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ORDINARY MEETING, APRIL 13, 1885.

W. N. WEST, ESQ. (HON. TREAS.), IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following Elections were announced :—

MEMBERS :—Rev. E. C. d'Auquier, M.A., Ramsgate ; His Excellency S. G. W. Benjamin, United States Minister, Teheran ; S. W. Francis, Esq., A.M., M.D., United States.

ASSOCIATES :—Rev. H. Carrow, Weston-super-Mare ; Rev. A. T. Clark United States ; Rev. F. R. Elder, B.A., New South Wales ; Rev. Principal H. C. G. Moule, M.A., Cambridge ; Rev. W. Nicholson, M.A., St. Petersburg ; Rev. J. R. Sutherland, A.M., D.D., United States.

The following paper was then read by Mr. C. HASTINGS DENT, C.E., F.L.S., the Author being unavoidably absent. No discussion was taken on pages 269 to 281.

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY. By the Rev. G. BLENCOWE, of Wakkerstroom, Transvaal, South Africa.

JOHNSON defines responsibility as “accountability, or liability to answer.” Hence, wherever there is responsibility, there is subordination and inferiority. A supreme or a perfectly independent being is responsible to no one ; but in the measure in which our being and possessions are derived from another, and in which they are sustained by his continued operation, we are plainly liable to answer to him. The mechanic, who receives the material for his work from his employer, is answerable to him for the appropriate use of it. The farmer, who commits his stock to the care of his bailiff, requires from him full tale of all delivered, and of all the increase. The primary question, therefore, with respect to man is, Are we self-originated—are we independent ?

How came I into being ? There was a time when I was not, another time when the first cell of my complex body began to collect or protrude other cells, and to weave, by occult and mysterious skill, the wonderful structure which I now possess, and by which I am joined to and form part of the visible universe. There was also a time when I was first conscious of myself, and of objects around me, not myself, from which moment my consciousness and my thought have continued until now, increasing my knowledge of myself and nature, and thus opening new sources of enjoyment and power.

But I had no choice in my beginning, nor in my construction, nor in my birth, nor in my endowments. All were without even my concurrence. I did not make or place the object which first evoked my consciousness, nor am I the author of those objects which by continual operation increase my knowledge and augment my power.

For my being I am immediately indebted to my parents, but not to their direct and immediate volition. For, when we compare human and brute procreation, we find a lack of uniformity in the former, which shows that a superior authority to our immediate parentage must be the source of life. All others have come into being in the same manner as ourselves; hence our relations to others and theirs to us are independent of our own will, we have all been without the possibility of choice, and, therefore, are plainly under the direction and at the disposal of some super-human authority, possessed of power to fulfil his own purposes.

Here is a chain of accountability. First, to the author of our nature and the giver of our life. When a man constructs a machine, he has a right to its use and to dispose of it as he pleases. He also is presumed to have had some definite purpose in its construction, and the right, therefore, to employ it for this purpose, and to forbid its use in any way which will spoil or deteriorate it. And this right is considered sacred and indefeasible, in proportion to the excellence and value of the instrument constructed. How, then, can bounds be set to the right of the Author of a nature like ours, with all its wealth of intellect, emotion, and will, which He has placed in conditions calculated to call forth every power to its full strength, to use, or to require its use, according to His own purpose?

But here we see the special distinction of humanity. We have a body, a wonderful and exquisite machine,—by which we receive instruction and various other benefits from the material universe, and by which we can act upon it, for good or evil,—but we ourselves are more than, and different from, a machine, however perfect. We are not instruments, as our body is, but agents. That is, we can see the nature of any and every act, the consequences which follow from it to ourselves and others, and the reasons why we should do it or leave it undone. And we are further able to determine, of and from ourselves, whether we will act in harmony with our nature and relations or not. We are, therefore, as much bound to answer to our great Author for the proper use of the personal and relative endowments committed to our trust as the driver of a locomotive is for the use of the engine put into his hands.

But our responsibility to the Author of our nature is not

bounded by our relation to Him simply as His creatures. We cannot have come into being without parents and other family relations; we cannot give free scope to our affections, nor develop our intellect, nor act adequately, nor secure full bodily enjoyment, but as we form part of a community, the various members of which contribute to our improvement. And, as communal life is not a separable accident of humanity, but a necessity of our nature, we are bound to answer to its Author for the general good, so far as it is in our power to promote it. And it further follows that, as we are communal by the very constitution of our nature, we can by no means relieve ourselves of these obligations to our Author to live natural, that is, communal lives,—lives in which we shall seek, not our own good only, but the good of others also.

We are placed,—not have placed ourselves,—in this world, and in this vast and wonderful universe, which we have not made, which we cannot modify, not one of whose properties we can change, and to which we cannot add an atom. But we derive all our support from it, both as to body and intellect. Not only are its material resources unlimited, so that, by its orderly alternations, food, clothing, and every other requisite for happy and full physical life are furnished, generation after generation, but its structure and combination are so various, and multiform, and recondite, that it is capable of revealing to us, with continually-increasing clearness and breadth, the mode by which its great Author works. Thus it brings our intellect into contact with His, and teaches us the same order and breadth of thought as that which by a supreme volition has produced all things.

We know that the most exquisite skill of the mechanic is only a faithful copy of the order of the world itself, in the application of material properties in a material substance. All pure science is but a knowledge and application of the properties of number and space in their multiform combinations and relations. The deductions of the chemist are but the discovery of some of the secret processes of nature, or rather of its great Author in His material operation; while the artist, in his most noble and original creations, is simply using the material which the Creator has provided after His own method. Thus, the world is not only our habitation, but our school and our storehouse. Without it our body would die and our mind become inert.

But we are not only dependent on the great Author of all for the production and furnishing of this world, but also for the constant operation by which its forces are maintained, its substance renewed, and its life preserved; for each of these

classes of facts requires similar operation for their continuance to that required for their original production. We cannot conceive of force but as a personal act; our idea of it is derived solely from the effort necessary on our part to produce motion; and, as we find that motion does not belong to matter, either in the atom or the mass, but is superimposed, so continued action is necessary from the original source for its continuance. We are unable to think of continued motion without continued energy. And, when we attempt to calculate the sum of the motion which is going on every moment in the universe, we find ourselves as utterly unable to approach a true result as we are to attain to an adequate idea of the mode of creation out of nothing. Yet there the motion is as a necessity of universal existence, and there, at its back, is the energy or force which is its cause: too vast and too wonderful for our comprehension.

But there is one side of this question of which we must not lose sight. We are evidently not in an orphaned, a forsaken world; but we have present with us everywhere the hand that formed, now sustaining all things.

This incessant operation is necessary for the continued renewal of the earth as the habitation of man. Without day and night, summer and winter, the disintegrating atmosphere, and rain and frost, the fertility of the earth could not be preserved, and its utility to man would cease; and we find ourselves unable to increase its utility but by taking advantage of the order first established, and by working on the same lines, after the manner of the miller who diverts the stream to his own wheel. He cannot create the stream, he can originate no force, but only employ what the great Operator has already provided. In like manner, all recuperative operation is not of human origin, but is simply the application of recuperative power lying ready to hand by the prolific providence of the Author of all.

Life requires certain conditions. The most elementary vegetable cannot exist without light and water. The animal must have organised substances for his food, and a properly-mingled atmosphere to breathe. Small changes in either are fatal. The world is full of life, full beyond possibility of numbering, and it does not fail. If we were able to form a judgment, we should incline rather to the conclusion that it has been increasingly abundant from the beginning. But if we cannot enumerate the lives, or even the varieties of life, how much more are we unable to tell all the observation, and the care, and the varied and constant operation which have been necessary from the beginning to perpetuate it.

Thus we are brought face to face with a mighty operating personality, all whose work tends to the preservation, and development, and perfecting of the universe; of which, so far as this world is concerned, man is the head and the only being capable of understanding the Author's purpose, and of employing the vast resources He has provided for our use according to that purpose. This greatly increases the range and the force of our responsibility. The man who is placed at the head of a grand operative establishment, having a large capital and many subordinates under his control, is bound to greater carefulness, diligence, and fidelity than any one under him. By this rule, how truly boundless is our responsibility to the Creator and Upholder of all things. We can conceive of no capability of our nature, no relation we sustain to others, and no donation of His providence, for which we are not bound to answer.

But is there a Creator? Have not all things come into being by the independent operation of matter, and from properties inherent in itself? Before we can answer this question, we necessarily meet another. How came the material substance of the universe into existence? It could not produce itself, because, if capable of acting, it could not act before it existed, and especially so mighty a work as creation could not come from a non-entity. But, in nearly all the discussions on the supposed action of matter, a hidden fallacy lies. Matter is spoken of as though it were one homogeneous substance, possessing unvarying and uniform properties and powers, and therefore capable of simple and immediate action. It is, however, well known that this is not its true character, but that the substance of the earth consists of sixty-three different elements, every one of which has a fixed and unchangeable nature, utterly incapable of transmutation, and some of them have an unalterable incompatibility with others; so that united action, for any such purpose as the creation and arrangement of the substance of our earth, is simply inconceivable. We could as well suppose that lions, tigers, bears, sheep, deer, and cows could unite in any undertaking for the general good. And there is equal difficulty in supposing that one element could produce another.

If hydrogen were the first which evolved itself from nothingness, how could it have produced gold, or iron, or carbon? If we suppose them all to have come into being spontaneously, who fixed the order of birth, and whence came the adjustment of proportions in the mass, so that

carbon is abundant and gold scarce? Whence did the affinities come? Did hydrogen construct itself on purpose to be able to take one atom of oxygen into union with two of itself to produce water? And, when both were self-made, whence came the pressure by which their combined bulk was reduced eighteen hundred times to make the great ocean of water? How were the diverse atomic weights determined, so that lithium is but seven, while bismuth is two hundred and ten? These are but a few of the thousands of questions which claim an answer before we can admit the independent action of matter.

And the difficulties are only removed a step further back, by the adoption of the only alternative which is possible to the Materialist,—the eternal existence of matter,—while that theory carries with it certain grave difficulties peculiar to itself. In the days of old, when matter was thought and spoken of as one simple whole, it was possible, with at least a show of reason, to argue for its eternity, but no man can contend for sixty-three eternals. Geology shows that, so far as our earth is concerned, there has been a constant process of disintegration and re-construction from the beginning, every series of which is capable of measurement in time; and the most liberal donor of duration can go back to a precise and definite beginning. Astronomy also teaches us that the solar system can only have existed for a limited and definite period, while all through its existence the motions of the several members, both in direction and speed, have been ruled by strict mathematical law. But such science can scarcely be attributed to an assembly of unconscious and incompatible atoms. Thus we are compelled to look for some intelligent creator and distributor of matter in its various forms, adequate both in knowledge and power, to account for the existence and adjustment of the substance of the universe.

But we are now met by a theory which, taking matter as already existing, supposes it to possess inherent power of development into all the forms of life we now see. An initial difficulty here is the fact that, in all the changes taking place in mere matter, a strict law or order is, and must be, observed. In all chemical combination strict laws of quantivalence and proportion prevent any more than a definite and invariable number of specific atoms uniting to form any substance; while other laws compel the union of the appointed number when brought into juxtaposition. Thus, matter, pure and simple as we find it in the atom, is incapable of independent action, but follows an invariable order, which has existed ever since matter existed. Development or progress, in material

combination and form, in and from matter, is therefore impossible. How, then, is it possible for matter, which cannot change the form of its own crystal, to produce life? Matter nowhere acts, but is acted on by forces exterior to itself.

Life in the simple form of the vegetable sack is totally distinct from and above all chemical force, which operates only by superimposed law. The crystal can only increase by accretion, which, however great, cannot alter the position, shape, or size of the one first deposited; but the plant selects from the atmosphere, the earth, and the light, those things only which it can assimilate, and by taking them into itself increases its own bulk, matures its strength, and propagates its kind. Here, therefore, we have powers which are nowhere seen in mere matter, and which are certainly of a higher order; and what matter has not it cannot give. If this be so with vegetative life, how much more with animal life, where we have in its most minute forms the wonderful power of volition, and in its progressive stages various vital and mental qualities, which are of an entirely different and much higher character than any vegetative force, and therefore much more impossible to mere matter.

But, supposing life in its simplest forms already to exist, we are taught that it has gone on improving into more complete forms, until the present species have come into being. If this has been so, it is matter of history; but we find no evidence of the existence of only imperfect and elementary forms of life in the earliest deposits, gradually growing up to perfection in the last. Then, as now, various gradations of complexity in structure, each suited to the conditions and purpose of life, existed as contemporaries. But, in all past times, we have no clear example of an animal in the condition of change from one species to another,* nor can we conceive of such change by any vital analogy of the present time. But, if the capability of such progress or development is involved in the very idea of life, as the theory supposes, it would not touch our present argument. For, as we have no example of spontaneous generation and cannot conceive of it, so we must, in this case, suppose this to be the mode by which the Creator chose to work; as the first life with all its potentialities must have been His gift. This is implied in the term *evolution*, which necessarily supposes *involution*, as potentially full as the evolution. "What comes out in the web must first have been in the loom, and the warp, and the weft." So

* Professor Huxley's argument as to the hipparion is very far from a proof.

that, whether our Creator chose to bring our body to its present state of completeness by a process nearly as long as that by which He fitted the earth for our abode or fashioned it according to the counsel of His own will, by the word of His power, when "He spake and it was done, commanded and it stood fast," in either case, He is our Maker, whether the process of making has been long or short.*

This, however, must not be taken as an acknowledgment of the correctness of the theory in question, which we do not accept because of the difficulties and contradictions which it involves. First, we have no authentic example of such transmutation as this theory requires, so that it is as yet mere theory. Then, we find that we have at present existing almost every conceivable variety of life, from the simple sack up to man, and we see no case in which these lower forms are passing into the higher. Darwin himself informs us that the earth-worms have retained their lowly but useful position from the first till now; nor can we conceive of the existence of sufficient intelligence in the lower forms to attain, or even aspire after, a higher. How could the simple sack, whose power of absorption extends over its whole surface, discern the advantage of tentacula, a mouth, and an alimentary canal? and, if he knew their benefit, how could he proceed to their production?

The sum of the whole, then, is:—1. Pure materialism is impossible. 2. Of evolution we have no proof and no authentic example. 3. Creation, pure and simple, is the only doctrine that meets and removes every difficulty and covers the whole case; while it is impossible to prove it false. Adopting the mechanical maxim of following the line of least resistance, we accept the infinite Creator, as attested and proved to us by the whole assemblage of mundane facts. We are His creatures in His world, sustained by His constant providence, and therefore we are accountable to Him.

A notable confirmation of this accountability we have in the faculty of conscience, which is possessed by all men. This power or faculty is an immediate perception or intuition of duty, which, although in nearly all cases it is capable of confirmation by subsequent processes of reasoning, is not the result of reasoning in the first instance, but springs at once

* This conclusion is the more necessary, as the accepted description of the origin or cause of evolution is, "The tendency in any given direction which gives a greater chance of life to the individual, but with which the will or the intelligence of the individual has nothing to do."

and in full force in the mind. In this perception of duty is involved the obligation of fulfilling it, which is accompanied by complacency on obedience, and by a sense of condemnation and remorse on disobedience. This is not an acquired but a primary faculty of our nature, and remains in active operation in all but the most degraded.

The force of this testimony to our responsibility is sometimes sought to be evaded by reference to the diverse decisions of conscience in different persons. It should, however, be remembered that this diversity in detail as to practice may, in all cases, be traced to previous error as to our relations to others. Thus, the ruler who has adopted the now-exploded notion that he has an unlimited right, by divine donation, to command his subjects after his own pleasure, and that any resistance of his authority is fighting against God, will feel little or no compunction in robbing or oppressing them. But although such falsehood, when taught in and from infancy, or accepted from common and popular opinion, may, to a great extent, pervert the judgment and dim the perception of duty, yet it remains a question whether any human being can plainly invade the right of others without compunction. And it is certain that no man of ordinary mental capacity could adopt principles and rules of action palpably in violation of the rights of others without self-condemnation.

It must also be remembered that we cannot learn the decision of another man's conscience by his actions. Selfishness, avarice, pride, and all other evil dispositions and passions contend against the pure, benevolent, and just decisions of conscience. We can only be directly certified concerning its operation by our own experience, and thence we learn that, although its decision may sometimes be silenced by the clamour of passion, and at others may be set aside by the fallacies of a proud or a grovelling selfishness, yet the whip and the sting never fail to fall and to pierce when the voice of the inward judge is disregarded. The great broad facts with respect to the operation of conscience are these,—it perceives obligation and duty, it requires obedience to its dictates, and does not fail to bless or curse as they are regarded or contemned.

It is also especially worthy of consideration that the verdict and judgment of conscience are primarily in the name of, and are ultimately directed to, the great Author of our being, and our present Ruler. For, although, in most of the cases on which the judgment of conscience is recorded, the action has respect immediately to our fellow-creatures, yet the judgment proceeds on the assumption that, independent of and above

man, we have been placed in relations to our fellow-creatures by a Supreme Authority, and that these relations which He has established we have observed or violated. Hence it does not matter whether our fellow-man be cognisant of our action or not, we are alike self-condemned or self-applauded in the presence of the great King. But this could not be, unless we stood in conscious relation to Him as the rightful Supreme Ruler.

This inward testimony to the existence of a Supreme Ruler is universal. Hence all nations, as far back as we can trace their existence, have had a religion and a God. And the more primitive their condition the more precise and definite their views on the relations they sustain to the Creator and Upholder of all things. During the present century the ancient records of Egypt, of Assyria, and the whole of Mesopotamia have been disinterred and read; researches in Persia have brought to light the condition of the whole Iranian tribes prior to the reformation of Zoroaster, and as its consequence; while the Vedas,—the religious poems of their kindred Indian Aryans,—have been written and translated; and profound researches into the ancient literature of China have unveiled the doctrine and the worship of the Chinese before and since Confucius; and the result of the whole is, that we find in these nations, from the time of their existence as separate and distinct communities, religion,—after the special manner of each,—was the primary and most prominent peculiarity of their combined action.

In Egypt, religion entered into the entire social and individual life of the nation, regulating every private action and requiring a varied and complete virtue, which furnished terms for every Christian grace to the Coptic translators of the New Testament. While it ruled the people, it controlled the king, who was the high priest of the Supreme God. In Assyria a pure and dominant despotism prevailed, such as we might expect from the successors of him who was a "mighty hunter before the Lord." In the records of the Mesopotamians, therefore, we see only the king, who undertakes all his works, builds all his cities, fights all his battles at the bidding of the God, his father, and to establish his worship. The Iranians, as might be expected from their nomadic, and quiet, and contemplative character and habits, returned to the pure and simple worship of the Creator, whose only symbol was brilliant light, and with whom no moral corruption could abide. In Ahurô Magdâo they partly beheld the varied, full, and limitless perfection which the Jew saw in Jehovah; hence their morality embraced every devout, individual, and social virtue,

enforced by present divine favour and blessing, and by an everlasting reward. Their Indian kinsmen seem to have made religion the stay and the luxury of their life. So far as we can now see, they had fallen under the domination of an oppressive priesthood, but still they struggled after the free and friendly intercourse which their ancestors enjoyed, and which for many generations was embalmed in the hymns which they continued to sing when the experience they embodied was forgotten. But one thing is conspicuous throughout. Religion was the business of their lives. The Chinese, from their first appearance as a distinct people, had clear conceptions of the existence and present dominion of the Creator, which they retain to this day, although their superstition has peopled the heavens and the earth with multitudes of subordinate or ministering spirits who fulfil His will, so that direct worship is now only paid to the Supreme Sovereign by the emperor on behalf of the whole empire represented in their solemn services. The Phœnicians surpassed their neighbours in the severity of their worship, offering human sacrifices to appease the anger of God, which shows the strength of their conviction as to the reality of His existence and rule.

We cannot conceive of a religion which does not suppose the dependence of the worshipper upon his God, and also of real intercourse between them; at any rate, so far as the offer of worship by man and the bestowment of benefits by God; and in the ancient nations already mentioned, that God was the Creator, notwithstanding the grouping of subordinates around Him in subsequent times. Nor can this conviction of the existence of a divine Creator and Ruler be ascribed to the infancy and consequent immaturity of these peoples. First, the definite precision of the doctrines forbids such a supposition, and the mechanical, scientific, artistic, and social proficiency of these nations at the time these precise and sharply-cut decisions were commonly held, shows that they were not lucky guesses of the ignorant, but the permanent opinions of thoughtful men.

M. Le Page Renouf, in the *Hibbert Lecture* of 1879, quotes the late M. Emanuel Rougé's mature judgment concerning Egypt, and declares that no scholar is better entitled to be heard on this subject. "No one has called in question the fundamental meaning of the principal passages by the help of which we are able to establish what ancient Egypt has taught concerning God, the world, and man. I say *God*, not the *gods*. The first characteristic is the unity most energetically expressed,—God, one, sole, and only,—not others with Him. He is the only being living in truth: 'Thou art

one, and millions of beings proceed from Thee.' He h made everything, and He alone has not been made. T clearest, the simplest, the most precise conception. . . . The belief in the unity of the Supreme God, and in H attributes as the Creator and Lawgiver of man, whom H has endowed with an immortal soul,—these are the primitiv notions."

Dr. Legge, in his *Lectures on the Religions of China*, show by a careful analysis of the primitive characters by which th Chinese fathers expressed their theological doctrines,—an which he says "puts us *en rapport* with them fully 5,000 years ago,"—that at that remote period their idea of the Deity was Supreme Ruler, "whose providence embraces all." He then proceeds to say that "T'ien has had much of the force of the name Jahve, as explained by God himself to Moses; T'i has represented that absolute deity in the relation to men of their lord and governor. T'i was to the Chinese fathers, I believe, exactly what God was to our fathers, whenever they took the great name on their lips." Zoroaster is supposed to have lived about the time of Abraham, and he taught most distinctly the unity, supremacy, spirituality, benevolence, and righteousness of the Creator and Governor of all. But he only professed to be a reformer, bringing back the people to a primitive faith and practice.

Professor Th. Ribot, in his *Contemporary English Psychology*, page 241, says: "The legislations of Buddha, of Solon, of Lycurgus, of Confucius, of Mahomet, were not the pure creations of their brain. Confucius declares that he follows the traditions of his ancestors. Mahomet states that he is a restorer. Buddhism is born of an effusion of hearts towards charity, tenderness, and the doctrine of inaction. Solon and Lycurgus gave a body of ancient Ionic and Doric institutions. All these men have told the secret to the world." And that secret, according to Professor Ribot, was, that these laws for the regulation of human action were the result of the combined testimony of individual consciences; thus showing that the great legislators drew the material for their laws from the operation of that faculty in man which directly and intuitively recognises our responsibility.

In more recent times, we find the Greeks and Romans in all their public acts besought the aid of their gods, and in their calamities and failures saw the divine wrath, and proceeded by the appointed means to turn it aside. In our own time, we see the most civilised and enlightened nations are the most religious, while the most honourable, virtuous, and intelligent men of those nations are proportionately devout,

and they confessedly derive their principles of honour, and their power of right-doing, from their devotion.

The force of this important series of facts is not invalidated nor weakened by the consideration, that in some of the cases referred to the objects of worship were spurious; but it is rather strengthened by the fact that, so dominant is the sense of need, and so prevalent the persuasion of the possibility of access to God, on whom we depend, that when all true knowledge of Him was lost, and only false substitutes for the living God existed, which could not help, yet, even then, the practice of worship was continued through successive generations of disappointment, all of whom were ready to ascribe the failure to the imperfection of the worship rather than to the impotence or the indifference of their gods.

We have no other peculiarity of humanity equally universal, operative, elevating, or permanent. How can we account for it, but as the expression of a universally-felt need of our nature, prompting to acts of reverence, submission, trust, obedience, and love, mingled with appeals for help, and grateful thanks for past blessings? We recognise the uneasiness of hunger and thirst as a natural provision, securing the proper nourishment for the body. And we have equal reason to look upon this pressing sense of spiritual need, and the aspiration to one Supreme King, as a natural provision for the spiritual life of the soul.

There plainly can be no insuperable difficulty in the way of intercourse in the highest sides of our nature with its Author, when we find our intellect in constant contact with Him. Many things are at present by our philosophical teachers said to be unthinkable, but far more unthinkable than any philosophical impossibility is the constant sight of operation without an operator. No human mind can think of the one without the other. We not only are able to recognise the operation of the Creator, but we can also learn the modes of His operation; our only difficulty is in the vastness of His work. We can calculate the actual operative force which the divine volition puts forth in the various members of the solar system, in the attractive force of the different chemical affinities, in the great integrating power of gravitation, in the motion of light, in the capillary attraction energetic in every vegetable tube over the surface of the earth. We have been able to employ the sun to paint our portraits, and the lightning to carry our messages round the world; while our own work can only be done as we direct to our own ends the force already and continually operating.

Thus we find ourselves in continual contact with the Almighty operator, and, so far as our intellect is concerned, unable to exercise it but upon His work. But this could not be if we were in a condition of necessary and absolute ignorance of God. The cup cannot contain the ocean, but it may be filled from its water. So we are unable to grasp as one magnificent whole the boundless and varied operation of the sustainer of all things, much less can we adequately conceive the breadth of the attributes of His own infinite nature; but we can see in His work skill and power such as we ourselves can exhibit in a less degree. Nor have we any difficulty in seeing benevolence in the boundless and varied life with which our earth is peopled, all the arrangements for which tend to the happiness of the living. In like manner, we find that when men live in any way unnatural lives their action tends to their own weakness and decay, while the violation of all social obligation destroys confidence, so that lying, deception, theft, and every other trespass on the rights of others tend to the disruption of the bonds of society, and require suppression, that full communal life may remain. These facts, which are invariable, as plainly show us the righteousness and truth of the Author of our nature, and the reality of His moral rule, as the physical universe shows us His skill and power. Thus it appears that a knowledge of God, of His moral character, and of our obligation to do His will, may in some measure be learned by His government of us.

But as all such knowledge is rudimentary, and requires long time and patient thought, as well as large range of observation, and, after all, is only of authority to the individual who has thought it out for himself, we require, some more certain, extensive, and authoritative teaching, that we may from the first live natural lives,—that is, lives in accordance with the requirements, capabilities, and obligations of our nature. This need becomes more imperative from the fact that we begin life in a condition of total ignorance, and have each for ourselves to acquire such knowledge of external things as will enable us to prolong and improve our life in this world; and this in many cases so engrosses the attention as to leave no room for anything besides.

Not only is there nothing in human nature to prevent such a revelation of the divine will, but our relations of subordination and dependence,—the grounds of responsibility,—make it likely that such revelation will be granted, and that, in some way, certain and conscious intercourse with the Father of our spirits will take place. We know of no being but God with whom we as men can have free interchange of

thought and emotion, while, as we have already seen, if we act effectually, we must act after His manner. There is, therefore, no reason in the nature of things, in what the universe teaches us of God, nor in our own nature, to make such intercourse unlikely, but everything to make it extremely probable.

No man of ordinary intelligence would erect a large manufactory, furnish it with machinery and all material necessary for the work to be done, and then commit it to the charge of totally ignorant people to conduct the operations, and leave them without supervision. Unless he declared his will with respect to their action, he could not expect his plans to be carried out, and the *employés* would certainly not be to blame for the failure. How much more is it impossible for the Maker of all things to bring into existence a race of intelligent agents, and place them at the head, and in possession, of a world full of His creatures of inferior nature, and after all leave them without information concerning His will and purpose towards them. Nor can we conceive of His having created a race so richly endowed with emotional capacity, and after all leaving them without a knowledge of Himself, the only object capable of calling forth the full strength of these emotions; particularly when the emotion is not a separable accident of the nature, but is woven into its entire texture, influencing every volition, and prompting to every action.

The force of such arguments as the above, which appeal to reason and common sense, is often evaded by bringing against them the terrible charge of being anthropomorphic. The alarm is created by the use of the long Greek word; if it were simply translated, and the harmless word *human* took its place, its power to dismay would depart. There is wonderfully terrific power in long Greek words. And, when we observe the solemn awe with which the charge of being anthropomorphic is generally brought, we cannot help recurring to Austin Caxton's adventure with the wild bull, which he thus describes, "Luckily I had the umbrella, and I sprang it up and spread it forth in the animal's stupid eyes, hurling at him simultaneously the biggest lines I could think of in the first chorus of the *Seven against Thebes*. I began with '*Elede mnas PEDIOPLOCTUPOS*'; and when I came to the grand howl of 'Iò, Iò, Iò, Ió, the beast stood appalled as at the roar of a lion. I shall never forget his amazed snort at the Greek. Then he kicked up his heels and went bolt through a gap in the hedge." In like manner, when the grave charge of being human is brought in Greek, instead of boldly affirming it, some who know better, appearing to think that there must be some evil lurking under

the outlandish word, begin to defend themselves against anthropomorphism.

Plainly we are incapable of anything which is not human ; our thoughts, emotions, and actions are all human, and nothing but human. But the gentlemen who bring this charge do so avowedly for two reasons. First, that all such modes of thought are inadequate to produce any knowledge of God ; and, secondly, that they are derogatory to the divine nature. But it must be remembered that their God is not the God of common men. He is not the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, but an abstraction of the human intellect, who is presented to us as the Absolute, the Unconditioned, the Infinite ; each and all of these and similar terms conveying the notion of an existence without attributes, without relations, without thought, without action, and therefore, to all normal human thought, without being. And this they virtually acknowledge, in declaring that all anthropomorphic,—that is, human,—modes of thought cannot apply to him.

Nothing can more clearly show the non-natural, and, therefore, worthless character of such speculations, than the acknowledgment that human thought cannot apply to such a conception any attribute of reality, as, indeed, it cannot. How can we conceive of an infinitude which fills immensity, and yet is nowhere ; which comprehends all excellence, and yet has no particular virtue or power ? Such a thing is simply a human creation, and the creators find their production so full of contradictions and absurdities, that they are unable to present it in an intelligible form to others. But instead of acknowledging their failure, as normal human modesty would suggest, they repudiate human language and human thought, because they reject the monstrosity. But let us never forget that the Absolute, the Unconditioned, the Infinite of modern philosophy has no existence but in the minds of the philosophers themselves ; and there we may leave it, without any alarm for the consequences.

But, while they amuse themselves with abstractions which are delusive and perverting, let us remember the Living God, our Maker, and the bountiful Donor of our blessings. And, while we keep our eyes open to all the operations of His hand in the physical sphere of His work, let us not fail to mark the effects of human action under His government, both on the actors themselves and on others also. Thus we shall learn much concerning His moral character, which will instruct and help us in our endeavours to walk uprightly before Him. But the more we study these questions, and the greater pro-

ficiency we make, the more deeply shall we feel that some further knowledge of Himself and the relations in which we stand to Him is necessary for us.

We have already seen that we can only think of the Creator according to those laws of thought by which we think of other persons and things. It, therefore, follows that any communication from Him must be brought down to the human level. There seems to be no difficulty in this, inasmuch as all His work in the material universe is open to our comprehension. But here a question arises,—How are we to ascertain that the communication professedly coming from Him does really so come? If it be merely local, temporary, or individual in its application, all that can be considered necessary is the assurance to the person to whom it comes that the speaker is God. No improbability, no difficulty can possibly exist in any communication of the Creator with His creatures. Several such special, individual revelations are found in the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Such communications, however, cannot meet the general need, nor would solely individual revelation be in harmony with the Creator's mode of operation in material and secular things. A law for the race must be publicly proclaimed, and there must be unquestionable evidence that He who speaks is divine, or the speaker must be attested as a divine messenger. We cannot suppose that less than this would be done by God, and certainly less ought not to be accepted by man. Otherwise we might be following lying spirits, and not the Spirit of God. With such assurance we may rest content.

What, then, are the facts with respect to the Christian revelation? We find them cluster around two persons,—Moses and Jesus of Nazareth. Moses is our authority for the records of all preceding revelations; we must, therefore, look for an attestation of his character and office, of equal certainty to the importance of the position which he occupies with respect to the world. We see a personal call to his important office in the appearance of God to him in the burning bush, in which he has an assurance that the Creator would appear in the government of His people, in all the plenitude of His infinite, necessary, and eternal being, of which He gave a pledge in assuming the new name Jehovah. This must be considered as the pledge, the promise of all that followed. This, however, immediately concerned Moses alone, and was the assurance to him of that full divine revelation which by him, in its continuous progression, should manifest God in the flesh. This was necessary to give him the confidence needed for the special and dangerous work he had immediately to do.

The pledge was redeemed; Moses passed through all the danger and difficulty of his intercourse with Pharaoh, not only without harm, but with such improvement in courage, knowledge, and political conduct as fitted him to lead the children of Israel to freedom and independence.

But the personal revelation to Moses was only the prelude to such public and general manifestations of divine power, as proved that the Sender of Moses was none other than the Creator and Upholder of all things. Only he who possesses, and can use as he pleases, the matter, the force, and the life of the universe, could have inflicted the plagues on the Egyptian king and nation. That they really occurred as recorded is evident from the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, and from the profound place this wonderful deliverance occupied in the sacred and national literature of Israel. But these displays of the divine presence and authority were but the beginning of that wonderful and diverse fatherly goodness of God to Israel, which was intended as a pattern and a pledge to the whole world of like fatherly care and love. See their immediate direction by the pillar of cloud and of fire, so that they stirred not but as the Lord led them; their daily food not failing, but neither sown, reaped, ground, nor kneaded by themselves; and, finally, at the time declared, their entrance on and possession of Canaan. These were all palpable facts, which it was impossible surreptitiously to foist. The memorials of them were preserved in the Feast of the Passover, of Tabernacles, and in the rod of Aaron and the pot of manna, which were preserved in the Tabernacle and the Temple, till the destruction of the latter by Nebuchadnezzar.

To the whole community, the infant nation, thus prepared, the Law was proclaimed. But, as might be expected for so important a transaction, special and imposing preliminaries and accessories were appointed. Moses was called to the divine presence, and thence sent back to the people to say: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." To this appeal "all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." When Moses carried this reply, he was sent back to sanctify them by the appropriate sacrifices and cleansing; their clothes also were washed, and on the third day the whole congregation, in a state of physical

and moral purity, came to the front of Sinai, that they might hear the Lord proclaim His law. "And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." From the fire, and the thick darkness, the Lord spake the Ten Commandments, in the hearing of all the people.

The whole scene was imposing and awful, so that "the people removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die." Thus it is evident that the whole transaction was, to the assembled Israelites, an awful reality. And, when we consider the circumstances, we see that there was no possibility of simulation. None but the Creator and Possessor of all things could have made Sinai to smoke and quake, and from that fiery furnace have uttered the Law. The moral impossibilities are equally apparent. How could a gigantic deception have been joined on to the Egyptian plagues, the dividing of the Red Sea, and the descent of the manna? Could anything but reality be associated with the utterance of that Law, which is the basis of all sound human legislation, and which to this day has full force in all the most civilised and intelligent nations of the earth? It is impossible also that the morality of a nation could come out of a lie, either spoken or acted, and especially such a full and complete morality as the laws of Israel enjoined. There is also this important collateral evidence of its reality. The descendants of this generation who witnessed the giving of the Law, in all their neglect of it, in all their idolatrous apostasy, never once pleaded the want of authority in the Law itself as an excuse for their sin. And their descendants, so wonderfully preserved as a distinct people to this day, acknowledge the Decalogue as the Law of the Lord. All these assurances, however, are no more than might have been looked for in a declaration of the divine will so important and wide-reaching.

The reality of the scenes of Sinai being assured, let us look at the significance of this revelation. We have here only one view of the Creator,—it is that of King. He does not proclaim anything concerning His own nature, nor satisfy a single human speculation, nor even declare the relations in which He stands to His creatures as the basis of His law; but, taking as an unquestionable and fundamental fact the rightful subjection of all men to Himself, He simply declares His will. And, although the law was given to Israel as the

condition on which alone the special privileges of being a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation could be enjoyed; yet, at the same time, He claimed the right to the whole earth. Thus from the mouth of the Lord Himself we learn our responsibility to Him and our obligation to do His will.

This act of legislation was one, by it the nationality of the Israelites was secured, and only the details of social law and the administration of the law remained to be secured. These did not fail, and in them that full revelation of divine perfection, which the name Jehovah promised, was accomplished. But this economy, which secured such abundant good to Israel, was brought about by the establishment of most perfect and direct responsibility to the Lord, who was not only their God, but their King. And, although by His permission they at length had a human monarch, that monarch was merely the divine vicegerent. They were, therefore, commanded, while yet in the wilderness, that at the time they should say, "I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose." This was actually done in the case of Saul and David, and these kings and their successors were simply intrusted with the administration of divine law. Their legislative authority extended only to proclamations of an individual and peculiar character, which adjusted the general provisions of the Mosaic Law to special cases. But not one clause of the original Law could they abrogate or amend. In accordance with this economy, the king was consecrated to his office by an anointing, which was the outward symbol of the gift of the Spirit of God, as the qualification for the efficient fulfilment of the duties of his office, and, when both king and people departed from the law, God Himself inflicted the punishment due to their transgression, as He was their deliverer and helper in all times of their obedience.

In this continued exercise of direct rule over Israel we have repeated proofs of the presence of the Creator and Upholder of all things. When they had grievously departed from the law, and had, contrary to express prohibition, introduced the idolatry of the Sidonians into Samaria, and worshipped Baal instead of the Lord, He withheld rain from them for three years and six months, so that famine was sorely felt in Samaria and the whole country; nor was the infliction removed until the people again declared the Lord to be God, and the 450 prophets of Baal were slain. The means also by which this reformation was effected could only have been used

by Him in whose hands are the forces of the universe. The prophets of Baal in vain called upon their god from morning till noon, and till evening approached, and cried and cut themselves, and leaped in desperation on their sacrifice, but no answer came, and no fire descended. But, when Elijah appealed to the Lord, to show all the people that he had done all in obedience to His word, and thus turn their heart back again to Himself, "then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water in the trench." Here was a work which only the Supreme Ruler could have done; and, like all which He did in the government of His people, it was done under circumstances which rendered mistake or deception impossible. A public challenge had been given, the prophets of Baal and of the groves, 850 in all, had been summoned, and all Israel had been collected to witness the result of the contest. Most important national interests were involved; an entirely new departure, or a return to the old paths, must be the result of that day's trial; their eyes were open, their interest was excited, their attention fixed, and the result was a national cry, "The Lord he is the God! The Lord he is the God!" If any transaction ever was real, and certain, and unmistakable, this was, up to the unanimous and universal verdict.

Another act of direct divine rule occurred a few years after the above, in the kingdom of Judah, which demands consideration for our present argument. Jehoshaphat was informed that a great multitude of Moabites, Ammonites, and others was coming against him in Jerusalem. He knew that his force was insufficient to meet them, but he believed in the Lord his God, proclaimed a fast, and gathered all Judah to ask help of the Lord. Then, as the voice of the whole congregation, he uttered the following prayer: "O Lord God of our fathers, art not Thou God in heaven? and rulest not Thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in Thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand Thee? Art not Thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham Thy friend for ever? . . . If when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in Thy presence (for Thy name is in this house), and cry unto Thee in our affliction, then Thou wilt hear and help. And now behold the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir whom Thou wouldst not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and destroyed them

not; behold, how they reward us, to come and cast us out of Thy possession, which Thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt not Thou judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee."

When the prayer was ended the Spirit of the Lord came upon a Levite in the midst of the congregation, who, under this divine impulse, said, "Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou, King Jehoshaphat; thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you." On the morrow, when they went forth at the divine bidding to behold the invaders, they found that the Lord had turned their treachery to Judah towards one another, so that Moab and Edom slew the people of Seir and then turned their swords against each other until all were destroyed; and the number was so great that it took them three days to collect the spoil.

This quotation has been made because this piece of national history establishes every position that has been affirmed in the preceding argument. There evidently was free and conscious intercourse with God. He was addressed by Jehoshaphat as God in heaven, and as ruling in all the kingdoms of the heathen. As their King they appealed to Him for help, and by that power which He, as the Maker and Upholder of all men, was able to use, turned the swords of these foes of Israel against each other, and thus delivered His people who obeyed and trusted in Him, while He, in the same act, punished, by means of their own wickedness, those who had so plainly violated obligations palpable to all.

The two cases selected are only peculiar in this respect, that they were of that public and general importance which precluded the possibility of mistake or deception; and they have been taken, not as parts of a divine revelation, but as portions of authentic history. And the history of which they are parts is full of similar divine interpositions in the maintenance of His law, both to reward and to punish.

And it must be remembered that, while this rule was immediately over Israel for their good, its ultimate intention was as wide as the race. At the time Abram was chosen as the father of the Church, some special interposition was necessary to prevent the entire and universal departure of men from the Creator and Sustainer of all, as the one true and living God. Other reformers, among the Iranians and

Egyptians, were employed in recalling men to a spiritual worship and a pure and righteous practice; but they were members of nations already in existence, and hence were not able to perpetuate through the whole nation a reformation which they could not extend to all of their own time; therefore it was that the Lord chose Abraham, and of him made a nation, because the Lord "knew him, that he would command his children and his household after him that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."

In this nation, therefore, trained from the time of its great father in fellowship with God, the Creator determined to perpetuate the remembrance of Himself by His continual operation, to chastise and to bless, until He should complete His revelation in the incarnation of His Son. Thus, through fifteen centuries of idolatry, with its consequent pollution, injustice, oppression, and debasement, He preserved among His own people the knowledge of Himself as the living God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, and the practice of righteousness and truth to men, which, however defective through their unfaithfulness, was far in advance of the rest of the world. There was also established an outward and visible embodiment of divine rule, which has expounded the nature of that rule for all time as no didactic explanation could.

Indeed, everything we know of God we know from facts, and we see how hopeless every other method is in the barren results of philosophical speculation, which, after 2,350 years since the birth of its Grecian branch, has not produced a single proposition concerning the divine nature and government which men generally are able to accept; and, however correct the conclusions arrived at may be, coming only from the cogitations of an individual mind, and that generally abnormal, they entirely lack authority, and therefore are never universally received. The history of philosophy is a history of alternations, and from Thales to the present time the propounding of any philosophic doctrine in one age has been the guarantee of a contradictory doctrine as its chronological successor. At this time no system of philosophy commands universal assent; so that it is evident philosophy can never be the source of practical principles,—can never be the instructress of humanity in the every-day business of life. But the clear and explicit law of our Maker, illustrated by the examples of His continued rule, meets our entire need, and is capable of immediate and intelligent application. Thus it is, that by the records of divine government a child may become an expert in salvation.

This condition of things—for our results are the results of facts—shows that we are brought into immediate contact with our King, and are able to render as true and immediate obedience to Him as to any human monarch; and it is specially worthy of remembrance that, when the Son of God became incarnate and appeared as the Saviour, He commenced His ministry by declaring that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. He was sought by the Persian Magi as He who was born king of the Jews, and His entire work and influence was described by John as the coming of the kingdom of heaven. The title which Pilate in derision put on the cross was true, not only with respect to the Jews, but to all people. Because “He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore, God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,”—that is, Ruler or King,—“to the glory of God the Father.” Thus it appears that the establishment of an economy of salvation does not relax the bonds of authority nor contract the range of responsibility, but intensifies both by transferring the dominion to His hands, who, by reason of His death, has spiritual power to recover the disobedient and bring the rebellious into subjection.

We can only conceive of salvation as recovery,—as deliverance from the power and practice of sin. And this, according to the Christian scheme, not only involves the breaking-up of the power of habits of disobedience, but the mastery over all sinful inclinations and dispositions, and the establishment of reverence, filial fear, submission and love to God, as the ruling principles of the soul. But this is a condition in which a sense of responsibility becomes actual and active, to the extent of directing the whole life. But this subjection, when most perfect, is felt to be simply natural. No individual power is suppressed or weakened, no social obligation is forgotten or violated; all find scope, and all operate without friction or pain, because all is felt to be right. And in this testimony of the conscience is a strong, honourable, abiding joy, most sustaining and strengthening to the soul, which now feels that the only means of increased honour and strength, is a more perfect subjection to the divine King, and obedience to the law of the spirit of life written on the heart.

But, if the above be the result of the recovery in those who experience the salvation of the Gospel, then it is evident responsibility to the Author and Sustainer of our nature is a

primary and inseparable quality of the nature itself. And this receives confirmation from the fact that no other impulse is capable of developing the moral, which is the highest side of our nature, into heroic virtue, or of adorning the life with all that is true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. One in whom this excellence is found more nearly approaches the ideal of perfect manhood than any other. Consequently, the power by whose operation this state is produced is most peculiarly and intensely human. But that power is a profound sense of responsibility in intense and continued operation.

If we look at the contrast,—that is, at a man who has no sense of responsibility, having suppressed every call to duty and all remembrance of benefits from others, and who now lives as though he were perfectly independent,—we see one without a motive to virtue, and who can only act in mere concert with others from some individual and temporary interest of selfishness. A family, a city, a nation of such isolated units is impossible; and yet the family, the city, the nation, are integral and necessary parts of complete humanity. Union in purpose and work is impossible among individuals who have no sense of responsibility; but without such united purpose and action no cultivation of the mind, no improvement in outward conditions, no perpetuation of the race, and no life,—but in the lowest barbarism and privation,—is possible. Such a state of things is not the intended, as it is not the actual, condition of humanity, but it is the necessary consequence of the existence of beings with our endowments without responsibility. Had such been created, it would have been impossible to awaken a sense of responsibility afterwards; and, had it been possible, who possessed the right to interfere with the Creator's work, and who could possibly have the inclination to impart such a gift to man? Thus, by the necessity of nature, we are driven to the conclusion that man is liable to answer to his Maker for every endowment which has been committed to his trust.

In discussing the question of Human Responsibility, we are bound to give all possible attention to the declarations of the divine will, and to all divine acts which have relation to this side of our nature. And this obligation arises from the fact that none can know the nature so well as its Author, and that He can have no purpose towards it but its improvement to the highest limits. Taking this as our rule of procedure and judgment, we cannot fail to see that, from the beginning, there has been a continual effort to awaken and perpetuate

a sense of dependence for the entire need of our life. An the only conclusion to which we can come, from this continuous divine action, is that a perpetual sense of dependence that will call forth a filial trust, hope, confidence, and love which will open the entire nature to the fatherly soothing counsel and strength of its Author, is the true normal condition of man. Nothing in divine action leads to the conclusion that we have to do with a rigid destiny, or a harsh despotism, but only with the heart of the Father of our spirits, who yearns over us to reclaim us to Himself, not for His advantage, but for ours. For this reason only He fills the path of apostasy and sin with briars and scorpions, but makes all which lead to His fatherly heart ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.

It is only in this manner that we can consider that most wonderful divine intervention in human affairs,—the Incarnation of the Son of God. That the Maker of all things should condescend to take our nature in its feebleness and suffering into union with Himself, so as to constitute one person, and to remain forever our brother and the Almighty's fellow, is a manifestation of care for, and interest in us, which is wonderful beyond all thought, and which, but for the abundant proof of its reality, we could not believe. And the wonder is increased by the fact, that the present and perpetual administration of the divine government, which is in His hands, is as truly tender and brotherly as was the original impulse which prompted Him to love us, and give Himself for us.

The individual government of the Saviour over those who receive Him is most perfect, springing out of a union so intimate as to be only properly described as "Christ in you," "Christ dwelling in the heart," the counterpart of which is a most perfect submission to Him in all things, which the Apostle Paul describes thus: "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." And again, after this manner: "Whose I am, and whom I serve"; and "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." In this complete subjection, however, there is no coercion, the only constraint is the constraint of love. In the love of Christ they are rooted and grounded, so as to be able to apprehend its breadth and length, and depth and height, and so to be filled with it, unto all the fulness of God. This causes such persons to be followers of God as dear children, and to walk in love as Christ loved them, and gave Himself for them. An emotional bond of this strength cannot fail to bring the

whole nature under subjection. But these bonds are willing bonds, being only a response to the love of Christ, which surpasseth knowledge; and the law which we obey, although perfect in its range, extending to all actions, words, dispositions, and thoughts is, after all, the perfect law of liberty; so that, in this condition of perfect subjection, the individual will and purpose are most fully accomplished.

We cannot look upon this peculiarly fatherly rule of God as anything else than the complete accomplishment of His original purpose with respect to man, because it has been brought about by the atoning and mediatorial work of the God-man, who united in His own person the two natures, as the means and the type of the union between God and men above described. Thus, we are taught what the Creator intended for man, and from the extraordinary means used to accomplish it, when imperilled by a general apostasy, we learn the all-but infinite importance attached by Him to its accomplishment.

We cannot fail, however, to see, from the complete series of divine acts in the government of men, that in placing the whole race in a condition of responsibility, and in implanting an indelible sense of it in every human soul, there could not be, as the final purpose, a mere assertion of authority. We must look beyond the authority to the consequences of its exercise in those who submit to it. And here at once we see a benevolence which is equal, in its purity and strength, to the fountain whence it sprang and to the channel by which it has flowed to us. The immediate effect of this submission is the establishment of a condition of conscious peace with God, which is the means and the authority for a continuous friendly intercourse between the Creator and His creature; maintained on the part of the creature by grateful thanks for good already bestowed, a worship of submission, hope, love, and trust, and prayer for present and continued acts of fatherly love and blessing. In these exercises there is neither vagueness nor uncertainty, as there is no doubt concerning the assurance of love, the excitement of courage, hope, and faith, and the infusion of new life into the soul from the Lord. In this intercourse, under a divine illumination, the glories of the divine nature, as shown in the records of His providence and grace, are more distinctly and more fully seen, and thus an impulse to higher devotion and more perfect virtue is given. In this manner, beyond the peace and rest from which it starts, the intercourse with God is the means of increased vigor, righteousness, truth, purity, and goodness.

There is, however, a joy in this fellowship which arises

directly by the operation of the Spirit of the Lord, and which is augmented by the consciousness of all the friendly and gracious relations in which, by the effected reconciliation, we stand to our heavenly Father, which, in the happiness and strength it produces, surpasses all other joy, and is declared to be "unspeakable and full of glory." But it must be always remembered that the first and largest element of this joy is the sense of reconciliation; that is, the consciousness that the condition of rebellion has ceased, and that the subject of the joy has been brought into a state of harmony with and subjection to God. Thus this richest donation of divine grace shows that a condition of actual submission to God is not only perfectly proper and natural to man, but that it is the highest and happiest condition to which he can attain.

This is evidently the true view of the end and purpose of human responsibility, so far as our Maker himself has shown it; and we cannot conceive of any other result but the most perfect development of our nature in all its beauty and strength, as the consequence of full acquiescence in the divine purpose, by unlimited subordination. This side of the question, however, is generally lost sight of, and it is discussed as though the subordination was claimed by an alien authority for its own selfish purposes. This course is all the more strange when we remember the essential peculiarities of our nature in this life, as, that we are capable of boundless knowledge, and equally of unlimited mistakes; that we begin life in total ignorance, and, to perpetuate it, are compelled to consider its immediate need and supply it. So far as the life of the body is concerned, we cannot go far wrong without immediate check; and, in all metaphysical speculation, because of the remoteness and uncertainty of its results, a mistake is not of much moment; but in the cultivation or restraint of the moral side of our nature, which rules our practice, and so affects others also, mistake or perverseness is of most serious consequence to our own character and to the happiness of others.

There is also this peculiarity about all failure in this side of our nature; as it can only take place by the determination of our individual will, so there is special unwillingness to retrace any false step, and thus a course of continuous deterioration and mischief follows from a first step, which only diverged slightly from the path of uprightness. Is it not likely, therefore, that He who has so richly endowed us in every other respect will, with equal care, prompt, restrain, guide, and stimulate us in the cultivation of those dispositions, and in the

pursuit of that course of life which will enable us to obtain the full measure of benefit from His primary gifts ?

That this is the tendency of the divine government of man, is plain from the use to which individual responsibility is put. We are not so much called to answer for the number of prayers we offer, of psalms we sing, or of oblations we present, as to how we act to our parents, children, masters, servants, neighbours, friends, or enemies ; in short, to all men, in so far as our action touches them. All who are brought into the fellowship of Christ walk as He also walked ; that same mind of righteousness, pity, purity, truth, and benevolence which was in Him is also in them, so that they are fruitful in every good work. They are required not only to be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they are seen as lights of the world, but also to remember that "our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works." In all the Epistles of the New Testament, the fruit of faith is shown to be the fulfilling of every social duty. And there can be no question but that the finest examples of righteous, pure, true, and benevolent living have been the fruit of that thorough submission to the Saviour, which Paul expressed as, "Christ liveth in me." Without such works, faith is declared to be vain and dead.

It is evident that, as the number of such persons increases in any community, the various forms of iniquity which too frequently appear in the intercourse of men to the dishonour and degradation of the perpetrators and to the mischief of others, must diminish, and, when they are universally prevalent, must entirely cease. Then all the misery, and more than half the sorrow of life, would end, while the honour, pleasure, and strength of such a community would constantly increase. In such a state, however, there would be nothing beyond a purely natural life ; that is, a life in harmony with our relations to our Maker and to our fellow-creatures. But there is no moral power capable of producing this state, but such a full submission to God as is comprehended in our accountability to Him.

While we are without limit accountable to God, we see that a subordinate and secondary accountability runs through all our relations to others. Children are liable to answer to their parents, and without this subordination it would be impossible to train them to the duties of life. No compact of any

kind can be made without bringing each of the parties under obligation to fulfil severally his part of the contract. All magistrates are responsible to the head of the state for the administration of the law, and all private persons are required to keep their practice within the prohibitions of the law under which they live. No man is at liberty to touch the property of another or in any way to damage his interests. There cannot be a school, a factory, or an army, but you have subordination, and consequent responsibility, running in an unbroken chain from top to bottom. In fact, no human organisation can exist without it, and this comes from no arbitrary superimposed law, but by necessity of nature. Man must be unmade, and re-made after another pattern, if he could engage in combined action without responsibility ; and without such action the race must die out.

Further discussion as to the accountability of man to man is unnecessary, as it is impossible to escape from it, communal life demanding authority and restraint everywhere. We may, therefore, review our conclusions, and so come to a logical result as a guide to practice.

We have seen that we are dependent on others for our life,—first, on our parents ; but, as they also are equally dependent on theirs, we are led on to the first Cause and Giver of human life. No man can make himself now, nor could the first man. From our bodily structure, and from the faculties and capabilities of our mind, it is evident that we cannot have come into being by the mechanical or chemical action of matter, nor from both combined, but that our Maker must be a Being of supreme intelligence and power. It also has appeared that we are equally dependent on Him for the continuance of our life ; not only as His will prolongs or cuts it short, but as His providence continues the conditions necessary for its preservation ; and that we are under His rule absolutely, as to our body and our means of operating by it on the world without us ; being unable to depart from the course prescribed for us without injury or destruction. The limits of our ability in this direction are narrow, well defined, and invariable. We are also evidently under a similar invariable rule as to our moral action ; so that we can indulge in no vice without deterioration in honour and strength ; nor can we trespass on the rights of others, but we bring ourselves under the restraint and chastisement of the laws which the community imposes as a necessary bond of union and protection.

But we have capabilities and wants which the material universe and our fellow-men cannot fully meet or develope. Thus we have seen that, from the beginning of human history, we have evidence that men, by a universal intuition, have aspired after fellowship with their Maker,—not the attainment of mere abstract knowledge, but a true communion of thought, emotion, and action; and that they have so far found what they sought, as to persevere in the practice till now, when religion is more prevalent and more powerful than ever before. The Creator, who has made the eye for light, the atmosphere for breath, and the lungs for breathing; who has given us discernment, and spread the universe before us as an open book for us to read; and who has so made and ordered all our bodily members as to suit the conditions in which He has placed us, cannot have given higher faculties than sensation and intellect, to leave them without a possibility of exercise, by failing to respond to the faculty which He has given for no other purpose but as a means of access to Himself, and the attainment of knowledge concerning His modes of operation in cases which supply no other data from which to start our cogitations.

This prepared us to look for direct and unquestionable fellowship with the Creator, nor were we disappointed. We have records of such fellowship from the beginning of human existence; and, as though on purpose to remove the possibility of doubt or mistake both as to the fact and to the nature of the intercourse, He has connected the most perfect display of His moral glory and of His condescension to man with the government of a nation, in which He maintained His own law by an effectual administration all the way through, showing that He who was king in Israel was the ruler of the world, by employing the substance, forces, and life thereof as His instruments of government. By the same effectual rule He has preserved this people distinct from all others, so that, although for eighteen centuries they have been without a country, and scattered as aliens over the face of the earth, yet they are nowhere absorbed, but retain their identity still; but, wherever they go, they carry with them as their *Magna Charta* the records of that divine government which extended through 1,400 years, although they testify to the disobedience and rebellion of their fathers, and declare that their continued unbelief and sin are the cause of their own present alienation; and as these records were more scrupulously made, are more complete, have been more carefully preserved, and enter more fully into the national life than those of any other people, so they possess the greatest historic value. To deny them would

be to invalidate all history. We have no stronger assurance that Cæsar invaded Britain than that God brought the Israelites out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. We have no better proof of the result of the Battle of Agincourt than we have of the overthrow of the Ammonites, Moabites, and the people of Mount Seir by their own swords.

Thus, by a long series of carefully-recorded events, we find the reality of a divine rule of man is attested, and in our present condition we have abundant proof that it is neither relaxed nor restricted. We cannot remove our body from the operation of the physical laws of the Creator, nor can we take our soul out of the control of His moral law, or prevent a single action of our life from recording its moral verdict in our nature itself. To submit to this rule insures our highest good, because it is that of the Father of our spirits, who can have no purpose adverse to us, and because it enlists the authority, power, and wisdom of the Author and Ruler of the Universe for the accomplishment of our desires and the improvement of our nature. But to resist and rebel is to oppose our highest interest, and can only result in degradation and ruin: "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth," but "woe unto him that striveth with his Maker."

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. W. N. WEST).—Had the author of the paper been present instead of in the southern hemisphere, it would have been a great pleasure to have accorded him in person a vote of thanks for favouring us with so interesting a paper. We are indebted to Mr. Dent for his kindness in reading it, and shall now be happy to hear any remarks that may be offered.*

Rev. J. J. LIAS, M.A. (in responding to a call), said, I feel that I am in the position of an advocate who has no case to argue against. I regard the paper as an extremely able one. What strikes me with respect to the papers read before this Institute as a rule is, that it does not seem desirable

* A correspondent remarks as to page 253, line 4, "Except so far as this, that if He gives existence to other beings it is only to be expected that He should give them means to attain the end He sets before them." The author replies, "I entirely concur as to the existence of such responsibility, yet I am not discussing creation in the place in question, and think it would be irrelevant to introduce the limitation suggested." To the same critic he replies that Max Müller, in *Chips from a German Workshop*, is his authority for stating that Abraham and Zoroaster were contemporary. This critic also refers to the beginning of the sixth paragraph from the end of the paper, and says, "Not without limit, but rather within the limits of our free agency." To which the author replies, "I agree that our accountability is only within the limits of our free agency; but does not our 'free agency'—or, as I prefer to call it simply, our agency—cover an entire action, responsibility included? I think it does, and therefore wrote 'without limit.'"

** The discussion was not taken on pages 269 to 281.

for us to indulge in anything like microscopic criticism as to an expression used here, or a remark made there, which might either have been improved, or which might have been omitted. We ought, I think, to have regard to the whole drift of the paper, which, I think is, in this case, one likely to advance the cause we all have at heart. (Hear, hear.) It certainly seems to me that the points the author has brought under our notice are well deserving of consideration, and that this is especially the case with regard to one or two of the matters he has discussed. A few days ago I happened to be present at the reading of a paper in the Divinity School at Cambridge, written by Professor MacAlister, a learned man of science, who has devoted himself, among other things, to the study of Egyptian antiquities. The paper he then read was a very remarkable one on the "Ritual of the Dead" (a paper on this subject will be found in vol. vi. p. 321.—ED.) as employed in the early Egyptian religion, and it appears to me that there is one point which the author of the present paper has not brought out with sufficient distinctness, but which the facts actually prove to have been the case, namely, that the further we go back in the history of these ancient nations the more clear it appears to be that the religious principle was originally based on the monotheistic idea. It seems to me that in those early times the primary spiritual ideas connected with religion are more clearly displayed, and that, especially in the case of Egypt, the further we go back the more unmistakably do we find that, just as the Egyptian architecture was more pure and perfect in the earliest periods, so were the religious ideas of the Egyptian people of a purer and more perfect nature. The same remark will apply to the Assyrian religion; but, as to the Persian and Chinese religions, I can hardly speak of them because I have not studied them. I think that the more we study the points set forth in this paper the more does the author, who is so far removed from all intercourse with modern thought and from the opportunities afforded by the libraries and other aids we have around us, appear to demand our sympathy and admiration for having so ably thought out and discussed these matters. There is one point on page 265 which struck me. The author says:—"The force of this important series of facts is not invalidated nor weakened by the consideration that in some of the cases referred to the objects of worship were spurious; but it is rather strengthened by the fact that, so dominant is the sense of need, and so prevalent the persuasion of the possibility of access to God, on whom we depend, that when all true knowledge of Him was lost, and only false substitutes for the living God existed, which could not help, yet, even then, the practice of worship was continued through successive generations of disappointment, all of whom were ready to ascribe the failure to the imperfection of the worship rather than to the impotence or the indifference of their gods." The author here puts in a striking form the argument that human nature cannot do without a power outside of and superior to itself, as Matthew Arnold says, "A not-ourselves that makes for righteousness." We cannot do without something beyond ourselves which will help us to fight

for the right ; we are bound to acknowledge the necessity for an appeal to that Power of whose aid we feel, as poor human creatures, we stand in need. On page 268 the author travels over the same ground to that which I have traversed in a paper read before this Institute, namely, that we are not to look upon God as a mere abstraction of the human intellect, or a creation of our own minds, but as a concrete Being, the source of all life, a Being outside and beyond ourselves, who has created us, and who brought the whole world into existence. There is another point, also, which seems worthy of notice, and that is on page 283, where the author states that the God " who has so made and ordered all our bodily members as to suit the conditions in which He has placed us, cannot have given higher faculties than sensation and intellect, to leave them without a possibility of exercise, by failing to respond to the faculty which He has given for no other purpose but as a means of access to Himself, and the attainment of knowledge concerning His modes of operation in cases which supply no other data from which to start our cogitations." This is a point that has always struck me as being one of very great force. In the physical world we see a marvellous adaptability of means to ends. In whatever department of physical science we pursue our studies we find this remarkable evidence of purpose and design. And yet there are those who tell us that all the higher strivings of our nature which lead us to devotion to God, which bring forth prayer and a sense of dependence, and which lie at the bottom of all religion, are produced in us without an object ; that the mere physical faculties have a distinct and definite purpose, but that those which are highest of all have been brought into existence for no reason whatever. It seems to me that nothing can be more self-condemnatory than a notion such as this,—that all that is worthiest and best in human nature was given to us without a purpose, but that all the lowest, the meanest, and the most commonplace of our faculties have been bestowed upon us for special and definite objects. I agree, however, with a remark I heard made the other day at a meeting at Cambridge by the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, who said he always felt when he got up to speak as if he were in the House of Commons, and that, whether he had an antagonist or not, he was obliged to think he had one. Like Mr. Forster, I also fancy that I can get on best when I have an antagonist ; but in the present instance I cannot term Mr. Blencowe an antagonist, because he is in perfect sympathy with myself, and, this being so, the best thing I can do is to finish what I had to say, and resume my seat. (Applause.)

Mr. W. P. JAMES, F.L.S.—I have much the same feeling with regard to this paper as has been expressed by Mr. Lias, namely, that I agree so entirely with it that it is scarcely possible to say anything that is not in the shape of praise. Perhaps the title may be open to criticism, because it hardly does it justice. It is rather a branch of the theistic argument in general than a mere discourse on "Human Responsibility." It seems to me to take a much wider field than that indicated by the title, and to deal with the proof of theism from the point of view of man's

responsibility to the Creator, at the same time introducing the subject of creation in general. Some of the earlier parts of the paper I consider exceedingly well presented, especially those referring to the various arrangements in nature, from which we must infer a Creator. I may, perhaps, say that among those things from which we generally deduce the argument from design, I myself stumbled on one, which I have not yet seen in print, but which I have several times adduced in arguments I have had with Secularists and Atheists. On one occasion I offered to stake the argument from design upon it, but the challenge was not replied to. The point is this—that when we consider what we see in the world around us, there is scarcely any single thing which furnishes so strong an argument for the existence of a Creator as a fact which, perhaps, has been very little thought of in this connexion, namely, that, as astronomy teaches us, the earth is constantly subject to two distinct motions, the first being that by which it spins round on its own axis with tremendous velocity; and the second, that by which it performs its enormous orbit round the sun, a circuit which is also made at a marvellous rate of speed. Now, when we come to think of it, the world could not be inhabited unless it were so arranged that these tremendous movements should be imperceptible to the creatures upon its surface—and, as a matter of fact, so imperceptible are both these movements that a very long time elapsed before the people living upon the planet became aware of them. This imperceptibility of the movements of the earth I regard as a strong argument in favour of the probability that the world was prepared for habitation before man appeared upon it. The arrangements, whatever they are, by which this result is attained,—such, for instance, as the existence of the atmosphere,—must be the effect of various complex causes, which certainly seem very plainly to indicate that the earth was intended for the habitation of beings for whom it was essential that they should not be conscious of its motions through space, and who must be sheltered against what might otherwise be the effect of those motions during every moment of their lives. On page 257 there is a most able exposure of a very common fallacy as to the word “homogeneous.” A great many people who read the works of Herbert Spencer are much misled by the use of this word, and there can be no doubt that it is used in a very vague way. It is one of those convenient words which, much more than the expression “anthropomorphic,” conceal great confusion of thought. As far as the Greek word “homogeneous” goes, it simply means “of the same kind,” and I fancy this gets so fixed in people’s heads, that when they talk of the original nebula being homogeneous they suppose it was all of one kind. I think, however, when we come to reflect upon it, we shall find there is no reason to suppose that matter at the beginning was all of one kind. If by homogeneous is simply meant a nebula of uniform consistence,—which is probably what Herbert Spencer means,—then, as Mr. Blencowe shows, it is not really homogeneous, for the nebula consists of atoms of the elements of which we at present know sixty-three; therefore, it is not

homogeneous, but, on the contrary, very heterogeneous. I should like to know how an atom of hydrogen could be changed into one of carbon, or sulphur, or iron, or bismuth, or gold, or any other metal ; and yet this is what would be meant by evolution in a physical sense. As a matter of fact, no one has ever known an atom of hydrogen become anything but an atom of hydrogen. As regards the note on page 260, the evolution theory is that certain animals placed in the depths of the ocean were once without eyes, as, indeed, is the case now. These creatures do not appear to require them, and manage to get on very well without them ; and, this being so, one cannot see why they should not remain satisfied with their condition in this respect. But, according to the evolutionists, we are to assume that these animals became dissatisfied with their want of vision ; that certain small fibres along the surface of their bodies became slightly sensitive to light, and thus they were ultimately led to develop visual organs. Why this should be we cannot see, nor are we told of what use it can be to them to become slightly sensitive to the action of light. But, nevertheless, this is the orthodox theory, and we must not call it in question. Well, then, having been thus rendered slightly sensitive to light for a thousand years or so, the sensitiveness increases, and this is the theory as to how eyes are developed ! When we have regard to all the long nascent stages which so many generations of these animals must necessarily undergo in the working out of this process, the absurdity of the whole thing is rendered manifest. I think the part of the paper, which deals with the force of conscience, puts the subject in a very clear and able way. It is merely an adaptation of the thoughts expressed by Bishop Butler ; but there can be no doubt whatever, without any appeal to authority, that the universality of the faculty of conscience is one of the great arguments for theism and the existence of God. The three main arguments for this proposition are, the metaphysical argument, the argument from nature, and the argument founded on conscience. The metaphysical argument, which, I think, hardly deserves all the hard names that have been applied to it, is, nevertheless, one of the leading proofs of a First Cause ; the argument from nature is, likewise, a powerful one ; but the argument from conscience is, I suppose, the strongest of all, and I think Mr. Blencowe has put it in an exceedingly able manner.

Mr. R. J. HAMMOND.—At page 257 the author says, “The man who is placed at the head of a grand operative establishment, having a large capital and many subordinates under his control, is bound to greater carefulness, diligence, and fidelity than any one under him.” Thus, the pressure is put on the human conscience. Then, the author goes on to say, “By this rule, how truly boundless is our responsibility to the Creator and Upholder of all things.” The higher the position the greater the responsibility. The ruler of a state becomes the servant of that state ; the head of a government becomes the servant of his fellow-creatures, and cannot sleep as they do, because of the cares imposed upon him. This, it should be remembered, is a responsibility which follows what the rulers have

learned from the Divine Controller of the Universe. The Son of God has been down on earth and has taken the place of a servant, saying, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The divine image of the Father has taken the place of a servant.

Mr. J. HASSELL.—I admire the passage where the writer shows the true effect of the human conscience in the desire and need for God. I hold that the mind of man could never have formed an idea of God, had there not been a God. There must have been the prototype; for it is impossible to form an idea from what does not exist. We ought never to omit the opportunity of putting before the people the argument so well urged by the author of the paper, that God is not the abstract idea of Herbert Spencer—that He is not the metaphysical Absolute, Unconditioned, and Infinite of those who adopt Herbert Spencer's views. According to the metaphysical idea of these men, it is impossible to think of such a being as God. With them God becomes "unthinkable"; without attributes, relations, thought, or action, and therefore, as the author has put it, "without being." I assert that God has relations, as He is our Father, and our King; and we are equally related to Him as His creatures, for whom He framed laws, and for whose wants He makes provision. As opposed to the God of Herbert Spencer, the God of the Bible is a Being of infinite love and compassion; One with whom we can have conscious intercourse, for He is a person—a God, whom we have the power to realise and come into contact and communion with, and is not the metaphysical abstract of the Spencerian philosophy. In opposition to the theory of evolution, I would stand out for the grand principle that God made all His creatures perfect in their order, leading up by various gradations to man, the crowning work of all,—a being formed in His own image, able to worship Him, and capable of personal contact with Him.

Rev. W. C. BARLOW.—In regard to "the terrible charge of being anthropomorphic" (page 267), I have never found anything in that term at all like what is described in Austin Caxton's book. What is there regarded as the terrible resonance of the Greek, has not, in reality, any alarming power. Indeed, the word quoted by the author seems to me a most valuable word, and one that we have no need to apologise for. On the contrary, I think we ought strongly to insist on its being the correct word. We are talking everywhere about God as He is known, or can be, or ought to be known to us; and all human knowledge must come under human forms of thought. There must, therefore, be, as I understand Mr. Blencowe to say, an anthropomorphic character in all our knowledge of God. Besides, a word like this has the merit of suggesting a correlated word. It is one of the words which must come with another word in order to complete the meaning, and on the page referred to the word is treated of in relation to the question of the probability of a revelation from God to man. That revelation begins almost by an affirmation that man is theomorphic, for "God said, Let us make man in our image," the correlative being that God must be known to man in an

anthropomorphic way. That is a point which I think justifies one in saying—henceforth we may glory in the reproach which is conveyed in the censure put upon the word “anthropomorphic.” We need that word to enable us to declare the whole of the idea, which we hold is only true when it is taken as a whole. (Hear.)

The meeting was then adjourned.

REMARKS BY THE REV. R. COLLINS, M.A.

THIS paper arouses the mind very forcibly to the consideration of the question, What must be our ultimate defence against Modern Materialism? I think the true answer is, unquestionably, We must take our stand on History. We have, perhaps, too long expended our powers in chiefly endeavouring to show the weak points in the Materialist's line of thought, we have dealt largely in negatives. It is not very difficult to show that many of the assumptions of the Materialist are too absurd for belief; and yet it is possible to mistake or mis-state them. For instance, the Materialist does not attribute design to the animal or plant that improves itself. The note on page 260 correctly expresses the Evolutionist's theory; but he would not, as on the same page, speak of an animal “discerning the advantage of tentacula,” &c. With the Materialists the will and intelligence are simply “*physical phenomena*” produced by, or associated with, “molecular processes,” excited in the brain by external circumstances; the will or “cogitation” has no hand in Evolution, only the inherent forces of nature, or whatever other term may be used; so that, as Professor Huxley says, “the whole world, living and not living, is the result of the mutual inter-action, according to definite laws, of the forces possessed by the molecules of which the primitive nebulosity of the universe was composed.” These forces, however, always manage to work for *harmony*; and the Evolutionists are *obliged* to use, or choose to use, the language of intelligence. Darwin's phrase “*natural selection*” is a case in point. This always seems to me a tacit, though no doubt unwilling, testimony to the fact, that “final causes” are being worked up to; and it is difficult to conceive that, without supposing previous intention somewhere. And yet intention is no part of the Evolutionist's theory.

How are we then, in our turn, to explain the potency or potencies, or whatever term may be acceptable, under which the *Cosmos* is what it is? Mr. Herbert Spencer unifies this effort in Nature, and expresses it as “an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed.” Our mission is to show that the Infinite and Eternal Energy is the Energy of an Infinite and Eternal Intelligence; and to persuade men of this we must fortify our statement that this Intelligence *has spoken* to man.

Natural Religion and mere reason have not weapons strong enough for the entire defeat of Materialism. We need Revelation.—In short, we must gather our forces more and more within the domain of History. The “inward testimony” of man—a point emphatically brought out in Mr. Blencowe’s paper—existing as far back as we can trace his history, to the existence of a Creator and Upholder of all things, is, in fact, the result of that Creator’s revelation of Himself. The ancient literature of the nations, and the records that are being disinterred from the long-forgotten mounds of Eastern cities, are to furnish, especially in their confirmation of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, the best weapons against Modern Scepticism. To the man, who is convinced that God *has spoken*, materialism becomes necessarily an empty and useless dream. And, as regards the prominent topic of this paper, to the man, who is convinced of an Infinite and Eternal Intelligence, the Author of all being, the doctrine of human responsibility becomes an intense reality, the pole-star of human moral life : while to the Materialist it is but one result of what have been called “social forces,” and must be as changeable and evanescent as “social forces” themselves have ever been.
