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I.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD.

IN a scientific age like ours, something will be gained if we can show that Christianity is amenable to the Experimental Method. This method has very largely made the modern world. It received its great exposition and impulse from Lord Bacon, and is sometimes called the Baconian method. It consists of three stages: first, the collection of all the facts procurable upon the subject in hand; secondly, the casting about for some happy hypothesis to explain the facts; and, thirdly, the verification of the hypothesis by experience or experiment.

Now it so happens that Christianity may be made amenable to this method; and, that there may be no mistake about this being the Founder's intention, let us look at one declaration He made in the days of His flesh. His enemies had, strange to say, argued themselves into the idea that He deserved to be killed because He had made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day (John vii. 23). They illustrated in doing so the fact that, if we only set ourselves to it, we can argue ourselves into anything. The history of human thought shows that there is nothing too absurd, nothing even too diabolical, to be reached by argument. But Jesus has a better method to suggest than this one of everlasting discussion; and it is contained in the words, "If any man will [*willeth to*—Revised Version] do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 17). He does not say, "If any man will *discuss* God's will in all its length and breadth, he shall know of the doctrine;" but if he will *do* it, he shall reach

and such catholicity of spirit that no one can fitly read it without being instructed, stimulated and edified." The appendices of the original are omitted in the translation.—*Natural Theology*. The Gifford Lectures, delivered before the University of Edinburgh in 1893. By Prof. Sir G. G. Stokes, Bart. 12mo, pp. viii, 272. (London: Adam & Charles Black; New York: Macmillan & Co., 1893.) This course of Gifford lectures is quite similar in tone and style to Sir G. G. Stokes' first course, which was noticed in this REVIEW for July, 1892 (Vol. iii, p. 585), but differs from it in the lecturer allowing himself here to deal more freely with scientific subjects and with references to Christian teaching. The first six of the present lectures are, indeed, a very interesting discussion of the implications of certain recondite facts of nature with reference to what is beyond nature; while much of the last four lectures is little more than a series of remarks from a scientific man's point of view on fundamental Christian themes. The contribution of the lectures to *Natural Theology* belongs chiefly to the first six lectures. Here the lecturer illustrates, from the discovery of the luminiferous ether and the investigation of its qualities, how irrational it is to dismiss the evidence of asserted facts which "are of a nature to lie altogether outside the ordinary course of nature" as previously known to us; and then proceeds to illustrate the proposition that the subjects of our knowledge in nature belong to several distinct planes, the phenomena on each higher plane being inexplicable from the fundamental laws which explain those of the plane lower; then he seeks to illustrate the doctrine of teleology first from the structure and adaptation of the eye, and then from the molecular constitution of ponderable matter. In the treatment of teleology, he lays most stress upon such instances as the structure of the eye—subjects of limited extent such as our minds can grasp; while he justly recognizes the greater difficulty in dealing with the results of general laws, which arises from the host of consequences and the impossibility of singling out one particular beneficial consequence and declaring it to be the end of the law. "In such a case, it seems to me," he remarks, "that we should rather take the system of nature as a whole, and the laws of nature, so far as we have been able to discover them as a whole, and consider how the whole fits together in such a manner as to be conducive to our welfare" (pp. 89, 92, 141). Nowhere, however, is there to be found anything more than desultory remarks bearing on this great subject; there is no attempt to treat it systematically, or to illustrate it from nature with any completeness. In the course of these remarks, however, the Darwinian theory of development comes, in this volume too, repeatedly under discussion. Prof. Stokes, of course, stands firmly for the activity of second causes and for the recognition of their place in the production of effects. He is not disinclined, therefore, to a theory of evolution. But he does not think the Darwinian theory of "natural selection" able to account for the production of organs like the eye (pp. 138, 139), nor for the differentiations of living forms; and he quite clearly recognizes the atheistical import of the substitution of evolution for the idea of origination. "The erection of evolution into the rank of a general theory of universal application," he says (p. 241), "does seem to me either to banish God from our thoughts, or to reduce the idea of Him to such an abstraction as to land us in a sort of pantheism." Accordingly not merely does he look upon the atoms as "manufactured articles," but he considers that the origination of life required the exertion of creative energy (p. 145), which also is needed to account for the different types of living beings (p. 149), and for the production of man. With reference to immortality, Prof. Stokes does not think that, on purely natural grounds, we can attain to much more than a suspicion and a hope of it (pp. 170 *sq.*, 198, 230). He lays the

stress on the moral argument conceived somewhat as Kant stated it, and finds a subordinate argument in a teleological one, "arising from a combination of man's capacity for continued progress with prevention of it by death" (p. 231). But he considers this to be weakened by the fact of sin, as a disturbance of the normal result, and on the whole he leaves the impression that no strong conviction of survival after death is attainable on purely natural grounds.—*Christianity and Evolution*. By James Iverach, M.A., D.D., Professor of Apologetics and Exegesis of the Gospels in the Free Church College, Aberdeen, author of *Is God Knowable? Life of St. Paul*, etc. 18mo, pp. viii, 232 (London: Hodder & Stoughton; New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1894.) Dr. Iverach, in this ably and interestingly written booklet, sets himself to rescue the idea of evolution from its defamation by charlatany and soiling by ignoble use. He argues unanswerably that this great form of thought can never come to its rights save as it is filled with the Christian conception of God, as the Living God, who works immanently in all things, producing by means which from the point of view of efficiency we call causes, the ends of His own choice. The issue which he has before his mind is not, therefore, one "between 'evolution' and what our friends are pleased to call 'special creation';" it is between evolution under the guidance of intelligence and purpose, and evolution as a fortuitous result." He shows solidly that evolution is meaningless save as a formula for an immanent God, working according to plan; that the progressive discovery of laws under which the process proceeds, so far from ever more and more weakening the theistic argument, strengthens it; and that the grandeur, intelligibility and manifest purposiveness of the process proclaim its divine author. "Our position is," he says, "that each new discovery is a fresh testimony to theism, and each new law found in phenomena is only a fresh argument for God—for intelligence as the source of order and the only ground of law." This is an important issue, and Dr. Iverach has met it admirably. Whether it is the only important issue in the case—"the issue of to-day" (p. 104), as he calls it—is perhaps worth further consideration. The great idea of evolution can never come to its rights save under the conception of the Christian doctrine of God. But does the Christian doctrine of God come fully to its rights in the conception of evolution? Some of Dr. Iverach's readers may understand him so to suggest. He is very cordial in his recognition of evolution both as a fact, and as an apparently all-pervasive fact. "To me," he says, "creation is continuous. To me everything is as it is through the continuous power of God; every law, every being, every relation of being are determined by Him, and He is the Power by which all things exist. I believe in the immanence of God in the world, and I do not believe that He comes forth merely at a crisis" (p. 175). Elsewhere he excepts Christ from the process of creation by law, but adds: "But evolution will hold for all others" (p. 207). We do not for a moment believe that Dr. Iverach intends to exclude the transcendent action of God; his zeal is obviously rather to vindicate the reality of the Divine in His immanent action. But he appears to have spoken less guardedly than we could wish here. Christ is no doubt the great exception; but He is not the sole exception. "Evolution" can in no case be accepted as the formula of all that is: we must in any case rise above it to the higher formula of "God"—who is more than evolution, and works, in evolution indeed, but also out of it. We say this is true "in any case;" we intend to leave the impression that we are by no means so sure of the reality of evolution in the wide range which Dr. Iverach gives it, as he is. We would not willingly drag behind the evidence indeed,—nor would we willingly run ahead of it.—"*The Ascent of Man*." Its Note of Theology. By the Very Rev. Principal Hutton, D.D. Small 4to, pp. 45. (Paisley and London: