LITERATURE.

How to Find God.*

THE search for God, so easy for some, so strangely difficult for others, is the subject of the books noted below. Among them we give first prominence to the strong, simply written little volume by John Fiske, which one can read through at a sitting.

John Fiske had been known rather as a philosopher or historian when he published "The Idea of God" and "The Destiny of Man." He was counted of the company of Darwin and Huxley, and it was of the nature of a surprise when he first appeared, as if out of the enemies' camp, as the champion of personal Theism. This last volume develops his argument, and beats about no apologetic bush in the proof. And the first impression is that the book is interesting, irised with story and illustration, so that the philosophy is made easy and agreeable.

It is no simple task to compass the breadth of a whole book in a few paragraphs, but we must indicate the point of view. The existence of evil is Mill's argument against an omnipotent God. Fiske escapes the argument by the bold device of denying absolute evil, and admitting only relativity of evil. Without contrast there is no quality.

"If we had never felt physical pain, we could not recognize physical pleasure. For want of the contrasted background its pleasureableness would be non-existent."

We may pause to admit that we might not "recognize" physical pleasure, but we cannot admit that it "would be non-existent." The child could enjoy sweet that had not tasted sour. God could be good in the eternities before evil may have existed. Fiske holds that evil is no product of Ahriman or Satan, but "is an indispensable part of the dramatic whole," that "God is the creator of evil;" that man rises from brutehood, and that the morally bad and morally good represent stages in the development of character. But it becomes actually good. This goodness is the goal of humanity, produced under evolutionary laws, and all the more genuine for that. Yet the hideous lower stages are indispensable, without which would be stagnation. This seems to be a mystic, almost poetic, view. We see no more reason why the process of spiritual evolution needs to begin with evil rather than with innocence than why a child's growth should begin with pain rather than weakness.

Mr. Fiske next discusses the origin of the ethical idea—that is, of love. He finds it in the prolongation of infancy, which develops the mother care and mother love. Here is the root of altruism, which, seen in its lower forms in the parent animal, and then in the animal herd which defends its young, each bull risking its life for the rest, develops in man into what is his chief perfection and glory. Thus we suppose that Kipling's "Law of the Pack" utters the voiceless ethics of mutually protective wolves. But that law is binding, and so love becomes binding on man, and the whole Cosmic Process finds its end in self-sacrifice.

And we find near by the argument for God. Nature is all moving up toward Love, and ethics is the ideal and goal of Nature. Further, the chain of correlation of forces has no place for thought, which cannot be weighed or measured, which does not enter the closed circuit of physical transformations. For the materialist to assume that thought and feeling could not continue to exist if the segment of the physical circuit with which they coexist were taken away, is the hight of rash presumption. Further, the human heart postulates, demands, always and everywhere has demanded, three things—God, immortality, and an ethical meaning for the unseen world. That is, humanity always has had a religion, gross in gross stages of society, but always refining itself, just as ethics refines itself with the develop-

*THROUGH NATURE TO GOD. By John Fiske. 16mo, pp. 105. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. $1.00.)

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ZOOLOGY. By William Keith Brooks, Professor of Zoology in the Johns Hopkins University. 8vo, pp. 339. (The Macmillan Co., New York. $2.50.)

ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT. By the late Richard Holt Hutton. Selected from "The Spectator." 8vo, pp. 393. (Macmillan & Co., New York. $1.50.)

ment of man. Religion came with the birth of humanity, and has been dominant ever since, and ever evolving as if toward a final goal. Now if this relation, thus begun and vitally developed, between man and the unseen world is real only as far as man is concerned, while the objective term, the unseen world, is unreal, then we have here one unique contradiction of all the analogies of Evolution. Nature makes no such false steps elsewhere. The Cosmic Process elsewhere is confirmed; it must be here.

All this argument, charmingly developed, is convincing to the convinced soul, or to the soul that really wants God, and a future life with ethical relations to this life; but it will not supplant the other arguments for religion with which we are more familiar. Coincident with it runs a thread of assumption of a kind of God, transcendent and immanent in Nature, yet personal, less easy to conceive of than the ordinary anthropomorphic God, the "Almighty Lord Shaftesbury" of our common worship.

Professor Brooks's volume is very different from John Fiske's, and yet it reaches the same goal. The title is misleading, *The Foundations of Zoology;* for it uses the department of which the Johns Hopkins professor is such a master only to illustrate the real subject which might better bear the title which Fiske has taken, unless we may say that its purpose is rather the negative one to show that Nature does not lead away from God, that Nature offers no assumptions inconsistent with Theism. Professor Brooks boldly starts with a world of sensations, all we know; and he seems to be an idealist whose chief philosophical authority is Berkeley, but who cannot possibly escape the hard fact of realism. His literary style is as difficult as that of Fiske is easy. The bare words of a cardinal sentence will often hardly convey a meaning, except to the very careful and sympathetic reader. For example, what does this mean at first sight?

"Of all the strange errors that vex the soul of man, one of the strangest is the opinion that our faculties would lose their reality and their value if the history of man were proved to be orderly, and what might reasonably be expected, for that our history cannot have the slightest bearing on the reality of anything in our nature seems so obvious that it is hard to see why any one should question it."

But it has a definite meaning, as has all that the author says.

Professor Brooks believes that life is something different from non-vitalized matter. The reactions of a living organism are peculiar, and have relation to the history and welfare of its race. He says:

"If, like Paley, I kick a stone, I may change its position, raise its temperature, and bring about other changes that might all be computed from a few simple data. What happens if, instead of a stone, I kick a dog?

"In addition to certain changes which are obviously mechanical, like those in the stone, I start a new set of changes which could never be computed from the study of the kick alone. But note this remarkable fact: Show me the dog, and I may be able to tell you what he will do. If he have short hair, a pink skin, a big occipital crest, great cheek muscles, a long mandibular bone, a short nose with little pigment, small red eyes and crooked legs, he will not act like a dog with silky ears, curly hair, large dark eyes, a long, black pointed nose, a bushy tail and long legs with big feet.

"What has the color of a dog's nose or the size of his feet to do with the effect of the kick? Obviously, nothing at all; but the changes in the dog which follow the kick are not its effect, for they might follow an unsuccessful attempt to kick precisely as they follow an actual blow. The color of his eyes and the other marks are racial characteristics which show what his ancestry has been; how his parents and more remote progenitors have behaved under similar assaults."

At much length our author develops the proof that ethical ideas may have been developed and yet lose no essential value. Every California salmon perishes that makes the long journey from the sea to the head waters of the river to provide a safe hatching for its young; the race is wiped out for the good of unborn generations. Very few shad ever return to the ocean. The step from the salmon's self-effacement to human altruism may be a long one, but Professor Brooks sees no dreadful consequences if it should appear that our moral sense had a natural history, and he refuses to admit that this would show that duty is not duty, or that wrong is not wrong.

The substance of his teaching is that Nature is orderly, and that order is no denial of human freedom or of God. He refuses to

speculate about causes; he only knows order. What is the cause of succession and order of events he does not know; it may not be in the things themselves; why not in an outside Power? Indeed, his doctrine of will as orderly approaches that of Jonathan Edwards. If all events belong to the Cosmic Process, and could be infallibly foretold, that affects no belief in God or freedom. Is man a machine? But a machine is something orderly, for a useful purpose; and what is the objection? Now this elimination of causes in nature clears the way very clearly for a Cause out of nature, but we doubt if the common mind will allow the elimination; just as we doubt the author's Berkeleian assertion that "most thoughtful men of science agree that ideas," to the exclusion of objects of sense, "are all we know the existence of." So he reaches this conclusion:

> "If any believe they have evidence of a power outside nature, to which both its origin and its maintenance from day to day are due, physical science tells them nothing inconsistent with this belief. If failure to find any sustaining virtue in matter and motion is evidence of an external sustaining power, physical science affords this evidence."

We judge this is our author's conclusion. At any rate Nature seems to him brimming with purpose, not in its details, Paley's eye, hand, etc., but in the construction of Nature which produces hands and eyes. This volume is an answer, on the one hand to the materialist, and on the other to the theologian who denies evolution. It argues that Nature tells us not one thing against Theism. Nature is orderly; in its data are involved its products; but the question, What is the cause of Nature? is one to which each must seek an answer for himself, "for each has at his command all the data within the reach of any student of science." This is a most important conclusion, we believe a true one, altho we are not able to accept all the philosophical nescience about causes that has made a considerable part of the argument.

Quite different from these two volumes is the collection of short essays on *Religious and Scientific Thought*, contributed at various times to the London *Spectator* by R. H. Hutton. They are not abstruse, nor do they attempt more than the expression of intelligent faith and common sense on the current phases of religious and philosophical thought during the last twenty years. Thus Huxley and Mivart, Gladstone and Tennyson, Mill and Morley, Arnold and Martineau and Newman, all pass in review, and the discussion of their views is unusually sensible and helpful.
