

back of that "living present" with which alone Agnosticism glories in having to do. According to this system of accumulated negations which has condensed into it, all bygone forms of disbelief, we are sure only of what is present and visible. It is a presumption to claim faith in more. He does not positively deny the existence of God. He just does not know. He is not sure. It is erecting over again an altar "to the unknown God." But this ignoring God is equivalent to denying Him. The Agnostic is, to all intents and purposes, what Paul calls in Eph. II. an "*Atheos*"—that is, one "without God" in the world. Does not his very capacity to doubt involve the existence of the Being doubted? Can there be any doubt without some measure of thought to beget it, or thought without a thinking principle? It needs intelligence to doubt, but that intelligence which dignifies man and lifts him above the brute creation, pre-supposes an intelligence separate from and superior to that in the creatures, else we have the greatest of effects without a cause.

The Roman Catholic theologian, Dr. Brownson, is unanswerable when he says: "You cannot assert the intelligible without asserting necessary and Eternal Being; and, therefore, since necessary and Eternal Being is God, without asserting God, or that God is; and since you must assert intelligence, even to deny it, it follows that in every act of intelligence, God is asserted, and that it is impossible, without self-contradiction, to deny His existence."

Indeed, to deny or doubt God would require the possession of the infinite qualities of the Being doubted or denied. We would need, for example, to be capable of existing in all space and during all time,—for there might be some spot in the illimitable regions of space where evidences of His existence could be got, or there might have been some period in the world's history when God was.

"Christ," he said, "had taught some doctrines that were against the natural and best instincts of humanity." Yes, the "natural" but not the "best." It is natural to resent and resist injuries. For example, the Sermon on the Mount frowns on certain of these "natural instincts," but is not this its glory in the estimate even of many who, in character and conduct, were far from being in sympathy with the Divine human Teacher, whose very "gentleness made him great." The themes of Christ's teaching, that are against our "natural instincts," far from being blemishes on the face of His Religion, are its "glory and joy."

The Lecturer is reported as having stated further that Christ had not encouraged intellectual enquiries or independent investigation. "You can't have intellectual liberty and be orthodox." Strange—passing strange—when what is known as "the Christian Era" has been