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A GLANCE AT THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

NOT many years ago Dr. Draper, of the New York University, contributed to the International Series a volume entitled *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*. In his strictures on the work, the late Dr. Brownson justly remarked that the author had, like the elder Disraeli, written a history of events that never happened, adding, in his own incisive way, that a "conflict between religion and science is something that has never occurred and never can occur."

It is true that between true religion and true science there can be no conflict; between true religion and what by a woful perversion of language is called science there not only can, but actually does, exist a conflict, and that conflict is "nigh even at our doors." On all sides are evidences of its proximity.

Nowadays every man that talks at all talks about matters of science, and because there is no law to prevent him from babbling scientific nonsense, he can see no reason why he should not also annihilate religion; nay, he fancies himself intrusted with a special mission, having for its end the total destruction of all religion. He may not always be quite sure about the truth of the science which he champions, but with a species of intuition which seems common to the *genus* scientist, he never has a doubt about the falsity of the religion which he is bent upon demolishing. From the scientist obscure to the scientist renowned, from the rural scientist whose novel theories are the wonder of his unenlightened neighborhood to

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the ponderous names in a New England coterie, all feel that the complement of their career as true followers of science consists in utterly eradicating all vestiges of religion from the face of society; and it is no more than justice to say that most of them ungrudgingly expend a vast amount of zeal and energy upon at least the complement of their mission. They economize the time and labor, zeal and earnestness, which should be devoted to the actual study of the science they pretend to adore, in order to lavish them in unstinted measure in their warfare upon the religion which they manifestly abhor. That a false science should be habitually arrayed in an attitude of hostility to the Church is not to be wondered at, for this hostility is its very essence; but that within the last few years every individual follower of science should break out in active aggression is a curious fact. It is a fact, however, for which there is an obvious reason. For the last few years positive thought has been very busy, exceedingly noisy, and dreadfully in earnest. It has filled the world with untranslatable terminology. It has swelled the size of our encyclopædias and dictionaries. It has inflated men's minds and puffed them up with false notions of their own greatness. It has thronged our platforms with vapid orators, who propound foolish theories in unknown terms to astounded audiences, and these on their part applaud the loudest and longest when the language is least intelligible, and then go home to carp at religion and boast of the advancement of science. It has stocked the literary-scientific world with books, anthropological, biological, ethical, etc.; and these books are purchased and devoured by men who can with difficulty spell the sesquipedal terms of which they are composed, but whose greatest ambition is to be able to prate in the language of modern thought.

In this way positive thought has wrought incalculable injury to faith, and the injury done to faith is slight compared with that done to morals. On every side the pressure of religious belief is relaxed, and a removal, even the slightest, of the pressure of faith is sure to be followed by a proportionate slackening of morals. Many men have long since flung aside their faith in the existence of God, and many who yet retain their belief in His existence have long since lost all practical faith in His providence. Now men are men, and no longer children. They are perfectly able to act for themselves. To be taken by the hand and led by a divine providence would imply that they are either children or imbeciles, and against this imputation their whole manhood rises in indignant and rebellious scorn. They are impatient to shake off the hand, divine though it be, that is offered unsolicited, and manifest a disposition to rebuke the implied insult and condignly avenge it upon the head of the Being who offers it. Men have nowadays acquired too sturdy an independence to yield submission even to a Being to whom they

owe everything. Some are willing enough to allow Him to retain heaven as His throne, but His title to earth as a footstool they are prepared to dispute, and the time seems not far distant when the idea, already common to many, will be held by most men, that the earth is man's throne and the heavens his footstool. There is a universal tendency to exclude God from the concerns of the world altogether. Men are making desperate efforts to shorten God's right arm, which they formerly believed omnipotent, and to wrest from Him half His empire, over which, ever since He created it, He has exercised undisputed sovereignty. The lines are drawn, and the limits set beyond which He must not pass. Religion is His sphere, and to this men would confine Him. Its limits He must not transgress. Its boundary line He must be careful not to overstep. Any interference on the part of God in the affairs of men would be resented as an unwarrantable intrusion. Outside of religion all is man's. There man is sovereign and supreme lord. There all is man's enterprise. The whole is his undisputed empire; or, if he is willing to share his dominion with a colleague, he retains the throne and crown, bestows the sceptre, and at the name of his adopted associate in power every knee must bend, for the colleague is *Science*.

And even in religion God's place is gradually narrowing, and He is hourly in danger of being supplanted by an impersonal god,—Morality. Men have made to themselves the image and likeness of everything that is in the heavens above and the earth beneath, raised them upon their altars, adored and worshipped them, and this too with an unerring regularity worthy the idolatrous lapsings of the ancient Israelites. All this, though much, is yet but a tithe of the injury done to faith. It is the disease in its mildest form, and where the vital principle of belief in God's existence is yet intact. Side by side with the question of faith, and shadowing it as closely as the shadow follows substance, runs the question of morals. Already we are left a shattered faith in the deep-meaning things of life; and when the deep-meaning questions of life lose all meaning, the grave questions of morality, whose existence hangs upon them, must of necessity lose their meaning also. Thus it is that the influence of "modern thought" is felt in houses where the language of modern science would be a "tongue unknown," and that the successful leaders of advanced thought are at least indirectly responsible for actions committed by men to whom their theories would be a meaningless jargon, and to whom the names of Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Darwin, Helmholtz, or Virchow might mean anything from a leader of advanced thought to a Choctaw or Cheyenne chief. The widespread evil of uprooted faith in God and conscience has filtered down from rank to rank, from class to class, until it has a certain bearing upon most actions

of daily life. The good ship Faith, once riding firmly and steadily amid the waves of human opinion, was freighted with a precious, sacred cargo,—Morality ; but the tempest has lashed her sides, waves have rolled over her, a large portion of her precious freight has been hopelessly wrecked, and many men struggling in the surf, with honest purpose and noble endeavor, are buffeted, and all their efforts paralyzed by floating fragments from the wreck of ruined morality. There is no need of facts to verify this sad view of things. We have but to place a hand on the pulse, or lay an ear close to the abnormal beatings of the heart of the religious and moral feeling, and we shall find the symptoms to be such that the most skillful of charlatans cannot err in his diagnosis, or fail to ascribe the disease to its real cause. It would be strange if the Church should idly look on and witness the domain of faith and morals thus devastated, and raise not an arm to save them. It would be a betrayal of her trust should she with listless indifference behold an open foe make such sad havoc in the very province of which she is the divinely appointed guardian.

Already the first effects of the first movement are perceptible. The whole moral world is likely to be thrown into chaos and confusion unless the Church steps in and checks the threatening ruin. Not only is vice making daily encroachments upon the province of virtue, but virtue must be very prudent in its behavior or it will be decried and censured as vice. The line beyond which virtue becomes vice was never before chalked so far within the territory of virtue ; the line beyond which vice ceases to be blameless was never drawn so near the fountain-head of vice. Never, in the opinions of men, did vice lean so closely to virtue's side ; never had virtue so much to fear from a censorious world. Men's minds were never so divided about the point where purity ceases to be a virtue, and charity ceases to be praiseworthy. Up to a certain point impurity will be frowned upon, but there is a point, too, beyond which the world has learned to look upon purity as a virtue of doubtful merit. Charity, up to a certain point, will be extolled, but one step beyond, and it is apt to be hissed as folly or philanthropy run mad ; and little danger is there at the present day that humility will be pressed into heroics or purity into celibacy. The higher and holier sanction of morality (the sanction of eternal reward and punishment) the present age has entirely eliminated ; it has retained what it considers the manlier and more effectual one, —humanity. And thus we find the virtue of the present day precisely the same as the virtue of ancient Paganism. Virtue is no longer practiced for its own sake. People are virtuous not from a love of virtue, but because it is yet their interest. The rule of conduct has been appositely termed the " calculation of consequences." The cultivation of virtue for its own sake, or for any eternal reward

it brings, is a remnant of an obsolete religionism. The only things sought after for their own sake are money and pleasure. Virtue and morality are pursued merely to the bounds of advantage or convenience. Only their shadows remain; the substance has long since passed away. And that even the phantom of morality is allowed to remain is due to a very simple reason. The inevitable pressure of proof deduced from experience shows that morality is the only safeguard of order, and hence the necessity of its existence in the world; but come forward with a new entity which will preserve order and yet give free scope to licentiousness and immorality, or show that the world would be quite as well off without either morality or order, and this morality, which to-day is nominally sanctioned, will to-morrow be dethroned, degraded, and despised. Its imperative necessity in the world, as the only force competent to cope with anarchy and chaos, and capable of maintaining order in human affairs, is the only thread upon which hangs its existence, and hence it is not for its own sake, but for the sake of the order so helplessly dependent upon it, that it is, not indeed practiced, but countenanced in the world.

Indeed, from the necessity of their position, the *positivists*, to be consistent, should abolish morality. The code of Sinai retained when the Lawgiver of Sinai is abolished will, to say the least, be a strange anomaly. A code of ethics based upon a belief in God and the responsibility of creatures to Him, must be strangely out of place in a creed which makes merry over the absurdity of such a belief and treats it as an old wife's tale. Surely, to be consistent, they must demolish the structure when they have razed the foundations, and if they will not it is likely to topple of itself. A cloud has already cast its shadow over the old-time ethics. With radical changes in human beliefs, it would be strange if radical changes in ethics should not be introduced all around us. A new basis must be sought upon which to found ethical codes if the old one has been discovered to be resting on a foundation of sand. The positivists themselves seem to be fully aware of this, and already the first steps seem to have been taken to draw up a new code of morality. The revolution in morals seems to have already taken its soundings. Points which were always looked upon as irrevocably fixed begin to be questioned. The war has already attacked the outposts, and it seems but a question of time until every single point in the ancient order of ethics will have to fight for its existence. With Herbert Spencer and the whole ethical, medical, and philanthropic wings of positivism grandly questioning whether it were not charity to kill a person afflicted with an incurable disease—a work of corporal mercy, in certain cases, not indeed to feed the hungry, but to put them beyond reach of all hunger or the necessity

of food—a new code of ethics seems fast springing up, in which we may look for an entirely new set of cardinal virtues, in which suicide is likely to rank as an act of heroic valor, and homicide, in many cases, as an act of heaven-born charity. And thus we shall have the doors open to crimes which can strut in the guise of virtue, and more crimes committed in the name of charity than have ever been committed in the name of liberty.

Will this come? On all sides it is admitted that only one institution exists in the world sufficiently powerful to prevent it. This institution is the Catholic Church. Years ago Mr. Huxley told the world that the "Roman Catholic Church" was "the *one* great spiritual organization able to resist" what he was pleased to term "the progress of science and modern civilization." Now all the world admits the truth of Mr. Huxley's remark. The Church herself, too, fully realizes this fact; but in opposing "modern civilization" she is far from opposing the "progress of science."

Perhaps it might be said with truth, that for the third time in her history the Church finds herself called upon to confront an enemy which is not a rebel to her authority—an enemy which has come into existence, been reared, and attained its strength outside her dominions. Even Mr. Mallock from his stand-point will tell us that the Church is inclined to regard positivism "as a belligerent rather than a rebel." And, in point of fact, the movement of the present age can no more be said to be a revolt against the authority of the Church than was the Pagan element with which she found herself in conflict at her birth, or the enemy which she was subsequently called upon to combat in the followers of Mahomet. The attitude of positivism bears no shadow of resemblance to the outbreak of Arianism, Pelagianism, Protestantism, or Jansenism. Its apostles and disciples have never been in the ranks of the Catholic Church. In no sense can it be said to be a rebellion against her, unless in the sense that, like modern history, it is "a conspiracy against truth," whose claims upon mankind, like those of the Church, are universal. If there be a rebellion at all, it is a rebellion against Protestantism, not, indeed, in the sense that it is a rebellion against truth, but in the sense that the outbreak occurred in the ranks of Protestantism, and that its followers are drawn so largely from Protestant sects. Because it has pushed the pet principles of Protestantism to their most pernicious results it is none the less a rebel against it. A child is none the less a rebel to parental authority because he is heir to a stubborn disposition, and the example of rebellion has been set him by wilful parents. That he has bettered their instruction and profited by their example may be extenuating circumstances, but can hardly change the nature of the rebellious act. And that the leaders of modern thought have

but pursued to their utmost legitimate conclusions the favorite principles of private judgment and revolt against authority so dear to Protestantism, fails to lift them out of the rank of rebels to Protestant authority; if such a thing exist, positivism must then be looked upon as a rebel not to Catholicity but to Protestantism; but all the same it is Catholicity which must combat it.

On all sides it is freely admitted that the power in whose territory the revolt exists is utterly powerless to suppress it. At the present day there is no greater truism amongst the disciples of modern thought, than that Protestantism is entirely unable to resist its inroads. Indeed it is a commonplace which Protestantism does not take the trouble to gainsay. And within the last few years we even witnessed the phenomenon of the American world turning to Catholicity and holding out its hands to it for protection, when the worst terrors of communism—the legitimate offspring of modern thought—loomed up so ominously before us; so that the Church is called upon to fight not only her own battles against her internal and external enemies, but the battles of all mankind as well. She is called upon to conquer enemies found unconquerable by all others; and even those who centuries ago revolted against her authority must needs supplicate her assistance if they wish to subdue their own rebellious children. And thus we find the Church in the enlightened nineteenth century precisely what she was in the dark ages of the tenth,—the guardian of society and the benefactor of all mankind. Now she is called upon to marshal her forces against the serried ranks of what is pompously called “modern civilization,” and for many reasons “modern civilization” bids fair to be one of the most formidable antagonists which the Church has ever been called upon to encounter. Without provocation and without cause it proves to be the most bitter, the most malicious, and the most intemperate of enemies. The spirit which actuates it seems to be the spirit of heresy; the warfare it wages is the warfare of infidelity. It has something in common with every enemy which ever entered the arena against the Church; it displays an energy and a devotion which promises to labor “more than them all.” The materialism it advocates is the materialism of ancient Paganism. The barbarism it leads to is the barbarism of Attila and Genseric. The fierce and fiery fanaticism betrayed, at least, by those who might, perhaps, be called its lay disciples, is the fanaticism of the believers in the Koran. The vaunting boasts and the arrogant intemperance sound like the arrogance and intemperance of Martin Luther. The absurd and ridiculous guesses, the unfounded assumptions, are peculiarly its own. Mr. Mallock will tell us that it promises to revive the “buried lusts of Paganism.” We have only to take up the *Value of Life* or any of the effusions

of the female "scientists" to discover a more than Mohammedan fanaticism. Oliver Wendell Holmes would, perhaps, blame the science itself more than the followers of it for the propensity they manifest towards a braggart disposition; for he tells us that "absolute, peremptory facts are great bullies, and those who keep company with them are apt to get into a bullying habit of mind." And the same writer would probably assign the same reason for the intemperance with which the views of modern thought are obtruded upon us; for he says that "scientific knowledge" even in "modest men" partakes "of insolence;" and insolence we know is very nearly akin to intemperance. But while the present movement has so much in common with all its predecessors, it has an attraction and a charm peculiarly its own. There is no charge which a man, with any pretensions at all to knowledge, will repel with such spirit as a charge of ignorance. To be considered patrons, or at least abettors of science, seems to be one of the modern fashionable weaknesses. Perhaps this is the principal, if not the sole reason, why it is we find in the ranks of "science" in our day men of every hue of thought and every color of belief. We have scientists to whom science is their god, and philosophers who are ready to lay down their lives in the cause of truth; wild enthusiasts who draw rash conclusions from new discoveries; cool-headed reasoners for whom new discoveries are the confirmation of a life-long faith; men who are called credulous because they will not cease to believe in the existence of God; rash skeptics who doubt everything, even their own existence; morality-loving men whose irreproachable lives would be an ornament to Christianity; base libertines who make science their creed because it places no restraint upon their passions; earnest men in the pursuit of knowledge; frivolous men in search of novelty; good men in the best of faith, but who never possessed the gift of *faith*; bad men who possessed it but to abandon it, or clung to it only to outrage it; even strong-minded women who clamor for rights which most men seem inclined to deny them even as privileges; and weak-minded men who regard as privileges—and even then shrink from exercising them—what they might justly claim, and what all men would willingly accord them as rights;—all are to be met with enrolled under the banner of "modern progress."

The origin of Christianity has been compared with the origin of "modern thought" a hundred times. The noisy, pompous aggressions of the one and the humble beginnings of the other is an oft-told tale. The rapidity with which Catholicity gained the ascendancy over the world was a marvel, whose solution puzzled the minds of unbelievers in every after age; for neither its rapid growth nor the extraordinary ease with which it captivated men's minds

could be attributed to favoring circumstances. A metaphor of Lord Macaulay's on a different subject applies to it exactly. "The hardy plant" had but a "barren soil into which it struck deep its roots," and "an inclement sky" to which it "spread wide its branches." The famous words of Tertullian, "We are but of yesterday," etc. abundantly attest two things: the prolific growth of Christianity and the hostile elements against which that growth had to struggle. The sun of Catholicity rose indeed in the East, but to all the outer world the Eastern sky appeared overcast with the clouds of an unmeaning superstition. The nation from which sprang the strange being who claimed that He and the Father were one possessed no political prestige. The time was long past when the neighboring city of Tyre was the magnet which drew eastward the commerce of the world, when even Carthage was an emporium of Tyre, when the ships of Tyre were on every known sea, and the "ships of Tharsis" rode proudly into the Tyrian harbor. A time was when even Tyre herself might justly grow jealous of the commerce of Jerusalem; but now the nation itself was under a foreign yoke. The Jewish people were remarkable among neighboring nations only for their stubborn adherence, in spite of their former repeated lapsings, to the creed of their ancestors, for their manifold traditions concerning the human family, and their tedious, anxious longing for some one who was to come to them from Heaven as their king and deliverer. "Can anything good come from Israel," though not attaining the dignity of a proverbial formula, might express as much to those living out of Judea as "Can anything good come from Nazareth" did to those who lived outside the scorned hamlet. The founders of new creeds are not often visited with punishment, but the ignominy, the disgrace, the cruelty which the Founder of Christianity suffered at the hands of those He came to save is the most revolting in the annals of the world. The doctrine itself was a scandal to those for whom it was intended, and a stumbling-block to those to whom it was transferred. It was indeed "a banner with a strange device," for its *Excelsior* meant deeper in humility and mortification. Its greatest pride was to be possessed of the greatest humility; its greatest happiness to cut itself loose from the happiness of the world. Its greatest glory was to be buffeted to shame, and a death amid the most cruel tortures the most desirable end to a life which would be all the more enviable if chastened by a lifelong cross. The Evangelists of this creed were stranger if possible than the creed itself. Fishermen have never in any age been remarkable for eloquence, and the most notable school of logic is surely not a hut by the seashore for mending nets; whatever it might be at another time, it could hardly be so at a time when Rome was in the palmiest of its Augustan

days, and the Athenian Areopagus was the centre of all that was refined in art, in science, in literature, and in eloquence. Worldly influence or persuasive oratory can hardly be said to be the portion of the toilers on the waves, and to those who would not recognize the *digitus Dei*, but judged Christianity from a human point of view, it must have appeared the most supreme folly for illiterate fishermen from their boats and nets to arise and stay the world in its progress, to convince the inhabitants of Jerusalem that the *Man* over whom their cruelty triumphed was the God whom their piety should lead them to adore; to tell the world that its highest wisdom was the highest folly, and that the riches of poverty was not only the most desirable, but the only desirable kind of wealth. Strange that the logic and eloquence of the fishermen succeeded! Strange that it should to-day survive! But stranger still, and strangest of all, that it alone,—the folly and ignorance of the Galilean fishermen,—following, no doubt, the “advanced thinkers,” law of the “survival of the fittest,”—after encountering the shocks and surviving the ceaseless opposition of nineteen centuries,—should be deemed to-day the only combatant capable of confronting the boasts of a haughty, intolerant science, and that too at the very time when that science is at the summit of its power, when it has the sanction of names illustrious in literature, when it has surrounded itself with dignity and splendor, and when it has filled the world with the fame of great things achieved and mighty things accomplished in its name. To-day modern thought stands at the circumstantial antipodes of Catholicity at its birth. Never was doctrine preached or theory promulgated under more favorable auspices. It has all the prestige of great leaders, and all the sanction of important discoveries. It has all the *éclat* which science can give, and every new discovery is made to serve as a new proof of this new doctrine. To take the world captive seems to be its mission, and every new development of science, while it has the confirming force of a miracle, is a new fortress erected within its boundary and a solid breastwork behind which it can intrench itself. Protestantism has been the Baptist to prepare the way and make straight the paths of the new Evangelists. Protestantism as surely prepared the way for positivism as Tractarianism prepared the way in England for Catholicity, and more surely than Evangelicalism prepared the way for Tractarianism. The age in which it asks for a hearing has all the credit of being Christian and all the advantage of being Pagan. The lamented Dr. Marshall aptly styled it an age of “intellectual presumption in the few and intellectual servility in the many.” The strings of religious feeling, as well as of religious belief, seem to have run loose. The mechanism of the various sects has long since run down. Since John Wesley appeared on

the scene there has been no thorough winding up of religious sentiment, and the unstrung mechanism woos every breeze that blows. The trumpet is not only liable at any moment to give an uncertain sound, but has already frequently emitted sounds calculated to inspire anything but confidence or certainty. The pillars of ancient sanctuaries, long supposed to be the abiding home of the Holy of Holies, are tottering to their very foundations, and the edifices which they supported reel and stagger. The creeds of the various sects have shifted their principles from point to point, from basis to basis. Like the dove from Noah's ark, they fail to find a solid resting-place. They seem to have discovered the fact, which they are unwilling to admit even to themselves, that there is but one solid foundation upon which to build a religious faith; but this is preoccupied by the Catholic Church, and rather than make common cause with an enemy which they have for so long a time alternately tried to ridicule and affected to despise, they prefer to "perish in the flood."

The doctrine of positivism has, though old, all the charm of novelty, and all the attractiveness of liberty of action. There are no hateful penances or groaning mortifications in its creed, and no ugly conflicts with enemies, all the more to be dreaded because unseen. If it cuts off all hope of happiness in the next life, it also cuts off the chances of misery, and for the loss of future happiness it amply compensates by holding out to us a brimming cup of present pleasures, if we can command them. And surely the man must have his own peculiar views of the latitude requisite in a moral code who would find fault with the narrowness of the morality which tells him, in the language of one of Moleschott's disciples (quoted by Archbishop Vaughan), that "the moral rule for each man is given by his own nature only, and is, therefore, different for each individual;" and which makes excesses and passions "but a larger or smaller overflowing of a perfectly legitimate impulse." The apostles of positive thought, unlike those of early Catholicity, are men of refinement and learning, leaders of thought, and in many instances models of culture. They are for the most part men of unquestionable morals as well as of unquestionable talents. Their brows are already bound with the bays of victory, and their theories at one bound take the foremost place in the van of "progress." All who have no ambition to wear the brand of ignorance must follow in the ranks and march under their banners. They wave their ensigns, display their proudest triumphs, and point to science as the god in whose presence all those who wish to escape the stigma of superstition must bow. Enthusiastic with the wonderful result of their recent researches, and intoxicated with the success of recent discoveries, they have already grown insolent

with the confidence of ultimate as well as present success. Having wrested from nature so many of her secrets, and emboldened by the fact that all who have, hitherto opposed them have from open foes become warm allies, with a glow of anticipated triumph and a *nonchalant* air of certainty of the result; they shrink not from encountering the veteran Church of a thousand battlefields. She, on her side, is far from shrinking from the contest. She knows it is the old, old story, long since learned by rote from constant repetition. Every fledgling science, every new-born theory, every homespun novelty bids the spouse of Christ quake and tremble. They threaten to unmask her hypocrisy, or set her aside as a superannuated dotard, who has long since outlived her usefulness, if she ever had been of use. They make loud and jeering boasts about unravelling her superstitions, and threaten to hold her up as a laughing-stock to the gaze of the world upon which she so long imposed by claiming for herself a mission which she pretended was divine. They have again and again assembled around her to witness the positions she would assume in falling and dying; and often so certain were they that her end was at hand, that they only hoped that it might not be too sudden, but that they might have ample time to leisurely view the last moments of the expiring gladiator. But she knows she has always conquered her enemies, as Mr. Lecky tells us she conquered the world "in the very hour" in which they were "supreme," and that she has always had the solemn satisfaction of performing for all of them the last sad rites, which each in turn was only too courteously anxious to perform for her. Now, too, she does not fail to see that the self-assured confidence of positive thought is but a childish conceit. And indeed there is something provocative of a smile in the boyish glee with which every "victory" of science is hailed. Certain bodies are discovered to have certain properties, and to be possessed of those properties since their creation, and science becomes as great a braggart over the discovery as though it had imparted to these bodies the properties themselves. It has learned to classify, merely, certain minerals, or catalogue, say, certain diseases, and forthwith it expects mankind to look upon it with wondering awe as a power which can create and destroy at will, as a deity which must be propitiated and kept in countenance, lest in its anger it might inflict, and that in its clemency it may avert these diseases. The reason is discovered why an apple falls to the earth, and the world goes wild with delight, as though an apple had never fallen before, and could never fall again without the universal consent of all the scientists in solemn council assembled; as though man had not only discovered the existence but invented the law of gravitation; as though scientific men had calculated the equipoise of the world, and without

aid from any higher power lifted the poles of the earth lightly and easily into their resting-places. Science has achieved much, it is true, and we are far from depreciating the merits of *true* science; but in its intemperate zeal it forgets that in its various departments it can but be employed in discovering and classifying properties and objects which have been in existence since the very beginning, and that when it turns aside from its own peculiar domain to manufacture ethical codes of its own design and pattern, it must provoke the contempt as well as the censure of all truth-seeking men. But as Mr. Marshall has well said, "burrowing in the earth like moles, they (the scientists) persuade themselves they are soaring in the air like eagles," and thus as one of their own luminaries does not hesitate to say, "by invading a province of thought to which they have no claim, they not unreasonably provoke the hostility of those who ought to be their best friends" (quoted by Mr. Marshall from an address of Dr. Carpenter). It does not require, however, the penetrating glance of the Church to be able to see that the self-importance of modern science is the self-importance of the precocious youth, who has made the discovery that the object which he has hitherto looked upon as a single indivisible whole can be divided into many different parts. His conception of his own greatness knows no bounds, and he expects that others will regard him as a veritable Archimedes. This precocious self-sufficiency is really the greatness of its strength. The Church, however, holding in *her* possession the true secret of all the mechanism in the universe, is confident that in her hands is deposited the touchstone which will prove the infallible test of all their theories, and which, like the Lia Fail, or Stone of Destiny, upon which the ancient Irish kings were crowned, and which was said to emit certain mysterious sounds when touched by the lawful heir to the crown, is sure to show them to be either true or false, legitimate or spurious, when brought into contact with it. She is confident for other reasons too; confident in the weakness of her enemies' position, confident with the courage of a veteran who has never known defeat, confident because she numbers by the thousand the battlefields on which the victory has always been hers, confident when she reviews the once powerful but vanquished names enrolled in her archives, confident because, although almost nineteen centuries have swept over her brow, she feels not the decay of age, but thrills with all the athletic vigor of youth; but confident above all in the infallible assurance that she can never fail. With the pledged assurance of victory it is doubtful whether the conflict is really more to be desired or deprecated. Besides the certainty of victory, however, there are other reasons why the Church should be inclined to welcome rather than shrink from the advent

of the struggle. It is sure to prove the deathblow of the various sects now clamoring for an existence. It is fairly certain that it will clear the field of all the different sects which now cover it as thickly as ants swarm on a hillock. When the din of battle ceases and the clash of arms no longer resounds, when the smoke and carnage will have been cleared away, it will be discovered that the "thousand sects battling within one Church" will be found lying dead upon the battlefield or swallowed up in the toil and turmoil of the strife, and that vanquished *modern* civilization and victorious Catholicity will be left the sole survivors, to prepare for further conflicts or concert an amicable truce. Scientific infidelity and Catholicity will be the two extremes between which there will no longer be a mean. At present the long plain which separates the two belligerent forces is swarming with myriads of clamoring sects. The intervening ground is covered with a network of religious camps, which serve only to confuse objects, obstruct the view, and bewilder the observer. There is so strange a commingling, of such endless variety, that the ordinary mind can meet with only perplexity. All the different religious sects have some characteristics of both Catholicity and infidelity. None have all of either. There is every shade of religious belief, there is every shadow of scientific error. In some sects the religious coloring is deep and striking, in others so faint as to be hardly perceptible. In some it is difficult to separate positivism from religion, so close is the blending; in others it is difficult to determine the point at which positivism begins and religion ends. In some there are Catholic truths to be met with in all their force and entirety. In some Catholic truth is strangely mingled with error. In some error has entirely displaced truth, while in "other some" the foulest caricatures are held up to the public gaze as truth. Ritualism so closely counterfeits Catholicity as "to deceive, if possible, even the elect." Unitarianism verges so closely on infidelity that a Unitarian may be an infidel with a very little stretch and without a very great scruple of conscience. And all other *isms* fall into line between Catholicity and atheism, at proper distances apart and in due proportions. It is said that from the shaft of a coal mine hundreds of feet below the earth's surface the stars at midday are plainly visible in the firmament. At the present day it would be difficult to take a position on what a European writer has called "the lowest degree of mental objection," and from it descry the beauties of the "city seated upon a mountain," and the light of the world "which shines before all men." And the difficulties arise not from the city or the light to be discovered, not entirely from the disadvantageous depths of the standing-point, but almost entirely from the maze of tangled errors which inter-

vene. There are few whose glance is so penetrating, or whose gaze is so searching, that, like Mr. Mallock or Mr. Lecky, they can take their stand upon the plane of positivism or rationalism, and, piercing through the intervening labyrinths, scan with a just appreciation of its strength the vantage-ground of Catholicity. At present it requires rare acuteness of vision and clearness of perception; but the morning after the struggle the sun will rise upon a world from which every misty exhalation of religious error will have vanished, and like good and evil, truth as represented by Catholicity and error as represented by a false science will alone survive. The religious horizon will grow clear. It will be easier to storm the citadels of error; it will be easier to discern the fair proportions, the beautiful symmetry, the graceful edifice of truth. The atmosphere will be purged of vapors which serve but to blind and confuse. The sincere seeker after truth will no longer be deceived by voices calling to him from the depths "of the fog," which he found led him to dwellings as cold and cheerless as the fog in which he had been wandering. That this will be one result of the conflict is but saying what will, perhaps, one day be, if not an axiom, at least a postulate in the philosophy of history, namely, that all minor issues are swallowed up in great struggles. The disgraceful brawls of the Saxon Heptarchy were drowned forever in the conflict between the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes. The feuds of the Irish chieftains and the faction fights of the septs did not survive the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Ireland. The quarrels of the Guelphs and Ghibellines were for four hundred years the scourge of Southern Germany and Northern Italy, and although reduced to the appearance of dying embers, they might easily have proved themselves but a slumbering volcano, did not the French invasion end them forever. The howl of the New England Puritan, the cry of the Know-Nothing, every discordant voice was hushed (never to be revived, it is to be hoped) in the thunders of Bull Run and the peace of Appomattox. What is true of profane is true also of ecclesiastical history. All Europe forgot its political and religious jealousies when the Saracens desecrated the shrines and slaughtered the pilgrims on the plains of Palestine; the revolution of the sixteenth century silenced forever the schism of the West.

Catholics can have little doubt about the result of the conflict. They have the Word of the Divine Founder that error can never prevail against the Church, and they have the confirmation of past history, which shows that error has never prevailed, and that the promise has never been made void. Already, too, are there human signs visible. In all the seeming strength of the enemy there is weakness—the weakness of division. There is division in the camp and disorder in the field. There are as many different sects in

positive philosophy and in the "scientist" movement as there are different elements in Protestantism. Like Protestantism, which is united only on the question of opposition to the Church, science in its various hypotheses has little in common, except the determined opposition to the idea of a God. Aside from this, the different shades of positivism are, like the sects, little more than a mass of jarring conventicles. "Schools of science are constantly springing up which, besides their rejection of God, have little in common unless they call themselves advanced." There are as many "variations" in the scientific movement as Bossuet could trace among the followers of the reformers, and there seem to be as many theories regarding the "origin of life" among the apostles of light as there are interpretations of the simple text, "This is my body." The utilitarianism of Bentham was moulded in the groove of John Stuart Mill, only to be derided by the disciples of Herbert Spencer. The data of ethics has driven the joint production of both from the field, probably to be ignominiously defeated by the coming volumes of the Rev. Joseph Cook.

The apostles of science seem also to be outstripped in zeal by their own disciples, and it would seem that this is because the zeal of the apostles has flagged through a loss of confidence in their position. Pet hypotheses are already spoken of with less confidence. The originators of the new theories are now less aggressive than their followers. The "uncertainty of these data" and the yielding of "only a provisional assent" are ominous words in the mouths of sturdy dogmatizers. The acknowledgment of their inability to prove that "life can be developed save from antecedent life," and that "against religious feeling the waves of science beat in vain," sounds like the prelude to a retreat. It is high time, as has been recently acknowledged by them, to warn the followers of a *will-o'-the-wisp* science that it is not admissible to represent conjecture as certainty nor "hypothesis as doctrine;" and it is more than time that they should "enter an energetic protest against the attempts made to proclaim the problems of research as actual facts and the *opinions* of scientists as established science." When they now attempt to do so their voices are drowned in a tumult. Their "energetic protest" is lost in the Babel of clattering tongues which their wild and fanciful theories have created; and when they wish to dismiss the weird spirits which they have summoned from the mighty deep, the evoked spirits show an unwillingness to depart. A lie travels faster than truth. The rabble will not be disillusioned. They have more faith in the new theories than in the scientists themselves; and when the same scientists, to whom they but lately listened so attentively, announce that "the failures have been lamentable, the doctrine utterly discredited," the disciples, lately

so credulous, shrug their shoulders in amazing incredulity. When Darwin cautions his followers against certain mistakes, and that one of the main principles of his doctrine does not work the desired result, such a renowned disciple as Stanley Gerome refuses to believe him, and confesses a readiness to swallow any amount of evolution physic. When Virchow announces to his German disciples that the theory of "evolution involves assumptions of which the proofs are still wanting," that "the descent of man from any ape whatever is as yet before the tribunal of scientific zoology not proven," Max Müller will tell us "he is howled down in Germany in a manner worthy of Ephesians and Galatians." And so it would seem that they have been at pains to needlessly raise a tumult which they now find themselves powerless to quell. The storm must spend its fury before the voice of even the magicians who created it can make themselves heard. Half-way they would try to arrest its course, but the current is broad and strong and deep, and there is nothing left for them but to wait "*dum defluat amnis.*"

Positive thought has labored hard and succeeded well in bringing discredit upon the beliefs of men. It has put forth the most gigantic efforts to upset the equilibrium of existing beliefs. It has taken from life all that men prized, and—no matter how much they may attempt to deny it—what they prized more than life itself. And what does it give in return? Nothing! Upon its own confession, mere guesses, mere assumptions, mere hypotheses. It is hardly just to trifle with a question where vital interests, nay, the *most vital* of all interests, are at stake. Others have refrained from preaching a new doctrine until, at least, they had found a substitute for the old. And no matter how distasteful these doctrines might have been, they always had the merit of being suited to their end and object. The worst excesses of Kniperdoling had a manifest aim, and the Girondists and Jacobins, even in the height of their maddened frenzy, never lost sight of their object,—liberty, equality, fraternity.

But here the very foundations upon which all men's hopes were built are levelled. The tree which sweetened the Marah of human ills is destroyed, and while we raise to our lips the bitter waters, with the sweetening influence gone, no other is given as a substitute. Or, if a substitute is provided, are we not privileged to ask what it may be? Will it supply the place of the old? It would have been at least philanthropy to wait till the golden calf was fashioned, until the molten figure was near enough to completion to warrant them in saying, "These be thy gods, oh! Israel," before we were called upon to destroy the gods in whom we trusted. It would seem that there are, after all, questions of greater impor-

tance than to know that lizards are great lovers of music, or that the tail of a lizard or leg of a frog if cut off will grow again. They are questions of the soul, of a future life, of an immortality, and, as far as the scientists are concerned, questions of such grave and awful significance are no nearer a solution than when the centuries were yet in their units. There has been a rumbling of the earth, which has displaced the fastenings and shaken the objects of faith on their pedestals, but we have made no further advancement in these problems of deep solemnity than when men believed the earth was a plane and that the sun moved round it.

And when science will have been fathomed to its very depths, when nature will not have left a single secret which science has not discovered nor a tangle which philosophy will not have unravelled, when she will have unbosomed to man her unnumbered mysteries of which she is now so jealous, when she will have taken him by the hand and told him of all her now hidden powers, when there will be left not a single work into which science will not have pried nor a fold of nature's mantle under which it will not have peered, when the philosophers and scientists will have unearthed stratum after stratum of yet undiscovered knowledge, and will at last have stood upon the hard rock of the last layer, these same questions will yet remain; man will be nothing more nor less than man, one of God's creatures; his relations to parent, wife, sister, brother will remain the same; death will yet be his inevitable portion, and after death, eternity.
