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CAPTAIN FRANCIS W. H. PETRIE, F.G.S., &c.

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1890.

## ORDINARY MEETING.*

H. CADMAN JONES, ESQ., in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following elections were announced :—

MEMBERS :—The Rev. Canon W. Barker, M.A., London ; Professor G. W. Curtis, M.D., Vice-Chancellor of the University of the State of New York, United States ; C. A. Vince, Esq., M.A., Fellow C.C. Cambridge, Head Master of Mill Hill School ; Rev. Joseph Wood, M.A., Principal of Wesley College, Nottingham.

HON. CORRESPONDENTS :—Professor H. W. Parker, Professor of Natural History, Iowa College, United States ; Principal W. N. Willis, B.A., St. John's Coll., Camb. ; Ascham School, Eastbourne.

The following Paper was read by the Author :—

### *MODERN SCIENCE AND NATURAL RELIGION.* By the Rev. C. GODFREY ASHWIN, M.A.

THERE is always a tendency to over-estimate the personal and the present; and it would be presumptuous to anticipate the verdict of succeeding generations on the nineteenth century, in which our lot is cast. But there is a general consensus of opinion amongst its contemporaries that it constitutes one of the critical periods of human history, leading up to some great climax, if not to the greatest, in the world's history. And the question occurs, To what do all the mighty changes by which it is characterised tend?—to a happier state of things, or to something like moral and political chaos? These changes manifest themselves in three marked lines :—

Political changes,—changes in which the constitution of civilised lands, brought about by home reforms, are greater even than the national changes which have been brought about by war.

Religious changes,—Christian activity greater than in any previous period since the Apostolic days, so that the nineteenth century is emphatically the missionary century of the world; but, accompanying this activity, a more wide-spread and open scepticism than in any previous time.

Scientific changes,—a truly marvellous advance in the knowledge of nature and some of the laws by which she is

* May 6, 1889.

governed, and an application of her treasury to the enrichment of human life, with comforts, luxuries, and information of which poets may have dreamed, but our predecessors formed no conception.

And many nervous minds are trembling lest the discoveries of modern science, or rather the more accurate observations of modern scientists, should overturn the conclusions our forefathers had arrived at from their more limited observations of the physical universe. This is the subject of the present paper. How far do the demonstrations of science justify scepticism? Are the conclusions of modern scientists in the direction of Agnosticism or Theism? Do they modify the deductions of what we understand as Natural Theology? *Natural Theology*,—for Revealed Religion occupies an altogether different platform, and as far as our present subject is concerned, we have nothing to do with the Bible.

But Natural Theology is a very wide subject, and embraces two distinct lines of thought,—physical and metaphysical,—the latter of these will be considered of primary importance by those who think that "the proper study of mankind is man," and the natural yearnings of the spirit of man for a knowledge of the Father of spirits can best be sought in the history and constitution of the human mind; the former by those who think a knowledge of the mysteries of the physical world is best calculated to reveal The Secret that underlies all things. To the first class the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of man's mental and moral nature must appear the most promising and hopeful field of investigation; and John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, and writers of that kind, will be regarded as the great authorities from whom they may hope to derive the light they seek. Respecting this branch of the subject, notwithstanding the common protestation against anything like anthropomorphic views of the Creator, supposing the universe to be a creation, it seems impossible for the human mind to form any conception of the Divine Being that is not anthropomorphic. For it is impossible for beings possessing any consciousness of intelligence, will, purpose, and power, to conceive the universe to have been formed, organised, and governed by a Being who does not possess, in an unlimited degree, those attributes which distinguish, though in a limited degree, man from all other beings with which he is acquainted. That is, he cannot but endow the God of his imagination with anthropomorphic qualities. Mr. Frederic Harrison, the Positivist leader, says:—"I say, in a word, unless religion is to be anthropomorphic there can be no working religion at all!"

Still, although the mental and spiritual nature of man cannot be altogether passed by by the scientific man in any conclusions he may draw from his studies of nature,—for mental and spiritual facts are as positive existences as the sun and the earth,—far more attention is paid to physical science, and far greater progress has been made in its study than in that connected with the inner man, and it is to the modern reading of what is called "the book of nature," and its bearing on the older deductions from it, the attention of the reader is more especially directed. The book of nature is one whose leaves have been well thumbed by many careful readers,—read and re-read and differently interpreted by successive generations of students, and by the same student in different stages of his education; and we must bear in mind that this book is to a considerable extent written in a foreign language, the niceties and peculiarities of which are still only partially understood by its ablest scholars. So much so, indeed, that it is like a picture, the most perfect, the most sublime, the most expressive that can be conceived, but still a picture, which each observer reads through the idiosyncrasies of his own mind; and as even articulate words, in our own language, convey different shades of meaning to different minds, we must be prepared, to some extent, for different interpretations of recognised facts of science.

But while prepared to accept fully and most gladly any clearly-proved facts, no matter what may be involved in the recognition,—more than this, while willing to give all due consideration to any probable theory which cannot as yet be regarded as proved,—we must carefully distinguish between facts and theories, and remember that the history of scientific progress is the history of a long list of erroneous, imperfect, and discarded theories, each preparing the way for less erroneous interpretations. None recognise this more clearly than the great apostles of modern science; for instance, the late Mr. Darwin said, in his *Descent of Man*, p. 385: "Many of the views which have been advanced are highly speculative, and some, no doubt, will prove erroneous. False facts are highly injurious to the progress of science, for they often long endure; but false views, if supported by some evidence, do little harm, as every one takes a salutary pleasure in proving their falseness; and when this is done, one path of error is closed, and the road to truth is often at the same time opened." Professor Huxley is, if possible, even more definite. He says: "Our way of looking at nature and speaking about her varies from year to year, but a fact once seen, a relation of cause to effect once demonstratively apprehended, are possessions which

neither change nor pass away, but, on the contrary, form fixed centres about which other truths aggregate by a natural affinity." *

Every one must admit the truth of this conclusion as regards *facts*, and no one could give a more earnest warning respecting the theories, that vary from year to year, than he has done in these words: "The army of liberal thought is at present in very loose order, and many a spirited free-thinker makes use of his freedom mainly to vent nonsense." †

This must be borne in mind in considering both the accepted facts of science and some of the more prominent and plausible speculations. The following are generally admitted as facts:—

1. The immense duration of the earth's history.
2. The gradual formation of the earth's crust by processes still in operation.
3. The homogeneous character of the materials of which sun, moon, and planets, including our own earth, are composed.
4. The uniformity and inviolability of the laws of nature.
5. The vast duration of human life on earth.
6. The indestructibility of matter.

It is true that some would relegate the last two of these from the category of proved facts to that of prominent and plausible speculation. For, the evidence of the extreme antiquity of man does not appear conclusive to all. And the theory that matter may be merely a form of vortical motion of a pure fluid which fills the universe is supposed by some to modify former conclusions as to the indestructibility of matter. ‡

Amongst the plausible speculations not yet accepted as facts are,—

(*a*.) The evolution of higher from lower forms of organic life, including the animal and man.

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* *Lay Sermons*, p. 124. † *Ib.*, p. 69.

‡ Supposing the Kinetic theory of the structure of matter be proved, and a very superficial knowledge of the theory is deeply interesting and highly suggestive, how far does it affect the question of the destructibility or indestructibility of matter? Professor Tait says: "If we adopt Sir William Thomson's notion of a perfect fluid filling infinite space, all vortex rings, and therefore, according to Sir W. Thomson, all atoms of matter, must necessarily be endless; that is, must have their ends finally united together. Secondly, Helmholtz shows that such a ring is indivisible; in that sense 'a vortex ring' is literally an atom. Therefore, if any portions of the perfect fluid have vortex motion communicated to them, they will remain for ever

(*b.*) That all life is developed from some common protoplasm.

(*c.*) That all the phenomena of life are the necessary consequences of certain complicated combinations of the particles of matter.

Now, if the six propositions assumed to be facts and the only accepted facts of science upon which the highest authorities on the subject are agreed be accepted, what do they absolutely involve?

*First.* A beginning so distant as to be practically, to our finite minds, an illimitable past.

*Secondly.* A common origin of the whole universe,—at any rate, of all parts of it which are open to human observation.

*Thirdly.* A ceaseless progress from a lower to a higher stage of existence, brought about by the operation of perfect and, therefore, unchangeable instrumentalities.

*Fourthly.* Uniformity of the operations of these instrumentations.

*Fifthly.* Uniformity of design pervading the whole, and most clearly manifested in the vegetable and animal kingdom.

These conclusions from what are generally accepted by scientific men as facts, are not affected by those speculations which, in some form or other, are widely accepted as to the evolution of all life from some common protoplasm; the necessary connexion of vitality with a certain combination of molecular particles; for, if ultimately proved to be true, they would only deepen the conviction of an eternity past,—a common something or nothing, out of which all things have been produced,—a constant, ever-active, ever-efficient force or power, which has brought into their present condition the world we inhabit, the unmeasured numbers and variety of living creatures which crowd it, and, chiefest of all, the wonderful powers of thought and delicacy of feeling and vitality of memory which distinguish Man as the highest, noblest organisation of which science has any knowledge. It is manifest these conclusions in no way justify Scepticism,—for Scepticism concerns itself with the question of Revelation from

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stamped with that vortex motion; they cannot part with it, it will remain with them as a characteristic for ever, or at least until the creative act which produced it shall take it away again." But "if this property of rotation should be the basis of all that to our senses appeals as matter," and must go on for ever,—unless checked by a similar act of force which first set it in motion,—then it would but return to the condition of the supposed perfect fluid, of which it is alone composed, to a condition of imperceptible materiality, which, by again receiving vortical motion, would again become perceptible matter.

a recognised Creator,—but do they naturally lead on to Agnosticism or to Deism? It seems to the writer that though many of the prophets of science call themselves Agnostics, their deductions from nature are distinctly Theistic! They have removed many erroneous interpretations of physical facts,—they have brought many fresh truths before the mind, but the more clearly they have laid open the vastness and complexity of nature,—the more conclusively they have demonstrated the almost incredible activity of molecular motion,—the more distinctly they have established the inseparable connexion which unites every particle of our solar system,—the more clearly, *also, they have proved* the all-embracing order, *law, purpose,* by which they are associated, through which they have been brought into their present condition, from "a beginning, infinitely remote," by which they are still acting, governed, and directed.

Let them speak for themselves. First, they recognise "a beginning." Professor Huxley says: "Astronomy, which leads us to contemplate phenomena the very nature of which demonstrates that they must have had a beginning and that they must have an end, but the very nature of which also proves that the beginning was, to our conception of time, infinitely remote, and that end as immeasurably distant."*

Then they emphatically exclude the possibility of "chance" having brought about the phenomena they have investigated: declaring that a "purpose" was being worked out, by means "adapted" to accomplish it, through the instrumentality of "law" and "order," directed by a "force" which "necessitated" the accomplishment of the purpose.

For Professor Tyndall says: "Within the long range of physical inquiry," and that extends from "the outer rim of speculative science,—for beyond the nebulæ scientific thought has never ventured hitherto,"—"within the long range of physical inquiry they have never discovered the insertion of caprice, throughout this range physical and intellectual continuity have run side by side." "No matter how subtle a natural phenomenon may be, whether we observe it in the region of sense or follow it into that of imagination, it is, in the long run, reducible to mechanical law." He illustrates this, as regards the mineral kingdom, by the Pyramids. "The blocks in this case were moved and posited by a power external to themselves, and the final form of the Pyramid expressed the thought of the human builder." "In the same way salt crystals," therefore all crystals, "are built up, those molecular

* *Lay Sermons*, p. 17.

blocks of salt are self-posited, being fixed in their places by the forces with which they act upon each other." But the gifted scientist goes on to apply this manifestation of "mechanical law," this outcome of this force, to vegetable and animal life, to the arrangement of "self-posed" molecules in a grain of corn and in every portion of the animal frame, so that "an intellect, the same in kind as our own,—if only sufficiently expanded,—would be able to follow the whole process from beginning to end," and "with the necessary data, the chick might be deduced as rigorously and as logically from the egg as the existence of Neptune from the disturbances of Uranus." Moreover, he goes on to say there is a necessity underlying the molecular action, "as the motion of the hands of a watch follow of necessity from the inner mechanism of the watch when acted upon by the force invested in the spring, the phenomena of nature have their inner mechanism, and their store of force to set that mechanism going."

Professor Huxley is equally definite in his testimony. He says, speaking of the development of the lobster from "a semi-fluid mass of yolk not so big as a pin's head, contained in a transparent membrane, and exhibiting not the least trace of any one of those organs, whose multiplicity and complexity in the adult are so surprising," appeals to this development as a proof of unity of plan, and says: "Thus the study of development proves that the doctrine of unity of plan is not merely a fancy, that it is not merely one way of looking at the matter, but that it is the expression of deep-seated natural facts."

Again, he says: "Suppose we had known nothing of the lobster but as an inert mass, an organic crystal,—if I may use the phrase,—and that we could suddenly see it exerting all these powers, what wonderful new ideas and new questions would arise in our minds! The great new question would be, How does all this take place? The chief new idea would be the idea of *adaptation to purpose*,—the notion that the constituents of animal bodies are not mere unconnected parts, but organs working together to an end"; but he goes even further than this. He says: "All who are competent to express an opinion on the subject are at present agreed that the manifold varieties of animal and vegetable life have not either come into existence by chance, nor result from capricious exertions of creative power, but that they have taken place in a definite order, the statement of which order is what men of science term a natural law," and while their deductions are so distinct from what they accept as facts, they are confident that these conclusions will not be modified,

supposing the present favourite theories should ultimately be received as facts.

Darwin, in speaking of his conclusions respecting the descent of man,* says: "I am aware that the conclusions arrived at in this work will be denounced by some as highly irreligious; but he who thus denounces them is bound to show why it is more irreligious to explain the origin of man, as a distinct species, by descent from some lower form, through the laws of variation and natural selection, than to explain the birth of the individual through the laws of ordinary reproduction. The birth of the species and of the individual are equally parts of that grand sequence of events which our *minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance.*" Dr. Asa Gray says: † "There is no tendency in the doctrine of variation and natural selection to weaken the foundations of natural theology, for, consistently with the derivative hypothesis of species, we may hold any of the popular views respecting the manner in which the changes of the natural world are brought about." And Tyndall, in the magnificent scientific prose poem which constituted his address on "the scientific use of the imagination," before the British Association at Liverpool, in 1870, in considering the question whether the commencement of life was a new creation, after the earth had been brought into a state for its reception, or whether it was an evolution from previously existing matter, says: "We long to know something of our origin. If the evolution hypothesis be correct, even *this unsatisfied yearning* must have come to us across the ages which separate the unconscious primeval mist from the consciousness of to-day. . . . . Fear not the evolution hypothesis. Steady yourselves in its presence upon that faith in the ultimate triumph of truth which was expressed by old Gamaliel, when he said, 'If it be of God ye cannot overthrow it.' Under the fierce light of scientific inquiry this hypothesis is sure to be dissipated if it possess not a core of truth. Trust me, its existence in the mind is quite compatible with the simultaneous existence of all those virtues to which the term Christian has been applied. It does not solve, it does not profess to solve, the ultimate mystery of the universe. It leaves, in fact, that mystery untouched."

True, they are careful to express their Agnosticism of the origin of the source of the "force which set the mechanism of nature" going. Thus, speaking for all scientists, Tyndall

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* *Descent of Man*, vol. ii. p. 395.

† Lyell's *Antiquity of Man*, 4th edition, p. 551.

says: "If you ask him whence is this matter of which we have been discussing, who or what divides it into molecules, who or what impressed upon them the necessity of running into organic forms?" he has no answer to give. Science is mute in reply to such questions. But, if the materialist is confounded, and science rendered dumb, who else is prepared with a solution? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Let us lower our heads, and acknowledge ignorance, priest and philosopher, one and all.

But they recognise a something—or some One—beyond and above the physical universe, which fills their hearts and minds with "awe" and calls forth "worship."

Thus, Tyndall says: "When the stroke of action has ceased and the pause of reflection has set in, the scientific investigator finds himself overshadowed with the same awe which filled the mind of Immanuel Kant, when he said: 'Two things fill me with awe, the starry heavens and the sense of moral responsibility in man,' and 'breaking contact with the hampering details of earth, it associates him with a power which gives fulness and tone to his existence, but which he can neither analyse nor comprehend.'" And Huxley speaks of the "necessity of cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions,—Religion,—by worship, for the most part, of the silent sort at the altar of the Unknown and the Unknowable." It is clear that Natural Theology has nothing to fear from the facts of physical science. But one of its greatest masters, Professor Huxley, recognises "that as the different flowers of monœcious plants must be brought together to render the tree fruitful, so it is with physical and metaphysical studies. I may be taking too much a naturalist's view of the case, but I must confess that this is exactly my notion of what is to be done with metaphysics and physics. Their differences are complementary, not antagonistic, and thought will never be completely fruitful until the one unites with the other."* Let us unite the testimony of the metaphysician to that already given by the physicists. Herbert Spencer says:—"Those who think that science is dissipating religious beliefs and sentiments seem unaware that whatever of mystery is taken from the old interpretation is added to the new. Or rather, we may say, that transference from one to the other is accompanied by increase, since for an explanation which has a seeming feasibility, science substitutes an explanation which, carrying

* *Lay Sermons*, p. 371.

us back only a certain distance, then leaves us in the presence of the avowedly inexplicable."* And he concludes the article with these words :—"But amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty that he is ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy." From this "Infinite and Eternal Energy"—he is careful to use capital letters,—he declares "all things proceed." †

To this "Infinite and Eternal Energy" he only hesitates to apply the word Person, because "though the attributes of personality, as we know it, cannot be conceived by us as attributes of the Unknown Cause of things, yet duty requires us neither to affirm nor deny personality; but the choice is not between personality and something lower than personality, but between personality and something higher, and the ultimate power is no more representable in terms of human consciousness than human consciousness is representable in terms of plant functions."

Again, he says: "I held at the outset, and continue to hold, that the Inscrutable Existence, which science in the last resort is compelled to recognise as unreached by its deepest analysis of matter, motion, thought, and feeling, stands towards our general conception of things in substantially the same relation as does the Creative Power asserted by Theology."

Uniting these "different flowers of monœcious plants," physical and metaphysical, what fruits of thought spring from their union? In the mineral world atoms are piled together indicating plan and design as distinctly as the final form of the pyramid expressed the *thought* of the human builder, by some hidden "force"! Could that have been effected without intelligence and foreknowledge? In the vegetable and animal kingdom, in the molecules of a corn grain, and the development of a chick from an egg, the processes are so regular, so orderly, so necessarily tending to the purpose proposed, that "an intellect, the same in kind as our own, if sufficiently expanded, would be able to follow the whole process from beginning to end." Could that process have taken place without its having been designed by an Intellect possessing the requisite expansion, accomplishing its object by the necessary power?

And men of the highest intellectual power and culture

* *Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1884, p. 10.
† *Ib.*, p. 12.

recognise a power *outside nature* which fills them with *awe*, which necessitates *worship*. Is it possible for such minds to "worship a mere" non-intelligent power? and can *such a power* "give fulness and tone" to the existence of such men?

Moreover, the only reason that "personality" is not attributed to this "power" is, that His attributes transcend those which our limited experience and consciousness associate with personality! An all-embracing Intellect is recognised, an all-efficient Power is admitted. Practically, personality is acknowledged "in the Unknown All-Being."

The conclusion is, then, that these writers are not what ordinary men would call Agnostics, but distinctly and positively Theists.

And modern scientists are in harmony with the students of natural religion in bygone times, and tell us that the inarticulate utterances of all physical things, animate and inanimate, call upon man to worship the Unseen Creator and Governor of the world, whom Christians and Jews alike recognise as the One and Only Living God.

The CHAIRMAN (H. Cadman Jones, Esq.).—I am sure we are greatly obliged for Mr. Ashwin's interesting paper.

In reply to an inquiry from one of the audience as to in what sense he used the expression "natural religion," the author said:—The expression "natural religion," generally used by such writers as Paley and Butler, is universally understood as representing the highest idea the cultured mind of man can form, apart from the testimony of Revelation. The conclusion of man's reason, reasoning from his knowledge of the universe, that that universe must have had a Creator. I have written this paper because I know, from past experience, that there is an enormous sceptical wave passing through the minds of men, especially young thinking men, the working men in our great manufactories, the working men in our great engineering works, and the thoughtful men amongst the educated clerks and men of business in our large towns; and I regret to say that, to a great extent, I am convinced that that scepticism has been produced by the unjustifiable dogmatism of many teachers of religion. I was anxious to bring forward the testimony of the great scientists I have quoted, to the effect that they all recognise a something which is beyond the compass of their minds, underlying that which is subject to their mental capacities; there is a distinct testimony on their part that they

recognise what they will not call a Creator, but what corresponds with that idea, and I believe that one way in which we may hope to save some of the younger men of the present day from plunging into scepticism is by bringing before them the testimony of such men as these, that they do in reality recognise what we understand as God. The human mind apart from Revelation cannot rise further than that.* My paper does not touch Revealed Religion, therefore I have not referred to the Bible in my argument, and I think I have shown that these men do recognise that there is a God. Finally, let us bring calm, quiet, thoughtful, reverent minds to the study of God's Word, and remember that there must be the same gradual correction of preconceived misapprehensions respecting that Word as has taken place in the gradual removal of erroneous views respecting the explanation of the natural laws now at work in the universe. Growth in the knowledge of God's Revealed Word must, I think, be *pari passu* with growth in the knowledge and interpretation of the works of nature.

The meeting was then adjourned.

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* Natural Religion, which has had many and long ages to develop its fruits, has failed to meet the exigency of man's spiritual condition. The state of man everywhere, without a Divine Revelation, is sufficient proof of this.—ED.

## NOTE.

By the Editor.

The statement has often been made by the opponents of the Christian Religion,—that the progress of Science has given a death-blow to all belief in the truth of the Bible, and that men of Science no longer regard that book or the religious belief it inculcates. So false a statement might not be worthy of notice, but that it is repeated, in publications and on the platform, in almost every land, and it has been credited, not only by individuals in all classes, —especially the working classes,—but even by some charged with the regulation of education both at home and in our colonies: yet it is noteworthy that we find Professor Huxley, when lecturing at Liverpool on education (Feb. 16, 1883), mentioning the Bible as the first of the books which, in his opinion, our youth should study,—"I have said it before, and I repeat it here: If a man cannot get literary culture of the highest kind out of his Bible . . . he cannot get it out of anything." Again, he wrote, in the *Contemporary Review*, Dec., 1870, "I must confess I have been no less seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling, which is the essential basis of conduct, was to be kept up, in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters, without the use of the Bible." Again, Professor Tyndall, at Manchester, stated, "I have, not sometimes, but often, in the spring-time . . . observed the general joy of opening life in nature; and I have asked myself the question, Can it be that there is no being in nature that knows more about these things than I do? Do I, in my ignorance, represent the highest knowledge of these things existing in the universe? Ladies and gentlemen, the man that puts that question fairly to himself, if he be not a shallow man, if he be a man capable of being penetrated by profound thought, will never answer the question by professing that creed of atheism which has been so lightly attributed to me." Again, Dr. Darwin, in his *Origin of Species*, sixth edition, page 146, says, "Have we any right to assume that the *Creator* works by intellectual powers like those of man?" Also, Sir Charles Lyell, in *Principles of Geology*, tenth edition, page 613, says, "In whatever directions we (geologists) pursue our researches, whether in time or space, we discover everywhere the clear proofs of a *Creative Intelligence* and of its foresight, wisdom, and power." Pasteur, Sir R. I. Murchison, and many other leading men of science, have written to the same effect, but the authors here quoted are those whose works are most used (often unfairly enough) by the opponents of Religion. Again, Professor Max Müller, speaking of language, says it may be a product of man's nature, or of human art; but, he adds, "If it be the gift of God, it is God's

greatest gift; for through it God spake to man, and man speaks to God in worship, prayer, and meditation." Finally, as regards agnosticism, the opinion in regard to it, as expressed by Carlyle, and quoted in his Life by Froude, vol. ii., p. 216, may conclude these remarks: "The agnostic doctrines are to appearance like the finest flour, from which you might expect the most excellent bread; but, when you came to feed on it you found it was powdered glass, and that you had been eating the deadliest poison." *See also* vol. xvii.

## INTERMEDIATE MEETING.*

THE PRESIDENT, Sir GEORGE G. STOKES, Bart., M.P., P.R.S., in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following elections were announced:—

MEMBERS:—W. H. Williams, Esq., D.L., J.P., London; Rev. Alban H. Wright, B.A., Barbados; Rev. Principal M. B. G. Eddy, Mass. Metaph. Coll., Boston, United States.

LIFE ASSOCIATES:—Right Rev. E. G. Weed, D.D., Bishop of Florida, United States; Eber Caudwell, Esq., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., London.

ASSOCIATES:—W. Batchelor, Esq., London; Rev. J. Brittain, Harrogate; Rev. R. K. Collisson, London; Rev. J. E. Dwinnell, A.M., D.D., U.S.A.; Rev. J. Ellis, A.C.S., India; J. R. Van Millingen, Esq., Stamboul; Rev. Principal G. Washburn, D.D., Robert College, Constantinople; Mrs. J. D. Vollar, Ceylon.

HON. COR. MEMBER:—Rev. A. Shipton, A.M., Taunton.

A Paper "on Geological Science in accordance with the Christian Faith,' by C. S. Wilkinson, Esq., F.G.S., President of the Royal Sociey of New South Wales. was then read as a Lecture in the Author's unavoidable absence in New South Wales. A discussion ensued, in which many took part.

The Meeting was then adjourned.

* February 18, 1889.