

weight, and their works are not to last much beyond themselves.

## 5

And now having shown what it is that a Catholic University does not think of doing, what it need not do, and what it cannot do, I might go on to trace out in detail what it is that it really might and will encourage and create. But, as such an investigation would neither be difficult to pursue, nor easy to terminate, I prefer to leave the subject at the preliminary point to which I have brought it.

## IV

## A FORM OF INFIDELITY OF THE DAY

## I

## ITS SENTIMENTS

## I

**T**HOUGH IT CANNOT BE DENIED that at the present day, in consequence of the close juxtaposition and intercourse of men of all religions, there is a considerable danger of the subtle, silent, unconscious perversion and corruption of Catholic intellects, who as yet profess, and sincerely profess, their submission to the authority of Revelation, still that danger is far inferior to what it was in one portion of the middle ages. Nay, contrasting the two periods together, we may even say, that in this very point they differ, that, in the medieval, since Catholicism was then the sole religion recognized in Christendom, unbelief necessarily made its advances under the language and the guise of faith; whereas in the present, when universal toleration prevails, and it is open to assail revealed truth (whether Scripture or Tradition, the Fathers or the "Sense of the faithful"), unbelief in consequence throws off the mask, and takes up a position over against us in citadels of its own, and confronts us in the broad light and with a direct assault. And I have no hesitation in saying (apart of course from moral and ecclesiastical considerations, and under correction of the command and policy of the Church), that I prefer to live in an age when the fight is in the day, not in the twilight; and think it a gain to be speared by a foe, rather than to be stabbed by a friend.

I do not, then, repine at all at the open development of unbelief in Germany, supposing unbelief is to be, or at its growing audacity in England; not as if I were satisfied with the state of things, considered positively, but because, in the unavoidable alternative of avowed unbelief and secret, my own personal leaning is in favour of the former. I hold that unbelief is in some shape unavoidable in an age of intellect and in a world like this, considering that faith requires an act of the will, and presupposes the due exercise of religious advantages. You may persist in calling Europe Catholic, though it is not; you may enforce an outward acceptance of Catholic dogma, and an outward obedience to Catholic precept; and your enactments may be, so far, not only pious in themselves, but even merciful towards the teachers of false doctrine, as well as just towards their victims; but this is all that you can do; you cannot bespeak conclusions which, in spite of yourselves, you are leaving free to the human will. There will be, I say, in spite of you, unbelief and immorality to the end of the world, and you must be prepared for immorality more odious, and unbelief more astute, more subtle, more bitter, and more resentful, in proportion as it is obliged to dissemble.

It is one great advantage of an age in which unbelief speaks out, that Faith can speak out too; that, if falsehood assails Truth, Truth can assail falsehood. In such an age it is possible to found a University more emphatically Catholic than could be set up in the middle age, because Truth can entrench itself carefully, and define its own profession severely, and display its colours unequivocally, by occasion of that very unbelief which so shamelessly vaunts itself. And a kindred advantage to this is the confidence which, in such an age, we can place in all who are around us, so that we need look for no foes but those who are in the enemy's camp.

## 2

The medieval schools were the *arena* of as critical a struggle between truth and error as Christianity has ever endured; and the philosophy which bears their name carried its supremacy by means of a succession of victories in the cause of the Church. Scarcely had Universities risen into popularity, when they were found to be infected with the most subtle and fatal forms of unbelief; and the heresies of the East germinated in the West of Europe and in Catholic lecture-rooms, with a mysterious vigour upon which history throws little light. The questions agitated were as deep as any in theology; the being and essence of the Almighty were the main subjects of the disputation, and Aristotle was introduced to the ecclesiastical youth as a teacher of Pantheism. Saracenic expositions of the great philosopher were in vogue; and, when a fresh treatise was imported from Constantinople, the curious and impatient student threw himself upon it, regardless of the Church's warnings, and reckless of the effect upon his own mind. The acutest intellects became sceptics and misbelievers; and the head of the Holy Roman Empire, the Cæsar Frederick, the Second, to say nothing of our miserable king John, had the reputation of meditating a profession of Mahometanism. It is said that, in the community at large, men had a vague suspicion and mistrust of each other's belief in Revelation. A secret society was discovered in the Universities of Lombardy, Tuscany, and France, organized for the propagation of infidel opinions; it was bound together by oaths, and sent its missionaries among the people in the disguise of pedlars and vagrants.

The success of such efforts was attested in the south of France by the great extension of the Albigenses, and the prevalence of Manichean doctrine. The University of Paris was obliged to limit the number of its doctors in theology to as few as eight, from misgivings about the orthodoxy of its divines generally. The narrative of Simon of Tournay, struck dead for

crying out after lecture, "Ah! good Jesus, I could disprove Thee, did I please, as easily as I have proved," whatever be its authenticity, at least may be taken as a representation of the frightful peril to which Christianity was exposed. Amaury of Chartres was the author of a school of Pantheism, and has given his name to a sect; Abelard, Roscelin, Gilbert, and David de Dinant, Tanquelin, and Eon, and others who might be named, show the extraordinary influence of anti-Catholic doctrines on high and low. Ten ecclesiastics and several of the populace of Paris were condemned for maintaining that our Lord's reign was past, that the Holy Ghost was to be incarnate, or for parallel heresies.

Frederick the Second established a University at Naples with a view to the propagation of the infidelity which was so dear to him. It gave birth to the great St. Thomas, the champion of revealed truth. So intimate was the intermixture, so close the grapple, between faith and unbelief. It was the conspiracy of traitors, it was a civil strife, of which the medieval seats of learning were the scene.

In this day, on the contrary, Truth and Error lie over against each other with a valley between them, and David goes forward in the sight of all men, and from his own camp, to engage with the Philistine. Such is the providential overruling of that principle of toleration, which was conceived in the spirit of unbelief, in order to the destruction of Catholicity. The sway of the Church is contracted; but she gains in intensity what she loses in extent. She has now a direct command and a reliable influence over her own institutions, which was wanting in the middle ages. A University is her possession in these times, as well as her creation: nor has she the need, which once was so urgent, to expel heresies from her pale, which have now their own centres of attraction elsewhere, and spontaneously take their departure. Secular advantages no longer present an inducement to hypocrisy, and her members in consequence have the consolation of being able to be sure of each other. How much better is it, for us at least, whatever

it may be for themselves (to take a case before our eyes in Ireland), that those persons, who have left the Church to become ministers in the Protestant Establishment, should be in their proper place, as they are, than that they should have perforce continued in her communion! I repeat it, I would rather fight with unbelief as we find it in the nineteenth century, than as it existed in the twelfth and thirteenth.

## 3

I look out, then, into the enemy's camp, and I try to trace the outlines of the hostile movements and the preparations for assault which are there in agitation against us. The arming and the manœuvring, the earthworks and the mines, go on incessantly; and one cannot of course tell, without the gift of prophecy, which of his projects will be carried into effect and attain its purpose, and which will eventually fail or be abandoned. Threatening demonstrations may come to nothing; and those who are to be our most formidable foes, may before the attack elude our observation. All these uncertainties, we know, are the lot of the soldier in the field: and they are parallel to those which befall the warriors of the Temple. Fully feeling the force of such considerations, and under their correction, nevertheless I make my anticipations according to the signs of the times; and such must be my *proviso*, when I proceed to describe some characteristics of one particular form of infidelity, which is coming into existence and activity over against us, in the intellectual citadels of England.

It must not be supposed that I attribute, what I am going to speak of as a form of infidelity of the day, to any given individual or individuals; nor is it necessary to my purpose to suppose that any one man as yet consciously holds, or sees the drift, of that portion of the theory to which he has given assent. I am to describe a set of opinions which may be considered as the true explanation of many floating views, and the converging point of a multitude of separate and inde-

pendent minds; and, as of old Arius or Nestorius not only was spoken of in his own person, but was viewed as the abstract and typical teacher of the heresy which he introduced, and thus his name denoted a heretic more complete and explicit, even though not more formal, than the heresiarch himself, so here too, in like manner, I may be describing a school of thought in its fully developed proportions, which at present every one, to whom membership with it is imputed, will at once begin to disown, and I may be pointing to teachers whom no one will be able to descry. Still, it is not less true that I may be speaking of tendencies and elements which exist; and he may come in person at last, who comes at first to us merely in his spirit and in his power.

The teacher, then, whom I speak of, will discourse thus in his secret heart:—He will begin, as many so far have done before him, by laying it down as if a position which approves itself to the reason, immediately that it is fairly examined,—which is of so axiomatic a character as to have a claim to be treated as a first principle, and is firm and steady enough to bear a large superstructure upon it,—that Religion is not the subject-matter of a science. “You may have opinions in religion, you may have theories, you may have arguments, you may have probabilities; you may have anything but demonstration, and therefore you cannot have science. In mechanics you advance from sure premises to sure conclusions; in optics you form your undeniable facts into system, arrive at general principles, and then again infallibly apply them: here you have Science. On the other hand, there is at present no real science of the weather, because you cannot get hold of facts and truths on which it depends; there is no science of the coming and going of epidemics; no science of the breaking out and the cessation of wars; no science of popular likings and dislikings, or of the fashions. It is not that these subject-matters are themselves incapable of science, but that, under existing circumstances, *we* are incapable of subjecting them to it. And so, in like manner,” says the philosopher in question, “without

denying that in the matter of religion some things are true and some things false, still we certainly are not in a position to determine the one or the other. And, as it would be absurd to dogmatize about the weather, and say that 1860 will be a wet season or a dry season, a time of peace or war, so it is absurd for men in our present state to teach anything positively about the next world, that there is a heaven, or a hell, or a last judgment, or that the soul is immortal, or that there is a God. It is not that you have not a right to your own opinion, as you have a right to place implicit trust in your own banker, or in your own physician; but undeniably such persuasions are not knowledge, they are not scientific, they cannot become public property, they are consistent with your allowing your friend to entertain the opposite opinion; and, if you are tempted to be violent in the defence of your own view of the case in this matter of religion, then it is well to lay seriously to heart whether sensitiveness on the subject of your banker or your doctor, when he is handled sceptically by another, would not be taken to argue a secret misgiving in your mind about him, in spite of your confident profession, an absence of clear, unruffled certainty in his honesty or in his skill.”

Such is our philosopher's primary position. He does not prove it; he does but distinctly state it; but he thinks it self-evident when it is distinctly stated. And there he leaves it.

## 4

Taking his primary position henceforth for granted, he will proceed as follows:—“Well, then, if Religion is just one of those subjects about which we can know nothing, what can be so absurd as to spend time upon it? what so absurd as to quarrel with others about it? Let us all keep to our own religious opinions respectively, and be content; but so far from it, upon no subject whatever has the intellect of man been fastened so intensely as upon Religion. And the misery is, that,

if once we allow it to engage our attention, we are in a circle from which we never shall be able to extricate ourselves. Our mistake reproduces and corroborates itself. A small insect, a wasp or a fly, is unable to make his way through the pane of glass; and his very failure is the occasion of greater violence in his struggle than before. He is as heroically obstinate in his resolution to succeed as the assailant or defender of some critical battle-field; he is unflagging and fierce in an effort which cannot lead to anything beyond itself. When, then, in like manner, you have once resolved that certain religious doctrines shall be indisputably true, and that all men ought to perceive their truth, you have engaged in an undertaking which, though continued on to eternity, will never reach its aim; and, since you are convinced it ought to do so, the more you have failed hitherto, the more violent and pertinacious will be your attempt in time to come. And further still, since you are not the only man in the world who is in this error, but one of ten thousand, all holding the general principle that Religion is scientific, and yet all differing as to the truths and facts and conclusions of this science, it follows that the misery of social disputation and disunion is added to the misery of a hopeless investigation, and life is not only wasted in fruitless speculation, but embittered by bigotted sectarianism.

"Such is the state in which the world has lain," it will be said, "ever since the introduction of Christianity. Christianity has been the bane of true knowledge, for it has turned the intellect away from what it can know, and occupied it in what it cannot. Differences of opinion crop up and multiply themselves, in proportion to the difficulty of deciding them; and the unfruitfulness of Theology has been, in matter of fact, the very reason, not for seeking better food, but for feeding on nothing else. Truth has been sought in the wrong direction, and the attainable has been put aside for the visionary."

Now, there is no call on me here to refute these arguments, but merely to state them. I need not refute what has not yet been proved. It is sufficient for me to repeat what I have

already said, that they are founded upon a mere assumption. *Supposing*, indeed, religious truth cannot be ascertained, *then*, of course, it is not only idle, but mischievous, to attempt to do so; *then*, of course, argument does but increase the mistake of attempting it. But surely both Catholics and Protestants have written solid defences of Revelation, of Christianity, and of dogma, as such, and these are not simply to be put aside without saying why. It has not yet been shown by our philosophers to be self-evident that religious truth *is* really incapable of attainment; on the other hand, it has at least been powerfully argued by a number of profound minds that it *can* be attained; and the *onus probandi* plainly lies with those who are introducing into the world what the whole world feels to be a paradox.

## 5

However, where men really are persuaded of all this, however unreasonable, what will follow? A feeling, not merely of contempt, but of absolute hatred, towards the Catholic theologian and the dogmatic teacher. The patriot abhors and loathes the partizans who have degraded and injured his country; and the citizen of the world, the advocate of the human race, feels bitter indignation at those whom he holds to have been its misleaders and tyrants for two thousand years. "The world has lost two thousand years. It is pretty much where it was in the days of Augustus. This is what has come of priests." There are those who are actuated by a benevolent liberalism, and condescend to say that Catholics are not worse than other maintainers of dogmatic theology. There are those, again, who are good enough to grant that the Catholic Church fostered knowledge and science up to the days of Galileo, and that she has only retrograded for the last several centuries. But the new teacher, whom I am contemplating in the light of that nebula out of which he will be concentrated, echoes the words of the early persecutor of Christians, that they are the "enemies of the human race." "But for Athanasius, but for

Augustine, but for Aquinas, the world would have had its Bacons and its Newtons, its Lavoisiers, its Cuviers, its Watts, and its Adam Smiths, centuries upon centuries ago. And now, when at length the true philosophy has struggled into existence, and is making its way, what is left for its champion but to make an eager desperate attack upon Christian theology, the scabbard flung away, and no quarter given? and what will be the issue but the triumph of the stronger,—the overthrow of an old error and an odious tyranny, and a reign of the beautiful Truth? Thus he thinks, and he sits dreaming over the inspiring thought, and longs for that approaching, that inevitable day.

There let us leave him for the present, dreaming and longing in his impotent hatred of a Power which Julian and Frederic, Shaftesbury and Voltaire, and a thousand other great sovereigns and subtle thinkers, have assailed in vain.

## 2

### ITS POLICY

#### 1

**I**T IS A MISERABLE TIME when a man's Catholic profession is no voucher for his orthodoxy, and when a teacher of religion may be within the Church's pale, yet external to her faith. Such has been for a season the trial of her children at various eras of her history. It was the state of things during the dreadful Arian ascendancy, when the flock had to keep aloof from the shepherd, and the unsuspecting Fathers of the Western Councils trusted and followed some consecrated sophist from Greece or Syria. It was the case in those passages of medieval history when simony resisted the Supreme Pontiff, or when heresy lurked in Universities. It was a longer and more tedious trial, while the controversies lasted with the Monophysites of old, and with the Jansenists in modern times.

A great scandal it is and a perplexity to the little ones of Christ, to have to choose between rival claimants upon their allegiance, or to find a condemnation at length pronounced upon one whom in their simplicity they have admired. We, too, in this age have our scandals, for scandals must be; but they are not what they were once; and if it be the just complaint of pious men now, that never was infidelity so rampant, it is their boast and consolation, on the other hand, that never was the Church less troubled with false teachers, never more united.

False teachers do not remain within her pale now, because they can easily leave it, and because there are seats of error external to her to which they are attracted. "They went out from us," says the Apostle, "but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but that they might be made manifest that they are not all of us." It is a great gain when error becomes manifest, for it then ceases to deceive the simple. With these thoughts I began to describe by anticipation the formation of a school of unbelief external to the Church, which perhaps as yet only exists, as I then expressed it, in a nebula. In the middle ages it might have managed, by means of subterfuges, to maintain itself for a while within the sacred limits,—now of course it is outside of it; yet still, from the intermixture of Catholics with the world, and the present immature condition of the false doctrine, it may at first exert an influence even upon those who would shrink from it if they recognized it as it really is and as it will ultimately show itself. Moreover, it is natural, and not unprofitable, for persons under our circumstances to speculate on the forms of error with which a University of this age will have to contend, as the medieval Universities had their own special antagonists. And for both reasons I am hazarding some remarks on a set of opinions and a line of action which seems to be at present, at least in its rudiments, in the seats of English intellect, whether the danger dies away of itself or not.

I have already said that its fundamental dogma is, that

nothing can be known for certain about the unseen world. This being taken for granted as a self-evident point, undeniable as soon as stated, it goes on, or will go on, to argue that, in consequence, the immense outlay which has been made of time, anxiety, and toil, of health, bodily and mental, upon theological researches, has been simply thrown away; nay, has been, not useless merely, but even mischievous, inasmuch as it has indirectly thwarted the cultivation of studies of far greater promise and of an evident utility. This is the main position of the School I am contemplating; and the result, in the minds of its members, is a deep hatred and a bitter resentment against the Power which has managed, as they consider, to stunt the world's knowledge and the intellect of man for so many hundred years. Thus much I have already said, and now I am going to state the line of policy which these people will adopt, and the course of thought which that policy of theirs will make necessary to them or natural.

## 2

Supposing, then, it is the main tenet of the School in question, that the study of Religion as a science has been the bane of philosophy and knowledge, what remedy will its masters apply for the evils they deplore? Should they profess themselves the antagonists of theology, and engage in argumentative exercises with theologians? This evidently would be to increase, to perpetuate the calamity. Nothing, they will say to themselves, do religious men desire so ardently, nothing would so surely advance the cause of Religion, as Controversy. The very policy of religious men, they will argue, is to get the world to fix its attention steadily upon the subject of Religion, and Controversy is the most effectual means of doing this. And their own game, they will consider, is, on the contrary, to be elaborately silent about it. Should they not then go on to shut up the theological schools, and exclude Religion from the subjects scientifically treated in philosophical education? This

indeed has been, and is, a favourite mode of proceeding with very many of the enemies of Theology; but still it cannot be said to have been justified by any greater success than the policy of Controversy. The establishment of the London University only gave immediate occasion to the establishment of King's College, founded on the dogmatic principle; and the liberalism of the Dutch government led to the restoration of the University of Louvain. It is a well-known story how the very absence of the statues of Brutus and Cassius brought them more vividly into the recollection of the Roman people. When, then, in a comprehensive scheme of education, Religion alone is excluded, that exclusion pleads in its behalf. Whatever be the real value of Religion, say these philosophers to themselves, it has a name in the world, and must not be ill-treated, lest men should rally round it from a feeling of generosity. They will decide, in consequence, that the exclusive method, though it has met with favour in this generation, is quite as much a mistake as the controversial.

Turning, then, to the Universities of England, they will pronounce that the true policy to be observed there would be simply to let the schools of Theology alone. Most unfortunate it is that they have been roused from the state of decadence and torpor in which they lay some twenty or thirty years ago. Up to that time, a routine lecture, delivered once to successive batches of young men destined for the Protestant Ministry, not during their residence, but when they were leaving or had already left the University,—and not about dogmatics, history, ecclesiastical law, or casuistry, but about the list of authors to be selected and works to be read by those who had neither curiosity to read them nor money to purchase;—and again a periodical advertisement of a lecture on the Thirty-nine Articles, which was never delivered because it was never attended,—these two demonstrations, one undertaken by one theological Professor, the other by another, comprised the theological teaching of a seat of learning which had been the home of Duns Scotus and Alexander Hales. What envious

mischance put an end to those halcyon days, and revived the *odium theologicum* in the years which followed? Let us do justice to the authoritative rulers of the University; they have their failings; but not to them is the revolution to be ascribed. It was nobody's fault among all the guardians of education and trustees of the intellect in that celebrated place. However, the mischief has been done; and now the wisest course for the interests of infidelity is to leave it to itself, and let the fever gradually subside; treatment would but irritate it. Not to interfere with Theology, not to raise a little finger against it, is the only means of superseding it. The more bitter is the hatred which such men bear it, the less they must show it.

## 3

What, then, is the line of action which they must pursue? They think, and rightly think, that, in all contests, the wisest and largest policy is to conduct a positive, not a negative opposition, not to prevent but to anticipate, to obstruct by constructing, and to exterminate by supplanting. To cast any slight upon Theology, whether in its Protestant or its Catholic schools, would be to elicit an inexhaustible stream of polemics, and a phalanx of dogmatic doctors and confessors.

Let alone Camarina, for 'tis best let alone.

The proper procedure, then, is not to oppose Theology, but to rival it. Leave its teachers to themselves; merely aim at the introduction of other studies, which, while they have the accidental charm of novelty, possess a surpassing interest, richness, and practical value of their own. Get possession of these studies, and appropriate them, and monopolize the use of them, to the exclusion of the votaries of Religion. Take it for granted, and protest, for the future, that Religion has nothing to do with the studies to which I am alluding, nor those studies with Religion. Exclaim and cry out, if the Catholic Church presumes herself to handle what you mean

to use as a weapon against her. The range of the Experimental Sciences, viz., psychology, and politics, and political economy, and the many departments of physics, various both in their subject-matter and their method of research; the great Sciences which are the characteristics of this era, and which become the more marvellous, the more thoroughly they are understood,—astronomy, magnetism, chemistry, geology, comparative anatomy, natural history, ethnology, languages, political geography, antiquities,—these be your indirect but effectual means of overturning Religion! They do but need to be seen in order to be pursued; you will put an end, in the Schools of learning, to the long reign of the unseen shadowy world, by the mere exhibition of the visible. This was impossible heretofore, for the visible world was so little known itself; but now, thanks to the New Philosophy, sight is able to contest the field with faith. The medieval philosopher had no weapon against Revelation but Metaphysics; Physical Science has a better temper, if not a keener edge, for the purpose.

Now here I interrupt the course of thought I am tracing, to introduce a *caveat*, lest I should be thought to cherish any secret disrespect towards the sciences I have enumerated, or apprehension of their legitimate tendencies; whereas my very object is to protest against a monopoly of them by others. And it is not surely a heavy imputation on them to say that they, as other divine gifts, may be used to wrong purposes, with which they have no natural connection, and for which they were never intended; and that, as in Greece the element of beauty, with which the universe is flooded, and the poetical faculty, which is its truest interpreter, were made to minister to sensuality; as, in the middle ages, abstract speculation, another great instrument of truth, was often frittered away in sophistical exercises; so now, too, the department of fact, and the method of research and experiment which is proper to it, may for the moment eclipse the light of faith in the imagination of the student, and be degraded into the accidental tool, *hic et nunc*, of infidelity. I am as little hostile to physical science as I

am to poetry or metaphysics; but I wish for studies of every kind a legitimate application: nor do I grudge them to anti-Catholics, so that anti-Catholics will not claim to monopolize them, cry out when we profess them, or direct them against Revelation.

I wish, indeed, I could think that these studies were not intended by a certain school of philosophers to bear directly against its authority. There are those who hope, there are those who are sure, that in the incessant investigation of facts, physical, political, and moral, something or other, or many things, will sooner or later turn up, and stubborn facts too, simply contradictory of revealed declarations. A vision comes before them of some physical or historical proof that mankind is not descended from a common origin, or that the hopes of the world were never consigned to a wooden ark floating on the waters, or that the manifestations on Mount Sinai were the work of man or nature, or that the Hebrew patriarchs or the judges of Israel are mythical personages, or that St. Peter had no connection with Rome; or that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity or of the Real Presence was foreign to primitive belief. An anticipation possesses them that the ultimate truths embodied in mesmerism will certainly solve all the Gospel miracles; or that to Niebuhrize the Gospels or the Fathers is a simple expedient for stultifying the whole Catholic system. They imagine that the eternal, immutable word of God is to quail and come to nought before the penetrating intellect of man. And, where this feeling exists, there will be a still stronger motive for letting Theology alone. That party, with whom success is but a matter of time, can afford to wait patiently; and if an inevitable train is laid for blowing up the fortress, why need we be anxious that the catastrophe should take place to-day, rather than to-morrow?

## 4

But, without making too much of their own anticipations on this point, which may or may not be in part fulfilled, these men have secure grounds for knowing that the sciences, as they would pursue them, will at least be prejudicial to the religious sentiment. Any one study, of whatever kind, exclusively pursued, deadens in the mind the interest, nay, the perception of any other. Thus, Cicero says that Plato and Demosthenes, Aristotle and Isocrates, might have respectively excelled in each other's province, but that each was absorbed in his own; his words are emphatic; "quorum uterque, suo studio delectatus, contempsit alterum." Specimens of this peculiarity occur every day. You can hardly persuade some men to talk about any thing but their own pursuit; they refer the whole world to their own centre, and measure all matters by their own rule, like the fisherman in the drama, whose eulogy on his deceased lord was, that "he was so fond of fish." The saints illustrate this on the other hand; St. Bernard had no eye for architecture; St. Basil had no nose for flowers; St. Aloysius had no palate for meat and drink; St. Paula or St. Jane Frances could spurn or could step over her own child;—not that natural faculties were wanting to those great servants of God, but that a higher gift outshone and obscured every lower attribute of man, as human features may remain in heaven, yet the beauty of them be killed by the surpassing light of glory. And in like manner it is clear that the tendency of science is to make men indifferentists or sceptics, merely by being exclusively pursued. The party, then, of whom I speak, understanding this well, would suffer disputations in the theological schools every day in the year, provided they can manage to keep the students of science at a distance from them.

Nor is this all; they trust to the influence of the modern sciences on what may be called the Imagination. When any thing, which comes before us, is very unlike what we com-

monly experience, we consider it on that account untrue; not because it really shocks our reason as improbable, but because it startles our imagination as strange. Now, Revelation presents to us a perfectly different aspect of the universe from that presented by the Sciences. The two informations are like the distinct subjects represented by the lines of the same drawing, which, accordingly as they are read on their concave or convex side, exhibit to us now a group of trees with branches and leaves, and now human faces hid amid the leaves, or some majestic figures standing out from the branches. Thus is faith opposed to sight: it is parallel to the contrast afforded by plane astronomy and physical; plane, in accordance with our senses, discourses of the sun's rising and setting, while physical, in accordance with our reason, asserts, on the contrary, that the sun is all but stationary, and that it is the earth that moves. This is what is meant by saying that truth lies in a well; phenomena are no measure of fact; *primâ facie* representations, which we receive from without, do not reach to the real state of things, or put them before us simply as they are.

While, then, Reason and Revelation are consistent in fact, they often are inconsistent in appearance; and this seeming discordance acts most keenly and alarmingly on the Imagination, and may suddenly expose a man to the temptation, and even hurry him on to the commission, of definite acts of unbelief, in which reason itself really does not come into exercise at all. I mean, let a person devote himself to the studies of the day; let him be taught by the astronomer that our sun is but one of a million central luminaries, and our earth but one of ten million globes moving in space; let him learn from the geologist that on that globe of ours enormous revolutions have been in progress through innumerable ages; let him be told by the comparative anatomist of the minutely arranged system of organized nature; by the chemist and physicist, of the peremptory yet intricate laws to which nature, organized and

inorganic, is subjected; by the ethnologist, of the originals, and ramifications, and varieties, and fortunes of nations; by the antiquarian, of old cities disinterred, and primitive countries laid bare, with the specific forms of human society once existing; by the linguist, of the slow formation and development of languages; by the psychologist, the physiologist, and the economist, of the subtle, complicated structure of the breathing, energetic, restless world of men; I say, let him take in and master the vastness of the view thus afforded him of Nature, its infinite complexity, its awful comprehensiveness, and its diversified yet harmonious colouring; and then, when he has for years drank in and fed upon this vision, let him turn round to peruse the inspired records, or listen to the authoritative teaching of Revelation, the book of Genesis, or the warnings and prophecies of the Gospels, or the *Symbolum Quicumque*, or the Life of St. Antony or St. Hilarion, and he may certainly experience a most distressing revulsion of feeling,<sup>1</sup>—not that his reason really deduces any thing from his much loved studies contrary to the faith, but that his imagination is bewildered, and swims with the sense of the ineffable distance of that faith from the view of things which is familiar to him, with its strangeness, and then again its rude simplicity, as he considers it, and its apparent poverty contrasted with the exuberant life and reality of his own world. All this, the school I am speaking of understands well; it comprehends that, if it can but exclude the professors of Religion from the lecture-halls of science, it may safely allow them full play in their own; for it will be able to rear up infidels, without speaking a word, merely by the terrible influence of that faculty against which both Bacon and Butler so solemnly warn us.

I say, it leaves the theologian the full and free possession of his own schools, for it thinks he will have no chance of arresting the opposite teaching or of rivalling the fascination

<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* University Sermons, vii., 14.

of modern science. Knowing little, and caring less for the depth and largeness of that heavenly Wisdom, on which the Apostle delights to expatiate, or the variety of those sciences, dogmatic or ethical, mystical or hagiological, historical or exegetical, which Revelation has created, these philosophers know perfectly well that, in matter of fact, to beings, constituted as we are, sciences which concern this world and this state of existence are worth far more, are more arresting and attractive, than those which relate to a system of things which they do not see and cannot master by their natural powers. Sciences which deal with tangible facts, practical results, ever-growing discoveries, and perpetual novelties, which feed curiosity, sustain attention, and stimulate expectation, require, they consider, but a fair stage and no favour to distance that Ancient Truth, which never changes and but cautiously advances, in the race for popularity and power. And therefore they look out for the day when they shall have put down Religion, not by shutting its schools, but by emptying them; not by disputing its tenets, but by the superior worth and persuasiveness of their own.

## 5

Such is the tactic which a new school of philosophers adopt against Christian Theology. They have this characteristic, compared with former schools of infidelity, viz., the union of intense hatred with a large toleration of Theology. They are professedly civil to it, and run a race with it. They rely, not on any logical disproof of it, but on three considerations; first, on the effects of studies of whatever kind to indispose the mind towards other studies; next, on the special effect of modern sciences upon the imagination, prejudicial to revealed truth; and lastly, on the absorbing interest attached to those sciences from their marvellous results. This line of action will be forced upon these persons by the peculiar character and position of Religion in England.

And here I have arrived at the limits of my paper before I have finished the discussion upon which I have entered; and I must be content with having made some suggestions which, if worth anything, others may use.