds, or methods of working, but as it concerned her union with the civil power. I have been accustomed to see the supporters of churches and institutions criticise each other freely. But I never heard that such criticisms could be construed into insults until I came to Canada. Roman Catholics in England freely criticise, and unsparingly condemn, the Protestants; but I never heard that the Protestants called themselves insulted by it. I remember that not so very long ago the Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford said in a sermon that the Protestant Bishop of Manchester was no Bishop at all. Whereupon the Bishop of Manchester took up the cudgels, and a great fight came off. The Episcopalians didn't bluster and talk of insult, and send threatening letters, but rather enjoyed the lordly war of words; many of us thinking that he of the Catholic Church had rather the best of it. The nonconformists are called Schismatics, and Spoliators and a host of ugly things; but they never talk of being insulted, as the people do here. And I cannot help expressing my disappointment at the poor namby-pamby spirit I find here among many people. You have only to say that you are going to subject a church, or an institution, to a little historical airing and criticism, and a lot of people begin to grind their knuckles into their eyes and blubber. They take it as an attack upon themselves, and pay it back, not in defending their institutions and answering your arguments or no arguments, but in heaping personal abuse upon you. That is a state of things I do not understand. Why there should be so much anger and so much vulgar abuse heaped upon a man who has never attacked persons from the first to the last, or uttered a word that could be construed into anything more than a fair criticism I do not know. Nor do I understand how it is that the press allows such violent personal attacks under a *nom de plume*. I have written a great deal at one time and another for newspapers, but never in my life did I send an anonymous letter. And I am amazed to find here a lot of scoundrels, who have nothing to lose that anybody would care to find, allowed to skulk behind the hedge and fling dirt. I do hope that the press will put a stop to that. I can see very well that if a public question is under discussion the cause may gain nothing by having the name of a writer; but when it is merely a malicious attack upon a person the case is different. I have no hesitation in saying—and my judgment is based on general principles and particular cases—that a man who will malign the character of another under a pseudonym would rob a till or strike a woman. And this too I affirm that the man who takes a criticism or an attack upon an institution, or organization, ecclesiastical or other, as a personal attack, or insult, is thereby proven to be devoid of all knowledge of educated society. I deny that I insult a man by denouncing his dogmas, if I use reasonable language. A Redemptorist Father used language of us awhile ago, that some of us thought not quite polished; he even damned us with energy. And why not? He meant it I am sure. Who was insulted? Not I. I would have eaten salt with him after his sermon. Hard words break no bones, and if you want to enforce a point you must use strong language. Don't let us talk of insult as if we were small boys; let us be men and manly. By a good healthy criticism we learn our own faults and how to put them away. It is the salt of society; it is the root—nourishment of institutions. It is as needful as a strong opposition in the parliament, without which political corruptions would never become "Pacific Scandals," or foolish contracts "rusting steel rails." Being in Canada, it did occur to me that I was in duty bound to take some interest in Canadian affairs and some share in the work of the nation. I have some ecclesiastical education, and some strong political instincts. I indulge both. I am a pastor of a church, which office I fulfil to the best of my ability, thus far without serious complaint on the part of my people. I am also a member of the state, and think it my duty to turn my attention and my efforts that way when I can. In the year or so that I have been here I have wrought hard to acquaint myself with the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of this country. And I would impress upon you the feeling that has come upon myself. I see clearly that there is resting upon the people of this Dominion a very great and grave responsibility. It seems a law—be it a law or no—it is a fact, that for many generations past the tide of life has been flowing westward. This continent is but a thing of yesterday—but see what a day has done. See the millions of people, their religious and political institutions—their commerce and industry. In almost everything outstripping the old world. And here you have a magnificent country—great rivers, great lakes, great woods, and a fertile soil—and in the people you have the nucleus of a great and prosperous nation. The people are hardy, thrifty, and given to piety in an extraordinary degree. Out of an old world we have to build a new nation. All history is before our eyes, revealing the excellencies that we may copy them, and the blunders that we may shun them, of the old nations of Europe. Never before, it seems to me, in world history has such an opportunity occurred to any people. It is not that the Indians are called upon to make the country,