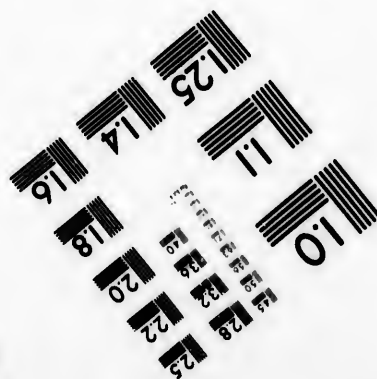
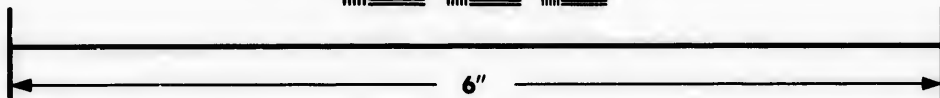
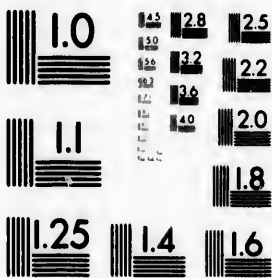


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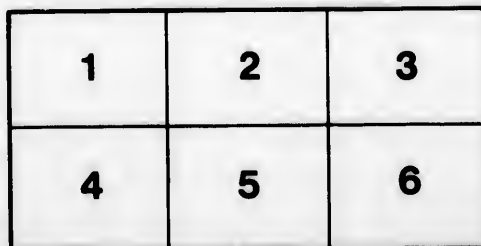
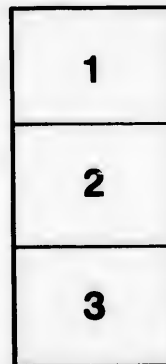
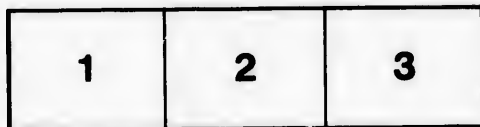
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AGNOSTICISM.

—BY—

The Right Revd., The Lord Bishop of Ontario.



AGNOSTICISM.

A Lecture Delivered in St. George's Hall, Kingston,
on the Occasion of the Meeting of the
Synod of the Diocese, June 12, 1883,

BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF ONTARIO

Printed by Request of the Synod.

KINGSTON :
1883.





AGNOSTICISM.



RELIGION is at the present time confronted with a very real as well as a very subtle danger. It is not Christianity, or any particular system of religion, that is attacked, but religion itself at its very root. This danger arises from the prevalence of Agnosticism, which is so subtly diffused that its influence is felt not only in the writings of Agnostics, but in conversation, magazines and newspapers. It occupies the attention and affects the minds of multitudes who dare not avow it. It has crept into our churches, and heads of families who are churchgoers and outwardly believers are at heart Agnostics. And there is a reason for this suppression of their real feelings. They have a lurking suspicion that it is not safe to abolish the present standard of right and wrong, until a substitute has been provided. They have misgivings regarding the expediency, or rather the cruelty, of consigning confiding wives and believing children to the tender mercies of Agnosticism. They have not as yet sufficient confidence

in their negative creed to intrust to its keeping the reconstruction of society on the new basis, and property owners are not quite sure of the stability of things, should all the world become agnostic. They rightly think that it is bad enough though God is recognized as a fact, and they shrink from the possible results of His being regarded as a myth. Mr. Labouchere tells us in his newspaper, *Truth*, that a majority of the British House of Commons are Agnostics. It may be so, but they have thrown out the Affirmation Bill, so that if they be Agnostics, they have not the courage of their convictions, perhaps from some such reasons as I have mentioned. This distrust of the practical results and working of Agnosticism is proved by the fact that some of its avowed champions write in favor of attending public worship and conforming to religious usages, and their doing so, while it does not make us admire their morality, convinces us of their embarrassment. We cannot, therefore, estimate the real numbers of Agnostics by regarding as such those only who avow their disbelief, and I am justified, therefore, in calling Agnosticism a very subtle as well as a very real danger. But what is it in itself? In trying to answer this question, let me remind you that the earliest heresy that arose in the first century was that of the Gnostics, or the knowing ones. They took their name from the Greek word *γνώσις*, knowledge or deeper wisdom. They professed to know more about God, creation and immortality than all other Christians. They had their day, but after a time passed away and were no more seen, at least

under that title. The latest heresy, that of the Nineteenth Century, is the direct contradiction of that which prevailed in the first. It is that of the Agnostics, or the know-nothings. They not only profess that they know nothing about God or immortality, but they go farther and assert that nothing can possibly be known by the human mind on such subjects. They are not content to speak for themselves but for all the world besides. The instinct that tells uncivilized man that there is a God, goes for nothing, as being unscientific, while the reasoning that tells civilized man that God is, goes for nothing too. The proofs from the marks of design in the universe do not prove a Designer, as Lucretius held long ago, and the manifest purpose which created natural laws such as those discovered by Newton and Kepler is therefore discredited. Instead of these proofs, the hypothesis is maintained that matter sorted itself by the collocation of atoms, according to laws purely mechanical. Now, Agnosticism is a most unfortunate name for this creed or rather this want of creed. It is a contradiction in terms. It is a belief that there can be no belief. It begins by telling us that nothing can by possibility be known about God, and it ends by telling us that we *do* know the most important thing that can be known about Him, namely, that He does not exist. Agnosticism is not only Theological Nihilism, but it is a cowardly name for Atheism. It is based on negation, and yet becomes ludicrously affirmative in its negations. It denies the possibility of the conception of a personal God, and then proceeds to

affirm to all intents and purposes the Deity of Matter. But how can the modern spread of Agnosticism be accounted for? What causes have contributed to its adoption or resuscitation? That it is gaining popularity is quite clear. Indeed it is not so much argued as assumed that it is true and scientific, even by many who know little or nothing of the arguments by which it is sustained. I believe that if we insist on a diagnosis of the disease, it will be found that it is the widely spread popularity of the theory of Evolution, leading as it does to Materialism, which has fostered Agnosticism and destroyed belief in Theism. In consequence of the acceptance of the Evolution theory, man has come to be regarded as a condensed vegetable with a battery in his head. Influenced by the wonderful genius of Darwin as a naturalist, and even by the fact that he was accorded burial in Westminster Abbey, many rush to the conclusion that the Evolution theory has been accepted as proved by the scientific world, and so fashion as usual is enjoying a temporary triumph. Really, as has been well said, * "We are threatened with a new intellectual tyranny of the most odious kind; not a dictatorship of some imperial genius, but a decemvirate of specialists, an oligarchy of experts. The dogma of scientific infallibility is proclaimed without the decorum of an Œcumenical Council, or the election of a Sovereign Pontiff. Evolution is enforced by authority, rather than justified by argument. In reference to it, these are the formulæ to which we

* Basis of Faith (Conder) p. 188.

are obliged to listen : 'All competent judges are now agreed.' . . . 'Every educated person is aware that those best qualified to judge, tell us.' . . . 'It can now no longer be questioned.' . . . 'Science tells us,' and such like phrases." But in spite of all these plausible assertions, Evolution remains still an hypothesis only, that is, an unverified supposition. "An hypothesis," says Brown in his philosophy, "is nothing more than a reason for making one experiment or observation rather than another," and Evolution is nothing else. The hypothesis is briefly this, that man is descended from a clot of slimy mud in the depths of the ocean, the atoms of which, by fortuitous concurrence and means purely mechanical, produced protoplasms which in turn begat *amaba* which became sponges, and so on through a multitude of evolutions occupying a period of time which for practical purposes differs little from eternity, till at length the tailed apes appeared. Then there is a break in the chain. The links between the apes and man are missing. But the lacunæ do not daunt or trouble Professor Haeckel who says, that "Man-like apes who lost their tails through disuse *must have existed* in the Miocene period, and from them man was developed." It is here that the hypothesis completely breaks down. We have remains of mammals of the Miocene period, of the Dinotherium, the Mastodon, and even of dog-faced Apes, but not a vestige of ape-like man. Two of the plainest rules of logic are, "No chain is stronger than its weakest link," and "*de non apparentibus et non existentibus, eadem est ratio*," but

they are as nothing in the way of Evolutionists. They tell us that though the links are missing, "they must have existed." This surely is not the inductive philosophy of Lord Bacon; but let us proceed. Another reason for regarding Evolution as an unverified hypothesis is that some of the most distinguished Professors of Natural Science, while admitting that all vertebrate animals pointed to man as the archetype, do not accept Evolution as the true account of the descent of man. Professor Owen, whom Hugh Miller well describes as supreme in his own special walk as a comparative anatomist, says, * "The recognition of an ideal exemplar for the vertebrated animals proves that the knowledge of such a being as man must have existed before man appeared, and that the archetypal idea was manifested on this planet long prior to the existence of those animal species that actually exemplify it;" and Agassiz, after a survey of the geologic existences more extended and minute, at least in the Ichthyological department, than that of any other man, says, "That there is a manifest progress in the succession of beings on the surface of the earth. This progress consists in an increasing similarity to the living *fauna*, and among the vertebrates, in their increasing resemblance to man," but he adds, "This connection is not the consequence of a direct lineage between the *fauna* of different ages. There is nothing like parental descent connecting them." Again, Sir Charles Lyell says, † "No satisfactory proof has yet been discovered of the gradual passage

* Testimony of the Rocks, p. 228.

† Principles of Geology, pp. 146-148.

of the earth from a chaotic to a more habitable state, nor of any law of progressive development governing the extinction and renovation of species, and causing the *fauna* and *flora* to pass from the embryonic to a more perfect condition, from a simple to a more perfect organization." And again he says, "It would not follow that even if there were sufficient geological evidence in favor of the theory of progressive development that the creation of man was the last link in the same chain; for the sudden passage from an irrational to a rational animal is a phenomenon of a distinct kind from the more simple to the more perfect forms of animal organization and instinct." And once more, "It appears that species have a real existence in nature, and that each was endowed at the time of its creation with the attributes and organization by which it is now distinguished."

Any theory of Evolution which does not account for the origin of life on earth, leaves us just where we were, believers in creation by a Divine fiat. But Evolutionists are strangely at variance with each other on this point. While Bastian and Haeckel try to account for the origin of life by * Bathybius and spontaneous generation, Huxley, on the other hand, while claiming for himself a philosophic faith in the probability of spontaneous generation, says, † "Biogenesis, or life through the action of life appears to me to be victorious along the whole line at the present day." The experiments of Tyndall corroborate the belief of Huxley who is

* Amorphous protoplasm in the lowest depths of the sea.

† Address to the British Association.

so dissatisfied with the differences of opinion among Evolutionists, that he says, "The army of liberal thought is at present in loose order, and many a freethinker makes use of his freedom to vent nonsense. We should be better for a vigorous and watchful enemy to hammer us into cohesion and discipline, and I for one lament that the bench of Bishops cannot show a man of the calibre of Butler of the Analogy, who, if he were alive, would make short work of the current *a priori* infidelity." According to Mr. Darwin the human brain was developed from the ape brain by the necessities of the case in the struggle for existence, but another great Evolutionist sees in the production of man the intervention of an external will. He remarks, that the lowest types of savages are in possession of a brain, and of capacities far beyond any use to which they could apply them in their present condition, and that, therefore, they could not have been evolved from the mere necessities of their environments.* Thus we see that the greatest comparative anatomists in our age, as well as Evolutionists, differ greatly among themselves, as to the descent of man from the lower strata of beings, and we are therefore justified in calling Evolution an unverified hypothesis—a guess. The origin of life on earth, which some Evolutionists attribute to material mechanism, is not only discredited by Huxley but by many other great scientists. Sir William Thompson's theory is that an aerolite ejected from some other planet brought the first germs of life to

* Mr. Wallace, quoted in the "Unseen Universe," p. 178.

ours. But it is admitted on all sides that this is but throwing the difficulty a stage back, and leaving us in the dark as to how life originated in the ejecting planet. For these reasons then we should regard Evolution as an unverified hypothesis.

It will, however, be asked by thoughtful men, how does it happen that an unverified hypothesis has had such a fascination for so many minds from the age of Lucretius and Horace to that of Darwin and Huxley? Indeed Horace * writes as though the hypothesis was the general belief in his day, though he does not trace the Evolution of man farther back than to what he calls "*Animalia*." How comes it then that this theory takes captive so many minds? The answer is not far to seek. Nothing captivates the human mind so much as system. A theory in two volumes worked out systematically, drawing the reader up by degrees from an assumption, through carefully wrought out analogies, and proceeding along an interesting and cumulative chain of evidences, takes him captive, in spite of the want of some connecting links. We see an instance of this in the way some persons bring themselves to believe in the descent of the Anglo-Saxon race from the lost tribes of Israel. First, there is the assumption that the ten tribes were lost, and then again there are missing links between Hengist and Horsa and the Israelites. Still the theory is maintained by the judicious use of accumulated similitudes, many of them, however, so far-fetched that I should not be surprised if some

* Satire I, 2.

new ones should be discovered, such as the tendency of Saxons to worship golden calves of the human species, and as recent events have proved, "to spoil the Egyptians." In estimating the weight to be attached to such modes of proof, we should bear in mind the weighty words of Lord Bacon, "Method carrying a show of total and perfect knowledge, has a tendency to generate acquiescence." It seems to me, therefore, that a great deal of the popularity of Evolution is due to the skilful and systematic way in which it has been presented to the public by its advocates; the general effect of the whole theory on the minds of many is not affected by the absence of evidential and necessary links.

Agnosticism takes refuge in Evolution in order to get rid of the idea of God as unthinkable and unknowable. But it is the old story of Scylla and Charybdis, for Evolution introduces us to much that is unthinkable and unknowable. For instance, during the unimaginable ages preceding the Evolution of the ear and eye, neither sound nor sight existed. It was only when natural selection seizing on accidental variations developed the eye, that the conjunction of the sun's rays and that organ, caused light and vision to start into existence. They were *non-existent* till the eye was made, for Agnostics will not allow us to believe that "God saw the light that it was good." Now, that the rudimentary eye should have by natural selection worked in the direction of light which did not exist, is unthinkable, and supposing that it did, that the process took

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place without purpose or design is incredible. Sound, too, existed not, till the ear was formed, because on evolutionistic and agnostic principles no earthly ear had been developed, and the ear of God was non-existent. But natural selection struggling to meet the vibration of the air, without purpose or necessity, at last caught a vibration ; in the course of ages the ear improved its capital, and finally sound was created. All this is unthinkable. Again, granting that the maxim of the evolutionist that creation from nothing is unthinkable, that "*Gigni de nihilo nihil, in nihilum nil posse reverti,*" is indisputable, we ask, is not the eternity of matter and its atoms regulating themselves by chance which however always wins, quite as unthinkable, and yet this is the only alternative if we deny that the worlds were framed by the word of God. Is not the belief that the worlds were made by the fiat of an omnipotent Creator quite as thinkable as that they were developed from nebulous fire-dust that existed from eternity, and that they dropped into their places in space by chance which, however, resulted in the planets always poisoning themselves so that the square of one planet's period of revolution round the sun should be to the square of the next planet's revolution, as the cubes of their distances respectively from the sun ? That this law of Kepler should be the product of chance, is unthinkable. Agnostics insist that creation *ex nihilo in time* is unscientific and unthinkable. Of course it is unthinkable on their principles, because *time* did not exist till man was evolved and his conscious-

ness developed. Time is but the interval, measured and multiplied, between two states of mental consciousness. But till the Evolution of man there was no consciousness of time, because, on the Agnostic hypothesis, the consciousness of a supreme intelligence existed not. Time has no existence outside mind. It is the mind's creation. Therefore, if there be no such thing as the mind of God, and that of man was, up to his Evolution, non-existent, time too was non-existent, so that past, present and future were a unity which no word in language can express. To this unthinkable conclusion are we brought by Agnosticism. And not only are such drafts on our credulity unthinkable, but there are others which, though thinkable, are absurd. The possession by man of certain rudimentary organs is said to prove that he is descended from animals which had them in a state of perfect development. Thus man has a rudimentary tail, showing that he has been evolved from the ape, and the guess is that apes with tails, in the process of ages got rid of them by disuse, so that man's immediate ancestors were tail-less apes of a species which does not now exist, and whose remains have not as yet been found. So, tails that were developed by means of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, because they were prehensile and useful in climbing trees, became disused and disappeared, they were developed for their utility and abandoned for their inutility. Again, man has rudimentary *mammæ* on his breast, proving that he is descended from a race that had them in perfect development. They, how-

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ever, ceased to be used, and became only rudiments
 of the original organs. The immediate male pro-
 genitors of man gave up suckling their young ; so
 males and females became distinct ; but at the early
 period of ape-man's existence, all were females—
 this is unthinkable. Again, man has rudimentary
 hair on his body, showing, by parity of reasoning,
 that his progenitors had a hairy covering for the
 body. How they got rid of it is not explained. It
 could not have been through disuse, for that is un-
 intelligible, and the strange thing is that they
 divested themselves of it, not only in hot climates
 where they did not want it, but in cold climates
 where they did. Darwin says that the ape-man
 was in all probability evolved in a hot climate, in
 Africa, where he lost his hairy covering, as it was
 useless, but he does not explain how it happened
 that his descendants in cold climates did not revert
 to the hairy type of their progenitors the Chim-
 panzee and the Gorilla, "man's nearest allies."
 Indeed, it is hard to resist a smile at the attempts
 to build up such theories on the airy basis of fanci-
 ful analogies. The relationship of man to the horse
 is shown by the analogy between the muscular
 power of the horse to twitch his skin—say, to get
 rid of a mosquito—and the power of some men to
 move their scalps. Man's relationship to the frog
 appears from the fact that man and the frog are
 the only animals that have calves to their legs !

But let us pass awhile from considering the aid that
 Evolution gives to Agnosticism, to another point
 well worthy of our reflection, I mean the tendency

of the age to depose God in favor of natural laws. The *reign* of law and the *working* of natural laws are expressions very common and very misleading. They seem to deify law, and to withdraw attention from the Lawgiver. They also tend to create a dislike to anything bordering on the præternatural or the supernatural. And yet let us ask, what do we mean by natural? We mean simply, what is in accordance with our own experience, or that of others on whose testimony we rely. The laws of the universe are infinite, and the extent to which man has fathomed them, is incomparably less than the ratio that the scratching of a prairie with the point of a needle bears to the ploughing of a continent. What is natural to-day, was supernatural a few years ago, and what is supernatural to-day may be quite natural a year hence. Had our grand-fathers been told that we should now be travelling over the world whirled along by steam engines with the roar of a tempest and the speed of an eagle, or that we should utilize the lightning to flash our thoughts around the world in a few seconds, or make the sun paint our portraits, they would have exclaimed, "All this is supernatural." Perhaps our grand-children may smile at our incredulity touching the future, because any day may introduce us to some discovery in nature that will throw all previous discoveries into the shade. We cannot know the limits of the natural or where it blends with or fades into the supernatural. What we call miracles may have been only in accordance with natural laws, though they proved superhuman knowledge

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of those laws. And not only is the word *natural* misleading, but the word *law* too. It has been well said that men fancy that their thoughts control their words, but in truth, their words control their thoughts. We speak of the operation and working of natural laws, till we fancy that we understand all about them, and we set up an idol of our own making in the place of a Supreme Being. Yet if we think on the matter, a law does not *work*, it merely *exists*. A law cannot work of itself. Unless put into operation by an intelligent executive, it may indeed exist, but it is obsolete, dormant, or a dead letter. Similarly, there are an infinite number of natural laws now existing of which we know nothing, for we cannot see them in operation. There are laws too in constant operation, and yet all we know about them is that a Supreme Intelligence must be directing them, such as the law that regulates the proportion of the sexes born into the world. We are nearly sure that the ratio is twenty females to twenty-one males, and we can see why the males outnumber the females, in order that provision should be made to supply the loss of males caused by wars and all the other accidents to which they are exposed. But how the law is worked out all the world over, except by the supervision of a Supreme Intelligence, we cannot even conjecture. Other laws innumerable have existed for ages and a few of them, such as the circulation of the blood, have been from time to time discovered, but what is the external force that originated them, or keeps them a going, is unknown. Law is nothing but the

regular, systematic sequence of movements from given starting points in human experience. The more intricate and minute these sequences are, and the more successfully we are able to discover and trace them, the more we imagine that we know all about the phenomena, and the greater is the temptation to materialism. The anatomist who has mastered the intricacies and complications of that marvel of mechanism, the human body, is inclined to refer the whole structure, in its origin and purpose, to the interaction of matter with matter. He is apt to forget that the law governing the human machine is not automatic, and he mistakes the *process* of action which he *has* discovered for the *cause* of the action which he *has not* discovered. In short the discoveries in modern times, in all branches of physical science, have had a tendency to materialism, partly by withdrawing the mind from the contemplation of what is spiritual to what is material, and partly by reason of human self-conceit absorbed in complacent reflection on its own achievements. Still, we should be grateful for these discoveries. The more the better. They go on "declaring the glory of God and showing His handiwork," though in many cases they may tend to promote materialism, and thereby, Agnosticism.

By some means or other "the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence" is assumed to be a law of nature, and if it be so, our faith is severely taxed. Survival of the fittest—fittest for what? If the answer be, fittest for surviving, we argue in a circle, and get no information whatever.

movements from experience. The sequences are, and to discover and what we know all water is the temptatist who has implications of that body, is inclined origin and purwith matter. He ning the human he mistakes the discovered for the discovered. In es, in all branches tendency to ma-e mind from the qual to what is man self-conceit n on its own grateful for these . They go on wing His handi-ay tend to pro-pticism. survival of the s assumed to our faith is st—fittest for surviving, we on whatever.

The only rational answer must be, they survive who are fittest for their environments, in size, strength and vigour. But let us consider how far this is the case. As to fitness for survival by reason of size and the strength attendant on size, if we look at a geological chart we see that the reptiles of to-day are mere pigmies compared with those of the secondary formation, and that the mammalia of our time are but dwarfs as compared with the mammoths of the tertiary formation. Throughout all the geological ages there was a steady diminution in size and its attendant strength, in the animal world. Most of the primeval monsters are extinct, except a few diminutive representatives. So that, in their case, size and strength did not constitute fitness for surviving. Many of our existing quadrupeds, and of our *diminutive* rodents are the same as those that co-existed with the mammoth. So that great inferiority in size was not a hindrance to survival. And ever since man appeared on earth, feeble though he was, and ill-furnished with weapons of offence or defence, he has been able to hold his own, and even to prevail against animals the largest and most ferocious, though he has been well nigh helpless against insects that destroy his crops, and locusts that devour the fruits of his labours. Nor is size, even when accompanied with corresponding strength, conducive to survival. Giants as well as dwarfs are not long lived, but on the contrary most liable to early decline. Further, as the same physical laws that prevailed in primeval ages are in force now, since nature is uniform in its workings, let

us see how this law of the survival of the fittest can be made applicable to the human animal. Can it be truly said that the fittest survive, after a war of thirty or more years has destroyed the flower of the population of a continent—that part of the population selected for stature and freedom from bodily defect or blemish? And this has been going on, with more or less interruption, ever since history began. Do the fittest survive famines, pestilences, shipwrecks and all the countless accidents by land and sea? Is it credible that ever since the advent of Christianity at all events, man has been persistently striving to frustrate the law of the survival of the fittest, and for all that, is “increasing and multiplying and replenishing the earth?” Laws of nature should be obeyed and co-operated with, not fought against and thwarted, and if survival of the fittest be one of those laws, we ought to abolish all asylums and hospitals for the blind, the deaf, the drunkard, the idiot and the lunatic, and we ought to expose to death all sickly, puny and superfluous infants. Heathen nations were more consistent believers in the law of the survival of the fittest than we are, for they worked with nature and would have nothing to do with such appliances as now exist for the survival of the *unfittest*. All these considerations and many others that suggest themselves, are such a strain on our faith that we exclaim with that worldly-wise heathen, Horace, *Nil agit exemplum litem quod lite resolvit*. One difficulty cannot be explained away by raising another, the survival of the fittest cannot be a law

of the fittest can of nature, and the mystery of the Mosaic Cosmogony cannot be explained away by raising the animal. Can it mystery of Evolution. Let us now proceed to enquire whether, in spite of Agnosticism, we have not after a war of evident proofs pointing to a Supreme Intelligence. the flower of It requires intelligence to understand natural laws, part of the popu- and much more intelligence to have established and lom from bodily worked them. A common intelligence can under- been going on, stand how a steam engine works when the process er since history is explained, but a higher intelligence is needed, to nes, pestilences, contrive it and set it going. Whenever and where- accidents by land ever we see one intelligence exceeding another, or ince the advent the highest human intelligence anticipated or sur- as been persis- passed by some other, we are led to a belief in a of the survival supreme intelligence. When, for instance, we sur- increasing and vey one of our mediæval Gothic Cathedrals and are th?" Laws of lost in wonder and delight at its beauty, at the erated with, not exquisite combination of airy lightness and massive survival of the strength, beauty and harmony associated with at to abolish all strength and solidity, surely any one but an idiot, the deaf, the sees that the architecture was the result of mind— and we ought to intelligence. But centuries after these mediæval superfluous in- architects died, fossils were discovered in rocks in consistent be- which, as Hugh Miller tells us, there is scarce an the fittest than architectural ornament of the Gothic or Grecian are and would styles which may not be found existing. Man had iances as now been anticipated millions of ages ago by some other All these con- intelligence; he only imitated unconsciously the suggest them- works of a greater architect, *who must have had mind* th that we ex- oo. This is not a case of a human architect imi- atthen, Horace, ating nature, like the Grecian architect copying in *resolvit*. One the Corinthian or other styles the graceful forms of ay by raising not be a law

the acanthus or other shrubs or flowers. No, the fluted columns, the sculptured lozenges, the delicate diaper work of Gothic Cathedrals, were all created ere man appeared on the earth, and man's intelligence in imitating them, though the model was unknown, proves not only that a superior intelligence existed before his own, but that his own mind, is one in kind, though infinitely inferior in degree, to that of his Creator who formed him after His own image. Or again, the sense of beauty is instinctive in man; he loves the harmony of colors, all the hues and shades that create effect, and where he has succeeded by his works in producing things of beauty that are a joy for ever, no one whose reason is not shattered, will deny that such words indicate intelligence or mind. Let me remind you of what Hugh Miller says of the beauty invented and expressed by a calico printer. A pattern called Lane's Net was the most successful ever tried. Its beauty caused a greater sale than had ever been known. Now mark, that very pattern, only more delicately beautiful, was recently discovered in the old red sandstone coral and had been stamped on the rocks countless ages before the appearance of man. If then there was intelligence in the man who drew the pattern the other day, shall we deny it to the worker who anticipated man in the almost infinite past? Agnosticism says that man can know nothing about a Supreme Intelligence. Let us try the assertion by another test. Lines, that is, length without breadth, triangles, squares, ellipses, foci, cubes, are merely mental conceptions, they have no existence of them-

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selves outside man's imagination. Yet man builds upon them and their complex relations wonderful fabrics, and no one in his senses will affirm that a book of geometry does not prove the existence of mind. Well, man gazes into the starry firmament, and the heavenly bodies are tracked and measured by him, not in their apparent, but in their real, motions, and lo! he discovers that the geometric conceptions of his own mind were anticipated by a higher intelligence myriads of ages before he was created or evolved. In wonder he looks into the planetary system, and he sees his own conceptions that had been wrought out independently, illustrated on an infinite scale and working from a period in the past that seems like eternity. Surely there is enough here to make him fall prostrate in wonder and awe and adore a Supreme Intelligence, while from the depths of his heart, as well as from the convictions of his intellect, he chants a *Benedicite*. Truly it was not because St. Paul was a Jew or a Christian, but because he was a man of powerful intellect, that he said, "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

It is urged, however, by Agnostics, that the evidence for Theism is not convincing, that the existence of Agnosticism proves that such is the case, and that many men of philosophic mind are Agnostics. But it may be replied that the evidence is convincing to equally philosophic minds, so that the

philosophers on each side may settle the matter between them, or be considered as neutralizing each other's arguments. Men of philosophic mind have doubted their own existence, as well as the existence of matter, and why should it be thought surprising that they should deny the existence of God? It should ever be remembered that the intrinsic value of evidence and the force of that evidence on differently constituted minds are totally distinct things. The intrinsic value of evidence is estimated differently by a learned and experienced judge and by an ordinary juryman. It is not more surprising that a strong intellect should be uninfluenced by a certain kind of proof than that a man whose hearing is perfect should be insensible to music or harmony. A mathematician has little taste for any kind of proof but the mathematical; and there was a case of a devout Christian mathematician who lost his reason in the attempt to reduce the evidences of Christianity to a mathematical shape. Indeed there are some whom nothing will satisfy but ocular demonstration. "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us" is their demand; but that is not a more surprising phenomenon than that a man whose organ of vision is perfect should have no eye for the beauties of nature:

"A primrose by the river's brim,
A yellow primrose is to him,
And it is nothing more."

The wish, too, that the evidence may not be convincing, is sometimes father to the thought, and thus when an inability to feel the full force of the evidence is combined with a desire that God should

settle the matter be non-existent, we cannot wonder if we find
 neutralizing each Atheism. The evidence of the senses is said to be
 sophic mind have the highest of all, yet no court would regard the
 well as the exist evidence of one whose sense was disordered, whe-
 t be thought sur ther the case in point depended on sight, hearing or
 existence of God taste. Now, I cannot help thinking that some men
 that the intrinsic are born color-blind towards God. To explain to
 f that evidence on the color-blind the wondrous hues of an autumn
 e totally distinct sunset or a Turner's picture would be useless, and
 dence is estimated so I cannot help believing that there are men who
 rienced judge and are incapacitated, or rather placed at a great disad-
 t more surprising vantage, in their search after God. They ask for
 uninfluenced by a proof beyond the reach of cavil, though they can
 man whose hearing show no title for making the demand. The follow-
 music or harmony ing is the nearest approach yet made by the
 for any kind of intellect of man to demonstrate that mind rules
 there was a case matter, and to justify our natural belief "in God the
 ian who lost his Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." It
 the evidences of was stated by Professor Haughton, of Dublin Uni-
 shape. Indeed, versity, in a sermon on the occasion of the meeting
 satisfy but ocular of the American Association for the Advancement
 father and it suff of Science: "The principles known as the *conserva-*
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 ve no eye for the present order and laws of nature, if left to them-
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 sooner or later, in a state of death, of absence of all
 motion, physical as well as vital. If it be thus
 may not be con- certain, then, that the universe, if left to itself, must
 he thought, and have an end, it is equally certain that it must have
 full force of the had a beginning." This remarkable conclusion,
 that God should shown from the facts of the exact sciences, was, I

believe, first publicly stated by a distinguished Irish man, William Thompson, who sums up his demonstration in the following propositions :

“I. There is at present in the material world a universal tendency to the *dissipation* of mechanical energy.

“II. Any *restoration* of mechanical energy without more than an equivalent of *dissipation* is impossible in inanimate material processes.

“III. Within a finite period of time past the earth must have been, and within a finite period of time to come the earth must again be, unfit for the habitation of man as at present constituted, unless operations have been, or are about to be, performed which are *impossible* under the laws to which the known operations going on at present in the material world are subject.”

In other words, something outside nature and her laws has *interfered in times past*, and will again interfere in *times to come*. This is, then, the nearest approach that the intellect has made to a demonstration as certain as a mathematical one, and yet I am bold to say that to the vast majority of the human race, even if they could understand it, it would not be so convincing as the intuitive, instinctive feeling within us, for, after all, it may be said of the great mass of human beings, as nothing but the sun can make us see the sun, so nothing but God can make us see God. “*Sol facit ut solem videas; Deus facit ut videas Deum.*” But all men have not this intuition. Natural incapacity, and not any physical research, makes some men Agnostics. This is evident from the fact that many of the most successful explorers of the arcana of

distinguished Irish nature, from Newton to Faraday, have not only
 summed up his demon been believers in God, but in the revelation of Jesus
 ons: Christ; and from another fact, that many are
 material world a Agnostics who have no pretensions whatever to the
 ion of mechanical name of scientists, while many others are Agnostics
 of some shade or other only for a time. It cannot
 cal energy without have escaped the attention of thoughtful men that
 tion is impossible there is a sceptical time of life. Up to early man-
 hood a youth for the most part believes what he has
 of time past the learned from his parents; after that, the age of self-
 a finite period of reliance, independence and intellectual conceit sets
 n be, unfit for the in; but after the age of forty or fifty, or earlier if
 constituted, unless the man has been disciplined by affliction, experi-
 t to be, performed ence sends him back to the belief of that which his
 laws to which the mother had taught him. This leads to a pregnant
 ent in the material topic, but I must not now dwell upon it further than
 to suggest that, if my statement is at all correct, the
 ide nature and he necessity of a religiously scientific education in our
 d will again inter universities is imperatively demanded. Irreverence
 then, the nearest on the part of the young is a characteristic of this
 made to a demon generation, and irreverence and Agnosticism act and
 ical one, and yet interact together, so that it is difficult to determine
 t majority of the which of the two gives birth to the other; but it is
 understand it, i certain that an irreverent spirit, beginning with dis-
 the intuitive, in respect for parents, age and precedent, often ends
 ter all, it may be in irreverence towards God, and Agnosticism is
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 Sol facit ut solem exploration will often suggest the noble words of
 e." But all men Prince Leopold, in a recent speech at the Mansion
 incapacity, and House "that in this world of mysteries arrogant
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As a practical summing up, let me now address Agnostics and believers respectively. And, first, to Agnostics, I would say, your reasoning is quite aimless. Your Agnosticism, if you imagine that it will lead to atheism generally, is quite imbecile. We go with you a certain distance; we admit that there is a sense in which no man can know God. No one can know God's existence as he knows his own. Therefore we do not say, I know God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, but, I *believe* in God the Father Almighty, and this belief, so far as it consists in fearing and loving Him, can never be overthrown. There is not the remotest chance of the world ever becoming atheistic, there is more danger of its becoming "wholly given to idolatry." We cannot get rid of nature. As Horace says, "*Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.*" And if we could divest ourselves of all thoughts of God as an unattainable object, why in the name of everything that is rational should we try to do so? Where is the civilized man who can deny that God, or the conception of God, has been the motive power for good in everything that concerns the human race? All the virtues we possess are traceable to a belief in God. What pen can depict or tongue tell or testify to the amount of happiness conferred on mankind by the delusion (according to Agnostics) which inspires happy anticipations of compensation for earthly miseries, imparts resignation and self-denial, and has conquered the world by sweetness, love and light. Granting that there are intellectual difficulties in Theism as well as in Atheism, so that

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both are balanced, throw in the moral perfection of
heism, and then ask yourselves which of the two
urns the scale. It is downright cruelty for Agnostics
o thrust their negations upon us. They remind us
f the friends of the man of Argos, of whom Horace
rites, that while he was an excellent citizen and
erformed all the duties of life most faithfully, he
et laboured under the delusion that he was con-
stantly listening to beautiful tragedies; but when
rough the kindness of friends, and the use of
ellebore, he was cured of the delusion, he ex-
laimed :

*"Pol me occidistis, Amici,
Non servastis," ait, "cui sic extorta voluptas,
Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error;"—*

By Pollux, you have killed me, not cured me, my
riends, in wringing from me violently a most delight-
al delusion." But Agnostics in trying to deprive us
f the most delightful sensation on earth—the love
f God—and in their efforts to puzzle us, are but
trengthening us in our creed. We say to them,
our Evolutionism and Materialism get rid of soul
nd its immortality, but Agnostics as you are, that is,
gnoramuses as regards God, soul and immortality,
what are you putting in the place of soul? What is
hat consciousness of existence which assures me of
y personal identity throughout all the flux and
utations of my body from childhood to old age?
ou must admit that it is a *something*—an energy or
orce. But a prime article of your creed is, "I
elieve in the conservation and transmutation of
energy." The *something* is therefore immortal. Again

we ask, how is this energy or force generated? You reply, by molecular mechanics, by the movement of atoms which have all the appearance of being manufactured articles, though we are Agnostics as to the manufacturer. But the second article in the creed of your science is, "I believe in the indestructibility of matter or mass." Given, therefore human consciousness, (and it is useless to argue with one who denies it) given consciousness, generated materially, and we have on your own principles the immortality of what we call soul, whether that soul be energy, force or matter.

And now a word to Theists, who hold that "there is a God that judgeth the earth." Alas! that Agnosticism should be unwittingly fostered by weak but well meaning religionists. Every caricature of the Christian's God or the Christian system helps Agnosticism. Well has the present Archbishop of Canterbury said, "I know not whether any stern or sensuous religion of heathendom has held up before men's astonished eyes features more appalling and more repulsive than those of the vindictive Father or of the arbitrary distributor of two eternities." Agnostics smile when they see the parodies and travesties of Christianity that are encouraged and sought to be moulded to God's honour by devout Christians. They sneer at the unmeaning words of pious believers who speak of special providence or the intervention of providence, and such like phenomena, as if God were ever absent from His own world, and was not always presiding over His own

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education, but waking up now and again to interfere
the affairs of men.

He hides Himself so wondrously,
As though there were no God,
He is least seen when all the powers
Of ill are most abroad.

Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell,
That God is on the field when He
Seems most invisible.

Every sneer at science and every denunciation of
scientific men as such helps Agnosticism. The facts
of science, provided they be facts and not guesses,
are as true as the facts of religion and proceed from
the same author. We shall never hear the last of
the taunt levelled against the Church, that she
denounced the systems of Galileo and Copernicus,
and the same kind of denunciation proceeds apace
on a minor scale from the lips and pens of well
intentioned but unscientific religionists. It has
been my own lot to meet with gentle upbraidings
for inconsistency of conduct as a Bishop, because I
took the initiative in Canada in inducing the British
Association for the Advancement of Science to visit
the Dominion next year, some of its members being
avowed Agnostics. But I have no fears from
assaults from without. I *do* fear them from within
the Christian fortress. The attacks on geology in
our own day have not raised Christian controver-
sialists in popular estimation, nor are scientists
attracted to our creed when they sometimes find
opprobrious epithets substituted for arguments, and
see in the same Christian men contempt for science
coupled with the grovelling credulity of fanatics. Be
assured that intellectual doubts must be answered

intellectually, and scientific objections be met scientifically, but Agnostics must not be allowed to palm off mere guesses for scientific truths. They must be told that their hypothesis, which takes no account of man's moral nature, which is as much part of his being as his body is, is not strictly scientific; that man's cravings after immortality and yearnings after God require from them explanation and cannot be set aside with a contemptuous shrug and a plea of inevitable ignorance. They must be reminded that it is not the part of practical science to give up in despair the effort to solve difficult problems, even though they be the discovery of the pole, the squaring of the circle, or the finding of perpetual motion. The searching after God, "if haply we may find Him," will no more be given up by men because Agnostics say that *they* cannot find Him than the idea of transatlantic steam navigation was given up by mechanical engineers because a great mathematician proved its impossibility to his own satisfaction. In solving problems in the queen of sciences, Theology, we cannot resign ourselves at the bidding of Agnostics to the torpidity of blank despair.

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