

the economical must turn from the threshold ; for them is written " Abandon all hope (of bonnets) all ye who enter here."

It would be tedious to lead the reader through all the shops and *établissements* visited by us during this amusing day. How, in a fit of virtuous economy, our *buyer* thinks she must penetrate to some less extravagant exporter's, there to cater for her humbler customers ; there to find that, having cultivated our taste by admiring all that Paris can show of most *recherché* in millinery art for hours, we cannot descend to second-best, and we all tail out, rather ashamed of ourselves for having bought nothing ; whereupon our *buyer* says she must have a day to herself in these unattractive purlieus, unbiassed by people of such excessively good taste as ourselves.

This is certainly a pleasant and well-earned holiday for the hard-working and ever-complaisant " head of a department," and the good of such a holiday reflects upon the whole *clientèle* of the employers. Thus a woman with good taste, and the adaptive faculty to make use of what she procures, is well deserving of such an *outing*, and will secure to her department an ample return for the large outlay necessary for the procuring of first-class *Paris Modes*.—*The Queen*.

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN SCOTLAND.

IV.—THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND: "SCOTCH SERMONS, 1880."

So far the rationalistic movement in the Scotch churches has appeared as incipient only—as an attack upon some one particular doctrine. The case is altogether different with the Established Church. Here the liberal movement has been most marked ; appearing not as an attack upon any particular doctrine of the creed, but as the growth of a new system of ideas within the old. Beneath the surface there has been long observable within the Church of Scotland a broad, deep intellectual current. Gradually absorbed, the new thought has been silently at work leavening the old. It has at last come to the surface, and found formal and authoritative expression within the church itself. The publication of a recent volume of Scotch sermons must be regarded in the light of a public manifesto by the Broad Church party, which has found a home in the Established Church. The volume itself is a fair criterion of the state of religious thought and feeling existing in that church, and demands attention as one of the most remarkable productions ever emanating from a church in Scotland.

Originating, according to the preface by the editor, Professor Knight, of St. Andrew's University, in "the wish to gather together a few specimens of a style of teaching which increasingly prevails amongst the clergy of the Scottish Church, 'Scotch Sermons, 1880,' may serve to indicate a growing tendency, and to show the direction in which thought is moving." And by the purely scientific method and unrestrained freedom, the severe logic and unflinching boldness with which its discussions are carried on and its conclusions stated, the volume amply redeems its promise.

Starting with the implied assumption that truth destined to become universal is at first wrapped up in and identified with purely local and temporary forms, the writers' attitude towards Church Creeds and Confessions is historical and philosophical. They recognise the existence of the letter as well as of the spirit of truth, and claim that "Creeds are but the reflection of the thought of the ages which gave them birth." They must follow, they maintain, the stern, beautiful law which raises the world, and by which the faith of to-day becomes the superstition of to-morrow.

With such a standpoint, a conciliatory rather than hostile attitude is assumed towards physical science and the conclusions it has reached. A readiness is shown to accept whatever truths it may have to teach, and to reconstruct old theories in harmony with them. Hitherto physical science has been regarded as hostile to religion, because it has been directly hostile to the supernatural, which it would eliminate from it. Miracles, in the ordinary sense of the term, it regards as so improbable as to be practically impossible, or at least it claims that no evidence can be produced to prove that they are historical. While, by the application of its highest thought category of *evolution* to the phenomena of history, all the various forms in which religion has appeared among men are regarded as an evolution from the mind itself. This attempt to explain away the supernatural origin of religion, by tracing its development and detecting its presence even in the most rudimentary ideas and practices of the world, is, however, regarded without alarm by the authors of "Scotch Sermons." On the contrary, Professor Knight maintains that the validity of any belief is independent of the process by which it may have arisen. If, he argues, the human mind has grown at all, its religious ideas must have grown along with it, becoming ever more rational and spiritual. And religion can never die, he holds, because it is the outcome of a permanent tendency and the satisfaction of an ineradicable want of human nature. It may seem to disappear in the individual or tribe : it survives for ever in the general heart of the race. The various forms, idolatrous, intellectual, or ecclesiastical—in which it may be clothed for a time, must change ; but the *intuition* which underlies and gives life to them, lives on as an essential constituent of human nature itself. No claim to a specially supernatural origin on the part of one religion more than

another is admissible on such a theory. Prof. Knight, therefore, argues that the history of religion, from its earliest and rudest, to its highest manifestations, is that of a progressive development and continually unfolding life, Christianity itself being only the continuation of that revelation "which primitive worshippers enjoyed in humbler manner and in lower form." Taking a broad and comprehensive view, sufficient to satisfy the most exacting scientist, of religious phenomena, as they have appeared in history, Professor Knight therefore concludes that "the human race has lived in the light of a never ceasing apocalypse, growing clearer through the ages, but never absent from the world since the first age began ;" the fetich worshipper being thus as real, although not so articulate a prophet of religious ideas as the founder of maturer faiths.

Corresponding, however, to this subjective tendency of human nature, "a real element in human consciousness," from which all religious phenomena have sprung, there is, Professor Knight maintains, an objective side equally significant. Religion involves "the intellectual recognition and moral discernment of an object," the clouds and darkness surrounding which religious thought is ever endeavouring to penetrate. One conception after another as to the nature of the Divine may require to be modified or given up altogether, as utterly inadequate ; even present modes of thought must soon be superseded as the light keeps breaking. But, Professor Knight concludes, "no illusion of tradition will ever disenchant the mind of the belief that the Infinite is for ever revealing Himself, that 'God's great completeness flows around our incompleteness, round our restlessness, His rest' ; that God is within us as well as without, the soul of our souls, the life of our lives, the substantial Self that underlies the surface evanescent self." This central dogma of religion, however, he frankly concedes, is surrounded with obscurity, and even an ultimate mystery. Due in part to a defect in the beholder's eye, partly to the shadow projected by the moral and social state of man, he traces it also to the very nature of the case. The finite organ can never comprehend the infinite in which it lives and moves and has its being. Professor Knight also insists that if it were all light, if religious truths were as obvious as the truths of science, moral life would be reduced to a process of mere mechanical development. The discipline produced by the mingling of light and shade would be impossible. Knowledge of every kind, of course, recedes at last into the "unknowable," and the "theistic" explanation of the facts of life and of the universe, as Professor Knight himself confesses, is no exception to the rule. He contends however, that it gives a key which partially unlocks the mystery, and provides a working theory of life.

The same conciliatory attitude towards physical science is seen in the discussion of "Law and Miracles," although the attitude is undecided. The doctrine of Miracles, we are told, has now fallen into the background and lost its apologetic value. Christianity being a revelation of spiritual truth, seeks to quicken spiritual perceptions ; and to argue "that the possession of power over nature is the constant index of spiritual truth and wisdom is to take for granted an assumption demanded by no necessity of thought, and contradicted by every-day experience of men's actions." The reign of law is admitted. Any interruption of nature's uniform course, any breach of continuity, it is held, would be a blemish in the picture, a positive pain to thought ; and, instead of disposing the mind to reverence, would fill it with doubt and confusion. Yet the writer does not argue that miracles are impossible, or even unhistorical. Although not basing our faith in Christ on miracles, we may, he holds, base acceptance of the miracles upon our faith in Christ ; a seeming contradiction of his own principle. For if power over the material world be no guarantee of the possession of spiritual truth, the converse is also true : possession of spiritual truth is no guarantee of power to work a miracle. The author is tolerant, however, even at the expense of his logic. For he adds that it cannot be said belief in the revelation necessitates belief in miracles. And, therefore, he concludes that "to insist that no one who rejects the miracles of the New Testament may claim to be a Christian, is intolerance which ought to be resisted."

The whole tone of the volume is philosophical rather than critical. Yet the results of the "Higher Criticism" are not ignored. They are tacitly accepted, or they are arrived at by a different method, as *e.g.*, in the discussion of the question of authority. The fallacy underlying the Protestant doctrine on the subject—the objective infallible authority of the Bible as a final standard of belief, is fearlessly exposed in a sermon on *Authority*, the expressed purpose of which is to vindicate the claims of the individual reason to supreme authority over individual belief. It is maintained that there is a *human* as well as a *divine* element in the Bible, and that to simple, pious souls who love it in their hearts, their favourite books or portions of books alone are divine revelations. Enlightened Christians, it is held, claim the right to judge each utterance of the Scriptures "in the light of their own Christian consciousness, and to deny Divine authority to any of them which fall beneath the ethical standards which, as men illuminated by the spirit of Christ, they have set up for their own guidance. They deny all Divine authority to those portions of Scripture which treat of matters which belong more properly to science and history than to religion." The only authority, therefore, this writer logically maintains, which can be attributed to any utterance of Scripture is that of its "inherent reasonableness" ; and he concludes that the Scriptures are not true because authorita-