the character, to sanctify both individuals and communities, are likely to be true. Experience of the Divine can be the richest and surest experience only if it not merely implies all that is absolute and necessary in consciousness and existence, but is also confirmed and guaranteed by all that is relative and contingent therein.

What are known as “the proofs” for the Divine existence have ’ from the time of Kant to the present been often represented as sophistical or useless. This view is, however, less prevalent than it was. During the last twenty years the proofs have been in much greater repute, and have had far more labour expended on them, than during the previous part of the century. They have, of course, been considerably modified, in conformity with the general growth of thought and knowledge. For instance, they are no longer presented elaborately analysed into series or groups of syllogisms. It is recognized that the fetters which would assuredly arrest the progress of physical and mental science cannot be favourable to that of theology. It is recognized that the validity of the proofs must be entirely dependent on the truthfulness with which they indicate the modes in which God reveals Himself, the facts through which man apprehends the presence and attributes of God, and that, therefore, the more simply they are stated the better. Man knows God some­what as he knows the minds of his fellow-men—namely, inferen- tially,—yet through an experience at once so simple and so manifold that all attempts at a syllogistic representation of the process must necessarily do it injustice. The closeness and character of the con­nexion of the proofs have also come to be more clearly seen. They are perceived to constitute an organic whole of argument, each of which establishes its separate element, and thus contributes to the general result—confirmatory evidence *that* God is, and complemen­tary evidence as to *what* God is. The explanation of this doubtless is that the apprehension of God is itself an organic whole, a complex and harmonious process, involving all that is essential in the human mind, yet all the constituents of which are so connected that they may be embraced in a single act and coalesce into one grand issue.

The cosmological argument concludes from the existence of the world as temporal and contingent, conditioned and phenomenal, to the existence of God as its one eternal, unconditioned, self- existent cause. It is an argument which has been in no respect discredited by recent research and discussion, which is in substance accepted not only by theists but by pantheists, and which forms the basis even of the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. The principle on which it proceeds—the principle of causality—has only come to be more clearly seen to be ultimate, universal, and necessary. The hypothesis of an infinite series of causes and effects has not had its burden of irrationality in the least diminished. The progress of science has not tended to show that the world itself may be reason­ably regarded as eternal and self-existent ; in the view of theists it has only tended to render more probable the doctrine that all physical things must have their origin in a single non-physical cause. The necessity of determining aright the bearings of the new views reached or suggested by science as to the ultimate constitution of matter, the conservation of energy, cosmic evolution, the age and duration of the present physical system, &c., has been the chief factor in the latest developments of the argument *a contingentia mundi.* The teleological argument, which concludes from the regularities and adjustments, preconformities and har­monies, in nature that its first cause must be an intelligence, has been both corrected and extended owing to recent advances of science and especially of biological science. The theory of evolu­tion has not shaken the principle or lessened the force of the argument, while it has widened its scope and opened up vistas of grander design, but it has so changed its mode of presentation that already the *Bridgewater Treatises* and similar works are to some extent antiquated. Perhaps the most promising of the later applications of the argument is that which rests on the results obtained by a philosophical study of history, and which seeks to show that the goal of the evolution of life, so far as it has yet pro­ceeded, is the perfecting of human nature, and the eternal source of things a power which makes for truth and righteousness. The ethical argument—the proof from conscience and the moral order— held a very subordinate place in the estimation of writers on natural theology until Kant rested on it almost the whole weight of theism. It has ever since been prominent, and has been the argument most relied on to produce practical conviction. Much importance is now rarely attached to those forms of the metaphysical argument which are deductions from a particular conception, as, *e.g.,* of a perfect being. Ignorance alone, however, can account for the assertion often met with that the argument is generally abandoned. It has only been transformed. It has passed from a stage in which it was presented in particular ontological forms into one in which it is set forth in a general epistemological form. As at present maintained it is to the effect that God is the idea of ideas, the ultimate in human thought, without whom all thought is confusion and self- contradiction. In this form, by what theologians and religious philosophers possessed of much speculative insight is it not held ?@@1

The changes adopted in the methods of theistic proof have all tended in one direction, namely, to remove or correct extreme and exaggerated conceptions of the Divine transcendence and to produce a true appreciation of the Divine immanence,—to set aside deism and to enrich theism with what is good in pantheism. The general movement of religious speculation within the theistic area has been towards mediation between the extremes of pantheism and of deism, towards harmonious combination of the personal self-equality and the universal agency of the Divine. Positive science has power­fully co-operated with speculation in giving support and impulse to this movement. While the modern scientific view of the world does not result in pantheism, it affords it a partial and relative justification, and requires a theism which, while maintaining the personality of God, recognizes God to be in all things and all things to be of God, through God, and to God. It may be said that theism has always thus recognized the Divine immanence. The vague recognition of it, however, which precedes scientific insight and the conquest and absorption of pantheism is not to be identified with the realizing comprehension of it which is their result.@@2

As to the further treatment of the idea of God in recent or con­temporary theology, the following may be mentioned as, perhaps, the chief distinctive features :—first, the general endeavour to present the idea as a harmonious reflex of the Divine nature and life, instead of as a mere aggregate of attributes ; secondly, and consequently, the greater care shown in the classification and correlation of the attributes, so as to refer them to their appropriate places in the one great organic thought ; and, thirdly, the more truly ethical and spiritual representation given of the Divine character. To realize the nature and import of the first of these features it is only necessary to compare the expositions given of the idea of God in the works of such theologians as Nitzsch, Thomasius, Dorner, Philippi, Kahnis, and even more in those of the represen­tatives of German speculative theism, with such as are to be found in the treatises of Hill, Watson, Wardlaw, and Hodge, which, although published in the present century, express only the views of an earlier age. As to the second point, there has of late been a vast amount of thought expended in endeavouring so to classify and co-ordinate the attributes, and so to refer them to the various moments of the Divine existence and life, as that God may be able to be apprehended both in His unity and completeness, self-iden­tity and spiritual richness, as one whole harmonious and perfect personality. Of the work attempted in this direction our limits will not allow us to treat. In regard to the third feature, any one who will peruse an essay like Weber’s *Vom Zorne Gottes,* or Ritschl's *De Ira Dei,* and compares the way in which the Biblical conception of the wrath of God is there presented with the mode of exhibiting it prevalent for so many ages, is likely to be convinced that considerable progress has been made even in recent times in the study of the moral aspects of God’s character. That the Divine glory must centre in moral perfection, in holy love, is a thought which is undoubtedly being realized by all theists with ever-increas­ing clearness and fulness.@@3

It follows from the above that theistic thought has been moving in a direction which could not fail to suggest to those influenced by it that a rigidly Unitarian conception of God must be inadequate, and that the trinitarian conception might be the only one in which reason can rest as self-consistent. So long as the simplicity of the Divine nature was conceived of as an abstract self-identity, intelligence could not venture to attempt to pass from the unity to the trinity of the Godhead, or hope for any glimpse of the pos­sibility of harmoniously combining them. But, this view of the simplicity of the Divine nature having been abandoned, and an idea of God attained which assigns to Him all the distinctions com­patible with, and demanded by, completeness and perfection of personality, the doctrine of the Trinity necessarily entered on a new stage of its history. The free movement of thought in this century, far from expelling it from its place in the mind of Christendom, has caused it to strike deeper root and grow with fresh vigour. Never since the Nicene age has theological speculation been so actively occupied with the constitution of the Godhead, and with the trinitarian representation thereof, as from the commencement of the present century. It is, of course, impossible here to describe any of the attempts which, during this period, have been made to show that the absolute Divine self-consciousness implies a trinitarian form of existence, and that intelligently to think the essential Trinity is to think those moments in the Divine existence without which personality and self-consciousness are unthinkable ; or that a worthy conception of Divine love demands a trinitarian mode of life ; or that a world distinct from God presupposes that God as triune is in and for Himself a perfect and infinite world, so that

@@@1See the present writer’s *Theism,* and the indications of the literature given in the notes.

@@@2 See the extremely interesting papers by Peabody, Montgomery, Howison, and Harris in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* for Oct. 1885, on the ques­tion, “ Is Pantheism the Legitimate Outcome of Modern Science ?" Also F. E. Abbot’s *Scientific Theism,* 1885 ; and J. Fiske’s *Idea of God as affected by Modern Knowledge,* 1885.

@@@3 Bruch, *Lehre von den Göttl. Eigenschaften,* 1842 ; Moll, *De Justo Attributorum Dei Discrimine,* 1855. Both are, however, already inadequate.