

DISCOURSE II

THEOLOGY A BRANCH OF KNOWLEDGE

THERE WERE TWO QUESTIONS, to which I drew your attention, Gentlemen, in the beginning of my first Discourse, as being of especial importance and interest at this time: first, whether it is consistent with the idea of University teaching to exclude Theology from a place among the sciences which it embraces; next, whether it is consistent with that idea to make the useful arts and sciences its direct and principal concern, to the neglect of those liberal studies and exercises of mind, in which it has heretofore been considered mainly to consist. These are the questions which will form the subject of what I have to lay before you, and I shall now enter upon the former of the two.

I

IT IS THE FASHION just now, as you very well know, to erect so-called Universities, without making any provision in them at all for Theological chairs. Institutions of this kind exist both here and in England. Such a procedure, though defended by writers of the generation just passed with much plausible argument and not a little wit, seems to me an intellectual absurdity; and my reason for saying so runs, with whatever abruptness, into the form of a syllogism:—A University, I should lay down, by its very name professes to teach universal knowledge: Theology is surely a branch of knowledge: how then is it possible for it to profess all branches of knowledge, and yet to exclude from the subjects of its teach-

ing one which, to say the least, is as important and as large as any of them? I do not see that either premiss of this argument is open to exception.

As to the range of University teaching, certainly the very name of University is inconsistent with restrictions of any kind. Whatever was the original reason of the adoption of that term, which is unknown,¹ I am only putting on it its popular, its recognized sense, when I say that a University should teach universal knowledge. That there is a real necessity for this universal teaching in the highest schools of intellect, I will show by-and-by; here it is sufficient to say that such universality is considered by writers on the subject to be the very characteristic of a University, as contrasted with other seats of learning. Thus Johnson, in his Dictionary, defines it to be "a school where all arts and faculties are taught;" and Mosheim, writing as an historian, says that, before the rise of the University of Paris,—for instance, at Padua, or Salamanca, or Cologne,—"the whole circle of sciences then known was not taught;" but that the school of Paris, "which exceeded all others in various respects, as well as in the number of teachers and students, was the first to embrace all the arts and sciences, and therefore first became a University."²

If, with other authors, we consider the word to be derived from the invitation which is held out by a University to students of every kind, the result is the same; for, if certain branches of knowledge were excluded, those students of course would be excluded also, who desired to pursue them.

Is it, then, logically consistent in a seat of learning to call itself a University, and to exclude Theology from the number of its studies? And again, is it wonderful that Catholics, even in the view of reason, putting aside faith or religious duty, should be dissatisfied with existing institutions, which profess to be Universities, and refuse to teach Theology; and that they should in consequence desire to possess seats of learning,

¹ In Roman law it means a Corporation. Vid. Keuffel, *de Scholis*. Hist. vol. ii. p. 529. London, 1841.

which are, not only more Christian, but more philosophical in their construction, and larger and deeper in their provisions?

But this, of course, is to assume that Theology is a science, and an important one: so I will throw my argument into a more exact form. I say, then, that if a University be, from the nature of the case, a place of instruction, where universal knowledge is professed, and if in a certain University, so called, the subject of Religion is excluded, one of two conclusions is inevitable,—either, on the one hand, that the province of Religion is very barren of real knowledge, or, on the other hand, that in such University one special and important branch of knowledge is omitted. I say, the advocate of such an institution must say *this*, or he must say *that*; he must own, either that little or nothing is known about the Supreme Being, or that his seat of learning calls itself what it is not. This is the thesis which I lay down, and on which I shall insist as the subject of this Discourse. I repeat, such a compromise between religious parties, as is involved in the establishment of a University which makes no religious profession, implies that those parties severally consider,—not indeed that their own respective opinions are trifles in a moral and practical point of view—of course not; but certainly as much as this, that they are not knowledge. Did they in their hearts believe that their private views of religion, whatever they are, were absolutely and objectively true, it is inconceivable that they would so insult them as to consent to their omission in an Institution which is bound, from the nature of the case—from its very idea and its name—to make a profession of all sorts of knowledge whatever.

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I THINK THIS WILL BE FOUND to be no matter of words. I allow then fully, that, when men combine together for any common object, they are obliged, as a matter of course, in order to secure the advantages accruing from united action, to sacrifice many of their private opinions and wishes, and to drop the

minor differences, as they are commonly called, which exist between man and man. No two persons perhaps are to be found, however intimate, however congenial in tastes and judgments, however eager to have one heart and one soul, but must deny themselves, for the sake of each other, much which they like or desire, if they are to live together happily. Compromise, in a large sense of the word, is the first principle of combination; and any one who insists on enjoying his rights to the full, and his opinions without toleration for his neighbour's, and his own way in all things, will soon have all things altogether to himself, and no one to share them with him. But most true as this confessedly is, still there is an obvious limit, on the other hand, to these compromises, however necessary they be; and this is found in the *proviso*, that the differences surrendered should be *but* "minor," or that there should be no sacrifice of the main object of the combination, in the concessions which are mutually made. Any sacrifice which compromises that object is destructive of the principle of the combination, and no one who would be consistent can be a party to it.

Thus, for instance, if men of various religious denominations join together for the dissemination of what are called "evangelical" tracts, it is under the belief, that, the object of their uniting, as recognized on all hands, being the spiritual benefit of their neighbours, no religious exhortations, whatever be their character, can essentially interfere with that benefit, which faithfully insist upon the Lutheran doctrine of Justification. If, again, they agree together in printing and circulating the Protestant Bible, it is because they, one and all, hold to the principle, that, however serious be their differences of religious sentiment, such differences fade away before the one great principle, which that circulation symbolizes—that the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, is the religion of Protestants. On the contrary, if the committee of some such association inserted tracts into the copies of the said Bible which they sold, and tracts in recommendation of the Athana-

sian Creed or the merit of good works, I conceive any subscribing member would have a just right to complain of a proceeding, which compromised the principle of Private Judgment as the one true interpreter of Scripture. These instances are sufficient to illustrate my general position, that coalitions and comprehensions for an object, have their life in the prosecution of that object, and cease to have any meaning as soon as that object is compromised or disparaged.

When, then, a number of persons come forward, not as politicians, not as diplomatists, lawyers, traders, or speculators, but with the one object of advancing Universal Knowledge, much we may allow them to sacrifice.—ambition, reputation, leisure, comfort, party-interests, gold; one thing they may not sacrifice,—Knowledge itself. Knowledge being their object, they need not of course insist on their own private views about ancient or modern history, or national prosperity, or the balance of power; they need not of course shrink from the co-operation of those who hold the opposite views; but stipulate they must that Knowledge itself is not compromised;—and as to those views, of whatever kind, which they do allow to be dropped, it is plain they consider such to be opinions, and nothing more, however dear, however important to themselves personally; opinions ingenious, admirable, pleasurable, beneficial, expedient, but not worthy the name of Knowledge or Science. Thus no one would insist on the Malthusian teaching being a *sine quâ non* in a seat of learning, who did not think it simply ignorance not to be a Malthusian; and no one would consent to drop the Newtonian theory, who thought it to have been proved true, in the same sense as the existence of the sun and moon is true. If, then, in an Institution which professes all knowledge, nothing is professed, nothing is taught about the Supreme Being, it is fair to infer that every individual in the number of those who advocate that Institution, supposing him consistent, distinctly holds that nothing is known for certain about the Supreme Being; nothing such, as to have any claim to be regarded as a material addition to the

stock of general knowledge existing in the world. If on the other hand it turns out that something considerable is known about the Supreme Being, whether from Reason or Revelation, then the Institution in question professes every science, and yet leaves out the foremost of them. In a word, strong as may appear the assertion, I do not see how I can avoid making it, and bear with me, Gentlemen, while I do so, viz., such an Institution cannot be what it professes, if there be a God. I do not wish to declaim; but, by the very force of the terms, it is very plain, that a Divine Being and a University so circum-stanced cannot co-exist.

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STILL, HOWEVER, this may seem to many an abrupt conclusion, and will not be acquiesced in: what answer, Gentlemen, will be made to it? Perhaps this:—It will be said, that there are different kinds of spheres of Knowledge, human, divine, sensible, intellectual, and the like; and that a University certainly takes in all varieties of Knowledge in its own line, but still that it has a line of its own. It contemplates, it occupies a certain order, a certain platform, of Knowledge. I understand the remark; but I own to you, I do not understand how it can be made to apply to the matter in hand. I cannot so construct my definition of the subject-matter of University Knowledge, and so draw my boundary lines around it, as to include therein the other sciences commonly studied at Universities, and to exclude the science of Religion. For instance, are we to limit our idea of University Knowledge by the evidence of our senses? then we exclude ethics; by intuition? we exclude history; by testimony? we exclude metaphysics; by abstract reasoning? we exclude physics. Is not the being of a God reported to us by testimony, handed down by history, inferred by an inductive process, brought home to us by metaphysical necessity, urged on us by the suggestions of our conscience? It is a truth in the natural order, as well as in the

supernatural. So much for its origin; and, when obtained, what is it worth? Is it a great truth or a small one? Is it a comprehensive truth? Say that no other religious idea whatever were given but it, and you have enough to fill the mind; you have at once a whole dogmatic system. The word "God" is a Theology in itself, indivisibly one, inexhaustibly various, from the vastness and the simplicity of its meaning. Admit a God, and you introduce among the subjects of your knowledge, a fact encompassing, closing in upon, absorbing, every other fact conceivable. How can we investigate any part of any order of Knowledge, and stop short of that which enters into every order? All true principles run over with it, all phenomena converge to it; it is truly the First and the Last. In word indeed, and in idea, it is easy enough to divide Knowledge into human and divine, secular and religious, and to lay down that we will address ourselves to the one without interfering with the other; but it is impossible in fact. Granting that divine truth differs in kind from human, so do human truths differ in kind one from another. If the knowledge of the Creator is in a different order from knowledge of the creature, so, in like manner, metaphysical science is in a different order from physical, physics from history, history from ethics. You will soon break up into fragments the whole circle of secular knowledge, if you begin the mutilation with divine.

I have been speaking simply of Natural Theology; my argument of course is stronger when I go on to Revelation. Let the doctrine of the Incarnation be true: is it not at once of the nature of an historical fact, and of a metaphysical? Let it be true that there are Angels: how is not this a point of knowledge in the same sense as the naturalist's asseveration, that myriads of living things might co-exist on the point of a needle? That the Earth is to be burned by fire, is, if true, as large a fact as that huge monsters once played amid its depths; that Anti-christ is to come, is as categorical a heading to a chapter of history, as that Nero or Julian was Emperor of Rome; that a divine influence moves the will, is a subject of thought not

more mysterious than the result of volition on our muscles, which we admit as a fact in metaphysics.

I do not see how it is possible for a philosophical mind, first, to believe these religious facts to be true; next, to consent to ignore them; and thirdly, in spite of this, to go on to profess to be teaching all the while *de omni scibili*. No; if a man thinks in his heart that these religious facts are short of truth, that they are not true in the sense in which the general fact and the law of the fall of a stone to the earth is true, I understand his excluding Religion from his University, though he professes other reasons for its exclusion. In that case the varieties of religious opinion under which he shelters his conduct, are not only his apology for publicly disowning Religion, but a cause of his privately disbelieving it. He does not think that any thing is known or can be known for certain, about the origin of the world or the end of man.

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THIS, I FEAR, is the conclusion to which intellects, clear, logical, and consistent, have come, or are coming, from the nature of the case; and, alas! in addition to this *primâ-faciè* suspicion, there are actual tendencies in the same direction in Protestantism, viewed whether in its original idea, or again in the so-called Evangelical movement in these islands during the last century. The religious world, as it is styled, holds, generally speaking, that Religion consists, not in knowledge, but in feeling or sentiment. The old Catholic notion, which still lingers in the Established Church, was, that Faith was an intellectual act, its object truth, and its result knowledge. Thus if you look into the Anglican Prayer Book, you will find definite *credenda*, as well as definite *agenda*; but in proportion as the Lutheran leaven spread, it became fashionable to say that Faith was, not an acceptance of revealed doctrine, not an act of the intellect, but a feeling, an emotion, an affection, an appetency; and, as this view of Faith obtained, so was the

connexion of Faith with Truth and Knowledge more and more either forgotten or denied. At length the identity of this (so-called) spirituality of heart and the virtue of Faith was acknowledged on all hands. Some men indeed disapproved the pietism in question, others admired it; but whether they admired or disapproved, both the one party and the other found themselves in agreement on the main point, viz.—in considering that this really was in substance Religion, and nothing else; that Religion was based, not on argument, but on taste and sentiment, that nothing was objective, every thing subjective, in doctrine. I say, even those who saw through the affectation in which the religious school of which I am speaking clad itself, still came to think that Religion, as such, consisted in something short of intellectual exercises, viz., in the affections, in the imagination, in inward persuasions and consolations, in pleasurable sensations, sudden changes, and sublime fancies. They learned to believe and to take it for granted, that Religion was nothing beyond a supply of the wants of human nature, not an external fact and a work of God. There was, it appeared, a demand for Religion, and therefore there was a supply; human nature could not do without Religion, any more than it could do without bread; a supply was absolutely necessary, good or bad, and, as in the case of the articles of daily sustenance, an article which was really inferior was better than none at all. Thus Religion was useful, venerable, beautiful, the sanction of order, the stay of government, the curb of self-will and self-indulgence, which the laws cannot reach: but, after all, on what was it based? Why, that was a question delicate to ask, and imprudent to answer; but, if the truth must be spoken, however reluctantly, the long and the short of the matter was this, that Religion was based on custom, on prejudice, on law, on education, on habit, on loyalty, on feudalism, on enlightened expedience, on many, many things, but not at all on reason; reason was neither its warrant, nor its instrument, and science had as little connexion with it as with the fashions of the season, or the state of the weather.

You see, Gentlemen, how a theory or philosophy, which began with the religious changes of the sixteenth century, has led to conclusions, which the authors of those changes would be the first to denounce, and has been taken up by that large and influential body which goes by the name of Liberal or Latitudinarian; and how, where it prevails, it is as unreasonable of course to demand for Religion a chair in a University, as to demand one for fine feeling, sense of honour, patriotism, gratitude, maternal affection, or good companionship, proposals which would be simply unmeaning.

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NOW, IN ILLUSTRATION of what I have been saying, I will appeal, in the first place, to a statesman, but not merely so, to no mere politician, no trader in places, or in votes, or in the stock market, but to a philosopher, to an orator, to one whose profession, whose aim, has ever been to cultivate the fair, the noble, and the generous. I cannot forget the celebrated discourse of the celebrated man to whom I am referring; a man who is first in his peculiar walk; and who, moreover (which is much to my purpose), has had a share, as much as any one alive, in effecting the public recognition in these Islands of the principle of separating secular and religious knowledge. This brilliant thinker, during the years in which he was exerting himself in behalf of this principle, made a speech or discourse, on occasion of a public solemnity; and in reference to the bearing of general knowledge upon religious belief, he spoke as follows:

“As men,” he said, “will no longer suffer themselves to be led blindfold in ignorance, so will they no more yield to the vile principle of judging and treating their fellow-creatures, not according to the intrinsic merit of their actions, but according to the accidental and involuntary coincidence of their opinions. The great truth has finally gone forth to all the ends of the earth,” and he prints it in capital letters, “that man shall

no more render account to man for his belief, over which he has himself no control. Henceforward, nothing shall prevail upon us to praise or to blame any one for that which he can no more change, than he can the hue of his skin or the height of his stature." ^a You see, Gentlemen, if this philosopher is to decide the matter, religious ideas are just as far from being real, or representing anything beyond themselves, are as truly peculiarities, idiosyncracies, accidents of the individual, as his having the stature of a Patagonian, or the features of a Negro.

But perhaps this was the rhetoric of an excited moment. Far from it, Gentlemen, or I should not have fastened on the words of a fertile mind, uttered so long ago. What Mr. Brougham laid down as a principle in 1825, resounds on all sides of us, with ever-growing confidence and success, in 1852. I open the Minutes of the Committee of Council of Education for the years 1848-50, presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty, and I find one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, at p. 467 of the second volume, dividing "the topics usually embraced in the better class of primary schools" into four:—the knowledge of *signs*, as reading and writing; of *facts*, as geography and astronomy; of *relations and laws*, as mathematics; and lastly *sentiment*, such as poetry and music. Now, on first catching sight of this division, it occurred to me to ask myself, before ascertaining the writer's own resolution of the matter, under which of these four heads would fall Religion, or whether it fell under any of them. Did he put it aside as a thing too delicate and sacred to be enumerated with earthly studies? or did he distinctly contemplate it when he made his division? Anyhow, I could really find a place for it under the first head, or the second, or the third;—for it has to do with facts, since it tells of the Self-subsisting; it has to do with relations, for it tells of the Creator; it has to do with signs, for it tells of the due manner of speaking of Him. There was just one head of the division to which I could not

^a Mr. Brougham's Glasgow Discourse.

refer it, viz., to *sentiment*; for, I suppose, music and poetry, which are the writer's own examples of sentiment, have not much to do with Truth, which is the main object of Religion. Judge then my surprise, Gentlemen, when I found the fourth was the very head selected by the writer of the Report in question, as the special receptacle of religious topics. "The inculcation of *sentiment*," he says, "embraces reading in its higher sense, poetry, music, together with moral and religious Education." I am far from introducing this writer for his own sake, because I have no wish to hurt the feelings of a gentleman, who is but exerting himself zealously in the discharge of anxious duties; but, taking him as an illustration of the wide-spreading school of thought to which he belongs, I ask what can more clearly prove than a candid avowal like this, that, in the view of his school, Religion is not knowledge, has nothing whatever to do with knowledge, and is excluded from a University course of instruction, not simply because the exclusion cannot be helped, from political or social obstacles, but because it has no business there at all, because it is to be considered a taste, sentiment, opinion, and nothing more?

The writer avows this conclusion himself, in the explanation into which he presently enters, in which he says: "According to the classification proposed, the *essential idea* of all religious Education will consist in the direct cultivation of the *feelings*." What we contemplate, then, what we aim at, when we give a religious Education, is, it seems, not to impart any knowledge whatever, but to satisfy anyhow desires after the Unseen which will arise in our minds in spite of ourselves, to provide the mind with a means of self-command, to impress on it the beautiful ideas which saints and sages have struck out, to embellish it with the bright hues of a celestial piety, to teach it the poetry of devotion, the music of well-ordered affections, and the luxury of doing good. As for the intellect, its exercise happens to be unavoidable, whenever moral impressions are made, from the constitution of the human mind, but it varies

in the results of that exercise, in the conclusions which it draws from our impressions, according to the peculiarities of the individual.

Something like this seems to be the writer's meaning, but we need not pry into its finer issues in order to gain a distinct view of its general bearing; and taking it, as I think we fairly may take it, as a specimen of the philosophy of the day, as adopted by those who are not conscious unbelievers, or open scoffers, I consider it amply explains how it comes to pass that this day's philosophy sets up a system of universal knowledge, and teaches of plants, and earths, and creeping things, and beasts, and gases, about the crust of the earth and the changes of the atmosphere, about sun, moon, and stars, about man and his doings, about the history of the world, about sensation, memory, and the passions, about duty, about cause and effect, about all things imaginable, except one—and that is, about Him that made all these things, about God. I say the reason is plain because they consider knowledge, as regards the creature, is illimitable, but impossible or hopeless as regards the being and attributes and works of the Creator.

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HERE, HOWEVER, it may be objected to me that this representation is certainly extreme, for the school in question does, in fact, lay great stress on the evidence afforded by the creation, to the Being and Attributes of the Creator. I may be referred, for instance, to the words of one of the speakers on a memorable occasion. At the very time of laying the first stone of the University of London, I confess it, a learned person, since elevated to the Protestant See of Durham, which he still fills, opened the proceedings with prayer. He addressed the Deity, as the authoritative Report informs us, "the whole surrounding assembly standing uncovered in solemn silence." "Thou," he said, in the name of all present, "thou hast constructed the vast fabric of the universe in so

wonderful a manner, so arranged its motions, and so formed its productions, that the contemplation and study of thy works exercise at once the mind in the pursuit of human science, and lead it onwards to *Divine Truth*." Here is apparently a distinct recognition that there is such a thing as Truth in the province of Religion; and, did the passage stand by itself, and were it the only means we possessed of ascertaining the sentiments of the powerful body whom this distinguished person there represented, it would, as far as it goes, be satisfactory. I admit it; and I admit also the recognition of the Being and certain Attributes of the Deity, contained in the writings of the gifted person whom I have already quoted, whose genius, versatile and multiform as it is, in nothing has been so constant, as in its devotion to the advancement of knowledge, scientific and literary. He then certainly, in his "Discourse of the objects, advantages, and pleasures of science," after variously illustrating what he terms its "gratifying treats," crowns the catalogue with mention of "the highest of all our gratifications in the contemplation of science," which he proceeds to explain thus:

"We are raised by them," says he, "to an understanding of the infinite wisdom and goodness which the Creator has displayed in all His works. Not a step can be taken in any direction," he continues, "without perceiving the most extraordinary traces of design; and the skill, every where conspicuous, is calculated in so vast a proportion of instances to promote the happiness of living creatures, and especially of ourselves, that we can feel no hesitation in concluding, that, if we knew the whole scheme of Providence, every part would be in harmony with a plan of absolute benevolence. Independent, however, of this most consoling inference, the delight is inexpressible, of being able to follow, as it were, with our eyes, the marvellous works of the Great Architect of Nature, to trace the unbounded power and exquisite skill which are exhibited in the most minute, as well as the mightiest parts of His system. The pleasure derived from this study is unceasing, and so various, that it never tires the appetite. But it is unlike the low gratifi-

cations of sense in another respect: it elevates and refines our nature, while those hurt the health, debase the understanding, and corrupt the feelings; it teaches us to look upon all earthly objects as insignificant and below our notice, except the pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of virtue, that is to say, the strict performance of our duty in every relation of society; and it gives a dignity and importance to the enjoyment of life, which the frivolous and the grovelling cannot even comprehend."

Such are the words of this prominent champion of Mixed Education. If logical inference be, as it undoubtedly is, an instrument of truth, surely, it may be answered to me, in admitting the possibility of inferring the Divine Being and Attributes *from* the phenomena of nature, he distinctly admits a basis of truth for the doctrines of Religion.

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I WISH, GENTLEMEN, to give these representations their full weight, both from the gravity of the question, and the consideration due to the persons whom I am arraigning; but, before I can feel sure I understand them, I must ask an abrupt question. When I am told, then, by the partisans of Universities without Theological teaching, that human science leads to belief in a Supreme Being, without denying the fact, nay, as a Catholic, with full conviction of it, nevertheless I am obliged to ask what the statement means in *their* mouths, what they, the speakers, understand by the word "God." Let me not be thought offensive, if I question, whether it means the same thing on the two sides of the controversy. With us Catholics, as with the first race of Protestants, as with Mahometans, and all Theists, the word contains, as I have already said, a theology in itself. At the risk of anticipating what I shall have occasion to insist upon in my next Discourse, let me say that, according to the teaching of Monotheism, God is an Individual, Self-dependent, All-perfect, Unchangeable Being; intelligent,

living, personal, and present; almighty, all-seeing, all-remembering; between whom and His creatures there is an infinite gulf; who has no origin, who is all-sufficient for Himself; who created and upholds the universe; who will judge every one of us, sooner or later, according to the Law of right and wrong which He has written on our hearts. He is One who is sovereign over, operative amidst, independent of, the appointments which He has made; One in whose hands are all things, who has a purpose in every event, and a standard for every deed, and thus has relations of His own towards the subject-matter of each particular science which the book of knowledge unfolds; who has with an adorable, never-ceasing energy implicated Himself in all the history of creation, the constitution of nature, the course of the world, the origin of society, the fortunes of nations, the action of the human mind; and who thereby necessarily becomes the subject-matter of a science, far wider and more noble than any of those which are included in the circle of secular Education.

This is the doctrine which belief in a God implies in the mind of a Catholic: if it means any thing, it means all this, and cannot keep from meaning all this, and a great deal more; and, even though there were nothing in the religious tenets of the last three centuries to disparage dogmatic truth, still, even then, I should have difficulty in believing that a doctrine so mysterious, so peremptory, approved itself as a matter of course to educated men of this day, who gave their minds attentively to consider it. Rather, in a state of society such as ours, in which authority, prescription, tradition, habit, moral instinct, and the divine influences go for nothing, in which patience of thought, and depth and consistency of view, are scorned as subtle and scholastic, in which free discussion and fallible judgment are prized as the birthright of each individual, I must be excused if I exercise towards this age, as regards its belief in this doctrine, some portion of that scepticism which it exercises itself towards every received but unscrutinized assertion whatever. I cannot take it for granted,

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I must have it brought home to me by tangible evidence, that the spirit of the age means by the Supreme Being what Catholics mean. Nay, it would be a relief to my mind to gain some ground of assurance, that the parties influenced by that spirit had, I will not say, a true apprehension of God, but even so much as the idea of what a true apprehension is.

Nothing is easier than to use the word, and mean nothing by it. The heathens used to say, "God wills," when they meant "Fate;" "God provides," when they meant "Chance;" "God acts," when they meant "Instinct" or "Sense;" and "God is every where," when they meant "the Soul of Nature." The Almighty is something infinitely different from a principle, or a centre of action, or a quality, or a generalization of phenomena. If, then, by the word, you do but mean a Being who keeps the world in order, who acts in it, but only in the way of general Providence, who acts towards us but only through what are called laws of Nature, who is more certain not to act at all than to act independent of those laws, who is known and approached indeed, but only through the medium of those laws; such a God it is not difficult for any one to conceive, not difficult for any one to endure. If, I say, as you would revolutionize society, so you would revolutionize heaven, if you have changed the divine sovereignty into a sort of constitutional monarchy, in which the Throne has honour and ceremonial enough, but cannot issue the most ordinary command except through legal forms and precedents, and with the counter-signature of a minister, then belief in a God is no more than an acknowledgment of existing, sensible powers and phenomena, which none but an idiot can deny. If the Supreme Being is powerful or skilful, just so far forth as the telescope shows power, and the microscope shows skill, if His moral law is to be ascertained simply by the physical processes of the animal frame, or His will gathered from the immediate issues of human affairs, if His Essence is just as high and deep and broad and long as the universe, and no

more; if this be the fact, then will I confess that there is no specific science about God, that theology is but a name, and a protest in its behalf an hypocrisy. Then is He but coincident with the laws of the universe; then is He but a function, or correlative, or subjective reflection and mental impression, of each phenomenon of the material or moral world, as it fits before us. Then, pious as it is to think of Him, while the pageant of experiment or abstract reasoning passes by, still such piety is nothing more than a poetry of thought or an ornament of language, and has not even an infinitesimal influence upon philosophy or science, of which it is rather the parasitical production.

I understand, in that case, why Theology should require no specific teaching, for there is nothing to mistake about; why it is powerless against scientific anticipations, for it merely is one of them; why it is simply absurd in its denunciations of heresy, for heresy does not lie in the region of fact and experiment. I understand, in that case, how it is that the religious sense is but a "sentiment," and its exercise a "gratifying treat," for it is like the sense of the beautiful or the sublime. I understand how the contemplation of the universe "leads onwards to divine truth," for divine truth is not something separate from Nature, but it is Nature with a divine glow upon it. I understand the zeal expressed for Physical Theology, for this study is but a mode of looking at Physical Nature, a certain view taken of Nature, private and personal, which one man has, and another has not, which gifted minds strike out, which others see to be admirable and ingenious, and which all would be the better for adopting. It is but the theology of Nature, just as we talk of the *philosophy* or the *romance* of history, or the *poetry* of childhood, or the picturesque, or the sentimental, or the humorous, or any other abstract quality, which the genius or the caprice of the individual, or the fashion of the day, or the consent of the world, recognizes in any set of objects which are subjected to its contemplation.

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SUCH IDEAS OF RELIGION seem to me short of Monotheism; I do not impute them to this or that individual who belongs to the school which gives them currency; but what I read about the "gratification" of keeping pace in our scientific researches with "the Architect of Nature;" about the said gratification "giving a dignity and importance to the enjoyment of life," and teaching us that knowledge and our duties to society are the only earthly objects worth our notice, all this, I own it, Gentlemen, frightens me; nor is Dr. Maltby's address to the Deity sufficient to reassure me. I do not see much difference between avowing that there is no God, and implying that nothing definite can for certain be known about Him; and when I find Religious Education treated as the cultivation of sentiment, and Religious Belief as the accidental hue or posture of the mind, I am reluctantly but forcibly reminded of a very unpleasant page of Metaphysics, viz., of the relations between God and Nature insinuated by such philosophers as Hume. This acute, though most low-minded of speculators, in his inquiry concerning the Human Understanding, introduces, as is well known, Epicurus, that is, a teacher of atheism, delivering an harangue to the Athenian people, not indeed in defence, but in extenuation of that opinion. His object is to show that, whereas the atheistic view is nothing else than the repudiation of theory, and an accurate representation of phenomenon and fact, it cannot be dangerous, unless phenomenon and fact be dangerous. Epicurus is made to say, that the paralogism of philosophy has ever been that of arguing from Nature in behalf of something beyond Nature, greater than Nature; whereas, God, as he maintains, being known only through the visible world, our knowledge of Him is absolutely commensurate with our knowledge of it,—is nothing distinct from it,—is but a mode of viewing it. Hence it follows that, provided we admit, as we cannot help admitting, the phe-

nomena of Nature and the world, it is only a question of words whether or not we go on to the hypothesis of a second Being, not visible but immaterial, parallel and coincident with Nature, to whom we give the name of God. "Allowing," he says, "the gods to be the authors of the existence or order of the universe, it follows that they possess that precise degree of power, intelligence, and benevolence, which appears in their workmanship; but nothing farther can be proved, except we call in the assistance of exaggeration and flattery to supply the defects of argument and reasoning. So far as the traces of any attributes, at present, appear, so far may we conclude these attributes to exist. The supposition of farther attributes is mere hypothesis; much more the supposition that, in distant periods of place and time, there has been, or will be, a more magnificent display of these attributes, and a scheme of administration more suitable to such imaginary virtues."

Here is a reasoner, who would not hesitate to deny that there is any distinct science or philosophy possible concerning the Supreme Being; since every single thing we know of Him is this or that or the other phenomenon, material or moral, which already falls under this or that natural science. In him then it would be only consistent to drop Theology in a course of University Education: but how is it consistent in any one who shrinks from his companionship? I am glad to see that the author, several times mentioned, is in opposition to Hume, in one sentence of the quotation I have made from his Discourse upon Science, deciding, as he does, that the phenomena of the material world are insufficient for the full exhibition of the Divine Attributes, and implying that they require a supplemental process to complete and harmonize their evidence. But is not this supplemental process a science? and if so, why not acknowledge its existence? If God is more than Nature, Theology claims a place among the sciences: but, on the other hand, if you are not sure of as much as this, how do you differ from Hume or Epicurus?

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I END THEN AS I BEGAN: religious doctrine is knowledge. This is the important truth, little entered into at this day, which I wish that all who have honoured me with their presence here would allow me to beg them to take away with them. I am not catching at sharp arguments, but laying down grave principles. Religious doctrine is knowledge, in as full a sense as Newton's doctrine is knowledge. University Teaching without Theology is simply unphilosophical. Theology has at least as good a right to claim a place there as Astronomy.

In my next Discourse it will be my object to show that its omission from the list of recognised sciences is not only indefensible in itself, but prejudicial to all the rest.

DISCOURSE III

BEARING OF THEOLOGY ON OTHER
BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE

I

WHEN MEN OF GREAT INTELLECT, who have long and intently and exclusively given themselves to the study or investigation of some one particular branch of secular knowledge, whose mental life is concentrated and hidden in their chosen pursuit, and who have neither eyes nor ears for any thing which does not immediately bear upon it, when such men are at length made to realize that there is a clamour all around them, which must be heard, for what they have been so little accustomed to place in the category of knowledge as Religion, and that they themselves are accused of disaffection to it, they are impatient at the interruption; they call the demand tyrannical, and the requisitionists bigots or fanatics. They are tempted to say, that their only wish is to be let alone; for themselves, they are not dreaming of offending any one, or interfering with any one; they are pursuing their own particular line, they have never spoken a word against any one's religion, whoever he may be, and never mean to do so. It does not follow that they deny the existence of a God, because they are not found talking of it, when the topic would be utterly irrelevant. All they say is, that there are other beings in the world besides the Supreme Being; their business is with them. After all, the creation is not the Creator, nor things secular religious. Theology and human science are two things, not one, and have their respective provinces, contiguous it may be and cognate to each other,