Education
AND
Modern Secularism

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MODERN SECULARISM

BY THE

REV. C. W. FORMBY

FORMERLY OF KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD

WITH PREFACE

BY THE

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LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

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PREFACE

The writer of the following pages has asked me to write a few words by way of preface. I do so with ready willingness, glad indeed if I can help him to gain a hearing, and glad to express my own grateful recognition of the value of his work.

It has been a rare pleasure to me to receive from an old member of my College, after an interval of suspended intercourse, a piece of work so thoughtful, so open-eyed, and so vigorous as the present essay.

It seems to me in a true sense, to hit the gold. The subject discussed is one, or part of one, upon which much has been said. But I do not seem myself to have seen the particular issue brought out with so much clearness, or shown to be so important, or pressed with so much serious earnestness, as here by him. He starts from the
assertion that Secularism—used intentionally in a very wide sense to express the influence of the material side of life and thought—is immensely, unduly, and most dangerously dominant as an influence, or atmosphere, or (to use Mr. Balfour's word) climate: and his main thesis is that this is largely due to the faults and neglects of contemporary education on its religious side. But if this leads him to dwell on the darker side of the matter, he does not write in any spirit of panic or despair. On the contrary, he recognizes (p. 26) that the most recent movements of thought are rather away from, than towards, positions of a merely materialistic kind; he is prepared himself to regard the evil which he attacks as a 'passing phase in the majestic scheme of human development,' and the whole gist of his practical contention is that we can largely alter the mischief, if we will. But, if this is to be done, he maintains that we must cultivate the spiritual faculties and instincts far more carefully and systematically than we do; and further, that we must be careful to convince the minds of which these faculties are a part that they are natural parts, and parts to be prized, of a sound mental con-
stitution. He desires to enlist 'the energies of the rational faculties on the side of intelligent religious belief.' He would do this both by initiating growing minds into some elementary understanding of the reasons which justify us in treating the spiritual side of ourselves as valid and normal, and by presenting religious teaching in forms which take due account of the intellectual needs and acquisitions of the time. It is in this sense, I think, and in the interest of practical results, that he makes his suggestions about teaching Christian Evidences; suggestions of which the form may repel some readers, but which must be understood and judged in context with the whole. It is very possible that the writer may be thought to have undervalued what is being done in the direction that he desires by our best schoolmasters—(he is able to fortify his suggestions by an admirable example taken from one of our great Public Schools : p. 88)—or again to under-estimate the difficulties of doing it in the present condition of religious thought and life; but I am sure that, allowing for all such discounts, there is much here that needed saying, that is well said, and that may, if responsible people (bishops, clergy,
public schoolmasters, High School mistresses, and teachers, clerical or lay, in our Elementary Schools) will ponder it, be a really valuable contribution to the improvement which he desires to promote. And believing this, it is only justice—but it is justice which friendship makes pleasant—that I should say it, if my friend thinks that by doing so I can assist him and his cause.

May God's blessing go with this small book.

E. ROFFEN.

Bishop's House, Kennington, S.E.

August, 1896.
CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.
INTRODUCTORY.

The conditions of modern secularism, the difficulty of estimating its growth.—The object of this volume.—Some characteristic results of secularism; its connexion with unbelief.—Defective methods of religious education are the constant, universal, and primary source of secularism . . . . . 1

CHAPTER II.
EDUCATION AND SECULARIZING INFLUENCES.

The reason for expecting to find some definite source of secularism.—A glance at the general lay of the field.—Other existing sources of secularism have neither powerful, constant, nor universal influence.—Facts suggesting where the weak point may be. The opinions of competent critics . . . . . 8

CHAPTER III.
THE CULTURE OF SCEPTICISM.

The causes which have for centuries been actively working in society towards rendering the supernatural and supersensuous incredible, although now declining before the advance of psychological science, are nevertheless being reproduced in their most potent form by the peculiarities of school education.—Two directions from which counteracting influences may be brought to bear. . . . . . . . . 21
CHAPTER IV.

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

Proofs of deficiencies in existing methods—first, from definite facts; secondly, from theoretical considerations.—Recent statistics of confirmations and ordinations viewed in connexion with education.—Untenable theories upon which the existing system of religious education is based.

CHAPTER V.

THE USE OF THE RATIONAL FACULTIES.

Although the exact relationship between the rational and spiritual faculties cannot be determined, their independence is important.—Their use in maturity and in youth.—The dangers of neglect.—A suggestion from Mr. Kidd's Social Evolution.

CHAPTER VI.

TRAINING THE RATIONAL FACULTIES.

The rational faculties, if needed at all for the spiritual life, must require definite training.—An examination of modern intellectual tendencies.—The possibility of that development.—A dilemma involving the condemnation of the present intellectual tendencies.—The distortion of the rational powers.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCHOOLS.

The existing conditions of religious education in various grades.—The apathy common to all schools, its cause.—National Schools; the special importance of thorough religious education in these schools.—Sunday Schools, signs of weakness and loss of power.—Preparatory Schools: the effect of competition in Private Schools.—The state of religious education.—Public and Grammar Schools.—Evidential teaching in Public Schools.
CHAPTER VIII.

AN AVAILABLE REMEDY.

A summary of considerations.—Three guiding facts. —The use of text-books the only available means of ensuring a more thorough and rational teaching.—A suggestion as to their arrangement.—The need of insisting upon the use of such books.—The responsibility rests not upon teachers, but upon parents and the public . . . . . . . . . . . . 91
EDUCATION

AND

MODERN SECULARISM

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Notwithstanding the influence of a wave of spiritualistic thought on the one hand, and of the persevering efforts of many earnest Christians on the other, it undoubtedly still remains true that modern secularism is an increasing rather than a diminishing quantity. Of the two influences just mentioned, the former has to some extent driven out the grosser notions of materialism

1 The word 'secularism' is used as a general term expressing any and all of the various shades of worldliness, which mean a practical renunciation of the claims and restraints of Christianity. It is used as a collective name for the numerous forms of irreligion, which will be seen to be secondary symptoms of indifference or unbelief.
from those regions where they reigned supreme, but it has left them cold and barren. The latter has been generally active in provoking a listless admiration for self-sacrifice and devotion, rather than in exerting any persuasive force, either as to the real truth of Christian beliefs, or as to the slightest necessity of living the devout, self-denying, and Christ-like life. In estimating the exact condition of modern secularism, the absence of definite statistics must leave in this—as in all similar cases—a very wide margin for differences of opinion. Still, the prevalent vagueness in religious beliefs, and the slender influence which they have upon the popular mind, are features too marked and universal to be overlooked or minimized by any who have had the opportunity of forming a correct and unbiassed opinion. It is not our object to utter aimless lamentations, nor to admit for a moment any pessimistic views; but whilst regarding the evil in question as a passing phase in the majestic scheme of human development, to consider its essential nature, to find out its most pregnant cause, and to suggest by what means such a hindrance to progress may be diminished. It would therefore be foreign to our subject to inquire why men who amuse themselves six days in the week should desire nothing better than to spend the seventh in the same way; or why the possessors of a hunting stud, a deer forest,
and every other accessory to a life of pleasure, should prefer also to keep a yacht through the year for the sake of a few weeks' enjoyment, rather than, for a fraction of the same expenditure, to endow a hospital bed to the endless comfort of many a penniless and suffering fellow-creature; or why hundreds of good all-round men should desire to start upon a career of business, or to enter the Military and Civil Services, where one is willing to take Holy Orders; for are not all these phenomena accounted for by the very fact of a prevailing secular spirit? It remains for us therefore to go a few steps further, and to ask where is there any ostensible cause of this secular spirit, and where can even a partial remedy be found? We cannot remain satisfied with an evasive and inaccurate answer to our questions, such as—that these things have always been so. We know that there be few who find the narrow path. But we ask, why, in the face of so many favourable conditions, does the proportion of these apparently continue to fall? why do the few become fewer?

It will become clear on further examination of the subject, that the spirit of secularism has its immediate source in actual or practical unbelief—that is to say, either in definite and wilful denial of Christian truth, or in unwilling but genuine inability to realize the facts of the invisible, the spiritual, the supernatural world. Our
subject therefore resolves itself into this question, namely, as to what is the real source of modern unbelief. On this point Professor Stewart quotes Mr. Lecky's *History of Rationalism* as follows:

"The decline of the influence and realization of dogmatic theology which characterizes a secular age brings with it an instinctive repugnance to the miraculous"; and he appends the following significant comment: "The admission is rife with important consequences, for by it we see that what is called 'the spirit of the age' derives its character not from any profound reasoning, not from any natural necessity, not from any special regard for the interests of truth, but from the class of objects with which the mind of the age is chiefly occupied. In other words, the exclusive pursuit of secular aims—natural science, commerce, luxury,—any form of earthly ambition or absorption, makes the mind incapable of receiving, understanding, or even entertaining the idea of any Being higher than man, or any state of existence higher than the present." We have here the secret of the whole matter. Therefore, whilst entirely at one with Professor Stewart as to the main cause of unbelief, we propose in the succeeding chapter to trace this cause to its source in the initial stage of its activity. We shall find this primary source in modern educa-

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tion, where the process of "earthly absorption" is being begun on the most systematic lines. We must start our investigation by noticing the fact that people are not born secularists, but that they become so. Therefore the main question which will come before us is—what is the chief existing influence which is so all-powerful in causing people to become secularists? It will appear that palpable deficiencies in the present methods of religious education are the responsible causes for the prevalent spirit of secularism and unbelief, and that no other adequate causes can be found.

These educational deficiencies may be expressed in outline as follows.

First, that since the supernatural and spiritual is the basis of our religion, the natural faculties of the young need special training and special education in order to recognize the reality of the supernatural sphere. Whereas, under the present system, the supernatural is presented either as something too unimportant for comment, or too unintelligible for explanation.

Secondly, that religious education alone ignores the intelligence of the young, and takes no steps either towards directing its energies, or towards elucidating and removing its ordinary difficulties. "With regard to the subject of the first indictment," Canon Diggle writes, "it is the absence of the realization of the existence
of a distinct spiritual faculty in man, and of a distinct spiritual universe in which the faculty moves and has its being, that more than all else is responsible for the prevalence of religious doubt. And for the absence of this realization religious teachers are largely responsible. The religious education of all classes, even up to the sixth forms of our Public Schools, will be seen to adopt the same methods. It will also become clear that these methods have of late been more active in producing bad results, not from any retrograde movement in religious teaching, but from that which is practically tantamount—namely, from a failure to advance with the developments current in all other spheres of thought and education. Surely, since religion is needed as an active power in life's earliest and fiercest battles, it should be handed over to the young as far as possible as a finished weapon, possessed of reality and of substance, complete as far as possible with all its complementary adjuncts, tested by candid and open discussion, and grasped by carefully trained powers.

That the deficiencies of religious education are really responsible for the progress of secularism will appear evident from the three different standpoints from which the subject is viewed in the succeeding chapters; namely:—

\footnote{Religious Doubt, p. 348.}
First. From a consideration of the effect of other possible causes.

Secondly. From a review of some results directly connected with religious education.

Thirdly. From an examination of the theory and principles involved in training the religious capacities.
CHAPTER II.

EDUCATION AND SECULARIZING INFLUENCES.

It would be impossible to acknowledge the existence of any craze of fashion, however capricious, or of any current opinion, however short-lived, without being compelled to own, that inexplicable as such waves of popular fancy may appear, there must nevertheless be, at their origin, adequate and responsible causes. It would be still more impossible that there should exist over such a wide area to-day, features so marked and regular as those of modern secularism, without the presence of causes equally definite and universal. The tide of human proclivities does not ebb or flow in any direction without the influence of some mass of causes sufficiently weighty to supply the invisible powers of motion. That nothing can happen without a cause is surely as obvious a truism of the complex region of the mental and the spiritual, as it is in a matter of the simplest physical phenomenon.

With due reason then, on examination of the
roots of secularism, we may expect to find not only small intermittent sources, but some powerful cause, capable of producing continual and uniform results. In order to judge more accurately of those conditions which always attend the commencement of an irreligious career, it will be advantageous to concentrate the range of our observation, to pass from the million to the unit, from the mass to the individual. Sooner or later it becomes necessary for every individual, when religious principles have been understood and years of discretion attained, to apply these principles to daily conduct. The time has then come for a choice between the guiding principles of life, and such a choice involves the act of judgment as to their worth and weight. Either consciously or unconsciously the individual must assume a definite personal attitude towards religion.

The position thus taken is of course not unchangeable; but it is not, for all that, a mere mental attitude. It involves the consent of every faculty, instinct, and idiosyncrasy. In short, the attitude of each individual towards religion represents all the physical, mental, and spiritual factors which contribute towards the individual himself. A person's attitude towards religion is therefore, in reality, the expressed verdict of the entire being. The tone and tendency of the whole life depends on this attitude towards God and
religion. It is this personal attitude which forms the standpoint from which facts are viewed, opinions shaped, and actions decided on. It regulates the degree of illumination by means of which the problems of existence and duty are solved, and it supplies the bias by which the general course of life is swayed. In fact, upon the personal attitude towards God and religion depends the result of a religious or an irreligious life. Thus we arrive at the conclusion, that the secular career is merely the outward expression of an inward fact—namely, that the entire individuality has assumed an attitude of actual or practical aversion to God and religion. This is either the positive attitude of unbelief, or the negative position of indifference. We must not, however, forget that a large amount of irreligion and worldliness exists among those who are really believing and struggling Christians. As long as human nature remains what it is at present, so long must failures be forthcoming as proofs of its weakness. Still, the occasional and even frequent shortcomings of well-meaning Christians belong to an entirely different class of phenomena from the habitual or intentional irreligion which is at present before our notice.

We have already remarked on the variety of influences which guide individuals in taking up a definite attitude with regard to religion.
It will be seen that all such influences fall, by no arbitrary classification, but naturally, under one of three headings. All secularizing influences must arise either from

(1) *Natural disposition*,
(2) *Environment*,
(3) *Education and training*.

These three groups of causes will be found to embrace all influences which act upon individuals in the matter of a personal attitude towards religion.

We now approach the main question of our inquiry:—From which of these three causes emanate the particular influences which are so powerful in their tendency towards a non-religious attitude of life? If we examine briefly each of these three groups of causes, we shall at least readily observe in which direction lie the more suspicious facts. With but a few words we can pass over the first group of causes—namely, those which have their origin in *natural disposition* and inherited proclivities.

It could hardly be maintained that modern secularism is the outcome of any natural propensities, which have recently become innate characteristics in the temperament of the age. There is no reason for supposing that the deeps of human nature have of late become from birth greatly, or even noticeably, modified.
The slow and steady methods which for past ages have been employed in building up human nature, do not readily fall in with theories involving the reverse process of a sudden and destructive change. The essential features of the human soul, so far as they are seen embalmed in the most ancient writings, correspond very strikingly to those which exist to-day as living realities. Abundant evidence could be adduced, if there were need, to prove that now, as in bygone centuries, the peculiarities of individuals present, as a whole, the same varied soil for the reception of the seeds of truth. That the harvest is deficient depends therefore upon other causes.

We next pass on to consider the ordinary influences which modern environments bring to bear upon the religious life. Here we are confronted with a vast conglomerate mass of forces, which differ, in the case of each individual, according to the various external circumstances of life.

Foremost among such circumstances are the different occupations and professions, each with its own peculiar dangers and advantages; from the demoralizing atmosphere of the gin palace and gambling den, to the influences of a quiet home and honest work; or the still more ennobling career of a life of self-sacrifice and devotion. There is also the deadening
effect of excessive manual labour to be reckoned with, as well as the quickening exercise of intellectual study. There are the particular influences imparted both by the surroundings of nature and art, and by the moral tone of parents, clergy, friends, and acquaintances. There are also the conditions of the housing and style of living. All of these, together with many other influences, must act and react in the case of every individual, until we have, as the result, that religious temperature of the individual which decides the personal attitude towards religion. Now it is obvious that such factors, varying as they do in every case, and always indefinite, both in number and in degree of power, could never be dealt with as fixed and known quantities. It would therefore be well to state clearly both our object in considering the question of environment, and the length to which we need to go. We do not propose to attempt the impossible task of forming an accurate estimate upon indefinite data, nor of calculating the exact weight which any details may possess with reference to religious bias; but rather, to take a general survey of the whole matter, in order to ascertain if there be any prominent feature or modification in the conditions of life, which should appear undoubtedly capable of giving increased vitality to the cause of secularism.
But when we do examine some of the more powerful external influences which modern life brings to bear upon the majority of both sexes, and which must of necessity have great weight in moulding the religious tendencies of the age, we find that, in the main, such circumstances and conditions, so far from being necessarily productive of secularism and adverse to religion, are distinctly favourable to the development of the spiritual faculties. The ever-increasing discount at which manual labour must stand, the great premium laid upon mental power and ability, the tendencies and opportunities of town life, are all factors actively engaged in procuring the ascendancy of the higher faculties over the grosser elements of human nature. In addition to these forces, the activity of the Church is yearly becoming greater, and her machinery more extended and complete. Thus far some of the most important matters of environment would seem to be actually favourable to spiritual life.

Nevertheless, we must not overlook another class of conditions possessed of an entirely opposite tendency. Foremost among these may be mentioned, the varied consequences of a rapid increase in population, such as excessive competition in the various modes of earning money, and the consequent laxity of business principles; or a pressure of work which entails a real lack
of time, even for the ordinary amenities of life, much more for the demands of religion. Any such conditions of existence may, and in some cases undoubtedly do, amount to an almost insuperable barrier to a religious life. Even where they exist in a mitigated shape, they must give a very decided bias towards an attitude of indifference or carelessness. But with regard to business principles, though it would be impossible to estimate accurately the extent to which dishonest and corrupt practices are responsible for an enervated spiritual life among certain portions of the professional, mercantile, or trading classes, still we may fairly assert, that these evils cannot be considered either as a powerful source of secularism, or as one which is active in all spheres. For the influence of an accentuated struggle for existence can affect only the money-earning classes. But it is not to these classes alone that secularism is confined, nor indeed in these classes is it especially marked.

Again, there is the influence of vice to be considered. It is clear that drunkenness, gambling, and immorality taint the moral atmosphere in which they exist, and produce an environment altogether antagonistic to religious life. Still, it cannot be said either that such vices have at present wide circles of influence, or that their poison is of the most fatal and insidious kind. They would seem to be more accurately
described as some of the grossest fruits of irreligion rather than as its most powerful cause. For although vice must necessarily react upon the religious life of the community through force of example, still, in the face of so many counteracting influences, which are able to cope with such a vulnerable foe, the existing amount of open vice could never be considered as the prolific source of an increasing secularism.

Thus it seems, from a brief examination of the main features, that no peculiarity of inherited disposition, nor the ordinary environments of life, can be considered as sufficient causes for modern secularism. We have noticed a great mass of demoralizing influences, but also many agencies which are exerting a powerful humanizing and elevating force. We have been compelled also to recognize, that those conditions of life which appeared most unfavourable to religion were neither universal in their scope nor direct in their anti-religious tendencies. Therefore, so far from noticing any very prominent source of evil, we feel driven to the conclusion that, as far as external circumstances are concerned—exclusive of matters of education and intellect—the conditions of life to-day are more favourable to the spread and influence of religion than any which have previously existed. Taking also into consideration the vast amount of power continually at work in spreading this same
influence of religion, we may reasonably express surprise at the existing result, and turn to another quarter in order to find a force sufficiently definite, widespread, and constant, to account for the phenomenon of modern secularism.

When we come to the third group of causes which affect the choice of a personal attitude towards God and religion—namely, to the influence of education and training—we approach a subject of which we are naturally more suspicious, on account of the large extent to which education is dependent upon human care and method. Moreover, as Gray reminds us,

"As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,  
Whose barren bosom starves her generous birth,  
So draw mankind in vain the vital airs,  
Unformed, unfriended, by those kindly cares  
That health and vigour to the soul impart."

Youth is the period generally answerable for the more important stages of human development; and since, in the case of an individual who has entirely adopted an evil course of life we naturally call in question the soundness of early training, we must also be quite prepared to recognize the tremendously important part which education may be playing in the matter of modern secularism. It will be seen, moreover, that there do actually exist in religious education deficiencies sufficiently serious to account for almost any extent of indifference or open
irreligion. Writers of the greatest possible competency have remarked on the shortcomings of the present methods of religious education. Again, we have the following dictum from one of the best known of Her Majesty's School Inspectors: "It is the simple truth to say, that no part of our educational work is less systematically, and less effectively, carried out than this same moral and religious training, which is supposed to be its best feature. This is a sad and serious fact, which it behoves all educationists and all earnest men to look more seriously into. If its neglect is a fact, it is time, it is more than time, that it should be remedied."

Upon the subject of religious education, the Bishop of Peterborough, speaking at the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society in 1894, said: "Now we know that about moral questions, much of our education has been adapted to the purpose of enabling young men to slowly grow into the sense of their responsibilities. But I fear we have never been equally careful in recognizing the same truth with regard to their spiritual and religious education. I think that too often it has been supposed, that if they are grounded in religious principles, these principles will last through their whole life. I think through the agency of this society there has been in the past, and there will be

still more in the future, much greater attention paid to the intellectual training of all young people. And should not this attention be given to preparing them for the actual difficulties which their faith is likely to meet with in later life?¹

We find also Professor Adeney making these comments upon the same subject, and on the same occasion: "I would therefore especially lay emphasis on that most valuable branch of the operations of this society, the instruction of the young. We are often too cautious in dealing with children, even with those who are not just children; we are afraid to let them know exactly what we think; they are brought up in a hot-house of artificial ideas, and when they go out into the world and hear the rough questions that are addressed to them, they wake up and turn on us and say, 'You have been keeping us in a fool's paradise.' They are absolutely bewildered, and what we taught them as certain suddenly vanishes into doubt. I feel that parents and all that are responsible for the teaching of children have here a grave duty, to see that young children are prepared for the questions they will have to face. I do not mean that we are always to be telling them of doubts and difficulties, we must lead them on

step by step in education, and dwell rather on positive truth and positive evidence than on difficulties."

On entering more fully into the question of religious education in the following Chapter, and on considering the peculiar demands presented by the age, and the way in which those demands are satisfied, we shall find that the above remarks are more than justified.

CHAPTER III.

THE CULTURE OF SCEPTICISM.

In order to understand the views which are advanced upon the present system of religious education, it will be necessary to inquire into the nature of those changes which have rendered the existing methods deficient. Since the whole groundwork of human thought has become modified within recent centuries by the spread of scientific methods, it would be unreasonable to expect that such a revolution in the mental world would produce no shock, nor need of readjustment, in the sphere of religious education. It would moreover be quite impossible to understand clearly in what direction such readjustment must lie, without having first comprehended the exact nature of the change which has come over the human mind, and the way in which this change has affected the apprehension of religious truth. From this inquiry as to the nature of the changed circumstances with which we have to deal, we shall also learn where any
untrue process has crept into popular modes of thought. In Mr. Lecky's *History of the Growth of Rationalism* we have a full description of the steps by which the scientific cast of thought has gradually gained the ascendency in the face of many obstacles. We notice that in reaching this position it has also produced two distinct and opposite results. The one an undoubted blessing, being nothing less than the purging away of some obviously irrational habits of thought, the expulsion of a host of superstitious ideas, and of a whole multitude of devilish practices. The other result, however, has proved productive of the most fearful and horrible of all risks—namely, of quenching the spiritual and guiding instincts in human life. This danger has not arisen because science has proved to possess an access to the realms of final truth superior to that of instinct, nor because scientific modes of thought have ever overcome spiritual truths by any legitimate methods; nor, indeed, is there even any necessity for antagonism between the two. Notwithstanding these facts, the scientific method of thought has been gradually smothering the spiritual faculties by an indirect and insidious process.

It is this process which is described in *The Growth of Rationalism*, and which we must briefly examine, in order to observe how it is being aided and perpetuated in all grades of
schools. Mr. Lecky points out, that the rational habit of thought has not won its way against opposing force by the weight of its arguments, nor by means of offensive warfare; but by means of a predisposition in favour of its methods, which various causes have tended to create. Now the chief cause which, Mr. Lecky tells us, has produced this predisposition, is the ordinary cast of thought and mental bias derived from daily occupation and from the practical affairs of business and government. These, and similar influences, have gradually produced a predisposition towards so-called rational methods of thought, which have gradually spread into every department of mental activity. These methods are for testing every fact thoroughly before acceptance, and they profess to do so in a true and impartial spirit. But the very notion of a habit of thought rendered common by an acquired predisposition to receive it, suggests also the possibility of prejudice and partiality rather than the exercise of impartial reason. On entering the sphere of religious belief, the rational spirit soon showed the weak point of its predisposition by assailing the miraculous element as something false, merely because not proven by its own experience, and thus the very notion of the supernatural and of the reality of spiritual life became doubted and thrust aside by a distinctly irrational process.
It is then the occupations and matter-of-fact affairs of every-day life, coupled with the use of scientific methods in other departments, that have gradually created a predisposition which is, by its very origin, opposed to any knowledge beyond the experience of earthly life. By the deceitful glamour of this predisposition the mental eyes are so blinded, that individuals become ready to cast aside their instinctive belief in the supernatural world: not from any sound judgment, but merely because they are under the impression that such a belief is contrary to reason; whereas it is only contrary to the bias of their own bodily experiences, and to a habit of thought based upon sensuous experience. A reasonable treatment of the supernatural would surely mean—regarding the testimony of history and of the instinct with the same impartial spirit with which the testimony of the senses is always treated. But here we see how impossible it is for the "rational spirit" to treat of these matters in an impartial manner. That the supernatural element of religion should be dealt with impartially, should mean—that there should be no predisposition towards the side of materialism. But the characteristic feature of the rationalism of today is decidedly materialistic, for it embodies a spirit and method derived solely from sensuous experience and opposed to admitting of
any other reality. Therefore it happens that the "rational" habit of thought, so far from approaching the question of the supernatural in an unbiassed and rational manner, starts with a vast weight of predisposition all of which has been gathered from perpetual contact with material forces. But there is in the spirit of rationalism, by virtue of its origin, a total absence of any bias or illumination gained, either from the influence of speculative reason, or from the instinctive and spiritual faculties. From these considerations we observe, that the spirit of rationalism attempts to crush out the spirit of religion, not by convincing it of error, but actually by creating an opposing tendency in the human mind. This is effected by an implicit trust in the guidance of material forces, and by the absolute disregard for any kind or form of intimation respecting the reality of the spiritual world.

In other words, reason and intelligence have become so engrossed in the study of the material universe, they have won so many conquests by using the bodily senses only as instruments for ascertaining knowledge, that the spiritual and instinctive faculties have fallen into disuse. Moreover, since the bodily senses as a rule find little to suggest the existence of the supernatural sphere, this realm has come to be regarded by many as entirely unreal. But however blind
the bodily senses may be towards any glimpse of the supernatural world, the natural instincts have always been inclined to demand its existence. Still, modern scepticism is a proof that the testimony of the senses has been accepted as affording a safe and sufficient guidance, and that any wider possibilities suggested by reason or instinct have been considered at least superfluous. But an unlooked-for change has lately overtaken these prevailing conditions. For just at a time when materialistic reasoners were beginning to talk largely about the unknown and unknowable, and were preparing to stake their all upon the data of bodily faculties; just when the philosophies of the future seemed likely to rise upon a foundation supplied solely by bodily experiences; just when so-called philosophers were beginning to tell us for certain the limits of the known and unknowable,—lo! the foundation work of their ideas begins to shift, and it appears that there are more things in this world than their philosophy dreamt of.

For the bodily senses themselves have of recent years become witnesses of new phenomena; they have themselves had experiences previously unknown; they have been startled by finding in psychical research, that, even within their humble range, phenomena do exist which point distinctly to deeper waters, and to conclusions which they were always pre-
viously ready to oppose. The fact that a new realm has been lately opened up to powers of sight by the Röntgen rays, at least reminds us that the future has much knowledge to reveal, with the aid of which coming generations will greatly modify our systems and conclusions. But in particular, if the obvious conclusions which must be deduced from the facts of hypnotism and psychical research be in any way reliable, or if the smallest fraction of the testimony of thousands of spiritualists be true, then we must accept the supernatural or supersensuous, not on faith, but on evidence. If the reality of the supernatural realm is already practically proved, or if it be proved at a future date, we shall then be forced to look back upon the growth of rationalism, not as a stage of genuine progress, but as a movement which endangered the life of human religious instinct through an unreasonable denial of the sphere in which it moves and has its being. Even if the spiritual faculties at a later date should receive the attention due to them, the mischief already done may need a vast time for reparation. But leaving the careers of those who have been misled in the hands of an All-merciful Creator, we have to ask ourselves if, as a matter of fact, the neglect and atrophy of such delicate and sensitive powers as those of instinct are likely to produce injuries which can be easily repaired. Upon this subject we receive
hints and warnings from various sources, from the atrophy of analogous powers in the lower creation, and from the result of misdirecting or neglecting the human instincts in language and art. All the testimony from these sources points to the same direction—namely, that a weakened faculty is not easily restored. We may also conclude the same truth from the teaching of Bible history. The instincts, and aspirations, and feelings of individuals, are the underlying powers which, in their aggregate, shape both the secular and the religious development of a nation. The teaching of the Old Testament seems to afford a most pointed warning, that when the religious instincts and feelings of a nation have become really blunted, it is only through the process of national decay and national death that a new life springs up fresh with sound spiritual vigour.

In the preceding observations we have noticed the various influences which have led to the ascendancy of the rationalistic spirit, and how these, coupled with the absence of any sensuous evidence of the supernatural, have gradually tended to establish an untrue process of judgment, which is all the more dangerous since it imagines itself true and rational. Now it is maintained, that these same influences, which have been so active in the past in giving rise to this predisposition towards scepticism, are
at present being exactly reproduced by the peculiarities of our school education. These ensure just that absorption in secular studies, just that prevalence of the rational habit of thought which can be so easily misused, just that lack of knowledge concerning the reality of religious truths, which we have already observed as creating a tendency towards positive unbelief. Whereas grown-up people who think and read have much put before them nowadays which should enlarge their views beyond materialistic views of life, the average schoolboy has absolutely no training to enable him to conceive the supernatural as a reality. However much or little the experiences of maturity may tend to produce a theist, the school life of youth cannot tend to much above a materialist. It is true that there is nothing in our schools which is openly opposed to a belief in religion, but there is a great deal which tends indirectly towards this end. Such an increased stress has been laid upon secular studies, that the subject of religion must necessarily fall into a less important position in the pupil's mind. This effect is only emphasized by the fact that, whereas in all other departments of knowledge truth is being grasped in a more thorough and intelligent manner, religious truth alone is treated in an entirely empirical way, as something either essentially above, or else
altogether beneath, intelligent comprehension. Various aspects of the existing system of religious education are examined in detail in the following chapters. It will be sufficient to notice here, that by such peculiarities as we allude to, modern education tends only to educate the mind to understand secular matters, whilst the supernatural, as the basis of religion, remains vague, unintelligible, and at last becomes incredible. Bishop Westcott has remarked, "While then we admit that the tendency of a scientific age is adverse to a living belief in miracles, we see that this tendency is due not to the antagonism of science and miracle, but to the neglect and consequent obscuration by science of that region of thought in which the idea of the miraculous finds scope. And even here the power of general feeling makes itself most distinctly felt against the power of abstract reason 1."

It is evident that physical science, by concentrating human faculties and energies upon one focus, withdraws them from every other realm of activity and cognition. Thus, by a one-sided development and use of the rational powers, there arises a predisposition to regard the senses as the most important of all faculties, and everything beyond their range as worthless and unreal. We are here naturally met by the question as to how

1 The Gospel of the Resurrection, p. 50.
it is possible to avoid such a dangerous tendency. We answer, by enlisting as far as possible the energies of the rational faculties on the side of intelligent religious belief. If we teach religion in the manner now in vogue, we cannot expect any other result than that the intelligence will give up as hopeless a subject from which it has been excluded for so long a time. There are, however, two directions in which we may open up grounds for an intelligent foothold which may lead to an intelligent faith.

I. First, by bringing the mind gradually into connexion with such subjects as tend to show the reality of an immaterial sphere. It is extremely easy to acquire the habit of regarding this realm as non-existent. As Professor Stewart reminds us¹, "Our minds are instruments which habit may render capable of acting only in certain directions. There are fashions in thought as there are fashions in dress." It is of the utmost importance that school training should produce minds capable of acting, not by the guidance of any predisposition towards one side of truth, but by the guidance of science and knowledge on the one hand, and by revelation and illumination on the other.

It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that religious education should aim at giving some

rational idea of the realities with which it is fundamentally concerned, and of imparting a unity to the range of thought and knowledge connected with religious truths. Of course, with children, such an aim must point to a very distant height; still, in a greater or less degree, according to the needs of the individual, it will be found that in every case there is ample opportunity for assisting the mind, by indirect means, to grasp at clearer notions of the groundwork of religious truths. We should commit a grave error by forcing the understanding unwisely, but a far more deplorable result is to be found in the numbers of grown-up people who are ripe for clearer comprehension, but who have not the slightest grasp of the truths with which religion deals, nor the slightest ability to think of the spiritual world as a reality. The writer of Progressive Revelation remarks¹, "To attain some true insight into the relationship between spirit and matter, or even to advance a few steps on the road towards doing so, is a result which cannot be too earnestly desired, because it affects our whole conception of man and of his destiny." The Bishop of Peterborough speaks upon a similar point in these words²: "The way in which religious questions can be settled is simply

¹ Progressive Revelation, p. 150.
² Speech made by the Bishop of Peterborough at annual meeting of Christian Evidence Society, 1894.
and solely by insisting that the matter that is raised should be thought out to the bottom, should be thought out in reference to life as a whole, for that is really the basis with which religion is concerned. We have a right to say to those who raise small or large objections—This objection is not all, it is not the important thing; think it out, and see what it brings you to. You cannot have your opinion in little bits; your opinion must go through the whole of your life; it must rest upon some definite basis and point to some definite end. Treat your objection in that way; think it down to an answer, to a definite foundation, carry it out to a necessary and definite end, and then see how you stand.”

Or to quote Professor Stewart once again¹:

“Works dealing with current difficulties are of real value only when they get beneath the temporary purpose, the surface controversy, to the broad principles, the eternal truths, by the test of which all that calls itself Christian must ultimately be tried.” From these opinions it may be noticed, how essential it is in the present day not merely to give a superficial and empirical instruction in religion, but also to use various means to give a real grasp of the fundamental truths upon which religion rests, to ensure some comprehension of the possible relationships be-

tween spirit and matter. In the department of secular knowledge, we find that the student is grounded from the first in the fundamental truths of science. These truths are made easy for comprehension by means of text-books, written to suit the powers of the average intellect. There can be no doubt that if there were a demand for religious school-books, giving a simple, rational, and orthodox explanation of some of the fundamental truths of religion, there would be forthcoming, not only a supply of such books from the pens of the most learned and competent writers, but as a result of their use, a steady increase in the realization of the glorious reality of religious truth. To this end there are ready to hand the investigations of psychological science and hypnotism, which would provide ample scope for enlarging the mental horizon beyond the boundaries of materialism, and would thus afford the greatest help towards the realization of the supernatural world. For it is in this direction that the greatest difficulty is often experienced. The phenomena of spiritualism as a practical investigation would no doubt be wisely avoided for the present, being left to those who feel a special call for ascertaining the truths, risks, or benefits connected with such an obscure subject.

Here we must however guard against being misunderstood, by a short explanation. There
could be nothing further from our intention than the wish to connect the truths of our most sacred Creed with any new facts that may come to hand, but which may not be understood in their true significance. The results of psychological study and of spiritualism are at present still to a great extent *sub judice*, and any reference to such subjects in religious teaching could only be of use by way of illustration. We would therefore use such knowledge, not as a subject suitable for general practical investigation, nor as one which can possibly affect the truth of religious belief, but simply as a means of enlarging our ideas and as illustrative of the possibilities and realities of the unknown world around us, and also as a means of counteracting the one-sided predisposition which necessarily follows as the result of purely material studies.

II. But to pass on to the second way by which it would be possible to open up the ground for a more intelligent faith; namely, by explaining fully all religious difficulties, and such questions as are likely to be discussed in after-life. As an example we might mention the subject of evolution. Surely we have no right to allow religious education to be considered well advanced before we have explained a doctrine which must sooner or later be universally received as showing a method employed in creation. It is surely a fatal policy to leave the subject to be distorted by any
future assailants of youthful faith: nor need we wait until the perhaps far-distant era arrives when evolution and its real motive forces shall be understood in their true significance. It is a sufficient gain for us to be able to enlarge the horizon of our notions, and to give our pupils some idea of the reality and importance of the life they are living. As Mr. Thring has remarked, "Without observation there is no thought; without the material for thought there is no building."

It is one of the great needs of the day to create a real desire to obtain understanding of religious truth among the young. Of course they cannot follow out any long train of thoughts, but a few simple and forcible facts are sufficient to produce a frame of mind suitable to the reception of religious teaching. That sacred subjects should have to be dealt with in an atmosphere of apathy, or disorder, is surely most deplorable.

Quite as distressing is the thought that the religious feelings should be appealed to in connexion with that which savours of the slightest breath of unreality, such as too often is attached to the idea of the supernatural.

We must now close this very brief treatment of a very extensive subject. In comparing the circumstances which have so greatly aided rationalistic unbelief in the past years, with

those existing in our school training to-day, we are dealing with two cases the parallel conditions of which might be shown with far greater precision. Our object however is only to point them out so far as to enable us to recognize the great danger of our secularizing methods of education. However successfully we may be enabled to stem the torrent of indifference and irreligion by our ecclesiastical and other machinery; however much all other sources of secularism may be running dry; as long as the religious education of both sexes of our young remains what it is at present, a name rather than a reality,—so long shall we be paralyzing the proper development of human souls, so long will secularism continue to prove a fatal barrier to all spiritual and social progress.
CHAPTER IV.

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

The deficiencies which we have just noticed will be thrown into more prominent relief by a consideration of actual results, which cannot be disassociated from their immediate cause. There can be no fairer test as to the efficiency of any working system, than an examination of results produced under known conditions; and there could be no comment upon the existing methods of religious education more significant of their inability to meet the needs of the present age, than a bare statement of a few definite results. The energy and devotion of some of the clergy and church-workers must necessarily fall outside the range of our consideration. The increased activity in these quarters cannot be said to be a result of ordinary education, but rather of that extra-ordinary training which an all-round student of modern thought can procure, and which seems to have given a certain proportion of individuals such clear notions of Christian truth. "There has probably never
been an age since that of the Apostles," writes Canon Diggle, "when, in the case of individual believers, religious faith has been so clear and firm and sure, as in this modern age." We find in this another argument in support of the theory, that there is a general need in all spheres for such thorough religious training. But to return to the point before us. There are two important results which are intimately connected with religious education, and which follow closely upon its work; namely, Confirmations and Ordinations. The former subject touches upon the condition of religious life in all strata of society; the latter chiefly in the upper-middle and upper classes. Among all classes one stage of religious education culminates in Confirmation. If a scholar from an elementary or any other school has been impressed by the reality of the truths of religion, he will almost certainly avail himself of the opportunity of being confirmed, especially as so much care is taken by the clergy to bring the matter into prominence.

A recent edition of the *Church Year Book*, however, gives the number of Confirmations which took place in 1893 as 223,115, and in 1894 as 214,122. The *Church Times* quotes those of 1893 at 223,893; with the following comment: "According to the figures supplied

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1 *Religious Doubt*, p. 102.
2 *Church Year Book*, 1895, pp. 525, 526.
by the last edition of the Church Year Book, the number of persons confirmed in 1893 was 222,893, representing, at 2 per cent., a population of 11,144,650, whereas the population of England and Wales in 1891 was returned at over twenty-nine millions, and reached no doubt, in 1893, twenty-nine and a half millions, showing a deficit in Confirmation of over 360,000 in one year. If the returns are true, and we expect they do not err on the side of defect, the Church is much less influential than we are willing to believe, and she must be losing ground; for if little more than one half of her children are presented for Confirmation, a rite fully accepted, in theory at all events, by the vast majority of her members, the leakage and consequent failure to affect the lives of the great masses of people must be enormous.

With regard to the subject of Ordinations, the number ofdeacons ordained in 1893 appears to have been 747, in 1894, 684. It appears also that the numbers of 1894, in spite of the growth of population, show a deficit of twenty-nine below the minimum of any year since 1881. These two groups of statistics show that modern education has not brought an increase of strength to the Church in the way of numbers, either of lay or clerical adherents.

1 Church Times, January 18, 1895.
2 Church Year Book, 1895, p. 522.
We may therefore reasonably ask, if it be not our religious education which is deficient in scope and method? If this be not so, why, we would ask, should a system of education, conscientiously and laboriously brought to bear upon a large mass of children, so far fail in result, that an increasing number of its pupils turn persistently from the goal to which they have been directed? Is there no proof of a deficiency in religious education in the very fact that it gains such a slender influence over the young? Why is it that so many children, as soon as they can obtain leave from their parents, are not only glad to leave the Sunday School, but, as an authority on Sunday Schools has expressed it, they are eager to shake off the very dust from their feet, and to give up the cause of religion—a few only for a time, many for ever?

Such facts as we have mentioned are, from this practical side of the question, a sufficient proof that there exists a very real and serious deficiency in religious education. We have already stated the points upon which these deficiencies exist. To some minds, perhaps, there might appear to be a graver deficiency than any we have alluded to, in a lack of doctrinal teaching. Or perhaps it might be maintained that a lack of personal influence and gifts on the part of teachers is the cause of bad results. Still, however prolific of weak results these and
similar causes may be, it must be admitted that such defects are not universal, but are only active here and there, and within limited areas. Their power must therefore fade into insignificance beside the stupendous fact, that everywhere, far and wide, the rational faculties of the young are almost entirely ignored, either as needing preparation and training, or as being even necessary to an adequate apprehension of religious truth. However much we may feel disposed to deprecate the use of mental powers in connexion with those that are spiritual; however vividly we may realize the truth, that clearness of mental apprehension is as nothing compared with a personal relation felt towards God; still, on dealing justly and truly with the problems which arise, we shall observe that the spiritual life can only exist and flourish where the state of the mind affords a congenial atmosphere. Therefore we can have no hesitation in affirming that the rational faculties of the young are, as a matter of fact, essentially necessary to a firm grasp of religious truth, and that they do most certainly stand in need of careful preparation, both towards realizing the truth of the supernatural and towards dealing with religious knowledge as with a reality. These two statements—that the intelligence is needed, and that it must be trained—both require full discussion: not because their truth is either doubtful or obscure,
but because the existing system of religious education can only be defended by denying either one or both of these statements. We are therefore forced to condemn the root-principle upon which the present system is based. For if the rational faculties of the young are powers essentially important as enabling them to attain a state of mind capable of recognizing the supernatural, and of gaining a knowledge of the general lie of the field, and if these faculties do need training towards these ends in every possible way, then the principle upon which religious education is now conducted is no longer sound.

We must remember, that the existing state of religious education is not the outcome of any deliberate verdict, either of the past or of any modern tribunal, but that the deficiency before us is due to the fact that no steps have been taken to readjust the methods of religious education to conditions which have of late become entirely re-formed and modified. We must also remember, that within certain circles of our community, namely, in the Theological Schools, we do recognize the necessity of calling in every possible intellectual aid in order to strengthen our grasp of religious truth. Therefore, without fear either of arguing towards an indefinite issue, or of harping upon an educational topic which has already received its full share of attention, we
proceed to discuss the truths contained in the afore-mentioned questions.

First. As to whether as a rule the rational faculties of the young are essentially necessary to an adequate apprehension of religious truth.

Secondly. As to whether such faculties, for their proper growth and development, do need careful training and attention. In discussing these two questions, some new aspects of the subject will come to notice; prominent objections, and the ideas of several educationists, will also be dealt with.
CHAPTER V.

THE USE OF THE RATIONAL FACULTIES.

It is admitted on all sides, though with various degrees of willingness, that in the case of grown-up people the rational faculties are more or less essential to the furtherance of the spiritual progress. It is commonly understood, though somewhat vaguely by those who have never given the subject careful consideration, that although religion is chiefly concerned with the spiritual instincts and feelings, still, these inner powers cannot become active until the intellect has given at least a provisional consent. This truth is found expressed in popular language in many different ways. It has been said that the citadel of the heart cannot be taken so long as the intellect holds the key of every approach, and renders every entrance impassable. Or, again, that the spiritual begins where the mental ends. These and similar opinions, although they express the necessity of a certain co-operation between the spiritual and intellectual faculties, do not suggest any notion, either of the manner or proximity in which the
mental and spiritual powers must always work together.

In fact there appears to be sometimes a genuine doubt as to the essential need of the rational faculties—if not as a help towards the grasp of religious knowledge, at any rate as an assistance towards communion with our Heavenly Father. Such opinions usually have their source in the erroneous idea, that the personal entity which works through the spiritual faculties can, when it desires, actually sever itself, not only partially, but entirely, from all connexion with its remaining powers and faculties; and can carry on its spiritual activities, not only without any co-operation of the other faculties, but in actual opposition to their promptings and influence. But we must remember, that the individual entity which at one time is making primary use of the spiritual faculties, is the same entity or personality which at another time may be employing the rational powers as the special instrument of the moment. Although, in the present condition of psychology, it is impossible to state anything of the exact relationship which exists between the various human faculties, still, from our own every-day experience, we can observe, that when one faculty is in use, so far from being disconnected entirely from the remaining powers, its tendency and action is to a certain degree depen-
dent upon their support. For instance, a modern writer reminds us, "To know God is not to read the Bible, is not to study nature, is not to go over the records of Christ on earth, though all these are of the utmost importance in their own place and way, just as are their human analogues; but to know God is to hold communion with Him as the Living Father of our spirits. Now it is evident that, for such most holy communion, the spiritual faculties are required in all their utmost purity. But we must not lose sight of the truth, that the entire individual entity or personality, in all its totality, is involved in such an act, and that although the lower powers are to a great extent relegated to the background, still the union with them is not severed; and that in such an act of communion the animal and bodily powers are all present; though inactive, they are present, bowing down before the Eternal Throne in helpless silence, but in perfect sympathy with the higher faculties. Thus it happens that the individual spirit is frequently interrupted in the exercise of the sacred functions of prayer and praise because of the lower powers which have refused to give sympathy and support, or which have become distracted in other directions. From these thoughts it becomes clear, that owing to the essential constitution and complexity of human nature, the higher faculties are

1 Progressive Revelation, E. Caillard, p. 47.
dependent upon the lower, as are the upper stories of a building upon the foundations. The rational faculties, though chiefly required in dealing with knowledge both concrete and abstract, yet obviously must contribute their unseen support towards each act of worship or prayer. It is also noticeable how the spiritual and rational faculties can react the one upon the other, to the great mutual advantage of both; the purely instinctive powers shedding down the light of their divine illumination and intuition, and guiding the rational towards true conclusions; the rational faculties performing their function of dealing accurately and truly with the information derived from the senses, and then, in return, strengthening and supporting the spiritual and instinctive faculties, by bringing the new discoveries within range of their influence, and by supplying detail and exactness to knowledge which may previously have existed only as a shadowy intuitive forecast, or as a vague transcendental revelation. From the close intimacy of these powers, bound together as we find them in human nature, we may conclude the essential importance of their equal development, and of their acting in perfect unison. It is one of our chief objects in this volume to notice how the rational faculties may co-operate better with those which are spiritual, and by becoming spiritualized may be rendered
sensitive to every ray of spiritual light and illumination. It will at least appear a dangerous experiment to continue to force apart the spiritual and rational faculties, powers which by nature are complementary to each other and interdependent. Of these it may be said, What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. If they be separated they will both be in error. The one, as is clearly evident from the past, will degenerate, returning to untrue and superstitious ideas and practices; the other will be overtaken by the fate of which we are almost in danger at the present time, namely, of becoming so absorbed with material studies and ideas as to be lost to the reality of any other sphere. If as the rational faculties grow in strength they are excluded altogether from the sphere of religion, and are cut off from the inspiring union and influence of the Holy Spirit, they must inevitably relapse into a condition of grosser sensibility, becoming more and more dependent for their powers of perception upon the bodily senses alone, and acquiring their tendencies simply from the influence of matter itself. They must give up all hopes of intuitional illumination; they must relinquish every prospect of inspiration. Every chapter of human history is full of warning as to the invariable effects which purely material studies and material absorption have upon a nation's life.
Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in his *Social Evolution*, when dealing with this topic, asserts that "The evolution which is slowly proceeding in human society is not primarily intellectual, but religious in character." Whilst agreeing as to the fundamental truth of this assertion, we would amend the wording as follows:—The evolution which is slowly proceeding in human society, is not primarily ordered by the capacity for apprehending knowledge of material phenomena, but by the capacity for assimilating the knowledge of religious and spiritual truth; in fact, not by the capacity for understanding the earth and for relapsing into its bosom, but by the capacity for understanding the things of heaven, and for rising to a higher and more spiritual life. With regard to the question of an *ultra-rational* sanction for social conduct, it is obvious that since human reason cannot comprehend the Infinite, a religion which supplies final truths must always remain in a sense ultra-rational to human powers of mind. Still, every religion must win the acceptance and confidence of the intellect before it can be adopted as a moving power of life, or as a foundation for the superstructure of a religious character. It would seem that the closer the intimacy between the rational and spiritual faculties, the greater the capacity of the former for accepting spiritual

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truth, and the stronger the hold of the latter over the whole personality. In short the more the intellectual powers can grasp spiritual truths, the greater become the powers of faith. Thus the truths for which we are searching to-day in our theories of social evolution, seem to have been practically revealed thousands of years ago in connexion with the patriarchal history of Genesis; namely, that a race is not rendered fit for survival by its intellectual calibre, nor by any capability for abstract reasoning, nor by any practical knowledge of the material universe, nor by any artistic attainments; but by its capacity for apprehending spiritual truths, by its sense of union with a ruling spiritual Power, and by the ability to obey that Power. In other words, a race is rendered fit for survival by its capability of developing a living faith in God, and doing His will. As such national capabilities unroll, further revelation is granted, and there is a new scope for further faith. The higher the state of civilization becomes, the more spiritualized the powers of the intelligent faculties become, the greater the opportunities for advance in civilization and in spiritual illumination. "The extent of the revelation must depend of course on the capacity. Thus the revelation to the eye of a bat and of an eagle is widely different indeed, yet in each case the capacity is for
light, and the response made is by light 1." Thus we can understand that the more effectually an harmonious union between the spiritual and rational faculties develops the powers of faith, the greater will be the gift of illumination, the more rapid the social and national progress. On this subject an author—whom we have quoted before—writes 2: "The demonstration of spiritual truths is impossible, except to those whose spirits are quickened and enlightened; for, in this respect, spiritual demonstrations are only on a par with rational demonstrations in antecedently desiderating the proper perceptive faculty."

The "proper perceptive faculties" in the case of religion are those which ascertain a thing to be possible, and accept it as true, on the warranty of an instinctive power which discerns the truth of a revelation. Here we have the intellect recognizing a certain class of facts as possible, and accepting them as true, at the dictate of an instinct which is felt to be a recipient of Divine guidance. Thus the united action of reason and instinct, and that of intellect and spirit, appear to be the active instruments of faith. But their sphere of action only lies within the realm of the credible. And here we must recognize the fact, that to some people

1 Progressive Revelation, p. 87.
2 Religious Doubt, p. 351.
The realm of the credible must often be narrowed and contracted, simply because their perceptive faculties are themselves either feeble, or untrained, or out of condition. There is, as we have already remarked, a state of mind which is capable of recognizing the possibility of the supernatural, and there is the opposite state where the supernatural is altogether incredible, and becomes, if possible, even more so every day. If the truth of this fact be duly recognized, it will become evident that the matter of training these perceptive faculties is one of the greatest importance. We have noticed how closely the spiritual and rational faculties interact in the case of grown-up people. There is probably no more fatal error with regard to the education of the young, than to suppose that these same faculties work in their case in an essentially different way. It would seem to be entirely unnatural that a man of thirty and a boy of thirteen should apprehend religious truth by means of faculties essentially different, or working in an essentially different manner. It is evident that in each case these powers must stand at very different levels of development, and must be used under different circumstances and conditions. But where can we find any facts which tend to show that they are not essentially the same in youth as in maturer age. In the case of grown persons, there is of course
a more deliberate use of the intellect, as well as a greater bias from acquired habits and from other causes. But in the case of the young, we shall find exact counterparts to each of these factors. There will be the same domain ruled over by the intellect; not yet set in order, but strewn with half-formed ideas, which will one day take shape, and float up to the sphere of conscious notions. Still these half-formed ideas have to provide a basis for choice of action, even in their immature condition. The various truths of religion will be there, existing with different degrees of clearness and outline according to the force by which they were impressed upon the understanding as actual realities. In the growing tendencies towards this or that direction, we shall find, in embryo, the exact counterpart to the fixed habits of older people. As in matters of bodily economy we find in the young and in the mature the same organs at work, and working in the same way, so in the assimilation of religious truth, the same faculties are used in both cases. Therefore we may rest assured that the best possible lines to follow in giving religious instruction are those which recognize such an obvious fact. There can however be no doubt that the undeadened instincts of youth are stronger, and more active, than those of maturer age. But this is only a further reason for
supposing that they would assist towards the understanding of explanations which might otherwise be beyond the powers of youthful intelligence.

To keep these instincts fresh, and to guard them against the first blasts of contamination, is an object worthy of great labour. But what could be more blighting to the tender unfolding life of the spiritual instincts, than to enter upon the first and most critical stage of existence, not only without sympathy and support from general surroundings and from the intellectual powers, but to meet with coldness from the one quarter, and actual opposition from the other. The method of avoiding the rational faculties when imparting religious instruction, does undoubtedly avoid the danger of suggesting doubts where none existed before; but we must not forget, that such a course of action has grave and undeniable objections, both in theory and in practice. To pass over the difficulties of a subject without comment, and to treat them as non-existent, is surely the very way to raise a suspicion that they are being shirked because too great to be successfully dealt with. But our work in the school-room is to equip the individual for the battles of life. Each pupil will soon be advancing along the ordinary highways of life, where all the more obvious difficulties of religion are sure to be thrust upon any person who shows signs of being an earnest Christian. What then
becomes of the faith which has been received as an untested weapon, and on which the intelligence has never been brought to bear? Could any position be more trying than that of a young person who, just entering the work of life, suddenly finds that his faith has never won the consent of his intellectual faculties. At a time when daily occupation allows of little leisure for full consideration of the newly suggested problem; at a period when he has already grown out of touch with the instructors of his youngest days just when all the fiercest battles of youth have to be fought at the very moment when of all others he stands in need of something firm and unshakable,—he is called upon, for the first time, to apply his intelligence to his religion and to examine the grounds of his faith. Amid all the bustle of life he has to decide if it be a reality in spite of so many new paradoxes; and if not, he must make haste to give it up, as something at any rate too vague to be retained at the price required. What, under the circumstances, can be the issue of such an inward debate? Whence can come the necessary human guidance, the friendly teaching, and the explanation sufficient to readjust and resettle those views, which from the first should have been built upon an intelligent and tested basis? Surely the temporary lull from all difficulties which is provided for by our present system of education cannot be an
adequate compensation for such risks and results as these; nor can it even be said to outweigh the tone of unreality and unimpressiveness which too often characterize the present average religious lesson. There is a further consideration; namely, that by avoiding the use of the intelligence in religious education, we are weakening its capability for dealing with religious matters. To avoid exercising the rational powers upon spiritual subjects, and to relegate them entirely to the study of material things, is, as we have already noticed, contrary to the natural development of human powers. As an objection to the views expressed, it might be maintained, that any increased use of the rational faculties in apprehending religious truth, would tend to impair the strength and efficiency of those which are more spiritual. For the exercise of faith and insight must naturally bring about an increased strength of the powers thus employed. But it must be remembered, that a more intelligent handling of religious truth would not render faith and insight less necessary, but would rather afford a more extended field for their action, providing scope for a more effectual faith. It would of course be folly to desire to understand all, or even the majority, of religious difficulties and obscurities. All that we can wish for is, to be convinced that their existence is due to the sheer depth of truth, and to our own feebleness.
It is one thing to attempt to annihilate a living creed by distorting it into a lifeless philosophy; it is another to suppress all reasonable appreciation of the certainties and possibilities of revealed truths. It is one thing for a human being to approach the religion of Christ relying on the inadequate guidance of science and of sensuous experience; it is another to disdain to prepare all the faculties for their fullest possible development. If to any extent in the far future, hope on earth shall have become partially lost in sight; if by Divine command some of the ground now in the realm of faith shall have passed into the territory of ascertained knowledge, humanity will still find the infinite stretching out before it, and will still be exclaiming, in the words of St. Augustine, "Credo ut intelligam"—I believe in order that I may understand.
CHAPTER VI.

TRAINING THE RATIONAL FACULTIES.

If then it is difficult to deny that the rational faculties of the young are necessary to an adequate apprehension of religious truth, it would appear even still more difficult to maintain that these faculties do not stand in need of wise and careful training. There is no labour which is more generously repaid than that which is laid out upon the training of expanding powers of any kind. Indeed the great danger of all development lies in the fact that there is always a risk of growth in a wrong direction, and the chance of such misfortune becomes only the more increased where there is an absence of constant and capable guidance. From the records of Geology and History we learn that the opportunities for deviating from the true line of development have been innumerable throughout the gradual progress of evolution. It is therefore probable that the present rapid mental development is not free from those
risks which have been present in every other stage of man's upward progress.

We have already remarked on the changes which have overtaken the modes of recognizing truth in all its different forms. This has also been accompanied by a corresponding expansion of ideas among the masses. There has been a "general levelling up of the intellectual stature" throughout the middle and lower orders of society. Mr. Kidd expresses an opinion, that "there seems every reason to suppose that the average intellectual development of successive generations amongst ourselves does not show any tendency to rise above that of the generations immediately preceding them." This however does not appear a very exact statement. The intellect can only be dealt with as an aggregate of faculties, and it would seem to be true that some of these faculties have, as a matter of fact, of late shown extremely clear signs of development, either in a wrong or right direction. For instance, all will admit that there has appeared of recent years a marked tendency to adopt more rational and scientific methods of thought. Has this, we would ask, involved no intellectual development of any kind? Again, the important doctrine of evolution has become popularized, and added to the store of general knowledge. Does not this mean development,

1 Social Evolution, chap. ix. p. 255.
and widening of the intellectual horizon and powers of thought?

The enormous demand for books of all kinds is also a sign that, at least among the middle and lower-middle classes, there is a very large amount of promiscuous reading. There is, no doubt, a distinct aversion in the present generation, especially among the lower classes, to heavy literature. But this dislike does not point so much to feebleness of comprehension as to the natural tastes of untrained and unguided minds.

The seamen of our navy, since they are gathered from all quarters among the lower classes, may be considered to form a body representing fairly well the intellectual calibre of the brighter members of the lower classes. Miss Weston recently made the following observation upon their mental powers:

"I have been personally working for so many years among the Queen's seamen, that I can remember the seamen of the olden time. The seamen of the present day are totally different from the seamen of the past in education; they are men of thought; they are readers; they are very quick to pick up any ideas new or old, of any kind, the newer the better. And with all this a good deal of scepticism has come into the Service."

Upon various grounds then we venture to differ entirely from Mr. Kidd's statement regarding the intellectual condition of the lower classes.

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masses, and their thinking powers. Various forces have been at work of late years in bringing into existence a new popular intellect, not perhaps of an absolutely higher order, but still more active, more logical, more materialistic, and more self-satisfied than former types. Among the various causes which tend nowadays to a fuller development of the intellect, we might also mention the high-pressure conditions of modern life, the increased facilities for communication, the abundant supply of cheap literature, but most powerful of all, the spread of education. The united result of these causes is that a type of individual, formerly the exception, is now becoming every day more and more the rule, namely the thinking being. There is surely every reason to welcome this growth of activity in mental powers. We feel confident that inasmuch as the general trend of development has been towards the production of a higher type, this step too, if rightly directed, will prove an advance towards the divinely appointed end. Still, we are bound to remember, that growth has not always in the past meant growth in the right direction, and that, so far as we can see, there will always be the possibility of mal-development, right up to the final stages of human evolution. Therefore, whilst it would be foolish to fear the present activity of intellectual growth, it would be equally unwise to
take it for granted that no dangerous elements can enter into it. The most constant care and watchfulness must necessarily be needed to counteract all such influences as would turn the course of mental development, either to the right hand or to the left, out of the true line of its appointed destiny. It is therefore not unreasonable that any stage of intellectual growth should be regarded with uneasiness, especially if there be any marked tendencies of a suspicious nature. There can be no doubt that a decided tendency towards secularism has advanced, pari passu, with the recent development of intellectual powers, and with the prevalence of rational modes of thought. That a tendency towards scepticism should mark any new stage of mental development must be in itself a most significant fact to Christians. We regard Christianity as a final revelation, as a perfect form of religion, suited to all stages of development, and especially to the higher types of humanity. But it is evidently unsuited to the type most recently produced. We have therefore to deal with this consideration—that the recent development of man's mental powers and equipment has carried him further away from the perfect religion, and rendered it unsuited to his mental constitution. But a development which has carried man further from the perfect religion cannot be a sound development. If it had been a step towards
a higher stage, then it would have also been a step closer to Christianity. There is no *via media* between the extremities of this dilemma. Either Christianity is not a final and perfect form of religion for man, or else the recent average intellectual development has in some particular deviated from the true line of progress, and has not produced a more perfect type of humanity. This conclusion, though obvious, is not without a suggestive corollary, as to the most important feature in intellectual development.

We find corroborative evidence in these deductions to a fact already stated in other words; namely, that in proportion as the intellect grows in ability to apprehend and assimilate the truths revealed in Christianity, the more surely is it developing toward the higher type, the more closely is it following along the lines which are divinely appointed, as the only course for the continued prosperity and survival of the race. We therefore conclude that the intellectual growth of recent years has been misdirected at some important point; and that by adopting an erroneous course, it has declined away from its appointed goal, making a movement to some extent retrograde rather than progressive. We have already seen in the methods of education a decided tendency towards a one-sided development of intellectual growth. The most cursory glance at the state of things actually existing is sufficient to show,
that the whole of the tremendous force of education is applied to the rational faculties from one direction. We have observed how intelligent methods of teaching prevail only in the secular department, and how entirely they are excluded from the other. We have seen how completely the rational faculties are confined to dealing with the facts and truths of the material universe, and how effectually they are cut off from any other; how entirely the intelligence is detained in one kind of atmosphere; how it is rendered familiar and apt to deal with the phenomena of this world, whilst it remains strange and unused to all that savours of the next. Can it be wondered that the rational faculties are happy and healthy in one sphere, whilst they have lost all ability even to breathe freely in the other? Can we wonder that such a one-sided training should produce a marked tendency towards one direction? Whatever else may be said of the present system of education, with reference to the way in which it trains the rational faculties, this is certainly clear—that it cannot possibly help the mind to grasp spiritual truth, or to comprehend spiritual knowledge. For it is the practice of secular education to employ the rational faculties only on secular subjects; whilst it is the practice of religious education to ignore them altogether. Thus there is a great gulf fixed between the mind and reli-
gion from the earliest years, which widens as time goes on and as the artificial habit of thought becomes natural.

Before leaving the subject of the training which is given to the rational faculties, we must observe one important feature in the materialistic tendency at present imparted to the mind. The exercising of the rational powers in one direction, and disallowing their use in the other, means not only imparting a decided bias towards materialism to those faculties which are already in existence; it entails also the inevitable result of calling into being new propensities and new powers of mind, which, from their very origin, are also imbued with an aptness for, and an inclination towards, material studies. At the same time, these powers must possess a corresponding inability to grasp and deal with truths of a more subtle and spiritual nature. The present system of religious education cannot therefore be considered as exerting only a negative influence on the mental powers; it involves the inculcation of a positive tendency of the strongest kind, a tendency towards a materialistic bent of mind, and towards a consequent spirit of irreligion. But we must not imagine that the rational powers can as a matter of fact be entirely shut out from the sphere of religion. They are sure to enter it aggressively, even during youth, perhaps only in
a desultory way, but still without guidance, and therefore not without the opportunity of doing harm. It is obvious that powers of intelligence, trained as they are at the present time to such a pitch of activity, and encouraged so early to enter every other subject, cannot be confined *entirely* to secular matters. We cannot teach the young to adopt rational methods in handling all other subjects, and expect them to accept religious truth off-hand, with any degree of earnestness or sincerity. The logic of the young is too active and too real to be restricted by unreasonable and arbitrary rules; for we must remember that, so far as the activity of the mind is concerned, there is no natural boundary between sacred and secular knowledge. Therefore, sooner or later, the rational faculties will overstep the artificial barrier, and begin to examine parts of the religious sphere. But how can they meet with encouragement in their faith? They will enter this region as strangers, without previous enlightenment as to its quicksands, without having had their powers trained for this purpose, and without competent guides. Still they will grope about in the darkness, predisposed to judge of everything by sensuous experience, and aided only by the light of an instinct already blunted and seared. Can such a state of things be right? Still it must be necessary where no definite training is given
to the rational faculties, and where the asking of questions is neither courted nor allowed. But as an objection to a more rational system of training, it might be urged that it would prove a great failure, for the reason expressed by the proverb, "Familiarity breeds contempt"; whilst on the other hand the words "Omne ignotum pro magnifico" remain as true as ever. To say nothing of the unworthy nature of such an argument, its validity in this case depends upon conditions which are per se impossible. The subject of religion could not in any case remain "unknown" or "unfamiliar"; indeed, it would lose its influence if it did. This is not an age of gratuitous reverence, or of unreasoning admiration, but of minute examination, of anxious expectation; and, it is only justice to add, of an impartial loyalty to the cause of truth. There is still a further objection to the methods advocated, and this a more practical one. It may be said, that to allow the young to discuss the various difficulties of religion would entail a certain spirit of debate, which could only be productive of bad results. This objection directs our attention to the possible faults of individual pupils, which must always supply the source of difficulty in all kinds of teaching. Every attempt to teach religion from an intelligent standpoint would be met, we should hope, with but a small amount of insincerity and unreasonableness.
But such drawbacks appear extremely slight, both when compared with those existing in other spheres of education, and when we remember the importance of the end in view. The opportunities offered for religious discussion during youth are surely more favourable than any which will present themselves in after years. The available leisure, the perfect discipline, the qualified and sympathetic instructor, the absence of stereotyped ideas, the freedom from the bias of fixed habits and practices, are among some of the unique conditions which will never combine again in after years. When once the occupation of life has become engrossing, and its mechanical necessities have become a part of a man's nature, the future shaping of half-grasped religious truths will proceed with difficulty, and will never run counter to the dictates of material interests. If the rational faculties are not trained in religious truth during youth, they will probably never receive such education at all. Life is too short to make up for the opportunities lost in youth. Moreover, if the problems of religion present themselves to an unguided individual, he will probably begin by choosing books which enlarge upon the difficulties of faith, that is to say if he reads at all, and he will thus naturally end by finding no arguments to confute his doubts. Most clergymen know what a hopeless task it often is to try to affect
the position of a grown-up sceptic. It means not only renewing and completing a man's stock of information, but also reforming and readjusting the whole bent of mind with which facts are viewed.

The facts mentioned in connexion with the statistics of Confirmation candidates remind us that religious convictions are of necessity brought to a definite issue at a comparatively early period of life. It is therefore important to provide help in time. To arrest a downward career when once fairly started is one of the hardest tasks to accomplish; but to train a youth is often one of the easiest.

It is one thing to convince a sceptic already bound by vitiated tastes and weakened by enervated spiritual faculties; it is another to guide a youth starting fresh with the bias of every instinct all on the side of good. Prevention is often easier, as well as better than, cure.
CHAPTER VII.

THE SCHOOLS.

Preliminary Remarks.

We propose in this chapter to examine briefly the conditions under which religious instruction is given in schools of different grades. By this means we shall observe further, to what extent the changes advocated are really called for by existing deficiencies. It is clear that since the same methods of religious teaching prevail in schools of all classes, deficiencies also of a similar kind will, to a certain extent, occur in every grade. We therefore propose to refer in these preliminary remarks to one great characteristic defect which is common to all schools, namely the want of interest and the apathy too often displayed both by teachers and pupils in all religious lessons. The Headmaster of Harrow has remarked: "The task of teaching and inculcating religion in such a way that it may be vitally loved for its own sake has not yet been accomplished by schoolmasters."

If, by indirect questioning, it be ascertained what subjects are really most attractive to young people, it will be too often discovered that religious subjects are considered to be among the dullest and

least engrossing. But it is the unanimous opinion of educationists, that interest is one of the first essentials towards progress. On the subject of interest in religious truths a writer (Ufer) on Herbart makes the following comment: "When interest is directed to the history and destiny of mankind, when it is as clear to the understanding as to the feelings that the ordering of the history of man involves something more than mere human power, and that therefore the history of each individual does not lie entirely in his own hands, then fear and hope gather in the heart." Another writer, speaking of the theories of the same educationist, i.e. Herbart, remarks: "Interest is the charmed word which alone gives power to instruction to call the spirit of youth, and to make it serve the aim of its master. It is the lever of education, which lightly and joyfully moved by the teacher, can alone bring the youthful will into the desired activity and direction." We are thus compelled to start with the fact, that religion, which is the most important of all subjects, is taught under circumstances found to be most fatal to advancement in all other departments of instruction. We have not however to make any close search for the cause of this lack of interest in religion in school life. It arises from no peculiarity inherent in the nature of the subject; for of all things, the

1 Herbart and Herbartians, De Garmo, p. 65.
supernatural, and the glory and grandeur of God, and the boundless expanse of the infinite, at least offer scope for fascination and interest, to leave unmentioned the further unspeakable attraction of the Gospel History and of a Saviour’s love.

The cause therefore of apathy towards such subjects seems to lie in the fact, that they are not handled as realities, but are dealt with in a totally different way from all other matters. As we have already pointed out, ordinary studies are dealt with as approachable realities, into which the student is urged to throw himself with all his powers; but religion is treated as belonging to an incomprehensible sphere, which it is wisest not to approach in an ordinary intelligent spirit. The barrier thus raised between religion and the intelligence of the young, appears as entirely human in its origin as it is arbitrary and fatal to sound advance in Christian knowledge. So long as we insist in handling religious truth as a subject which needs nothing but a training in material studies to render it intelligible, and so long as we teach religion as something which can be understood without adequate explanation and guidance, so long are we introducing the sacred subject into an atmosphere where it cannot possibly flourish, and where it will remain enshrouded in a mist of excessive vagueness, if not in a cloud of absolute unreality. On a reasonable consideration of the matter, it
cannot be denied that there exists a real necessity for preparing the mental faculties, and leading them on to recognize the possibility of the supernatural.

It will be evident also that there is an equal necessity for giving every explanation, wherever intellectual difficulties may prove a hindrance. It is quite contrary to the nature of young people to become either impressed or attracted by anything which comes to them with an air of vagueness or unreality. All who have had experience with the young will agree as to the entire falsity of the notion, that they are neither given to taking anything seriously, nor capable of real earnestness. Young people are as a rule the greatest of enthusiasts. The whole-heartedness and single-mindedness of youth are perhaps some of its most distinctive features. In these peculiarities lie the reasons why its joys are so sweet and its sorrows so bitter, and why both are so transient. It is this constitutional thoroughness, coupled with the freshness and purity of their instincts, which renders that which is obscure, trying to them, and that which appears unreal, detestable. We can understand how some of the associations connected with the teaching of religion do savour both of obscurity and unreality to the minds of some intelligent young people. We can imagine the effect pro-
duced—perhaps unconsciously on their part—by passing from the order and reality of the secular sphere, where all is full of life and eagerness, where the subjects are presented with every possible care, where they are exemplified by well-known truths, illustrated by visible diagrams, experiments, and tangible realities, where all difficulties are candidly and patiently discussed and explained, and where the whole matter is emphasized as important both by parents and teachers,—to the obscurity, the vagueness, the disinterestedness which pervade the religious lesson. And yet, as a matter of fact, in the face of all this, the subject of religion possesses an intrinsic grandeur and fascination from which other topics can borrow but the smallest portion. Lastly, as to the kind of education aimed at by the present system—is it thorough? is it a sufficient equipment for the battles of modern life? An explicit answer to this query will be afforded by considering the kind of questions which are asked as the final tests of religious education. Is any intelligent understanding sought for? Is not the greater portion of such religious knowledge composed of facts and phrases learnt by heart without, rather than with, the due proportion of intelligent understanding? We now proceed to notice a few facts which mark religious education in different grades of schools.
Elementary Schools.

In approaching the subject of religious education in Elementary Schools, we are considering the most powerful factors working towards the solution of the great problems of the future. We are dealing with the manner in which education, the most potent of all guiding forces, is brought to bear upon individuals who will represent that which is already the most influential class of society. It might however be maintained, that at least in Elementary Schools, there could be no demand for such a training of the mental faculties as we have mentioned. We must not however forget, that the Elementary School is a developing organism. The type of Elementary School in existence to-day is far ahead of its predecessors in every detail of secular progress. Each coming year must move us further towards other, and perhaps greater, changes. The present generation is, however, laying down the lines, along which to a great extent future developments will shape their course. If therefore we are convinced of the importance of religious knowledge, and would desire to increase a thirst for it, we must begin by imparting to the rising generations in the lowest classes a fuller knowledge
of divine truth, and an increased power to recognize and value its reality and depth. But there are several particular considerations which would seem to render the intelligent religious instruction at Elementary Schools a matter of the first importance. Not only is the time for such education shorter than in any other kind of School, but the individuals will encounter in after-life almost as many intellectual difficulties as those from schools of higher grades, and the largest share of deadening physical labour. If therefore members of these circles are to keep the spiritual powers in a sound condition, or even alive at all, they must, as far as possible, be rendered proof at the outset against the first attacks of brutalizing influences and degrading views of life. Artisans, mechanics, factory hands, and many trades-people, as well as the poorer classes, receive their education at Elementary Schools. Those who know these classes well, will be able to testify that, as a rule, their mental powers are neither feeble nor inactive, excepting in the very lowest strata, where bad and insufficient nourishment has produced a weakness of the whole constitution. On the contrary, there are among them those who are gifted with all kinds of capabilities. The various topics arising at leisure times are handled with perfect freedom and considerable accuracy of thought, and are attacked by every
variety of opinion. That the children of these
classes are sometimes neglected, weak, and back-
ward, is no argument against their need of care
and guidance towards gaining spiritual strength.
As well as the feeble, there are also in the upper
classes of Elementary Schools many children of
natural mental capacity equal to any of similar
age in schools of higher grades. The hardy
lives which children in the lower classes often
live tends at an early age to a practical turn
of mind. The struggle for life soon gives that
worldly shrewdness and independence of opinion
which is fatal, if allowed unguided activity, in
the sphere of physical truth. There are then,
even in Elementary Schools, many opportunities
for preparing the mental soil and for carefully
tending the growing seeds of truth, for removing
all obstructions, with a view to a real and intel-
ligent faith—a faith which will stand the trials
of future years, and form a nucleus for the
further acquisition of religious knowledge.
Sunday Schools.

The present methods of religious education exhibit some of their most characteristic features in the conditions which prevail in Sunday Schools. Not only are the minds of the elder pupils unprepared for any realization of the truths which are presented to them, and not only is there the same avoidance of interesting and rational methods in conjunction with those which are more spiritual, but these weaknesses are usually emphasized by a scarcity of teachers, and by a general want of influence and external support. It has been remarked by one speaking from nearly fifty years' experience in a suburban parish, that one of the most noticeable changes in this department has been the gradual withdrawal of men and the substitution of ladies as teachers. It is also true, that at the present time, the greater proportion of teachers is supplied from the lower middle ranks of society, whilst the leisured classes stand by in idle indifference. A loss of power again often results from the feeble support of home influence. There can be no doubt that there are unbelieving parents, who object to seeing in their children any signs of ear-
nest conviction, and who prefer that they should regard the Sunday School as a mere institution for utility and amusement. Thus we find a want of religious conviction in the rich and poor—two opposite extremes of society—reacting towards the same direction, in weakening the religious training of the young. These drawbacks must inevitably exist so long as the general indifference to religion prevails. But let the upper classes themselves gain, during youth, a firmer hold of religious truth and a deeper appreciation of the value of religious training, and they will understand that taking a class in the Sunday School does not mean keeping tiresome children quiet, and dinning into their ears dull and, to them, unmeaning facts, nor repeating familiar historical truths, nor attempting moral teachings which are not regarded; but that it offers the grandest opportunity for imparting difficult teaching to the children and for moulding their expanding powers and tendencies, that it offers an opportunity for interesting conversation, for finding out what rudimentary ideas they may possess, for leading them on by simple facts and thoughts to gain some clearer notions of life, of duty, of Jesus, and of God; that it is the task of giving to young flowers, as they unfold, the very first rays of light. And again, let the parents be able to look back upon the reasonable and convincing teaching which they themselves
received at the Sunday School, and they will no longer think that they are conferring a favour by sending their children, but that the opportunity of gaining real and lasting instruction is only to be accepted with gratitude and respect.
Preparatory Schools.

In this sphere recent years have been productive of very extensive changes. The leaven of development here, as in all Private Schools, has been forthcoming from two distinct sources. Not only from a sound spirit of reform, engendered by a sense of the real needs and welfare of the pupils, but also from motives dictated by an age of competition. The result has been, that whereas the first of these causes has given rise to many excellent improvements, the second has produced Schools which appear to aim not so much at sending out good, well-trained, and manly boys, as at a reputation for providing every material luxury. The arrangements for housing and feeding are in every School necessarily matters of great importance. The additional mental strain of modern education has rendered an increased attention to these details most desirable, if not absolutely necessary. In this direction, however, the limit is not unfrequently overstepped, and the emphasis laid upon material comfort is sometimes productive of conditions of luxury rather than those of healthy
simplicity. As long as parents in choosing a school consider the material appointments as of the first importance, and the mental opportunities as second, ignoring the spiritual and religious training altogether, so long there will continue to be a supply of Schools suited exactly to such requirements. All such points remain in the hands, not of the masters, but of the parents. As a contrast to the over-solicitous care for the material welfare of the pupils, the religious education provided by Preparatory Schools is often less complete than that which is given in lower grades. Whether the reason be that parents are indifferent to the matter, or that no Diocesan examinations are held in these schools, the fact remains as clear as it is unwarrantable. Upon this subject we find that Professor Huxley did not refrain from comment. "Of theology," he says, "the middle class schoolboy gets rather less than poorer children, less absolutely and less relatively, because there are so many other claims upon his attention. I venture to say that, in the great majority of cases, his ideas on this subject when he leaves school are of the most shadowy and vague description, and associated with painful impressions of weary hours spent in learning collects and catechism by heart." It is not probable that even if these "weary hours"

1 *Science and Education*, Huxley, p. 93.
were prolonged, they would form impressions upon the young which would be productive of lasting and good results, unless indeed such time were spent in making the impressions acceptable instead of "painful." It would be difficult to over-estimate the great benefit which a boy receives from a manly and liberal education, such as is given at most of our Preparatory Schools; but even these advantages dwindle to nothing before the irreparable loss which is incurred in another direction.

It often happens that the most fertile and impressionable years of life pass by without anything like adequate guidance towards the highest and most difficult of all attainments. In some Schools, from the beginning to the end of term, with the exception of sermon teaching, the pupils receive nothing approaching to spiritual instruction, nor is any teaching given with a view to laying the foundations of real and intelligent faith. The subject of moral instruction is also often either passed by entirely, or is only given when some faults render correction necessary. It is obvious that the incidental advice then given is received with a certain sense of rebuke, and can only be recalled in connexion with unpleasant associations.

Such a training really means that the rougher seas of the Public School have to be entered on, not only without the ballast of sound religious
principle and definite determination, not only without that unconscious guidance which is the result of spiritual training, but with a decided indifference to religion, already imbibed from the tone of surroundings, and with a supreme deference to material interests gained from the bias of purely secular teaching and influence.
Public and Grammar Schools.

As a consequence of the methods of education already noticed, the Public School career, instead of being entered upon under circumstances favourable to religious progress, is begun with an interest in, and an understanding of, secular matters only. This preparation, however, is entirely suitable to the new sphere, where the religious education is a continuation of the same processes adopted at the Private School. Since we have pointed out the deficiencies of these methods, it will not be necessary to revert to them again. We shall, however, now be considering the education of individuals, some of whom are entering upon the full powers of manhood, and it is instructive to notice to what extent the religious education is increased to suit their capacities. It may well be considered an open question whether the present system is productive of more evil in the upper than in the lower strata of society. Where the secular education has become more perfect, the deficiencies in religious training will be more dangerous. The keener the powers of the intellect, the greater the damage it will be capable of doing. It is evidently the opinion of many competent judges
that there is a discreditable neglect of religious education at our Public Schools.

That we expend a minimum of time and energy upon the subject is no doubt due to necessity more than to choice. As an example of the superficiality of our present system, it would not be out of place to mention the fact, that notwithstanding the thoroughness aimed at in other departments, none of our great Public Schools look upon Christian Evidences as a subject worthy of regular teaching. There seems to exist, however, a widely shared opinion that the time has come for more frankness and thoroughness in religious education. Speaking upon this subject, the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, recently said:

"It seems again and again to young persons, between the ages (say) of sixteen and twenty-six, that on religious questions, as distinguished from all others, intellectual activity is discouraged, and the ardour of an inquirer is dreaded. It is taken for granted that his energy may disturb some pre-existing whole, the repose of which is assumed to be precious. There is nothing quite like this in any other path of knowledge. On no other can an explorer go too far or report too much. But the theological student—so at least it seems to the young—is specially and heavily weighted. He knows that, if he pushes his inquiries beyond

a certain point, he will be not only criticized but attacked. No matter how reverent his outward tone, no matter how deep his inward love of 'the things which are above,' he knows that he may come to be regarded with suspicion as a dangerous and almost dishonest man." From information gained from twenty of the most representative Public Schools, it appears that, whereas in one case evidential teaching is relegated to the pulpit, and in another to incidental allusions in Scripture lessons, and in another to the occasional use of Paley and Butler in the sixth form, the majority regard it as practically outside the domain of school work altogether. Marlborough appears, however, to be in advance of the other Schools in this particular, and we append a very excellent paper set to the sixth form at that School.

MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE.

SIXTH FORM.—DECEMBER 1893.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

(Answer briefly; arrange clearly; avoid irrelevance.)

1. What is meant by saying that the character and teaching of Jesus are central evidences for the truth of Christianity?

2. How should you answer one who said that the miraculous element in Christianity is an impassable hindrance to belief?

3. What is meant by "Evolution" in Nature? Is the acceptance of this theory a bar to Christian belief?

4. Were the prophets mainly foretellers of future events? What services did they render to Israel?
5. Quote, or give the drift of, some of the chief Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, mentioning where each occurs.

6. Explain the importance of St. Paul's Epistles as evidences to the Resurrection and other chief doctrines of Christianity.

7. Mention briefly, without details, the different kinds of evidence that you would bring forward in proof of the historical truth of the Resurrection.

8. Discuss the reasonableness of the theory that hallucinations, legends, and myths account for the miraculous element in the Gospels.

9. What is meant by saying that Christianity is the only religion that satisfies the wants of man?

10. A few words about Theism—Deism—Buddhism—Agnosticism—Positivism.

But why, we ask, should such rational instruction be confined to the sixth form, as is the case wherever it is touched upon? The sixth form can only contain but a small percentage of the pupils. It is not that the other forms have not the mental capacity for some such instruction, but rather that under the régime of a purely empirical religious training, evidences are considered as a superfluity rather than as a necessity. The majority of pupils, however, leave school from forms below the sixth. We are therefore sending out from our Public and other Schools every year thousands and tens of thousands of individuals, into every occupation of life, and into every quarter of the globe, without having given them a fair opportunity of knowing what may be known about Christianity, or of realizing the truth of its doctrines.
They have neither been prepared to understand the supernatural, nor have their difficulties been aired or anticipated. It is true we cannot create faith in young people, even by the most assiduous care for their intellectual state. But we can teach them candidly and intelligently; we can warn them against the peculiar dangers of which we know, either from the wisdom of others or else from our own experience.
CHAPTER VIII.

AN AVAILABLE REMEDY.

In the previous chapters we have examined some of the most fertile sources of unbelief. We have noticed how intelligent methods of teaching prevail only in the departments of secular instruction. We have remarked how this practice of exercising the rational powers towards one direction reacts upon the general mental attitude, capabilities, and development. We have noticed how from such training as this there arises, not only a tendency to regard the testimony of the senses as the final limit of truth, but also a predisposition to believe that all which lies beyond the present range of the senses is comparatively worthless, if not entirely non-existent. We have further observed that there is a general consensus of opinion among thinking Christians upon the following points: that intelligent beings should receive an intelligent religious education, in order to develop powers of judgment which shall not be biassed by a one-sided and narrowed habit of
thought; that from early years the young should be helped to gain clear notions of "broad and fundamental principles"; that they should be guided towards a clear conception of spirit and matter, and also towards a firm and intelligent grasp of the eternal truths of Christianity. And lastly, we have noticed the apathy which is so often displayed by teachers towards the whole subject of religion, an apathy for which under the circumstances they are scarcely responsible. But the question now confronts us as to what can be done with a view to remedying the evils we have noticed. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to suggesting an answer. It has been stated by a most careful thinker, that every thinking religious man accepts as lamentably true what has been already said regarding modern secularism and its source in deficient education. If these views be correct, then we are at least starting with our feet upon solid ground; we are starting with the following significant facts as the basis for our action:

First. That the most fertile causes of unbelief lie in certain deficiencies of modern religious education.

Secondly. That the majority of thinking Christians are aware of the fact, and desire the introduction of a more reasonable, intelligent, and thorough system of religious education.

Thirdly. We are starting also with the obvious
fact, that until an efficient system of religious education has been in vogue for some years, we cannot have an adequate supply of teachers who have received an intelligent and thorough religious training themselves, and who therefore both realize the importance of this work, and are competent and anxious to do justice to it.

What then can be done to meet these facts? Are we to abandon the matter in despair, allowing each rising generation to be more carelessly taught on religious subjects as the supply of teachers becomes more secularized and less qualified to give the necessary instruction? Or, if it be entirely against the principles of our religion to give up the battle, then by what possible means can the existing condition of religious education be rendered more suitable to the needs of the day? In answer to this question it is maintained, that the level of religious knowledge, in every grade of life and in both sexes, could be raised to an indefinite extent by the issue and use of text-books upon religious subjects, written upon intelligent and reasonable lines. In providing thorough religious instruction we encounter the same difficulty which appears in the case of all other subjects under similar circumstances. The smaller the supply of teachers who are thoroughly competent to deal with a subject, the greater the need for the writings of
those who have, as far as possible, mastered that subject. In the case of all subjects which require the exercise of the intellectual faculties, an adequate supply of good text-books seems to have been accepted as an absolute essential. We have text-books upon the various branches of science, which by their careful compilation and admirable lucidity make clear difficulties and theories which would otherwise form an impassable barrier to nearly all young students. But in the sphere of religion those who are best qualified to instruct remain silent. There are no reasonably written text-books which can serve to explain, to guide, and to educate. Science is ever expanding the area of her influence by these means; she is ever expressing her dogmas in a way that the masses can understand; she is ever clothing her facts in language suited to the current habits of thought; she is always leading her disciples on to gain a correct and satisfactory idea of her fundamental principles. But religious truth is kept in the background; its dogmas and doctrines are only expressed in the language of bygone ages, which only the few can study and interpret. We appear therefore to need a graduated series of religious text-books, suited to minds in all stages of development. It is necessary also that these books should be systematically used in schools of all grades and classes, both of boys and girls. The gradation of
such a series and the grouping of the subjects might be somewhat as follows.

**First Series, for the Elementary Grade,**
suitable to the needs of Preparatory and National Elementary Schools.

No. I. A Text-book of simple introduction to the use of the Bible, with a statement of the facts of its origin and its human and divine elements, and with short explanations of prominent difficulties.

No. II. A Text-book of easy evidential facts and arguments, together with such explanations and expressions of Church Doctrines as would render them comparatively easy to minds adapted to modern modes of thought.

No. III. A Text-book dealing in a simple way with the realities of man's composite nature—soul and body, with illustrations from the facts of psychology and hypnotism, &c. Also a simple treatise leading up to the primary contrasting characteristics of spirit and matter.

**Second Series, for the Intermediate Grade,**

for Public and Secondary Schools, both for boys and girls.

This series might consist of several text-books upon each of the subjects already mentioned. They would also be fuller and more detailed, embracing perhaps abridged and simplified editions of existing works arranged as simple text-books.
Third Series, for the Advanced Grade, for the highest forms of Public Schools and for Universities, &c.

The most advanced works bearing upon religion and its kindred branches of knowledge.

The Christian Evidence Society has for some time devoted special attention to encouraging this kind of teaching in schools. The following extract from The Summary of a Year's Work of this society will serve a twofold purpose.

First, as illustrating the principle of the three-fold division of grades mentioned above.

Secondly, as showing how absolutely inadequate the efforts of any single society must be to cope with the vastness of the work.

Summary of Examinations in Christian Evidences held in 1895.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Students examined</th>
<th>Prizes</th>
<th>Certificates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Grade</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Divisions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Grade</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Evidences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary Grade</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>General Evidences</td>
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An educational literature of the kind described would supply at least a basis for reforming the deficient system which now exists. It would constitute a medium for imparting correct notions
of those fundamental principles and truths of religion which we have already seen to be so necessary in the present age of intellectual activity. It would supply a means of giving sound and intelligent biblical understanding, and would also afford a means of removing the risk of acquiring from childhood false and erroneous views. A means would be provided for training the minds of the young, and for creating that understanding of Christianity, which alone can prepare the soil and make pulpit teaching acceptable and helpful. Again, teachers of religion would be enabled to establish something like a unity of teaching upon modern views of the Bible, and such views, we trust, would be the safest and soundest within human reach. The future clergy would be brought up from childhood with intelligent views of religion, and would be thoroughly trained to make the most of the prevailing habits of thought. The Catechism would lose much of its dullness, by being connected with subjects already handled in an interesting manner. The Diocesan Examinations would also necessarily adopt lines testing the extent to which scholars had obtained a genuine hold of religious truth. Such a system would also ensure that the minds of those coming forward for Confirmation had been duly cared for, as well as their memories; that they had been taught to regard religion as a reality; that their
youthful difficulties had been set at rest; that they had been led through the period of inquiry, and had emerged from it ripe for unimpeded progress in the spiritual life. It would give stimulus to religious thought in the case of every man and woman. It would alter the attitude of apathetic teachers towards religion.

But to ensure only the production and issue of these guide-books to religion would not be greatly advancing the object which we have in view. It would be necessary also to ensure that they should be used systematically, in schools of all grades and kinds, and in schools of both sexes. There can be no reason for supposing that a supply of suitable text-books would be lacking, if a demand for them were once created. But here we are touching upon the crucial point of our subject; namely, as to how it can be brought about that nearly all educational institutions shall adopt such intelligent and thorough methods of religious teaching as the use of these text-books would involve. A satisfactory answer to this question can be based upon the facts already established. If, as appears to be the case, the majority of thinking Christians are alive to the educational needs of the present time; if it be generally recognized that shutting out the intelligence from religion, cramming the memory with facts, and handing over doctrines and dogmas without
one word of explanation or recommendation, neither stimulates the spiritual life nor tends to develop a spiritual insight, but rather to dwarf the higher faculties and to encourage apathy; if these facts are generally recognized and lamented, then we have at hand a motive-power strong enough to bring about the desired reform. To ensure a more satisfactory condition of religious education we have only to bring the force of this prevailing opinion to bear on the actual routine of the educational world. With regard to a great many schools it may be said with certainty, that if some good religious textbooks were forthcoming, written upon the lines already mentioned, many masters would gladly adopt them, as a welcome assistance towards the most difficult task of making religious instruction thorough, interesting, and impressive. But it would be obviously wrong to imagine that this important reform ought to be, or could be, worked out by the disconnected efforts of individual schoolmasters. Such a view of the matter would mean laying the burden upon the wrong shoulders, upon shoulders which are already sufficiently weighted. There is probably no existing body of workers—the priesthood excepted—who perform more important services in the cause of humanity, and perform them in a more noble spirit, than school-teachers of all grades and sexes. We must not allow
one syllable of blame to fall upon them for the flagrant deficiencies in religious education. They are guided by external ruling forces. In all schools there is naturally great anxiety on the part of the masters to teach all subjects according to the lines prescribed by general opinion. In schools of the higher classes, the express wish of the parents must be the ultimate authority which determines the more important features of the school curriculum. Those subjects which are universally, though indirectly, insisted on by parents, are forced forward in school work with corresponding emphasis. The present Headmaster of Haileybury once expressed himself upon this point in the following words: "Public opinion can work great changes on public schools, either by ordinary clamour, or by producing alterations in the public examinations, every little fluctuation in which causes a derangement more or less fundamental in the curriculums of all the schools. Schoolmasters at present are in a condition of almost helpless subservience to this quite uninstructed public opinion." If parents therefore would show a disinclination to allow their sons to compete in those examinations which place deep, sound religious knowledge in the background, it would inevitably bring about a change in all examinations which are intended to attract

the pick of England's youth. It is however a remarkable fact, and one which accounts for a great deal, that parents seldom take active interest in the religious education of their children at school. Not long ago, a headmaster of one of our great Public Schools remarked, that during the thirty years he had been headmaster, he had hardly once been asked by a parent as to the condition of a boy's interest and progress in religious knowledge. If however parents do now realize, that in this age of intellectual activity, providing no thorough religious education for their loved ones means handing them over helpless to all sorts of future trials and deceptions, and if they are willing to co-operate towards bringing about a better state of things, then we may hope for a system of thorough religious education which shall soon be active in every strata of society. It would be premature in this volume to make any practical suggestion for bringing the matter to an immediate definite issue. We trust that the views which have been advanced will prove to be the expression of what is generally felt to be true by religious people, and that the succeeding steps towards a practical reform will, by God's mercy, not be long delayed.

THE END.
Formby -
Education and modern secularism