



sought to secure for the "Truths for the Times" the "endorsement" of venerated authorities, or any recommendation whatever beyond that of the intrinsic truth of the statement itself. Our conviction of this truth can neither be strengthened by the assent nor weakened by the dissent of others; and we have desired to give Mr. Darwin's words to the public for the simple purpose of showing that the tendencies of Modern Science and Free Religion are in the same direction.

We do not wish to lay any more stress on Mr. Darwin's opinions than they are justly entitled to, or to insinuate that they are shared by all scientific men. With a modesty which is the weightiest of rebukes to the arrogant spirit of theology, he considers his own opinions as of little value on such subjects; and it is indisputable that scientific men are at present divided in sentiment concerning them. But there is confessedly no scientific thinker now living whose thought has so profoundly affected the future of science, or done so much to direct the course of its development. Human investigation has taken a new start from his deep, original thought; and the impulse he has given to all future researches into the origin, nature and destiny of man will never be exhausted while knowledge is loved and sought. Law, and not miracle, is the key with which he would unlock these and all other problems; and to him belongs the rare glory of having discredited miracle even in the disguise which had deceived the very eyes of science herself—of having revealed the unity and harmony of Nature's processes in a region which had been still sacred to superstition. Faith in law has been the inspiration of his wonderful scientific career; and it has made him one of the greatest prophets of the new era.

It is surely, then, no trivial fact that such a man can recognize his own thought in the ground-principles of Free Religion. From the side of science and the side of religion comes alike the same deep affirmation of law as supreme; and in this common faith is the old feud between them healed. The superstitions which religion has intruded among men's thoughts must be utterly cast out from the sphere of human belief; and yet science must reverence her in her legitimate domain. The moss-grown errors of Christianity are crumbling away; science must clear the ground for the temple of truth, sparing no rubbish of idolatry that impedes or embarrasses her work; yet religion will survive in human hearts as the living endeavor to realize in life the resplendent ideal that illumines the inmost recesses of the soul—as the strong, brave effort of imperfect man to rise higher and higher into the sunshine of the universal and absolute Best. The supreme empire of science over the intellect, like that of religion over the will, is drawing nearer day by day; and both together, in their unjared harmony, will make their advent as the one indissoluble empire of the Divine in Man.

This week we begin again to use *printed labels*, giving both the *address* of our subscribers and the *date* to which they have paid. Please examine these labels and notify us *at once* of any error in either respect. Those in arrears will be now informed of the fact; and we hope that all will be disposed to renew. If a few copies should be sent out this week without labels, the labels will be used next week.

A new Taylor Book Press has been purchased by our printers in order to publish THE INDEX hereafter in the best style. It is intended to improve the quality of the paper used in printing the next volume; but the size cannot be increased with advantage until additional stock of the Association is taken. When the liberal public are satisfied that the money already on hand is wisely used, they will doubtless increase it. This is right. We hope to show results that will justify confidence, and prove to our friends the magnificent opportunity before them of now building up a paper unique of its kind and unequalled in its liberalizing influence on public opinion.

#### DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION.

At a late meeting of the Radical Club in Boston, Mr. Weiss gave a definition of Religion which seemed to be very much misunderstood by those who heard it.

He said:—"Religion is the recognition of the facts of the Universe." Rev. Dr. Hedge, while praising the general character of the essay, objected to this and other statements as materialistic. It seems to me an entirely unfounded charge.

Mr. Weiss' definition may not be exhaustive. Religion is so broad a word, and is full of such subtle meaning and relations, that it is not easy to "define," or even, as Mr. Alcott says, "confine" it. But this is a very suggestive sentence, and one which puts Religion in an entirely worthy attitude, redeeming it from all the possibilities of narrowness and littleness which have been charged upon it.

We do not understand Mr. Weiss as meaning by the "facts of the Universe" merely that a stone falls to the ground by the power of gravitation, or that acids and alkalis unite by chemical attraction. The facts which Religion recognizes are of spirit as well as of matter. The fact of existence—that we are, that spirit is, that God is; the fact of Creation—that all is not as it once was, but that there has been evolution, growth, progress; the facts of Indestructibility, of Eternity, of Infinity,—all these are facts of the Universe, which the scientific mind perceives, and uses after its method and for its purposes. The religious mind recognizes these same facts, and relates them to the human consciousness—another fact—and deduces from them various truths of Religion.

The great Bibles of the World begin by taking cognizance of these facts. The Hebrew scripture announces the fact of existence in the eternal I AM; and its first pages are devoted to an account of the process of Creation in the form in which some Hebrew genius conceived it.

Then there are many puzzling facts in the Universe, very hard to understand,—the existence of evil, for instance, the great amount of suffering in the world, the tremendous convulsions of nature, disease and premature death, accident, destruction by flood and fire.

Has not Religion always busied itself with these facts, and tried to explain them? But it must first recognize them; and Mr. Weiss' word is a happy one, for it must recognize them with friendliness and willingness, and examine them frankly and fearlessly, before it can get into right relation with them.

There has been the short-coming of all nar-

row and dogmatic religions. They do not recognize the facts, but they try to force the facts to suit themselves. Ecclesiastical History does not investigate the origin of the world as a universal fact; it insists that Religion requires you to believe a special account of it. It does not look for the meaning of suffering and death in the constitution of the Universe; it declares it to be an arbitrary creation as a punishment for an imaginary offence.

Materialism is just as narrow when it insists that every thing shall be proved to the senses alone, and rejects all the facts of the consciousness and all the spiritual history of man.

This definition of Religion, of course, puts Religion perfectly in harmony with Science. Is it not strange that we should have had so much objection to that union from those who profess to worship the Bible, where the knowledge of God is so often spoken of as the highest attainment? And what is the knowledge of God but Religious Science?

When we recognize the "facts of the Universe," we shall have taken a great step towards faith and trust in its Creator; and is not that the first great principle of Religion? Until we do that, it seems to me all true relation to the Universe or its Creator is impossible.

E. D. C.

#### THE FREE RELIGIOUS CONVENTIONS.

We shall have something to say in an article next week on the recent Conventions held by the Free Religious Association in Detroit and Syracuse. This week we simply take a few extracts from the reports of the daily papers in those cities, which will give some indication of what was said and done. The newspapers generally were very liberal in the space given to the reports of the meetings and pretty fair in their accounts.

At the opening session of the Detroit Convention Mr. Frothingham took occasion to refer and reply to some of the criticisms and objections that are made to the Free Religious Association. Among these he alluded to the charge recently made by Rev. Mr. Mayo, of Cincinnati, that the principles of free religion tend to social demoralization. On this point the *Detroit Tribune* reports him as follows:—

When Luther, he said, went out of the Roman Church, it was asserted that society and morality would be destroyed; that the Lutherans could not succeed, and after a brief trial they would return to the mother church. The result is far different than was claimed by the anti-Lutherans. For strict morality and all that goes to make social bonds secure, the people have to turn to Protestant countries. Protestantism said the same thing of Unitarianism, and when this religious faith was established, the Protestants said it could not survive. To-day it is the boast of Unitarianism that rectitude of life is one of their cardinal principles. The Free Religionists claim that they can go still further than the Unitarians, and still inculcate a love of all that is honorable and pure and noble, and still improve the social structure of the world. Society is perpetually renovating itself, and Free Religion will continue to renovate society.

The essay read by Mr. Abbot on Friday morning upon the subject of "Free Religion in a Free State," which was reported at length in the *Post* of Detroit, will probably be given entire to the readers of THE INDEX. No extracts therefore are made from it here. From the report of the evening essay by the Secretary of the Association we take the following extracts. The subject was "The Doctrine of Divine Providence in the Light of the Western Conflagrations:—"

One of the cardinal doctrines of religion is that there is a wise, benignant Supreme Providence working in the affairs of men. One of the cardinal doctrines of reason and science is