

life as in the past. On the other hand, Mr. Harrison does not at all care for the mystery. What he sees in religion is the spirit of charity and philanthropy, or the doing of something for the practical uplifting of humanity. He takes no interest in speculations about God, but he is anxious to organize the forces of human life for the purpose of doing good to men. The discussion between these two men is a very good illustration of how easy it is for men of science to fall into the habit of discussing mere speculations as if they were of infinite moment. Of what greater practical value is the greater part of this discussion than a debate of equal length between two noted theologians—say Canon Farrar and Father Newman? Are these men any the more likely to hit the mark of truth than the others? Of course, we are all deeply interested to know what is Mr. Spencer's attitude on the great question of religion, and what the methods with which he deals with them. His attitude is at once radical and conservative, for he is anxious to keep the thing, but equally anxious to bring it into conformity with modern knowledge. His dealings with religion are hopeful, for much will grow out of them in the future, when the froth of mere speculation can be taken off. But we feel that Mr. Harrison is quite as nearly in the right; that his position in every way is as much one of hope and promise. He clothes his philanthropy in a very strange and motley garb, but the genuine purpose of it is of the very best. In fact, if we could have our way in the matter, we should combine Spencer's theism and Harrison's altruism. The result would be in every way a gain over the theory presented by either of these contestants. Each is deficient in that direction where his antagonist is strongest.

Science and Religion.*

ATTEMPTS to build a religion on the foundation of science are becoming more and more common. It is alike one of the fashions and one of the passions of the time. Every scientific teacher must try his hand at it, and every theorizer must put his thoughts about it into the shape of a system of philosophy or theology. A great number of those who make these attempts have no special knowledge either of science or philosophy; but this does not deter them in the least. The smaller their knowledge, the greater the audacity with which they can speculate. In every way it is curious and amusing to follow these speculations, and to note how the scientists rival the theologians in building up systems out of nothing, and how they speak with a tone as absolute as any that marked the schoolmen. After all, what is the value of a scientific speculation more than of a theological! So long as the man of science confines himself to hypotheses strictly based on his experiments and observations, they are quite legitimate. But how many of the scientists do this? They tell us that our earth is going to drop into the sun, and the whole system collapse; but how very little in the way of fact is there on which to base such a speculation. As a speculation it is about equal to the discussion of the schoolmen as to how many souls can stand on the point of a needle. There is about as much profit in it, and no more. Of a somewhat like nature is a good deal of the speculation of scientific men about religion. They make bold to think that the methods used in investigating physical phenomena are quite as good in theorizing about the problems of religion; and many of their conclusions are simply ridiculous.

We must turn from this aspect of the subject, however, to take note of the steady manner in which science is coming to support some of the fundamental beliefs of religion. The attitude of Herbert Spencer, in the papers we have under consideration (1), is one favorable to the theistic conception of the universe. He will not define God as personal, but he gives Him many of the characteristics which have been attributed to him by religious people. Spencer maintains that the power of religion lies in its mystery; but he also believes that its career has by no means come to an end. All that is real in it is to continue, for it is necessary to the healthy development of the race. It will take new direction, but it will remain as powerful an agent in human

A disciple of Spencer's has also undertaken to run down all the religions and philosophies of the world, and to cut them short of whatever in them is not in accordance with science. He has made a very large book (2), and written about many things; and at the same time he has made a book worth reading. It is a suggestive contribution towards working out some basis of thought on religious subjects. We think he has speculated quite too freely, and without any just warrant for his theories on more than one subject. He would reduce religion to a high and altruistic form of morality, but without anything of the antiquated ecclesiasticism which Mr. Harrison would retain. His criticisms of past religions and philosophies are not always acute or historic; and his attack on idealism is not at all of the value he seems to think. Idealism has by no means passed away as yet, nor will it cease to live so long as men are born into the world. It must be at the basis of any and every religion that is to possess any vitality and any power to guide men in the way of a common impulse after a higher life. The most striking feature of Mr. Spencer's religious speculations is the latent idealism they have developed.

* 1. *The Nature and Reality of Religion. A Controversy between Frederick Harrison and Herbert Spencer.* 50 cts. New York: D. Appleton & Co. *The Inexpressible Book.* (Same as the above.) \$1.50. Boston: S. E. Cassino & Co.
2. *The Religion of Philosophy; or, The Unification of Knowledge.* By Raymond S. Perrin. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.