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*THE IDENTITY OF REASON IN SCIENCE AND  
RELIGION.* By the REV. R. MITCHELL.

**R**EASON is not one thing in science and another thing in religion. It is not one thing in man, and a different thing in some other moral being. It is not one thing in speculation and another thing in practice. It is the same in all the spheres of its manifestation. The admission that reason conducts to propositions that are contradictory, has been fruitful of evil to correct thinking, and Kant did not escape from the difficulty by appealing to what is called the practical reason. For if reason lands us in contradictions in connection with speculation, there is no guarantee that the same result shall not follow in the sphere of practice. In like manner, Hamilton and Mansel remain unprotected by their appeal to faith; for faith is as really a function of the reason as is the intuition of cause and effect, of substance and attribute, of right and wrong, of the finite and infinite; and if reason may not be trusted in the one sphere, it will be difficult to show why it may be in the other.

2. Mansel is careful to remind us that Kant was "the advocate of the most unlimited rationalism in religion;" a rationalist being one "who, without denying the reality of a Divine revelation, yet maintains that the knowledge and acceptance of it is not an essential part of religion." But what is religion? It is known relations to God, with the duties and privileges involved. Now, reason in religion will demand that if this revelation can be shown to be true, it must be received. It is not an accurate representation of the place of reason in religion to say that it can originate religious truth for itself. It accepts what is originated, revealed, and enforced. Whatever has been done by error to dim the eye, and by evil to deaden the heart, has been taken into view in that system of religion which revelation presents. Ours is an abnormal state of things, and demands special aids to re-establish religious life. Reason then cannot oppose a revelation, for there is nothing unreasonable in it. Reason can only oppose what is false in the sphere of thought, impure in the sphere of feeling, and wrong in the sphere of action. But there are no such elements

in the idea of a revelation. Reason has in natural religion a great foundation in the ideas of God, responsibility, and a future. On that foundation it can stand and deal with matters of fact, of experience, of human and divine testimony, as it regards revelations of God to men. It will demand the healthiest exercise of all the faculties; not degrading itself however, by denying realities, simply because it cannot answer every question about manner or mode.

3. Science is systematic knowledge. And yet we are told by Büchner that "every science, and especially every philosophy, that seeks reality instead of appearance, truth instead of pretence, must necessarily be atheistic," and he adds that "in scientific matters the word God is only another expression for our ignorance."\* Now, is it reason that says all this? Distinguish between reason and reasoning, and the whole thing is plain. It is no fault of the eye that the medium through which it looks seems to distort the object. Even in its own name men of science may insult reason. And so too it is with philosophy. It is to be regretted that Hamilton should ever have said that the last and highest consecration of all true religion must be an altar, "To the unknown and unknowable God." It is also to be regretted that Mansel should have travelled through the sciences of numbers, of magnitude, and of morals, that he might smite reason in the face by declaring "that the infinite is not an object of human thought at all." If the weapon which is thus put into the hands of men be a legitimate one, it has an edge which no arguments about faith can ever break or blunt, but which must cut clean into the heart of the highest interests of men, even as we have seen it do, when used by such men as Büchner. If the finite be the only object of real or positive knowledge; if the "co-existence of the infinite and the finite in any manner whatever is inconceivable by reason;" if "moral reason is not entitled to implicit confidence," then religion is an impossibility, and science, instead of being an illumined temple, is only a dark cave in which blind men struggle for results which can never be realized. We cannot reasonably feel astonished that Büchner should say that "Science is a continual struggle with the notion of God," when in the teachings of Christian philosophers it is maintained that reason cannot know God. This is virtually to exclude reason from both science and religion.

4. Our object in this paper is to maintain that reason is common to science and religion, that in both there is revelation

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\* Büchner: *Man, Past, Present, and Future*, p. 329.

of reason to reason; and that the claims which men of science make to a monopoly of reason are unfounded. Behind the facts and phenomena which science gathers there is reason. It is so too in religion. For it is unaccountable that such a thing as religion should exist, unless on the ground that through all its manifestations reason is revealing itself to reason. Thus reason refuses to regard science and religion as antagonistic. They lie on the same line, and point to the same end. They testify to the existence of reason, without which there could be neither science nor religion. They are thus, as studies, peculiarly elevating in their influence. For there is nothing that we can think of greater than reason. The human reason, with its far-reaching intuitional glances, or its logical processes, is the greatest thing we know on the earth. The Divine reason revealing itself through science and religion is the highest point to which any study can raise a creature. Thus science and religion not only lie on the same line, but that line runs us up to heights where the sublimest realities await us. For amid the heights to which reason conducts us, God reveals Himself as Cause, as Creator, as Lawgiver, as Judge.

5. Since, then, they lie on the same line and lead to the same heights, each is, in its own way, essential to the great ends of human existence. They may not have an equal influence upon human interests, or an equal claim upon human thought; but it were an insult to reason to overlook the functions of either. Reason locks their hands together and bids them walk in light and love. Neither can say it has no need of the other. Science with its many eyes can see something true here, something beautiful there, something useful in another place, and what it finds, it hands over to religion, which, guided also by reason, takes what science gives, and weaves the whole into an offering of wonder and praise. For science is not complete by itself. It exists for something beyond. Science is thought. But thought is not an ultimate thing in our nature, was never meant to be, and cannot be. The nature of mind forbids it. It is related; for example, to feeling; but the highest feeling is that which responds in reverence to the reason that reveals itself in science. It is related also to action, but the highest action is that which rises in obedience to the reason thus revealing itself. Science thus gathers fuel for the fires of devotion that burn upon the altar of the dependent heart.

6. As a thing of thought, science says such and such a thing exists, exists in certain relations, serves certain ends; it speaks to us of body and space, of cause and effect, of means and ends. And religion, guided by reason, takes up all these things, and converts them into grateful song. The pulse of

religion is thus quickened by every law or new illustration of law ; by every fact and legitimate use which is made of the fact in science. While science discovers and classifies and names, religion looks on without fear ; for reason, which gives to science its meaning, gives to religion a shield.

7. There are of course many things to which religion is in one way or another related, which human reason does not attempt to fathom, which it does not require to comprehend at all, which, in fact, it could not, just because it is finite. But that can no more be an objection within the sphere of religion, than it would be within the sphere of science. For in science there are questions which reason does not solve, and the true scientist is not ashamed to say that it is so. In natural science he is made to feel what one of the acknowledged teachers in mental science feels when he says, "The truth is, we are face to face with that final inexplicability at which, Sir William Hamilton observes, we inevitably arrive when we reach ultimate facts." But this impotence of reason to explain all mysteries, can be no argument against its legitimate exercise within such spheres of things as are open to it.

8. In science the divine reason reveals itself as adapting means to ends, and it is within the function of the human reason to find this adaptation. The question of final cause draws deep, and we may not always be able to fathom it ; but unless science means to be laughed at, she must admit its existence, and admit also that she meets it on her every path. Dr. W. B. Carpenter says—"But from the time when I first began to think upon the subject, I had entertained a distrust of all arguments based on those individual instances of adaptation of means to ends, on which Paley and his school built up their proofs of 'design' ; the fallacy of such arguments lying in this, that whilst 'design' unquestionably implies a 'designer,' adaptation of means to ends, how perfect so ever, by no means necessarily proves any particular adaptation to have been intentional." But how, then, one may ask, does the adaptation of means to ends in any one case take place? If not "intentional," is it fortuitous? There is surely intention somewhere. And if the case is one which rises out of the sphere of finite intention, it must be one of intention on the part of the infinite mind. There must, we imagine, be thought and volition somewhere behind the movement of every atom of matter and of every action of what we call law. But thought must regulate volition, otherwise action will never put parts together in any way that will intelligently indicate adaptation of means to ends. If things do not go into position of their own accord, and jump to ends that contribute to the order and

beauty of the whole, it were wiser on the part of men to recognize the intention of some mind. To say that is by "law," is just to say that it is by intention. To say that it is by "physical cause," is to confound a link of the chain with the hand that holds it. If ethereal atoms come together and produce light, if ponderable atoms combine and form acids and salts and stones and plants and animals and fixed stars, and yet in any one case this may be without any "intention," then by whatever name you call the agent, there is a wisdom revealed in that end greater than the something that produced it. It is plain that reason cannot rest in that. If there is adaptation, it will seek an adapter.

9. But this adaptation of means to ends with which science is so familiar, and which reason apprehends, is met with also in religion. In its religious nature, and in the means adapted to its healthy and happy unfoldings, reason reveals itself everywhere. For the correction and expansion of thought, the divine means comes out in the words of Scripture: "Come let us reason together." And since life ultimately rests on thought, the man who reasons with God, and has his thoughts influenced by the thoughts of God, will certainly rise into such life as will harmonize his nature with the will and wish of God. It is a noble attitude which a man assumes when he reasons with the Almighty. In such an act, all that is base is subdued, all that is best, and truest, and noblest within him is brought into full and harmonious play. Reason reigns.

10. Thus, as in science reason is seen regulating inquiry, so do we see it in religion guiding all the higher energies of mind. Power, viewed psychologically, is a blind thing, and cannot find its own way in science any more than in religion; reason must guide it. But reason does not lose her sight when she passes from the phenomena of nature to the phenomena of consciousness and the facts of history. She does not slip from a rock into a quagmire when she passes from the law of gravitation to the law of love. But the law of love links all finite reasons to the supremely lovely. The supremely lovely has the highest claims on the love and admiration and worship of the rational creature. As in science reason is seen contributing to the pleasure of the heart by the beauties and harmonies which it discovers, so in religion reason is seen conferring the highest felicity by means of that boundless blessedness with which she brings the heart into felt contact. Philosophy never said a truer thing than when, through Plato, it said that "God is beauty and love itself." Now, it is impossible that the heart can be in contact with perceived beauty and love, and yet remain unaffected thereby. But religion ever keeps this love playing through

the reason upon the heart. Love is the sunbeam that woos the highest music from man's emotional nature, that melts the iceberg in the sea of frozen feeling, that turns all the passions of the soul into a power resembling the gulf-stream of ocean, that melts the snows of selfishness into rivers that flow as from Alpine heights to water and refresh the plains.

11. Now, since the circle which the magic wand of science describes cannot inclose all the interests of man,<sup>6</sup> it might occur to scientists to ask if it be not the case that religion may have to do with some of them, and even with the highest of them. Moral law, for example, viewed as means to ends, is adapted to man's moral nature, just as physical law is adapted to his physical nature. But morals and religion are closely allied. When Büchner says that "the many religions can stand in no necessary connection with morals," he glances only at the surface of things. It is not true, as he would dogmatically assert, that "morals and religion have originally and in principle nothing to do with each other, and have probably been commingled only in the course of history, and for reasons of external expediency." The tendency to degrade religion by attempting to exalt morality is somewhat strong among a certain class of thinkers in these times. Religion is confounded with some particular form of thought, or act of worship, and the defect, or supposed defect, is seized as an argument for separating morality and religion. The fault is in the minds that confound religion with theology. It may not be a duty to accept a given form of theology, but it must always be a duty to be religious; and if it be a duty, it must be moral. Religion is voluntary obedience to God, and surely that is a moral thing. The axe of Büchner cannot thus cleave asunder what the infinite reason has made one, and what the finite reason can apprehend to be so. Well, regulative ideas are required in moral life, just as they are in scientific life, and reason is seen as the source of those ideas. Reclaiming truth, as required by fallen moral beings, demands reason, just as any new discovery in science needs it for scientific purposes. Reason apprehends and gives forth the law that should regulate the moral volitions of men, just as it guides the scientist as he works in the laboratory or elsewhere. While, then, an exclusive attention to science may have a tendency to overlook many facts and phenomena which concern men, reason will not so allow herself to be blinded. There is, for example, no deeper fact in human consciousness than the fact of moral failure, and of moral weakness as the result of that failure, and of moral want as the effect of that weakness. Now reason takes notice of all this in the religious sphere, and will not allow any scientific bias to turn us aside from its importance. It com-



prehends as its legitimate province the cry which comes up from amid that want. It comprehends also the facts of history, amid which facts is the divine method of bringing relief to the weak and weary heart. It were an act of unreason to shut out these facts from our view. If the scientists collect facts, and deduce laws, and demand that we recognize them, we instantly obey. But we too have some facts to look at, and as firmly demand that reason be not outraged by their denial.

12. Nor must we, by anything that is said about the "impotence of reason," be turned aside from the facts and what is involved in them. Why should not reason be as trustworthy in morals and religion as in mathematics, in perception, in philosophy? There are certain subjective wants that are as philosophically met by certain objective verities,—as that fire is adapted to burn wood and ignite powder, or air to inflate the lungs, or sound to strike upon the tympanum of the ear. Thus reason, as we find it in religion, is the same whose radiations are met in science, in art, in philosophy, and in morals. Religious men have not always been wise in the way they have talked of reason in relation to religion, any more than scientific men have been wise in excluding faith from science. Without faith it is as impossible to give science the victory over ignorance and social inertia, as it is impossible to realize the enjoyment of religion without reason. Within the sphere of science, reason is regarded as competent to apprehend and lay bare nature's secrets, and men have faith in nature because reason can accomplish this task. But why should not reason within the sphere of religion apprehend the condition of obligation, the rightness of worship, and the power of divine love to rebind the human heart to God? If the reason has to do with the microscope and the retort, has it not also to do with the sensitiveness of conscience and the discipline of suffering? If it has some sphere of action in the science of evolution, or correlation of forces, has it no sphere of action amid the yearnings of heart or the intuitions of the moral nature? If it can say, "I have found a new fact in zoology," must it not be allowed to say, "I recognize an old fact in psychology"? If it moves with steps of light over the plains of matter, must it be hindered from showing itself in any way amid the affairs of conscience and immortality? If not, can it, we ask, rightly interpret questions of ethics and psychology, and yet stop short of religion? Impossible. To deny religion is to deny reason, and to deny reason is to deny God. Thus it is that what so often goes by the name of doubt leads to dogmatism.

13. The attempt which is made to bar thought in the direction of religion, does not, as we think, do honour to the

scientific mind. It presents that mind, as we sometimes meet it, as one-sided, illogical, raising a false issue, and seeking its end by false analogies. Its claim to a monopoly of reason is a loud one. And hence it can say with a boldness which is at the antipodes of a noble courage, "Orthodoxy is the Bourbon of the world of thought, and that extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules." (Huxley.) This, to say the least of it, is loud enough. Another writer (Büchner) rather more loud than the former, and who indeed takes the former to task for lack of courage, in not carrying his scientific findings to their logical results, says, "Science has destroyed for ever the distinction between God and the universe." Thus it has destroyed the distinction between reason and the universe. What, then, has science left us? Something less than ourselves. And yet, somehow or other, that universe that knows no God, has formed the conception of God and given it to us; has formed the conception of something greater than itself, and imbedded that conception deep in our nature, so that reason refuses to pause at that universe as its resting-place, while it has the thought of a centre grander and more glorious. Even we, it would appear, have received what the universe did not possess, and to which there is no response. Dumb, deaf, blind mother, if we can call the universe by that name, why did she give us a voice she cannot hear, and great wants she cannot see, and a weakness she cannot relieve, and a heart with yearnings to which she has no response? We have many complaints but no one to complain to. She that formed the ear cannot hear. If science has thus robbed us of the personal God, science should be prosecuted as the greatest thief that ever vexed the human heart. "The hinge-point of the controversy between naturalism and belief in a God," says the same writer, "is the question whether reason is before nature or in it." There is no doubt at all about the answer which he would give. This something that he calls reason is not in his thought associated with a personal God. And yet what can it be? We shall have occasion, a little further on, to see how he gets a human reason evolved. But we have quoted these words because of the admission that reason is met with in nature. When prosecuting science we are face to face with reason. In searching among the phenomena of the universe, in seeking to interpret their meaning, in trying to get at the law or idea or thought that is behind them, science is face to face with reason. Reason is looking out from amid these phenomena, revealing itself to some eye that can see it; thought is speaking to thought. Reason is thus something

greater than the natural cosmos, something which is served by it, and ruling over it. But reason, if the word has any meaning at all, must either be intuitional or ratiocinative; it is something that is gazing at truth, or is distinguishing one truth from another. There is an intelligence, something that knows and that is making itself known. However the controversy may swing, this is a point which the physicist must not overlook. Possibly he may be able, by a little reflection, to find his way to the conclusion of another, who says, "Where reason is there is conscience, where conscience is there is reason." If this conclusion, which is simple enough, be reached, there will be little difficulty in rising to the thought that the reason that is found in nature was also before nature. We are not in the habit of thinking of the conscience of nature. Often strained as language is, it has not been so far abused. But if we must think of reason, we must also think of conscience, and so of reason and conscience before nature.

14. The question of the existence of human reason is easily disposed of by the same writer. "As it regards the human *reason*, which," says he, "is generally considered an insurmountable barrier between man and animals, it is, according to Schaffhausen, only "the result of a finer and more complete organization, as the human body can only be regarded as the finest and most perfect expression of animal organization, it is not a gift of heaven bestowed on all men, nations, and times, but a result of universal education." This reason is, "that higher qualification which proceeds from the proportionate development and completion of all our souls' faculties to which the human family has been gradually matured, and which will conduct it to even greater intelligence." There is plenty of assertion here, but little of either science or philosophy. Still, since there is such a thing as reason, however evolved, its voice must be listened to and its wants met. It will demand authority for the statement that it is the "result of universal education." If the reply be "science," it will again demand how that can be, since through science reason has been face to face with reason in nature through all time. Besides, education supposes something educated. Education does not confer mental faculties on man, it simply develops what exists. It does not create. Education does not confer the religious faculty on man, it simply unfolds and directs it. If in science it can be said that the ray of light neither forms the eye nor the object on which it rests, may it not be said in reason and religion, that the truth received in education neither forms the religious faculty nor the object to which it rises? Is there not in the one utterance as high an exercise of reason as in the

other? If we can say that every house is built by some man, may we not also say that the heart has had a heart-maker, and that he who could make it must understand what feeling is, what religious feeling is, what religious aspiration is, what all the workings of reason are, and have in himself the power of responding to the play of all those higher energies which he has given?

Mr. Spencer will tell us that "the universality of religious ideas, their independent evolution among different primitive races and their great vitality, unite in showing that their source must be deep-seated instead of superficial." But what is thus historically true, is true also from a philosophical point of view. This religious nature is deep-seated, too deep-seated to be disturbed by any erratic utterance of science. Science might as well think of destroying reason as religion. But if science could destroy reason, it would be guilty of suicide, it would destroy itself. Mr. Spencer of course maintains that the religious susceptibility in man "arose by a process of evolution and not from an act of special creation," which is just to say that man arose by a process of evolution and not from an act of special creation, all of which is taking matters for granted which certainly have not yet been proved. For surely the religious susceptibility is as really an original element of man's being as any other that may be pointed out. The desire to know, the love of the beautiful, the felt obligations to the idea of the right, are not more prominent in his nature than the religious tendency. To say that dreams may have given rise to the notion of spirits, and that the idea of one or more gods may have sprung from these creations of a dream, is, to say the least of it, not unlike a condition of dreaming while men are professing to think. Mr. Holyoake's fanciful thought has about as much truth in it, when he asserts that in the "distorted reflection of man's image on the wall as it were of the universe, arose the idea of gods."

15. The claim to a monopoly of reason on the part of science is strongly put by Büchner when he says, "Mankind is perpetually being thrown to and fro between science and religion, but it advances more intellectually, morally, and physically in proportion as it turns away from religion to science." This is what is called "advanced thought," too far advanced, we imagine, in the mean time for not a few who are moving in the same direction. We call in question the alleged advancement, but we have quoted the words as an illustration of the way in which men of science have unnecessarily stirred the hostility of men to whom religion is dear, and claimed for science a monopoly of reason. If the author could have paused just to remind

himself that what he means by science is just the deductions of men from what they think they have seen in nature, he would not have represented mankind as perpetually tossed to and fro between science and religion. For it has yet to be proved that between the correct interpretation of the thoughts revealed in nature and the thoughts revealed in religion, there is any conflict. It is at least neither nature nor religion that is to blame for the battledore-and-shuttlecock play which the author sketches, and he, as a man of science, must bear his own share of the blame attached to such an unpleasant and unprofitable state of things.

16. This claim to a monopoly of reason on the side of science is often based on a professed certainty in result which has not yet been made good. Even within the circle whose unfavourable utterances towards religion have been the strongest, there are divergences in matters of science which make one question whether any certainty is ever to be reached. Theories and systems displace and demolish one another, as it has been said, "like dolls in a puppet-show." Of course, reason will give us certainty in science, but we must make sure that it is reason, and not simply reasoning that we have found. The divine thought lodged in nature is one thing, but the reasonings of men about that thought may be another thing altogether. Many illustrations of false reasoning may be found in connection with both science and religion, and nothing could be more unreal than some things which are declared as certainties; but that fact cannot militate against either the one or the other. No aberrations of reasoning in religion could be more glaring than some of the freaks we meet in connection with science. When, in connection with mental science, John Stuart Mill tells us that there may be worlds in which two and two are not four, we feel that reason is outraged, and that on such a principle there could be no consistency of thought on any question. But it is not reason that makes that assertion, any more than reason gives the flagrant and false findings within the sphere of religion to which the sceptical mind objects. When, again, Mr. Mill declares that "human volitions in particular may come into existence uncaused," we get another of those wild things which anything ever said in connection with religion has never yet surpassed. But surely reason is not responsible for these things. Methods of reasoning may be defective, the logical process may land men in absurdity, but reason rejects the imputation of blame as if she were at fault. And hence science has nothing to present as a result more positive and sure than what reason gives us in religion.

17. But this claim to a monopoly of reason on the side of

science is urged by a logic that is false. "The reason of man," says Mr. Lewes, "is incompetent to know God, because reason is finite, and the finite cannot embrace the infinite." This is the way reason is excluded from religion and relegated to science as its only sphere. For surely the idea of God is the foundation of all religion. But if God cannot be known, it is impossible for man to sustain any intelligent relations to Him. A God who cannot be known must be to man as if he were not. But if he is to be known, it must be by reason in some of its functions. Simply to say that the finite cannot "embrace" the infinite, and cannot therefore know God, is simply to bandage the eyes and then maintain that there is no light in the room. For, to know God, it is not necessary to "embrace" the infinite; that is, it is not necessary to be equal with God. The mind may not inclose the infinite, and yet it may with perfect ease lay hold on it; may not comprehend it, while it may easily enough apprehend it. Just as the physicist apprehends science while he does not comprehend it, feeling that while he has come to the shore a measureless sea still stretches before him, he may indeed know that science has its limits, and that, therefore, it may be comprehended; but even that thought will shut him up to the conclusion that there is something behind science sustaining that finite thing which is the sphere of science. Barrow asks, "Is the ocean less visible because, standing upon the shore, we cannot discover the utmost bounds?" The same thought had been given by Descartes. Cudworth has said "We may approach near to a mountain, and touch it with our hands, though we cannot encompass it all round and enclasp it within our arms." Mansel's use of the word *indefinite* is a defective rejoinder, and leaves the question where it was. For who can think of the finite, as finite, without thinking of the infinite? or the contingent as contingent, and not think of the necessary? Or the temporal, as temporal, and not think of the eternal? There is much meaningless writing about not knowing God because we cannot embrace the infinite. For, what is there even in finite science of which a man may say he knows it perfectly? Mr. Lewes has written much about philosophy, but will he profess to know it so as to "embrace" it? No doubt his thought has gone a good way round the mountain; he knows a little more now than when he represented the formula of causation as "*every existence must have a cause*;" but has he embraced the mountain? If then we can know nothing about any one person or thing till we have comprehended the whole, there is no knowledge on the earth, and, therefore, physicists and philosophers might be a little more humble, and a little less dogmatic. If the

attempt to know God is to "attempt the solution of an insoluble problem," simply because the finite mind cannot know everything about him, no less so is it with regard to science, and, indeed, every other thing the mind can think of. For does not reason in the sphere of science reach ultimates that baffle it? It has gathered together under its eye certain phenomena; it has pointed out some of their relations, but that which is beyond, which the microscope cannot detect, which the magnet cannot attract, which all the fine instruments of science cannot touch or unveil, is the mystery of all, and in the presence of which science, as such, is dumb. As another illustration of defective logic, take the words of Professor Tyndall:—"Trees grow, and so do men, and horses; and here we have new power incessantly introduced upon the earth. But its source, as I have already stated, is the sun; for he it is who separates the carbon from the oxygen of the carbonic acid, and thus enables them to recombine." But it occurs to one to ask him what the sun could do in such a case if there were no vitality, and no organization; let these be given, and the sun may do wonders; but in their absence, what can he do? Now, it is not reason that is at fault here, but reasoning. It is the logic that is to blame. If, then, religion leads men to take in the whole facts, is it not a much more rational thing than a science that either by design or obliviousness excludes an essential part?

18. This claim to a monopoly of reason on the side of science is made by the false issue which is raised. "If religion and science are to be reconciled, the basis of reconciliation must be the deepest, widest, and most certain of all facts, that the power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable;" so Mr. Spencer says. But is not this a fearful gulf over which science and religion are called upon to shake hands? Why assert that science and religion require to be reconciled? When, amid the harmonies of the universe did they ever quarrel or create a discord? Scientific men and religious men have quarrelled, and there is need now, as on many former occasions, for their being reconciled. But to speak of science as one sphere of truth, and religion as another, requiring to be reconciled, is to trifle. As the child with a ringing sound in his ear may fancy some bell is ringing, so certain men interpret the discordant sounds of their own thinkings as if they were the clashing of realities without.

19. And then, why assume that the "power which the universe manifests" is "utterly inscrutable"? If *utterly* inscrutable, why does Mr. Spencer say that the universe "manifests" it? If "inscrutable," what can he or any other

man know about it, so as to be able to speak about it so freely? He knows apparently that it is, for the universe "manifests" it to us; that is something scrutinized. A thing that is manifested to us is not "utterly" inscrutable. Because he cannot see it with the eye, and touch it with the hand, must he maintain that it is "utterly" inscrutable? He knows that it is the cause, for example, of the motion he meets in natural science. Dynamic science could have no meaning for him but for this fact. Now, unless motion, wherever we find it, be a random, haphazard thing, that power that moves, must have some design in so moving, and some mode of acting so as to reach the design. To escape, or try to escape, from this conclusion, is to falsify reason and deny the truth of science. The "power" is thus not "utterly" inscrutable. All this reason tells us in connection with science.

20. Then, why assume that, if religion and science do require to be reconciled, the basis of that reconciliation must be ignorance—a something inscrutable? Must science and religion agree to put out their eyes, that they may shake hands and not quarrel any more? If the most certain of all facts be that we must remain ignorant of God—or the power which the universe manifests to us, does it matter much whether we have any science? Or can we have any religion? Surely to shake hands over a gulf like that can be no desirable friendship. We refuse the issue thus raised. Why should science, instead of pressing on to the gates of light, strike its brow against so blank a wall? May there not be a knowable Being whose mind and will and heart, revealed in science and in religion, may form the basis of a reconciliation for all our imperfect thinkings? Reason in science and in religion would say there must be such a One, and that He can be known.

21. This claim to a monopoly of reason on the side of science is supported sometimes by a species of *claptrap*, as Mr. Pratt has truthfully named it, which one would scarcely expect to find among scientific men. Let a single illustration suffice. When Mr. Justice Grove was president of the British Association, he asked how the audience could conceive a full-grown elephant suddenly appearing upon the earth, and whence it could have come; "could it have dropped from heaven?" Now, if his audience had been drowsy, and he had wanted to tickle them into attention, such language might have been allowed to pass; but if he meant it to be an argument against the Bible account of the origin of such animals, he was guilty of as mean a trick of claptrap as it is possible to perpetrate. For what has the idea of bulk to do with the question of the origin of life and organization? Size is relative. What might seem big to



Mr. Justice Grove might be a small enough thing to the eye of some other being. The mere monad from which such wonders are made to spring, is surely as great a mystery as the large animal. If this is reason, intuitional or logical, surely religion has no cause to blush for any high claim she makes. But it should be understood that science cannot be advanced by such means. Reason may be insulted, may be opposed, may be disobeyed, but it cannot be degraded, and in the long run triumphs over every mean trick in logic or oratory.

22. This claim to a monopoly of reason on the side of science is made through *assumed superior knowledge of scientific methods*. "No one," says Mr. Knight, "even slightly acquainted with scientific methods and results can for a moment brook the idea of any interference with the laws of external nature produced by human prayer." This is not the utterance of a man of science, but it expresses one of the marked tendencies of a considerable portion of the scientific mind. Like many utterances, however, that are immature and one-sided, it fails to grasp the whole subject. It is not, for example, "human prayer" that "produces" the "interference with the laws of external nature." Human prayer does not act on the winds, on the seas, or on the seasons. Human prayer addresses a Being all-powerful, all-wise, all-good, whose will is supreme in the sphere to which human prayer points. "Scientific methods" must recognize that mighty will and wise thought, and, therefore, cannot reasonably object to the action of that will, if wisdom should see it meet. "Scientific methods," again, must not deny *facts*, historic facts. "Scientific methods" have too many sins to confess in this direction, even within their own sphere, to be allowed to speak with such dogmatic tones. Among those historic facts are to be found startling illustrations of the way in which, in answer to human prayer, there has been divine interference.

23. This assumed superiority of grasp finds in "*Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism*," another illustration. "If you come to talk of reason," the interlocutor is made to say, "the most unreasonable belief of all is that the world we see around us is the work of a personal and living God." But is it not more unreasonable to maintain that something that was not living gave life, and that nature, that is not personal, made a being that is—man, for example? If the author did not mean to encourage such reasoning, he was morally bound to offer some reply.

24. This claim to a monopoly of reason on the side of science is frequently recommended by analogies that are misleading. It is said by Mr. Holyoake that "nature refers us to

science for help, and to humanity for sympathy, love to the lovely is our only homage, study our only praise, quiet submission to the inevitable our duty, and work is our only worship." Now, in this rather laboured passage, there are some misleading thoughts which should not be allowed to pass. "Nature" is spoken of as a very intelligent person to whom we are supposed to have applied, and who has thought enough, and authority enough to refer us to science for help, &c. "Duty," again, is spoken of as something that concerns us, while the whole line of thought shows that we are looked upon as belonging to a system in which it is impossible to find a basis for duty. For, if there be no God, how can there be any truth, any rectitude, any duty? If there be no moral agency, it is only trifling with us to talk of submission being a duty.

25. But Mr. Bain will also supply us with an illustration. "I am not able," he says, "to concede the existence of an inscrutable entity in the depths of our being, to which the name 'I' is to be distinctively applied, and not consisting of any bodily organization, or any one mental phenomenon that can be specified. We might as well talk of a *mineral* as different from the sum of all its assignable properties." The materialism of such teaching is evident. But where is the fitness of the analogy? If you take away the assignable properties of the body, do you destroy self-hood? Does the ego disappear when the body passes through the changes to which physiology points, or when the body is laid in the grave? Whatever the "entity" may be, it is that which Mr. Bain refers to when he says "I." "If consciousness be aught of all it seems to be," our philosopher has dropped "the style of men" when he seeks his analogy for mind in a mineral. Reason has a right to complain that what passes for science does not give it justice.

26. Mr. Huxley will give us another illustration. The question is that of natural selection, and the illustration is as follows:—"When the wind heaps up sand-dunes, it sifts and unconsciously selects from the gravel on the beach grains of sand of equal size." But why represent the wind as selecting? Has the wind a choice in the matter? The absurdity is not avoided by looking upon the selection as "unconsciously" made. If fire is thrown into a heap of gold and silver and iron and brass, with a large quantity of gunpowder in which they are imbedded, the fire will ignite the gunpowder; but to talk of the fire as if it were an intelligent agent, and knew the main chance of the moment, and the best way to succeed, would simply be trifling with the question at issue. If such

analogies were used as arguments in connection with religion, reason would not be slow to object.

27. He is not more happy in his effort when he is dealing with ratiocination. "Now ratiocination," he says, "is resolvable into predication, and predication consists in marking in some way the existence, the co-existence, the succession, the likeness and unlikeness of things or their ideas. Whatever does this reasons; and if a machine produces the effects of reason, I see no more grounds for denying to it the reasoning power because it is unconscious, than I see for refusing to Mr. Babbage's engine the title of a calculating machine on the same grounds." And so the greyhound and the gamekeeper essentially resemble each other, and a calculating machine is equal to both. One need not wonder at the tendency of all such teaching to exclude religion; for all moral agency, accountability, and possibility of spiritual experience is excluded. Mental and moral life is simply a bit of clockwork. Indeed, this is the very kind of life he longs for, notwithstanding the protest which the mental instincts have raised. He has expressed the wish that some power would always make him think what is true, and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock, and wound up every morning before he got out of bed; and he says if such a power were to make the offer, "I should instantly close with the offer." It is difficult to see what he can mean by the "true" and the "right" in such a state of things. The bee and the beaver do not falsify the true, nor violate the right. Nor does the monkey. How comes it that man does it? And what kind of existence would that be in which the power of doing so is not possessed? A mechanical morality would be a peculiar thing, giving one no trouble, taking away all responsibility, and making a man simply a writing or lecturing clock. And yet if the doctrine of materialism be true, he has his wish; for, logically, one thing will be as true and right as another, and the great power that winds him up, does so without any reason at all for so doing. Science has surely glories enough of her own to arrest attention and maintain her claims upon our wonder and respect, without seeking to array herself in glories that are false, or assuming attitudes of hostility to truths that are more important than her own. When, however, she claims a monopoly of reason, she is guilty of such a false attitude, and ambitious of such a false glory.

28. But reason has some place in the question of *immortality* as in that of God and the moral responsibility of the soul. Büchner, who is consistent enough to carry his principles to their logical conclusions, says, "the more we free ourselves

from all delusive imaginations of a world above us and outside of us, or of a so-called *future*, the more do we find ourselves naturally directed with all our forces and endeavours to the *present*, or to the world in which we are living, and feel the necessity of arranging this world and our life as beautifully and advantageously as possible both for the individual and for the whole." It is of course right and safe to shield ourselves against all "delusive imaginations." But it is simply an assumption to call the "so-called Future" a delusive imagination; and reason will say that in dealing with the question of immortality, man is certainly as rational as when he is speculating on the times when people shall know science so as to observe law, and when the bold predictions of the scientist shall be reached. To ignore belief in immortality because strict scientific evidence cannot be given, can no more be in harmony with reason than to ignore the predicted eclipse because moral evidence could not be produced. To confine our "forces and endeavours" to the present is simply an impossibility. Both past and future demand thought. The circles of practical life round which human energies run are comprehended by a wider circle, from every point of which aspiration rises and touches spiritual realities. The less cannot exclude the greater. The near cannot annihilate the remote. There are wants felt which politics and commerce and philosophy and science cannot meet. The science that "reveals no whence and hints no whither," cannot satisfy reason. Religion does both. And to say that by freeing ourselves of the idea of the future we can make life more beautiful and prosperous, is simply gratuitous assumption. Will history, will observation, will experience allow us to say that men who have excluded the future from their thoughts have ever done much to beautify life? To raise society, thought must find a fulcrum in the idea of the future. Even the men who profess to live for the present, appeal from the judgment of to-day to that of to-morrow. For strength and calmness they need a future of some sort. Hence, even Büchner seeks it after his own fashion. He says, "when we die we do not lose ourselves, but only our personal consciousness, or the casual form which our being, in itself eternal and imperishable, had assumed for a short time; we live on in nature, in our race, in our children, in our descendants, in our deeds, in our thoughts,—in short, in the entire material and physical constitution which during our short personal existence we have furnished to the substances of mankind and of nature in general." But if personal consciousness is lost, why say "we live on"? Why not say that others shall know that we once

existed, but that we do not exist any longer? Would it not be more reasonable to abandon all idea of a future than toil and sweat to forge upon the anvil of the brain such a theory as that? We may be sure that it is not on such a theory that men have stood who have uttered the words and performed the deeds that have beautified humanity and made it prosperous. The circle of civilization will neither be wide nor bright that moves from a centre like that. But it shows how instinctively the mind demands a future.

29. When J. S. Mill speaks of "memories and expectations," he gives us the result of a severe controversy, in which the keenest analyses have not been able to destroy the truth. But what is it that to-day has the "memories," and that hopes to realize to-morrow the "expectations"? It is a "thread of consciousness." The words provoke a smile, but let them pass. What concerns us here is the fact that something has "memories and expectations." Mr. Mill may call that something "the permanent possibility of feeling," or "the final inexplicability," or a "thread of consciousness." We shall not cast about for a name, though the old, in this case, is better than the new. It is enough that there is a conscious something that knows itself as having "memories and expectations." It points to an existence that is not to be the destruction of personal consciousness.

30. Now, is not moral failure one of the most prominent and repulsive of those "memories"? Consciousness comprehends nothing more true than the fact that evil has been done, and that moral judgment has been pronounced. What, then, are the expectations that burst from the black breasts of these "memories"? Unless reason, through religion, has something to say to man on the matter, mental and moral science have led us to the margin of a cruel grave, in which, if not existence, at least the joy of existence, must be buried for ever. But it is just here that religion lights its lamp, that religion flings its arch of light across the gulf philosophy and science cannot span. It is here we see the worth of that life and immortality brought to light through the Gospel. It is here we see how human expectations may be gilded as with glory, for it is here we find religion becoming remedial and bringing divine relief to man. The divine reason provides what the human reason approves and accepts.

31. But Mr. Maudsley will object that "consciousness can never be a valid witness," even in the matter, we suppose, of evil done, or of memories and expectations. Well, but what can? Where can we find any valid testimony if we refuse that of consciousness? Has Mr. Maudsley no "memories," no "ex-

pectations"? If I tell him that he has neither, will he not assert that he has both? Will he then accuse that thread of consciousness of telling lies? If consciousness can never be a valid witness, how does he know it? Simply by appealing to it, we presume. That is, he believes it tells the truth that it never tells the truth. If consciousness can never be a valid witness, how does he know that he found fault with Mr. Mill for favouring the psychological method? How does he know that he is the Dr. Maudsley that wrote on the "physiology and pathology of the mind"? How, in short, does he know anything, if consciousness be not a valid witness? Mr. Mill has said that "whatever is known to us by consciousness is known beyond possibility of doubt." These "memories and expectations" are known to us by consciousness, and surely science is doing a wrong thing when it seeks to seduce reason into the denial of that reality.

32. The spiritual cravings of which men are conscious, are dealt with in a very superficial way by Dr. Huxley. "Natural knowledge," says he, "seeking to supply natural wants, has found the ideas which can alone still spiritual cravings, and in desiring to ascertain the laws of comfort has been driven to discover that of conduct, and to lay the foundations of a new morality." But what are those "spiritual cravings" to which Dr. Huxley's theories would point? Is art, or song, or scenery, or science the object of those cravings? Is it a craving simply for thought from which all angles are gone, and which is rounded into consistency with all other thoughts that are entertained? Is it a craving for intercourse and sympathy with a fellow-creature, who may die any day? This is surely but to touch the surface of the spiritual cravings of which man is conscious. How high in character is a man likely to rise whose cravings are towards a standard set on the foundations of this "new morality"? Are the "expectations" strung upon the "thread of consciousness" confined to the temporary fruits of prudence, of culture, and of what passes for good breeding? Ellicott may well say, "Science may teach us much; but when we gaze far into the *past*, or far into the *future*, we must always observe that it signally fails us; we can find that between the farthest point to which its deductions may help to lead us, and the beginning or the end, there is a chasm that cannot be bridged over." ("Destiny of the Creature.")

33. To tell us, as Mr. Spencer does, "that slowly but surely evolution brings about an increasing amount of happiness, all evils being incidental," is to say little that can meet our spiritual cravings. It is just Büchner's immortality in another

form. We are to content ourselves with the thought that in the "struggle for existence" the weak must go to the wall, and one day there will be a great amount of happiness on the earth. But reason which speaks to us of right and wrong, of reward and punishment, of probation and destiny, has something else and something nobler to say to us about the results of earthly struggle. The martyr's widow bending over the mangled body from which a brave true soul has gone, sees farther into the affairs of the universe than some of our philosophers and men of science can see. Reason does not insult the bereaved mother by simply reminding her that a dead body suffers no pain. Her living, loving heart suffers pain, and it is to her cravings reason through religion seeks to minister. Emerson only caricatures this craving when, in his "Compensation," he represents it as saying, "not being successful, we expect our revenge to-morrow." It is not revenge that reason seeks, but simply that the idea of the right shall never be outraged. The "new morality" only puts to the lips of dying men a cup of Tantalus's water, when it tells them that they may die with the conviction that the world will be wiser one day, and understand better about comfort and conduct. The "expectations" of the soul are not realized by any such treatment.

34. Beethoven styled Bach the "first parent of harmony." The expression may be permitted; but Bach was only reporting what he heard. There was a harmony to which his reason's ear was listening; a harmony which came upon him from the fountain head of all harmony. From the same source religion comes upon us as a song. At its heart there is harmony. Like the soft notes of the flute it steals in gentle tones upon reason's ear, and wakes it into sweet responsive sympathy with God. Like an all-pervading influence, the reason feels its presence and its power; and, understanding by the things that are made, the invisible things of God, exclaims: "Whither shall I go from thy presence?" As the "sounds of music creep in our ears," religion comes upon us as a soothing influence, detaining us in the divine presence, and holding all our nature open to the soft cadences of infinite truth and love. That truth and love may come upon us through a material world or an inspired book. And so, as we think of it, religion and science are alike the servants of reason. They exist for it, not it for them. And while it can make its voice heard, it will allow no separation, will listen to no internal quarrel, no shifting of obligation, and no neglect of respective duty. They are closely linked, and the connection must not be severed. Reason bids them both do their utmost to harmonize a discordant world. It works through both, speaks through both, and

by means of both reaches the high ends that are in harmony with itself. If they mutiny, it still retains its power; they may outrage it, but degrade it they never can. They are the theatres of its manifestation, and it will walk through them, ever revealing how great a thing it is. Hard things are said against it, as to what it can or cannot do; in its very name men abuse it: but nevertheless it shines on, the central glory of the created universe. As Culverwell has said, "to blaspheme reason is to reproach heaven itself, and to dishonour the God of reason."

The CHAIRMAN.—I think our best thanks are due to the Rev. R. Mitchell for this very important paper, and I do not think one has ever been read in this room with which I have more substantially agreed. I cannot see a single paragraph which I am prepared to dispute. The paper contains a vast amount of most important and thoughtful matter, such as I think is pre-eminently necessary at present, when so many atheistic works are in circulation, sapping the foundations, not only of Christianity, but of all religion. (Cheers.) It is now my duty to invite any one present who wishes to do so, to join in the discussion.

The Rev. J. H. TITCOMB.—If I criticise this paper at all, it will simply be in reference to one point where Mr. Mitchell seems to take up an antagonism to the position laid down by one of the writers against whom he is contending, viz., that consciousness can never be a valid witness. Now, in a certain sense this is so, as you will see in a moment when you consider how consciousness is capable of being deceived by the influence of appearances. So far as consciousness goes, it is not valid testimony. Consciousness without reason is no valid testimony; but, aided by the due exercise of reason, it is a valid testimony. The only weak point which I can note in the paper arises, in fact, from the forgetfulness of Mr. Mitchell to put in this distinction,—that while consciousness by itself is not always a valid witness, it may be a valid witness when it is aided by reason. But the paper is so valuable that it seems a shame to say anything in the way of criticism upon it. It draws a very proper distinction between reason and reasoning—a distinction which ought never to be forgotten. I take it that reason is a mysterious faculty of the mind from which reasoning springs, and reasoning is the exercise of that faculty which brings out and exhibits truth to our consciousness. The question, therefore, is, as touching the subject of this paper, whether, when reasoning is applied to religion as well as to science, reason herself has a proper sphere for exercise. I would ask, on what possible ground can that be disputed? It appears to me, sir, that there is only one ground on which we can exclude reason from religion when it is permitted to science, and that is, that there is a greater amount of incertitude in religion than there is in science. But, even taking that, and allowing it to be the case—which I do not at all allow,—still, any



amount of incertitude in a given subject forms no barrier to reason, and is no ground for reason herself being cast, as it were, from her own throne. On the contrary, the more incertitude there is in a subject the grander is the field for the exercise of reason, unless, indeed, you can show that the incertitude amounts to what may be called indeterminateness in the subject. If it amount to what I call indeterminateness, then no doubt reason utterly fails, but that is as true of science as of religion. No doubt there are many propositions in religion which unassisted reason utterly fails to explain and demonstrate, and we are not ashamed to own it; for instance, who can explain, however clear his conception may seem to be, that great doctrine of the Christian religion—the eternal generation of the Son of God? This of itself, though most important as a doctrine, is clearly what I have called indeterminate, and what others, perhaps, would prefer to term transcendental, so that reason cannot explain it. That one person can be begotten of another, and yet be equally eternal with the begetting person, is a proposition in respect of which reason fails, the moment you try to criticise, analyse, scrutinize, and pass judgment upon it. We may say the same of science. There are certain ultimate facts beyond which reason cannot penetrate, as, for example, the arrangement of molecular atoms. We can work out the laws which govern those arrangements in crystallization, in chemistry, and in other branches of science; but when you come to ask why, out of an acorn there should spring the oak, and from other seed the larch, the fir, the cabbage, or the turnip, you come to indeterminateness. So it is in religion, and therefore I say that there are limits, both in science and in religion, to the exercise of reason. Both are on common ground, and one has no right to attack the other as inferior in that respect. But when we get beyond to other questions, however great the incertitude, there is a sphere for reasoning, especially if the facts have antecedents and consequents. To say religion is not a mass of facts with antecedents and consequents is absurd: we should deny our whole convictions and consciousness. The whole of the text of the Apostles' Creed—the creed of the Church from which our Christianity is evolved—is nothing more nor less than a mass of facts—historical facts, which, if true, may be reasoned about. Anything in religion having these antecedents and consequents arising out of facts is surely fair ground for the exercise of the reasoning faculty. Take the existence of the Jews. They lived in the time of Christ. We know it as a fact that Pontius Pilate was a Roman governor in Palestine. We know it from Pliny, and Tacitus, and others, that the Jews existed there, that the Romans had conquered the country and colonized it, and that the facts of the Scriptures are more or less the facts they recognized and had to deal with. There are antecedents and consequents to these facts; and one antecedent in the Scriptures is the prophecy that the race should be scattered throughout the world among all nations, and suffer the most tremendous privations and persecutions. Whether the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, in which these curses are first found, was written by Moses, or by some unknown person in the days of Jeremiah, is

nothing to the point. In the time when Tacitus wrote the Jews were a nation occupying Palestine, and owning the Temple, centuries at least before the persecutions they then suffered. There is the fact that prophecy had stated they should suffer persecution and be scattered in all lands. That is a sample of many other illustrations which might be given; and I come back to the same point, that wherever we get hold of solid and substantial facts, which have other facts circling round about them, and wherever the powers of the mind are capable of fastening on points preceding and succeeding, there we get that which is identical, as a matter of reasoning power, with the facts which meet us in science—different in characteristics, but identical in substance. As I have already intimated, I heard Mr. Mitchell's paper with a great deal of pleasure, and think in what I have said I have not in the least invaded the positions of the paper, but have rather strengthened them. (Cheers.)

The Rev. J. SINCLAIR.—I cannot too strongly express my appreciation of the paper to which we have just listened, and cordially agree with the main position which it expounds and fortifies, namely, as I understand it, that reason is the same in all the spheres of its manifestation. What I rose to say is that there appears to me to be a little vagueness and inconsistency in the first part of the paper, which speaks of Hamilton's and Mansel's theory about faith, and takes an objection to that theory. Mr. Mitchell says (section 1) :—

“Faith is as really a function of the reason as is the intuition of cause and effect, of substance and attribute, of right and wrong, of the finite and infinite.”

Now Sir William Hamilton asserts, with respect, for example, to our faith in substance, that it is an ultimate belief; and calls it a regulative principle of belief which our nature affirms; distinguishing between that belief, and those which are the products of reason. Now Mr. Mitchell objects to that way of putting it, and maintains that these beliefs are the products of reason as much as any other. Well, I think that in substance there is no disagreement between them. It seems to me that the position of Sir William Hamilton and Mansel, so far as that is concerned, is incontrovertible—that our belief in these principles is incapable of being proved. We must accept them on the faith that our nature and the composition of our being is founded upon truth. If Mr. Mitchell calls that reason, then there is substantial agreement between him and Sir William Hamilton, but if he objects to his definition, and maintains that there is a distinction between what they mean by faith, and what he means by reason, I cannot for my part see it. I think that there is substantial agreement between them, and the only difference is that Hamilton and Mansel call faith, what he calls reason. There is just one other point. Mr. Mitchell says (section 2) :—

“It is not an accurate representation of the place of reason in religion to say that it can originate religious truth for itself. It accepts what is originated, revealed, and enforced.”

If the existence of a Supreme Being is part of religion—the foundation of it—I think that is scarcely a correct statement of the case. I take it that belief in the existence of a Supreme Being is one of our fundamental beliefs, the same as our belief in the existence of substance or matter. At least, if this truth is not originated by reason, it is difficult to conceive how otherwise it could be received. I do not know whether I make myself clear, but these observations are only offered in an endeavour to bring out the truth. As to what Mr. Titcomb said in reference to the testimony of consciousness, I think he missed the point of the argument on that question. I think we must admit that the testimony of consciousness is our ultimate authority, whether in respect of matters of religion or of science, and so Hamilton puts it. If we admit its testimony in one point, we must in all ; if we reject it in one point, we have no right to claim respect for its authority in any other. The illustration of the feats of a wizard, or the tricks of sleight of hand, does not at all refute or invalidate that position, because what consciousness testifies to in that case are simply phenomena, and there is no dispute there about the subjective. The only dispute is as to the objective, and the adequacy of the senses to discriminate between fact and appearance. Then reason comes in to effect that discrimination.

MR. TITCOMB.—I said that consciousness must have reason at the bottom of it. The paper speaks of consciousness without speaking of reason.

MR. SINCLAIR.—Yes, but the illustration adduced does not support the position of the insufficiency or imperfect authority of consciousness.

MR. TITCOMB.—I might perhaps mention the case of a ghost as a better illustration. A man sees a ghost, and is conscious that he sees it, but his reason must be superadded to it to convince him that what he has seen is an illusion.

THE REV. W. J. IRONS, D.D.—In offering my thanks to Mr. Mitchell for the beautiful essay which he has given us, I must take the opportunity to make, incidentally, some remarks on questions raised by Mr. Sinclair. If I understand the paper rightly, it makes a distinction between reason and reasoning, identical with the doctrine of Plato, who distinguishes between the *νόησις*, and the *διάνοια*. No doubt the *νόησις* has relation to the absolute—the absolutely true and right—the ground where we are able to communicate on common principles with our fellow-men ; but we do not say that besides the *νόησις* there is nothing whatever except the *διάνοια*, or the dialectical or logical faculty ;—far from it. I should, for instance, call the belief in substance an immediate inference in reason from the experiences of a man, but by no means a consciously logical process. We cannot, by any process of reasoning, prove the substance of the external world, nor, in fact, perhaps, the Being of God. It is a much more simple and direct process by which a conscious being, with the image of God stamped on him, finds his Maker, than by reasoning on a set of ascertained premises ; and so also it is not by any argument that we can prove an external world ; but it is that reason acts directly upon our con-

scious experience, and arrives, I will not say at a conclusion, but at unquestionable knowledge of that external world. I felt very grateful to Mr. Mitchell for adhering to that old distinction of philosophy which I feel sure has never yet been set aside,—I mean Plato's plain doctrine—and I am also thankful to him for his refutation, in some slight degree, so far as his limits allowed, of the doctrine of Dr. Mansel as to regulative truth. I cannot help thinking that that doctrine was most painful and mischievous. But the passages which Mr. Mitchell has selected from other writers, in order to comment upon, in this essay, are really touchstone passages. The great value of the paper is that it does select from one philosopher after another, and from one infidel after another, the particular points on which they have gone wrong; for if any one will master the points which Mr. Mitchell has selected, he will at once have a key to those several philosophies to which the essay stands opposed. There are one or two passages in the essay which I cannot exactly accept, but it is so useful and complete as a whole, that I will not be ungrateful enough to offer the smallest hostile criticism. (Cheers.)

The Rev. S. WAINWRIGHT, D.D.—Allow me to say, at starting, that I am second to no gentleman in this room in appreciation, or, rather, in admiration, of the paper with which we have just been favoured; but I am much too candid to attempt to conceal the fact that I was not so well satisfied with it, in its earlier portions, for I met several things there which I was inclined to question; perhaps, however, that arose from the fact that the writer of the paper was anxious to get on to other matter. When Mr. Mitchell got farther on, he had more room, and then he got the hornets in his mailed glove, and crushed some of them, and I was very glad to witness the operation. I think that has been done most effectively, and I concur with Dr. Irons in the opinion that the extent to which it has been done, constitutes, in no small degree, the special value of the paper; but, with all that, I should like to see some of those earlier passages, the accuracy of which I rather question, supplemented with, perhaps in some instances not more than a word, and in others possibly a clause, just to take off their edge. In reference to the observations of Mr. Titcomb, I think Mr. Mitchell is right in maintaining that consciousness is a valid witness, but then I am thoroughly with Mr. Titcomb too. Mr. Titcomb made a just and valuable remark when he said that he believed Mr. Mitchell's intention was to speak of rational animals—of human consciousness, and, if that word "human" had been put in, I do not suppose Mr. Titcomb would have taken the least exception to the remark. If any man can inform me fully as to what consciousness is, in irrational animals, I shall be prepared to admit or deny any affirmation he may make in respect thereof; but at present I do not know what the consciousness of an irrational animal may be, and therefore I cannot admit that the consciousness of an irrational animal is a valid testimony. Now let me mention another point which to me is hardly plain or consistent. Mr. Mitchell says (section 5), "Science is thought." I say "No." I am inclined to suppose that he has seen further

into it and gone further round the mountain than I have, and he may be quite right and I quite wrong, but at present I do not see it. You may depend upon it, that if I had the last word, I should have something to say in defence of my position as to the existence of a radical distinction between science and thought. There may be thought with a great lack of science. Then Mr. Mitchell says (section 13) :—

“And yet, somehow or other, that universe that knows no God, has formed the conception of God and given it to us; has formed the conception of something greater than itself, and imbedded that conception deep in our nature, so that reason refuses to pause at that universe as its resting-place, while it has the thought of a centre grander and more glorious.”

Now I hope not to be misunderstood. Let me say, that with the general scope and design of that 13th section I am thoroughly in accord: I am thoroughly opposed to the doctrine of Professor Huxley that is there quoted in order to be refuted. All I question is the form in which the sentence I have read is put. Separate it from the context, and Mr. Mitchell makes the affirmation that the universe has formed and given to us the conception of God. Now I do not think that affirmation, as it stands, was in Mr. Mitchell's mind. I cannot stand between his own interpretation of his own thoughts and himself, but I feel sure we are agreed on this point, and what I apprehend him to say is, that we have derived a certain conception of God from what we have perceived of the manifestations of mind in the universe. As it is, he has deified the universe itself. I have now done with the ungracious task of picking holes in a work which I like so much; and, when we turn to the obverse of the shield, we find that some of the things Mr. Mitchell has said in refutation of the authorities are really admirable. For instance, in section 16, he says:—

“In connection with mental science, John Stuart Mill tells us that there may be worlds in which two and two are not four.”

I refer to that in order to remind the meeting, and through the meeting to remind the mass of people who, whether they have science or not, have not enough thought when they repeat Mr. Mill's statements, that Mr. Mill has said something which I want them to judge and to weigh, so that they may give such credence as should be given to a man who says that a thing which is a contradiction in terms may be reasonable. Mr. Mill has said that the morality of the New Testament is capable of improvement. I would have that statement weighed by the credit attaching to that other statement. There is just one other point. Mr. Mitchell has spoken of Mr. Bain and the “Ego,” and has quoted Mr. Bain's remark (section 25) :—“I am not able to concede the existence of an inscrutable entity,” &c. I will not attack the writer on that subject—I take the things on which we are thoroughly in accord—but still hope I may say, for the sake of those present, that a most delightful paper was contributed some years ago to *Macmillan's Magazine*, by Miss Emily

Faithfull, on what she calls "Unconscious Cerebration." In that paper the authoress says, among other things:—"I am sitting at the piano; I am going to take part in a duet. A gentleman takes the seat beside me, and unconsciously I note the way in which he does it." She then goes on to describe, in her own characteristic way, how she has her attention fully occupied by the notes of the music—the crotchets, the minims, the demi-semi-quavers—the marks for piano and forte and pedal, and so on. She has all that before her, and never misses a note or inflection, but all the while she is remarking the movements of her companion, and catching snatches of the conversation of two people who are behind her. Her mind and fingers are fully employed by the music, and yet she is unconsciously noting all else that goes on, still it is upon the mere surface and a matter of unconscious cerebration; for what absorbs her is the faculty of delight in the music. Let me now say, with your toleration, that what concerns us especially is the outcome of this paper. Is it not simply that religion is a rational thing *per se*, and that the Christian religion, as contained in a revelation Divinely given, and as distinguished from all others, is emphatically a reasonable thing? The Christian religion especially claims that position, and the Christian service above all things claims to be a reasonable service. The Christian is always required to be able to give a reason for the hope that is in him: "you may of your own selves judge what is right." Reason itself asks us to accept the revelation which has been given to us, and in the profounder mysteries of that revelation, such, for instance, as the nature of God and of the Trinity, my belief is sustained by reason from analogy with the facts of the material world. I cannot take a pebble off the path without finding in it a Trinity—there is the force that keeps its parts together, the order in which those parts are arranged, and the law according to which that order operates; and when I see that trinity of force, order, and law in all things—in a pebble on the seashore, or in a drop of water—I cannot help being struck with the analogy that is thus presented to my mind. In the same way I see a trinity in myself—there is the material and visible element, the intellectual element, and the religious element—and since every man bears within himself that triad, and every pebble is stamped with the mint mark of the same currency, we should receive even that most mysterious doctrine of the Trinity with the feeling that reason is not lacking as the endorsement of the profoundest Revelation. (Cheers.)

Mr. C. R. MACCLYMONT.—I trust you will not think it unpardonable presumption on the part of a new member of this Institute to speak upon such a paper as that now before us. I will not say anything of the character of the paper: but perhaps I may be permitted to say a few words on the subject with which it deals, especially as I come fresh from a place where these questions are treated, not as mere abstract matters, or as matters for the display of ornamental rhetoric, but as questions of vital importance and interest. So far as we ourselves are concerned, I think that our presence here to-night is a testimony and proof that we have accepted these things

and have probably learnt to hold the truth as matter of practice in our daily lives before our reason enabled us to state its contradictions. But we must bear in mind the difficulties of those who oppose us—I speak not of those who attack the faith and boldly call themselves the leaders of infidelity, but of those who are anxious to find out what is right, but have not yet succeeded in their search. Now, Mr. Mitchell's paper opens with the bold statement that "reason is the same in science and religion." Perhaps he will forgive me for saying, that so far as I can understand his argument, it uses "reason" in one sense in one case, and in another sense in the other: it seems to mean *διάνοια* in the one case, and *νόησις* in the other. The methods of scientific truth are not the same as the methods of religious truth, nor are the objects set before the mind of the theologian the same as those which are set before the scientific student. Then Mr. Mitchell has contradicted his own statement when he says that it is the business of theology to apprehend, and of science to comprehend. While religion accepts facts, am I not right in saying that science does not merely accept them—to a certain extent it creates them? Is not each observation the application of a general rule which the scientific man evolved before he began to observe? When Professor Tyndall, or any other practised scientific student, examines a molecule, does he not see things which an untrained eye cannot see, and observe things which an untrained mind cannot find? To investigate the nature of prayer and its purpose; the proofs of religion, of miracles, and of inspiration, the place of historical criticism, and a host of other things connected with religious truth, demands a totally different attitude of the mind. I cannot explain the whole position, but trust that I am not misunderstood if I seem for a moment to take the sceptical side. I am myself a Calvinist, but I have lived amongst those who are not Calvinists, and who would not subscribe to many of the dogmas which are laid down by orthodox professors, and I know that their difficulties in reference to religious matters are very great. There are many men I know—good and honourable men—who, if they could be influenced wisely and religiously, might be turned to much good. Mr. Mitchell has referred to John Stuart Mill. Now, I believe that John Stuart Mill is a teacher who has done much for truth, and Dr. Irons seemed to me to show the distinction between the work of Mr. Mill and of the theologian proper. There is no question that the absolute want of enthusiasm which prevented John Stuart Mill from seeing higher truth, has given him greater accuracy in describing the methods of logical truth. In reading his "Autobiography" you are reminded of the fable of Plato. Some men lie bound with their eyes turned to the shadows. As it is impossible for them to turn to gaze at truth, they seem able to gaze more steadily and calmly at the shadows, and so make up in precision for what they lose in breadth. John Stuart Mill has done much and good work, and his work must be understood in relation to religion, before we can successfully grapple with the errors to which his school is attached. This is the more necessary on account of the peculiar state of the religious

and philosophical thought of the present day, when all sorts of mediæval questions are coming back upon us, and the old Radicals and Tories talk about their constitution as Bacon used to talk of the philosopher's stone. The question of *intelligo ut credam* or *credo ut intelligam* is really the question for the young men of the present day, and we should recognize the fact that the difficulties in the solution of that question stop the way to some of the highest and noblest truths. (Cheers.)

Dr. IRONS.—May I make an observation upon what Mr. MacClymont has said in reference to myself, when alluding to John Stuart Mill. I should be most anxious to obviate the thought in his mind that I had any sympathy with the philosophy of Mr. Mill. I feel that Mr. Mill's peculiar difficulty was that which he has himself plainly admitted,—that he had not, and knew not, that high reason which was Plato's *νόησις*; and I think the great lack of *νόησις* in Mr. Mill's structure is sufficient to account for his abnormal logic. I feel, of course, that his system of logic is full of interesting and suggestive matter, but as a system it is most flagrantly imperfect, and must be so, because he seems not to recognize that very faculty which must know the first premise of any argument. He finds his first premise in any syllogism haphazard. He has no discernment—no knowledge. He begins with a plunge, and when he has made it, no doubt, he strikes out with considerable intellectual muscularity; but how he finds himself in the stream at all I cannot imagine. As to what was said by Mr. MacClymont, almost the same course of thought would seem to my mind to meet the difficulty which he has suggested. A reasoning man must grapple with the true, the reasonable, and the right, and that is external to himself; otherwise every man is to himself a rule and standard of all thought and truth, internally,—which is absurd. He expects that which is reasonable in him to be recognized by the reasonable beings around him: consequently he directs his mind to some supreme rule above him; which is what Plato refers to. It is a direct motion of the mind instinctively towards the truth, which is much higher than reasoning; and that is Plato's *νόησις*.

Dr. WAINWRIGHT.—Will you allow me also to add a word. I have always made a stand, as a matter of principle, against the religionism of some of the speeches that I have had the good fortune to listen to here, and I have always taken the side of the scientists against the religionists as such. The very fact that I have done so gives me justification in saying that I should be sorry to go away to-night thinking that no voice of dissent had been raised against what I have understood to be a defence of John Stuart Mill in this room. Mr. MacClymont has spoken of the importance of not misrepresenting our opponents. I speak in the recollection of many present when I say that I have certainly, in one or two instances, rendered myself conspicuous by undertaking to put some right in that respect. I have the strongest sympathy with Mr. MacClymont's view as to the necessity of apprehending rightly what our opponents say, and my controversy is limited to the sentence I have quoted. I say it is thoroughly unscientific, and utterly unphilosophical to affirm, as John Stuart Mill has done,



that the morality of the New Testament is capable of improvement, and therefore I have a right to question the full power of perception of what is beautiful and good in the mind of a man who, with all his remarkable intellectual gifts, has yet been so purblind to the highest and noblest truths. (Cheers.)

A MEMBER having made some remarks to the effect that if he understood the intent of the paper aright, it was to show that reason directed us to religion, and proved to man that there was a God; if so, he dissented from it.

The CHAIRMAN.—I confess I feel a very strong sympathy for the paper before us, and I think my friend on my left, in his zeal against human reason, very much resembles the man who was so absorbed in the work of sawing off the branch of a tree that he forgot he was sitting upon that very branch, and, of course, when it was severed, he fell. If human reason is untrustworthy, we have nothing to trust. We have no other light whatever to guide us. Dr. Wainwright threw out one remark which he did not carry to any conclusion, but on which I should like to hear Mr. Mitchell's opinion—I mean as to unconscious cerebration. No doubt in our own minds we do many acts unconsciously. When I am writing I often put a thing away from me, as it were, altogether, and yet I afterwards find that my mind has been unconsciously acting upon it. That fact is noticed by pantheists as showing that there may be an unconscious intellect in nature; but my answer to that is: "because such a thing is an attribute of the conscious mind, is it therefore an attribute of this table?" (Laughter.) There is that difficulty however, and I think it is one of the pantheistic objections which has the most plausibility. I was surprised to hear the way in which Dr. Wainwright criticised the passage in which Mr. Mitchell declares that "science is thought." I have yet to learn that the subject and predicate of a sentence are convertible things.

Dr. WAINWRIGHT.—Do you mean that science is thought?

The CHAIRMAN.—No, but not all thought. There is other thought which is not science. I deny that the proposition is convertible.

Dr. WAINWRIGHT.—Do you mean that thought is science?

The CHAIRMAN.—I mean that science is thought—that it is the result of thought; but I entirely deny that thought is science. I understood Dr. Wainwright to argue that the proposition was convertible. Then there is that passage in the 13th section about the universe forming a conception of God. I own that I understood that passage as ironical.

Mr. MITCHELL.—Exactly so.

The CHAIRMAN.—There has been a great misapprehension on the part of some persons as to reason and reasoning. I apprehend Mr. Mitchell uses the term "reason" as meaning the whole of the intellectual faculties of the human mind, some of which have a foundation in our moral conception, and that he includes the intuitive faculties and those things which we cannot help believing. I suppose Mr. Mitchell to speak of reason not in any narrow sense, but as including the whole intuitive power, the reasoning power, and various other powers whereby the mind perceives truth. My belief in an

external universe is a thing which I cannot help. So, again, I cannot help believing that the future, under similar circumstances, will be like the past. That is another truth independent of all reasoning: to say that it comes from experience would be wrong.

Dr. IRONS.—It is reason operating in the midst of its circumstances.

The CHAIRMAN.—To say that I arrive at that conclusion from an act of reasoning, or from experience, is not correct. There is some principle in the human mind under which I cannot help believing: I apprehend that that is the general sense in which the term "reason" has been used by Mr. Mitchell, and, in that way it is possible to attach a consistent meaning to the term. I still hold with the first passage in the paper, that reason, whether exerted upon philosophy, science, or religion, is substantially the same principle. The subject matters differ most widely, and, of course, I might exercise that faculty in a different manner; but to say that reason does not lie at the basis of religion, as well as at the basis of anything else, is simply absurd. (Cheers.)

Mr. MITCHELL.—I rejoice at the discussion that has taken place upon this paper. Had I not expected discussion I should not have come all the way from Manchester to-day; but I wanted discussion, and I have been glad at the discussion we have had. Let me, as the author of the paper, express my gratitude for the many words of kindness and encouragement that have fallen from the lips of all the speakers. There have been some points which have been objected to, but the only one that I cared to charge my memory with has already been answered by the Chairman: as for the rest, the various gentlemen who have taken part in the discussion have answered one another, and I am profoundly grateful to them for so doing. The question which has been raised about unconscious cerebration has been to me for some time an exceedingly interesting one, but I do not know how any one can be unconscious of a thing and yet note it. However, I will not enter into that aspect of the discussion. In justice to Mr. MacClymont I ought to say that I do not depreciate any of the men whose remarks I have subjected to review in my paper. I have spent many anxious hours—many earnest, thoughtful hours—in wading as best I could through their works; and I can assure you that it was with no disrespect for Mr. Mill, or any other author, that I put my finger on these weak points. I put my finger upon them simply as points around which the whole question at issue seems to gather; and I trust Mr. MacClymont will not think there is any unreasonable opposition on my part to that class of men, or any unwillingness to take hold of what truth they represent. But at the same time we must all admit that in writing a paper of this kind you cannot discuss every point. Some friend has referred to the poetical character of the paper. That is a discovery to me. I was not aware that there was anything of that kind in it; certainly, there was not meant to be. But you know that when we have to meet all classes of men, and to speak so often, we do get into

certain ruts—ministerial ruts,—and it is very kind of Dr. Wainwright to take us out of them occasionally, and remind us of our duty in relation to the scientific world. I am afraid I must not, at this late hour, venture on anything like a reply. My paper, however, is understood, and though it has some defects—though, if I had to write it again, there are some expressions that I might modify,—still the whole line of argument would remain as it is. (Cheers.) As to the difficulty raised by Mr. Sinclair, I can only say that I should just like to have an hour with him, in order to discuss that question of faith and reason as discussed by Mill, Hamilton, Mansel, and others.

The Meeting was then adjourned.

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