

mighty congregation of lower heights; the base broadly built on earth, the summit grandly rearing itself high in Heaven; and the lower slopes terraced with gardens, festooned with vines, garlanded with flowers, and sparkling with streamlets, while the topmost height is crowned with the snowy whiteness of unsullied purity, and bathed in the eternal sunshine of the skies!

This Alpine illustration is pertinent to the case in hand, not only in view of the fact that universal humanity is gazing very intently at Christ, but in view of this fact also, that the gaze is a reverent one. Widely as men differ about Christ, they agree in high appreciation of his moral character. Infidelity owns that he was good. Rationalism crowns him as the kingliest of men. Error as well as truth awards honour to Jesus, and, without irony, hails and praises him. Anti-Christian scepticism is dead. The exclamation, "Crush the wretch!" does not awake the faintest echo. Every knee bows at the name of Jesus. Almost the only exception to this is to be found in the disrespectful complaint of Emerson, that "Christianity dwells with noxious exaggeration on the person of Jesus." But that dreamy thinker would probably make the same complaint of Infidelity, as taught by a modern sceptic like Renan, who sets out to depict "an admirable human figure," and unwittingly paints a divine portrait—whose avowed aim is to eliminate the supernatural from Christ, and yet many of whose utterances are so reverential, and even devout, that a believer might well-nigh adopt them as the language of worship and the litany of love. The figure that lives and moves in the pages of this remarkable writer, casts a reflection far larger and grander than itself, as objects do their shadows, only in this case, the reflection is vastly more real than the figure that casts it. Pious hearts have burned within them at the traits which Renan occasionally brings out so finely, and on the whole, perhaps, no avowedly sceptical book was ever produced, which has tended more powerfully to strengthen the faith it aims to supplant.

It is noteworthy also, that the very unbeliefs of our day have an air of evident sincerity about them. Men who, so far as their teachings go, are but "blind leaders of the blind," honestly own that they are groping after the light themselves. They lack the self-confidence and assumed infallibility of their infidel predecessors. They confess to hesitations and even doubts. They are like the drifting mariners whom Paul describes: "fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day." Scepticism is no peaceful haven where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." It is an exposed and boisterous channel, through which the winds rave, and the anchors drag; and over which neither sun nor stars appear. The voyagers are sleepless, anxious, troubled. This state of things calls for an entire change of front and of bearing, on the part of Christian believers. While infidelity "breathed out threatenings and slaughter," armed resistance was necessitated, but the foe of the battle-field becomes the brother when in hospital, and no chivalrous crew would pour a broadside into a crippled frigate which hoisted signals of distress, though it would not strike its flag. Experience teaches that what men want is the revelation of Jesus Christ; and for such as are bewildered, consciously dark, and eagerly desirous of enlightenment, the tenderest sympathy should be cherished, and every means used to prevail on them to grasp the hand of Him who only can guide them out of the labyrinths of error. Rejection of the truth—nay, even inability to receive it, is, no doubt, to some extent, the offspring of depravity, but there is a vast difference between the unbelief that boldly champions vice, and the unbelief that essays to do what it can, however little, to assuage anxiety, dispel darkness, and relieve want. Infidelity, as the ally and friend of profligacy, is no more—infidelity, in the form of inveterate hostile prejudice, is among the things that were—and an infidelity, thoughtful, sincere, ready to "hearken to reason," and wistful for light, has taken their place. The mammoths and pachydermata of the past have disappeared, and the advent of finer organizations and more sensitive natures marks a new era in the history of human thought.

It is a further characteristic of our times, that Christ, as distinguished from