CHAPTER I

ON TRUSTING OUR FACULTIES

I remember, some years ago, hearing a sermon by a very brilliant and noble preacher in which he described the main verities of Theism as not being 'subject to the understanding at all.' 'They never can be disproved or proved,' he said; but they 'can be believed and loved.' And then he proceeded: 'These are the mysteries of the Christian faith. None of them come under the decision of the critical reason. If they are to be held, it is only by faith that we can hold them; for, in fact, the understanding is more against them than for them, and experience seems rather to contradict them than to support them.'

Now I dare say that the great preacher whose words I have quoted would not care to be held exactly to these forms of expression; but the general view put forward of the grounds of religious belief affords me an apposite point of departure for the argument which I desire to state.
If it be indeed the case that the understanding is more against the leading affirmations of Theism than for them, still more if experience rather contradicts them than supports them, then all arguments in support of the belief in God and his love and goodness are a terrible mistake, misleading so far as they affect thought at all, and, like all misleading utterances, pernicious and perverse. But my contention from first to last will be that the critical reason, the understanding, so long as you do not put too great a strain upon it, and expect it to do work for you outside the limits of its proper territory, is for the trust and love of God, and not against it, and still more that experience—the true scientific foundation of all real knowledge—experience, which is prior to the exercise of the critical reason or understanding—the experience of the mind and soul—is the true foundation of religious belief; that from a man’s inward experience the understanding has to take its facts, and thence to reason out the justification of belief in a God whom we may love and trust.

I go further. I say that if understanding and experience were against belief in God, it would be a positive immorality to nurse and foster in us that belief. Understanding and experience are the instruments of our nature for the creation and consolidation of belief, and we have no right
to set our minds to think and believe in contradiction to them. That is to make against all human progress and emancipation. And the great word 'faith' is used in a wrong or degenerate sense, when we are told by faith to hold beliefs which critical reason and experience make against. Superstition, that mother of multiform evil, is nothing else than the clinging to some belief in the misused name of faith in despite of experience and reason. Let us rescue the great word from that degradation. The real faith which is a power for truth and good is not the opponent, but the helper of understanding and experience. Both the critical reason and the experience of the inward man have their times of dullness, inactivity, torpidity, non-illumination. Faith is the unswerving trust, at such seasons, in the enduring verity of those things, which in their moments of power and illumination the critical reason and the experience of the soul have taught us. Faith is trust in our own highest and purest self. To reason and experience then, I shall throughout this argument make my appeal.

To proceed, then, to the main topic of this book:—

All those of us who have from time to time been drawn into a discussion of our religion with persons who have given up religious belief have, I suppose, sometimes been thrown in upon our-
selves, quite baffled for a reply, by an antagonist who has roundly told us that we can know nothing at all about God or the soul, that he never believes what cannot be proved, and that as no one has ever seen God or the soul it is useless to try to prove their existence.

And our opponent is only expressing roughly a kind of scepticism, a certain fundamental distrust of our own faculties, which has pervaded a great deal of powerful philosophical writing in many countries and in all times. So that before we begin to try to build up the argument for believing in God and his Power and Goodness and Love, we find ourselves bound at the outset to discuss whether we really have any faculties which are capable of dealing with such matters at all.

There is a widespread and still spreading despair of any real religious knowledge whatever. This despair, says Dr. Martineau, he who invites men to trust their spiritual faculties must meet and refute at the very beginning. ‘For if it be well founded, every step of advance can only take us further astray; and if it be unfounded, it leaves us, like a victim of the black art, imprisoned within a magic circle, which, though needing but a breath to blow it away, we cannot pass.’ ‘We cannot afford either to enter a paradise of fools or to miss any Heaven of the wise, and must pause and guard our steps where the ways divide.’
Can we then really know anything about sacred things? Have we any real grounds for believing that our spiritual and intellectual impressions represent anything more than our own feelings? Is there any reason to believe that they come from any power outside ourselves, or correspond to any object or fact or truth outside ourselves?

You know how vivid a dream may be, especially in cases of fever. A dream dreamt in fever sometimes produces such an overwhelming sense of reality that we remember it for years and years, and can hardly believe that it was not real. Yet it was all nothing more than a kaleidoscope, as it were, within our own consciousness. There was nothing whatever outside ourselves corresponding to it. The horrible beast, or the dark pit, or the terrific struggle, the supernatural being, or the heavenly plains, or the ecstatic bliss, were nothing whatever but dream, dream, dream—the tumult and fever of our own irresponsible brain. We were certain at the time that it was all true. We are certain now that there was not a rag or scrap of truth about it. I have sometimes, in a series of dreams, following swiftly one after another, said to myself at each successive stage, ‘Now I know that I was indeed dreaming just now, when I thought that I was awake; but this time I really know that I am awake.’ And yet, presently, it has turned out that that ‘knowing’ was nothing
but dream either, just like that which went before it.

Well, then, may not all religious belief be a dream after the same fashion? Can anyone prove that the prickings of conscience are anything more than a phenomenon of which the beginning and the end are in our own fancy? Can anyone prove that the peace that comes in answer to earnest prayer or the consolation that fell like dew on the spirit of Jesus in Gethsemane, is anything more than a reaction within the personal consciousness? What argument can there possibly be by which we can confute a person who says that our intellectual and moral and spiritual impressions are all dreams without any objects answering to them outside our own minds?

Now in trying to meet this difficulty the first thing to be observed is this: it is not a difficulty affecting our knowledge of religious matters only, but it affects our knowledge all round, our knowledge of the physical world just as much as our knowledge of the spiritual world. You say to me: ‘How do you know that your religious impressions are not all fancy?’ I answer by saying to you, ‘How do you know that your physical impressions are not all fancy?’ In our common arguments in the street or in the parlour we meet plenty of people who say, ‘Oh, your talk about hearing God’s voice, or feeling his presence,
is all fancy'; but our friends do not say, 'Oh, your talk about seeing the houses opposite, and 'hearing the railway-whistle, and feeling the hard-ness of the pavement is all fancy.' Our friends—even when religiously they are the most complete Agnostics—are never agnostic about these things. They are as sure that there is a draper's shop opposite, and a tobacconist's round the corner, or that the birds are singing in the wood, or that the ice feels cold and the hearth feels hot, as we are. That sort of scepticism does not turn up in practical life as religious scepticism does. Nevertheless, the argument for it is exactly the same. There are precisely analogous reasons for doubting whether there is any external world at all—whether there are any tables or chairs, any great cities and green fields, any wide waters and mighty mountains, any stars or moon or sun—to those for doubting whether there is any God. In both cases the doubt is simply a doubt whether our own natural faculties are instruments that tell the truth, whether our own apparent experiences may be trusted as real and actual. And so, though in the street and in the parlour it is only the spiritual and not the physical existences that are commonly doubted, in the speculations of philosophers, in the reasonings of mighty reasoners, the one set of beliefs is challenged just as much as the other.
'Well, but,' you say, 'we have the evidence of our senses for the outward world and the things that are in it. We see that table, and seeing is believing. Or if we could imagine that our eyes are deceiving us, we can come to it and give it a thump, and the stinging of our fingers will tell us that it is a real table. If we doubt whether that is a real wall, we can try to walk through it, and we shall very quickly learn the truth.' But are you not going a little too fast? What is it that you really experience? Simply certain sensations—all in yourself! You never get outside yourself. These experiences all proceed from so many nerve-thrills of different sorts. If I choose to say that it is all action and reaction in your own nervous system, how can you prove that there is anything more? Have you never had 'a singing in your ears' which really was nothing more? Are you so very lucky as never to have had a sudden sharp blow just between your eyes, and did you not see a sudden flash of light, and yet know that there was not any flash of light at all? And in those fever-dreams, were not the physical things which you seemed to see and hear and touch, intensely real to you at the time? And yet you know now that they were less than thin air, the mere dance and riot of your own disordered fancies, without any external realities corresponding to them whatsoever. How are
you going to prove then that your senses of sight and touch and hearing are not lying to you in like manner all the while, deluding you with trick after trick, or rather with one long treacherous plot, from the day you are born to the day you die?

I have said all this, not because I expect to make you doubt for a single moment the reality of the visible, tangible world, not that I have ever doubted it myself, not that I believe a single philosopher all down the ages, however acutely he argued that it was all illusion, has ever really for a single instant doubted it; but merely to suggest to you that exactly the same kind of difficulties which trouble so many people about religious truths may in fact be advanced, with just as great a show of reason, against physical truths concerning which no sane man was ever really in doubt.

The fact is that there is no knowledge of any sort or kind in any sphere, great or small, which we can acquire without making vast assumptions to begin with. It is a very hollow science that says that it will believe nothing which it cannot prove, for of the fifty thousand things which it does believe there is not one which it can prove without making several unprovable assumptions at the outset. The man of science is very peremptory—and quite rightly so—in saying that he will believe nothing except on evidence; that
experiment or experience must give its testimony before he will believe any newly alleged scientific fact. He is perfectly right—with this proviso; that before there can be any evidence at all, or any experience or any experiment whatsoever, he must of very necessity make some of the most tremendous unproven assumptions it is possible to conceive. For he must assume the veracity and trustworthiness of his own faculties, of his sight, for example, and his hearing and his touch—which he uses continually in his experiments and which play their part in making up all his experiences—and also of his strict reasoning powers, and also of his memory.

Let us glance for a moment at this last faculty of ours which we call 'memory.' For if we examine it carefully, we shall see that it plays an exceeding great part in the structure of all our belief and all our knowledge, and further that our trust in it is a vast and extraordinary assumption, and that we can never by any possibility logically prove that assumption just.

What is memory? It is an impression in your mind at the present time that at some past time you had some particular experience. You are impressed with the belief at the present moment that an hour ago you were walking across Regent's Park, or that this time last night you were having, at a friend's house, much better entertainment
than reading this book, or that this time last month you were in the agonies of Russian influenza. The impression of it all at this moment is as clear as the impression of your friend's face before you. But after all it is only a present impression that you have, and there is no possibility of proving that anything in the past corresponds with it. How do you know that the present impression answers to any past fact? The geologists chip the fossils out of the rock and say that they have in them a proof that the rock was formed long ago, and that the fish or the crustacea were embedded in it in such and such a geologic age. When geology was being resisted by the theologians, some of the theologians said, 'How can you possibly tell that God did not make it all just as it stands six thousand years ago and put what you take to be fossils in it?' Well, how can you tell that your present impression of what you felt an hour or a day or a month ago has not come into your mind of itself? You cannot really recall the past to test the witness of what you call your memory. Suppose it is all illusion and deception. What proof can you give me that it is not?

'Oh,' you say, 'I trust my memory because it has always proved reliable. I have constantly acted on it from my earliest years, and it has not led me wrong.' Indeed! How do you know that? Because you remember, do you say? But, in
saying that, you are taking the very point I ask you to prove, for granted. You say that memory is trustworthy because memory tells you that memory always has been trustworthy. But this is arguing in a hopeless circle, nay, in a downright spiral, and you cannot get out of it, do what you will. You cannot prove that the faculty of memory is the register of the past which it seems to be, and not a mere delusion; you cannot prove it from any amount of past experience, because you have to start by assuming that you really do remember truly before you can begin to talk about past experience at all.

But if we may not assume that memory is a real faculty preserving to us the consciousness of the past, where are we? We cannot reason at all. For what is reasoning? It is taking one fact or thought into consideration and then inferring from it another which follows from it. But if at the moment of making the inference we cannot be sure that we really remember the thought or fact which was in our minds just before, the inference falls to pieces and cannot be held together. Nay, without assuming the veracity of memory, we cannot think or speak at all. If I say three words to you, by the time I am saying the second, you have no knowledge what the first was—neither indeed have I. Unless we assume that we have a faculty which, in the present,
truly represents to us our past, we cease to be
human beings at all, cease to have minds; we
are mere surfaces reflecting whatever colour in
earth or sky happens to flit past us at the moment.

Now all this about memory I have said, not
to make you doubt memory. Our trust in the
veracity of memory is ineradicably welded into
our nature; and let philosophers reason against
it as they will, neither you nor I nor the philo-
sophers can for one moment get away from our
belief in our own memory any more than we can
walk away from our own shadows, or sit down
outside our own bodies. But I have said all this
about memory to make you realize that we do
and must, in all our thinking, assume as true an
enormous amount which we cannot possibly prove;
and even if we try to argue about it, we assume it
again in the very first sentence of our arguing.
It is quite a mistake to think that we can possibly
found our beliefs in pure reasoning alone; for
we cannot begin to reason without assuming the
truth of some of our beliefs.

The late Professor Huxley, however, tried to
warn us of the danger of trusting even necessary
assumptions. ‘It is conceivable,’ said he, ‘that
some powerful and malicious being may find his
pleasure in deluding us, and in making us believe
the thing which is not, every moment of our lives.’
Yes, that is conceivable. But we can none of us
really take the warning, nor could even Huxley himself. Whether it be a good being or a bad being that has created our nature, here it is, and we cannot get out of it. We are made to believe memory. We are made to believe other primary faculties of our minds, before any proof. And being made to believe them, we do believe them—and Huxley did so as much as any of us.

Every act of reasoning that the mind of man has ever performed has proceeded from premises which, for the purpose of that act of reasoning, have been assumed as basis. It may be that in the great majority of cases those premises have themselves been reached by a prior act of reasoning. But if so, that prior act of reasoning must itself have started from other premises assumed. And so, though you go back and back indefinitely, there are always prior premises behind every act of reasoning. And so it follows that at the start of the chain of reasoning, there must have been some initial premises assumed prior to the very first piece of reasoning. Else there could never have been any reasoning at all.

So that the ground taken up by those Agnostics who say that we must believe nothing which we cannot prove is hopelessly untenable. They themselves transgress their own rule every waking moment of their lives. We all have principles of belief implanted in us from which we cannot
escape; and the only real question is how many and what these primary principles are which precede reason, and while it is impossible to prove their right to be trusted, yet are trusted always by every sane man.

What, then, is our proper way of meeting the absolute sceptics, the thoroughgoing Agnostics, who point out to us that we cannot prove the veracity of our own faculties, and urge us therefore not to put our trust in them? Our proper answer is to say to them: 'Why, good friends, you put your trust in them yourselves.' Yes, sceptic, you who tell us that we can know nothing at all about an outward world, you act on the belief in an outward world all the time. You assume in every step you take that the ground is solid. You assume every time you sit down to dinner that there is meat and drink before you. Act for a single hour as if you were not absolutely certain that there is this outward world; and we will begin to believe that there may be something in your doubts. No, we shall not believe that they have any reality even then; we shall only know that you are insane.

We must give up the idea that we are to decide whether to believe a thing by considering whether it can be proved or not. For no truth whatever can be proved except by first making assumptions which cannot be proved. But we are not left
without practical tests of truth which serve our purpose. What are these practical tests?

The chief of them is: 'does it work?' If a certain belief will not work, try it how we will, the presumption is that it is not true. Suppose a man says that the sea is solid. The test is, does the doctrine work? He steps down from the ship's side and sets his foot upon the wave. In a moment he is submerged; and he has more conclusive evidence that the waters are not solid than he could have got by arguing the matter with a philosopher for a year and a day. Suppose a man says that the granite road is solid; every step he makes upon it day after day, and year after year, more and more confirms his conviction. The doctrine works: and in the long run that will be the surest ground of his belief.

Suppose you receive as a Christmas present from an anonymous donor a machine packed in a packing-case of two feet cube. But there are no directions. What is it for? It strikes you it may be a new sort of roasting-jack. You put it in front of the kitchen fire, hang your sirloin on it, and set the cook to wind it up. But nothing happens except a purposeless buzzing and whirring of wheels. It does not work. Perhaps it is a clock, with the face left out. You make a cardboard face and fix it on, and fasten hands at a likely place. But no; though you wind it up,
and the wheels start off again, the hands stop where they are, or jerk round spasmodically an hour or more at a time. Then some one suggests that it is a sewing-machine, which you can wind up and leave to work without treadle or personal attention. What a godsend! You fix the end of a sheet into a holder that just grips it neatly, wind the machine up, leave it, and coming back in ten minutes find the sheet hemmed all round. Then you begin to believe that the machine is a sewing-machine of surpassing excellence. So far, that is the only belief that works. It is true there is a little group of wheels and levers in one part which seem no use at all. They do not move, or they move without apparent effect. And this causes a doubt to haunt you whether, after all, the machine may not be for something else and only accidentally applicable for hemming. But one day, in the middle of the work, the thread snaps at a weak place. You expect the machine to go on drilling useless needle-holes all round but to drop the thread; when, lo! that little group of bars, and wheels is suddenly all agog, the severed ends are reunited with a tiny knot, and the machine proceeds undisturbed to complete the job. Then you believe your doctrine without a shadow of doubt—the doctrine that this is a sewing-machine—because it works not only in an ordinary way, but also and with special emphasis in
exceptional circumstances or emergency. Using the machine in this way elevates it from a useless tangle of cogs and bars to an exquisite substitute for human muscles and intelligence. You are therefore convinced that this is the way in which it was meant to be used.

Or perhaps a better illustration is this: There is placed before you a volume in a language of which you are wholly ignorant. Long words and short words seem a hopeless jumble. But presently you see that a certain very short word—one letter if it is Spanish, two if it is French or Danish or Dutch, three if it is Greek or German—appears very often, and that it is a frequent occurrence that the words on either side of it bear some resemblance to one another in form. Accordingly you guess that that small but common word is the conjunction answering to our English 'and.' Next you observe that another very short word is still more common and is generally followed by a longer word, and that the short word often begins a sentence. Accordingly you guess that it is the article, our English 'the.' In the next place, you see two words beginning with capitals, and though rather oddly spelt, still pretty manifestly Cain and Abel. Between them stands one word. What does it mean? You guess it means either 'hated' or 'killed.' How can you tell which? Why, see here, just at the foot of the page is the
same word, and again two proper names which it divides, and these two names are manifestly Saul and David. Well, you know that Saul hated David at one time, but he did not kill him; so you believe that this word means ‘hated.’ But see, there are at least fifty words on the page ending with the same two letters as that word, which means ‘hated.’ So you surmise that they also are the past tense of verbs. And in this way, step by step, you may go on till you have solved the mystery of the language. If it is some dead and forgotten language, you may not be able to pronounce a single syllable of it. But bit by bit, catching a hint here and a hint there, you have pieced it together, and now you can fairly interpret other books composed in it which fall into your hands. In the gradual process you get a wrong clue now and then. A certain interpretation seems to work well twice, three times, six times, twelve times. But then comes a case in which it fails, producing only confusion and contradiction. Your hypothesis does not work! And so you go patiently back and begin again, till you hit upon a theory which covers all the cases. And at last you have your theory of the language so complete that you can translate the book, on the hypothesis that your clue is right, from beginning to end, and lo! it is a complete treatise, self-consistent, lucid, eloquent.
Then comes some one and says to you, 'Why, you can't prove that you have got the real English of a single phrase or word. You can't prove that this means "and" and this "the" and this "hated." It is all mere conjecture in the air. As for me, I am Agnostic, and I refuse to believe that you know anything about this strange tongue.' Then what will you say? You will say, 'My dear fellow, be as Agnostic as you please. Don't let me interfere with your judgment. But as for me, I am perfectly sure that I have gripped the truth. I refuse to believe that the correspondence I have discovered is all chance. I believe that I have the true theory of this unknown language, because in every page and line and word and syllable and letter my theory works, and I discover in the book a significant and rational whole.'

And just so with the belief in an outward world, just so with the belief in the veracity of memory, just so with the belief in other primary principles of our nature; these beliefs are justified in that they work, they never land us in confusion, they never break down; as the daily haps of life turn up, a myriad an hour, in infinite diversity, these beliefs fit into them all without a jar or a contradiction, while if for a moment we attempt to depart from them, we fall into utter confusion. This is the highest evidence we can have. And therefore the critical philosopher, though he argue
ever so cunningly, though he demonstrate that we are piling assumption on assumption, cannot really shake our belief. Nay, he cannot really shake his own. And to apply the principle in the widest sphere and on the largest scale, that interpretation of the problems of the universe which makes a rational whole and gives the highest significance to human life, will have in its favour a presumption practically overwhelming.

Now the main argument of this book will be that we have other primary faculties besides those which I have spoken of, primary faculties of a spiritual order which speak to us of a Living, Loving God; and that a distrust of these faculties is unreasonable and foolish in the same way as a distrust of the faculty of memory or of the reality of an outside world would be unreasonable and foolish. And further, I shall argue that just as all the experience of life fits into the belief in the veracity of memory and the senses, and the reality of the external world, so also the experience of life fits into the belief in a God who is Power, Righteousness, and Love; that as the belief in the veracity of memory and the senses, and in the reality of the external world works and never breaks down in the varied experiences of life, so the belief in a God who is Power, Righteousness, and Love works and never breaks down in the varied experiences of life. And so as we trust in
memory and the senses and the external world, though it is quite clear that we cannot prove their truth without making immense assumptions to begin with; it is reasonable also to trust in the God who is Power, Righteousness, and Love, though it is quite clear that we cannot prove the truth of this faith without making immense assumptions to begin with.

If it is seen that the machine or organism which we call a human being is comparatively useless, feeble, and inefficient while it is without God, but becomes useful, strong, and efficient when the love of God is in it, then that is an immeasurably strong argument for the reality of God—for the love of him being founded in truth, not in illusion. If it is seen that the belief in God gives meaning and force and coherence to the language of life, whereas without it, it is a mere jumble of letters, then that is a stupendously powerful reason for believing in God. My main contention is going to be that the belief in God works, and that therefore we do well to believe.

But there are certain degrees of religious Agnosticism which seem to me quite just and right in spite of all that I have said. When Zophar says to Job: ‘Canst thou find out the depth of God? Canst thou find out the end of the Almighty?’ I believe that he expresses a sense of the limitations of our knowledge of God which
is characteristic not only of the wisest, but of the devoutest minds. All that we can possibly know about God is how he affects us, at what points he touches our consciousness, and how he modifies it, moving us to joy or to deep peace or to bitter remorse or to great longing for a higher holiness. The Agnostics, from Zophar to Spencer, are absolutely right in telling us that we can never know anything of what God is in himself apart from his effect upon us. The philosophical way of expressing this is to say that we can never know him absolutely, only relatively. And this is indubitably true. But then the like thing is true of every other object of our knowledge whatever; and it is inherently impossible that it should be otherwise. You know nothing and can know nothing of your brother, or of the table at which you are sitting, or of a loaf of bread, or of the moon, except how each one of these affects your consciousness. You know each object in its relation to you, but you do not and cannot know it in itself. I have five avenues through which knowledge of the outer world and the things in it come to me. I call them sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. But I meet a man who is blind and always has been. It seems to him that he knows all about the world, except that he hears some unmeaning talk about light and dark, red and blue and yellow. The words have no sense
to him at all. And if he lived among a set of men all of whom were blind like him and always had been, and never came across or heard of anyone who was not blind, he would suppose that with ears and nose and tongue and touch he knew all that the world had to reveal about itself. He never could possibly so much as imagine a whole set of qualities inherent in every bird and butterfly and flower outside the cognizance of his four senses. And so, for all I know, there may be in the apple I eat at dinner, or the bed I lie on at night, or any other physical object whatever, a whole range of qualities which I can neither perceive nor even begin to imagine, because I have no sense for them; there is no avenue to my mind which admits that kind of quality. And there may be races of beings in some other planet with six, ten, twenty, a hundred senses, even without any one of the five senses which we possess—who yet through those senses which they have, get a knowledge of physical nature just as true, and just as limited as ours—a knowledge, that is, that the world affects their consciousness in such and such ways, but no knowledge at all of what that world is in its own essence.

And so of God: I shall speak in this book of three chief faculties through which we apprehend him; three avenues in our nature through which he touches our consciousness. But I do not for
one moment suppose that this which I perceive is all of God. It is only such effects of his as I, a mere man, am capable of becoming conscious of. And I am persuaded that there are infinitudes of being and an untold wealth of attributes in God, which this poor, feeble, limited human nature is unable to perceive.

But I believe in God. I believe in the reality of the physical objects round me, because I cannot but believe that there is something outside of me which gives me these sensations of hardness or softness, of blue or green, of sweet or bitter, of fragrant or malodorous. In like manner, I believe in the reality of God, because I cannot but believe that there is some one other than myself, who gives me these feelings of aspiration or repentance, ineffable peace or black remorse, of a divine protection or inflowing moral strength.

My whole argument in this book then will be a reference to various intellectual, moral, and spiritual experiences of yours and mine, and an appeal to you to trust in the faculties through which they come and believe the truths they seem to teach. I shall put forward first experience, and then reason starting from experience, as the basis of religious knowledge; and then I shall appeal to you to have faith in that experience and that reason and the verities which they declare.
CHAPTER II

ON GOD REVEALED AS POWER

In the preceding chapter I tried to show that there are certainly some primary mental faculties of ours which we are obliged to believe and do well to believe, and some primary convictions which we are obliged to entertain and do well to entertain, although it is utterly impossible that we can ever prove that they are trustworthy. Among these primary faculties is memory, and among the primary convictions is our persuasion that there is an outside world. We can never prove that memory really represents the past, and we can never prove that there really is an outside world. Yet we do well quietly to accept the necessity of our nature which makes us believe these things; and we are daily confirmed in our trust by finding that these beliefs work, that they fit into life at every point and never seem to land us in error or mistake. If, indeed, we do now and then declare, 'My memory has deceived me,' what
has deceived us is not, strictly speaking, memory, but a defect of memory, or an impression counterfeit memory. The true memory deceives no man ever. And I said that there were also faculties in us which in like manner bore witness to spiritual things, and that the main argument of this book would be that these also ought to be believed because they also work.

In this chapter I propose to deal with certain faculties which though they belong to what we call our intellectual nature, yet lead us in the direction of spiritual truths. They do not actually carry us into the palace of religion; but they take us to the porch and lead us to knock at the door.

I have to call your attention to something else which by your mental constitution, you cannot help believing, although it cannot be proved; and it is this: 'Every event, occurrence, or happening has a cause.' Do you not believe that? I do not know that I can make it much clearer by dwelling on it or labouring over it. Think of anything that ever happened, no matter what. It is—the death of Julius Cæsar, the falling of an avalanche, the burning of Chicago, the aching of your little finger—and try to fancy that it happened entirely of itself without any cause at all. You cannot do it. Push the idea of cause out at the front door: it will sneak in again at the back gate. Sometimes, it is true, it is im-
possible to discover the cause of an event. Then we say, 'What an extraordinary thing! How in the world did it happen? I can't imagine what caused it.' But if some one were to say, 'Well, really, I doubt whether it had any cause at all; I'm inclined to think it happened of itself,' we should put him down for a fool, and rightly so. It is true, again, that we sometimes hear folk pleading as if there really were no cause at all of some disaster. 'It just broke in my hand,' says the maid of the shivered tumbler or the smashed plate. But neither she nor we really believe that it broke without a cause. 'Accidents will happen,' you say. Yes, accidents will happen; but an accident is not an event without a cause. 'How came Thomas to break his leg?' 'Oh, it was a pure accident.' The most that that means is that neither Thomas nor anyone who was with Thomas could have foreseen that such and such a thing would cause his leg to get broken, or it may possibly imply that even now, after the event, we cannot make out what caused it. But we all know that something caused it; and we have not escaped out of that ring-fence which is planted round our minds and compels us, whenever we think of any event whatever, to think of it as having a cause.

But what do we mean by a cause? What is this idea, from which we cannot escape?
THE POWER IN CAUSE

John Stuart Mill, taking up and extending an old argument of Hume's, tried very hard to persuade us that it really meant nothing more than 'always coming before.' He said that if one thing always happened just before another, they got so closely associated in our minds that we began to think of the first as the cause of the second. But Monday always comes before Tuesday; yet I never heard anyone call Monday the cause of Tuesday. Meat always comes before pudding in well-regulated families; but I never heard anyone call meat the cause of pudding. Darkness always comes before sunrise; yet darkness is not the cause of sunrise. When we say that this is the cause of that, we mean something more than that this always comes before that. A very able Catholic philosopher, writing in answer to Mr. Mill, and wishing to give a very forcible example of what we mean by cause, says: 'I am urgently in need of some article contained in a closet of which I cannot find the key, and accordingly I break open the cupboard with my fist.' He says that the relation which exists between his will and the blow he struck is certainly something considerably more than that he willed first and the blow happened afterwards. The willing had something much more direct to do with the striking than that. The willing was the cause of the striking. And so this Dr. Ward gives us as
the very best and clearest example of cause that we can have:—'the influx of a man's mental volitions into his bodily acts.' When we exercise our will, power goes out—we know not how—and flows into our muscles, and the lifting of the arm, or the beckoning of the finger, or the tramp of the foot, or the blow of the fist, or the bending of the knee and the bowing of the head, is something more than what follows after the act of will. It not only follows after; it follows from. It is its result, its effect. The act of will is its cause.

So that when we say that we cannot help believing that every event has its cause, we do not mean only that we cannot help believing that every event was preceded by something else, but that we cannot help believing that every event is preceded by something from which power flows forth, shaping and making and controlling that event, as our act of will shapes and makes and controls the blow of the fist or the tramp of the foot. We conceive all the events that ever happen or ever have happened to be made and shaped by the flowing of some power into them like the flow of the power of our wills into the movements of our fist or our foot. And, though we may sometimes argue and bewilder and confuse ourselves into doubting it, it is a fundamental and primary fact of our nature that we cannot help thinking of all phenomena—which means all happenings,
everything which happens—as controlled by power of this kind coming from some source or other.

* But unfortunately we have got into the habit of using the word ‘cause’ in a very loose way. And loose speaking is only too sure to make loose thinking. And so we have got into the habit of thinking about cause in a very loose way. And this leads to no end of trouble. Indeed, I sometimes think that it lies at the bottom of the whole controversy between Theists and Atheists so far as that is a merely intellectual controversy.

And chiefly we make confusion by talking of the laws of nature themselves as if they were causes. We ask why the gas-escape makes itself smelt so quickly all over the room; and we reply that it is caused by the law of the diffusion of gases. We ask why the cannon-ball that is fired off with a decided slope upwards curves round and in a few hundred yards actually strikes the ground; and we reply that it is caused by the law of gravitation. But that is altogether a confused and confusing use of the word ‘cause.’ The phenomenon is *explained* by the law; it is duly *classified* when it is referred to the particular law under which it falls; but it is not *caused* by the law. For what is a law of nature? It is simply the fact that certain phenomena always happen in a certain way. It is a law of grammar that weak verbs make their past in ‘ed’ or ‘t.’ But
that is not the cause of the past of 'to walk' being 'walked.' It is only a statement of the fact that all verbs of that sort are modified in that way: And it is a law of nature that any two masses tend to approach each other with a force which varies inversely as the squares of their distances. But that is not the cause of the apple falling to the ground or the sea following the rising and setting of the moon; it is only the explanation of these things. Each dropping of an apple and each rise or fall of the tide is just one more fact going to make up the boundless mass of facts which we gather up and bind together, purely and solely for convenience of thought, under one law.

What we want to know is the cause of this very widespread fact that bodies do move towards one another in the way stated in the law of gravitation; and stating the law, which is only stating that they always do, does not bring us a hair's breadth nearer to the cause. My nurse, I remember, used to answer my intelligent questions in that way. 'Why does so and so happen?' I would ask. 'Why,' for instance, 'does the lid of the kettle bob up and down when the water boils?' 'Because it always does,' was the reply—a response precisely as scientific and philosophical and wise as reeling off the enunciation of a law of nature when asked for the cause of some
natural phenomenon. No; we want something more than that.

- There must be something or other like the influx of our will-power into our muscles, when the surface of the sea moves towards the moon and when the apple moves towards the ground and when two drops of water close together on a perfectly smooth horizontal sheet of glass are unable to rest close together and actually move up to each other and coalesce in one big drop instead of two small ones. There is a pull somewhere like the pull we give when we ring the door-bell. Who or what pulls then? Does the moon pull the sea, the earth the apple, one drop the other drop? No; moon and earth and drop are simply masses of matter. The mind cannot form the idea of their pulling, without for the moment thinking of them as alive and exercising will-power. But they are not, so far as we know, alive. They have, as far as we can judge, no will-power. Who or what pulls then? We are compelled to believe that, apart from the big or minute masses of matter themselves, there is in every case what we call a 'force,' that is, a power like our will-power, which does the pulling—only that it always does the pulling according to the same rules, whether with big masses or little ones, whether on earth or in the sun or through the vast spaces, which seem so empty, lying between the world-masses which are scattered through the heavens.
It sounds an extraordinary thing to say that whenever science tries to leave the one universal, all-penetrating force or will-power out of consideration, it slips into the old superstition of polytheism. But it is so. The human mind by its constitution can never rest till it has recognized a living force like will-power acting in all the motions of the universe; and if it is determined that it will not acknowledge one such force always and everywhere in action, then it simply breaks up that one force into a multitude of little powers—like the gods and demons of the ancient peoples. It may give scientific names to these, and try to make out that they have no life, no power like the will-power of man in them. But every time its thought begins to clear, these scientific abstractions begin to take the shape of so many living agents who carry on the worlds amongst them.

So that the real choice, if we are not to fight against the necessary laws of thought, not to try to get outside of our own thinking constitution, is between regarding the whole universe as a republic of multitudinous will-forces scrambling and clashing against one another, and regarding it as the sphere of one supreme, self-consistent will-force which penetrates every atom of the whole, and governs every motion, every thrill and vibration from the wheeling of the comet on the outskirts of the heavens to the tremor of a
gossamer or the pulsing of a molecule in the breast-feather of a robin or the stamen of a violet.

But the conception of such a Will-force, uniform, enduring, all-potent, is of unutterable majesty and grandeur, and fills the mind with wonder and awe, even though nothing else be yet realized concerning this Will-force save that it is the source of all the phenomena which make up the history of the universe.

And this conception of one Divine Will-force dominating the whole and every part simplifies all scientific and philosophical thought in the most beautiful manner. Nor need we hesitate at once to call this divine Will-force by the simple name of God. It may be a God intelligent or unintelligent. It may be a good God or a bad God. But the conception of one universal Will-force everywhere and always is the conception of God. Mr. Fiske, a very noble American writer, says: 'Once really adopt the conception of an ever-present God, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, and it becomes self-evident that the law of gravitation is but an expression of a particular mode of divine action. And what is thus true of one law is true of all laws.'

This leads us to the consideration of two very different ways of believing in God which belong to two different types of mind. The Deists of the eighteenth century, both English and French,
took what may be called a mechanical view of God's relation to the universe; and not only did these men take that view, but it has been largely taken by the Christian Church, and in spite of deeper and more luminous thinking here and there, it has on the whole predominated from very early times, and does still predominate, throughout the Latin and the Teutonic sections of Christendom, including ourselves.

Of course this mechanical view of God is held with varying distinctness and varying modifications, but broadly speaking, it may be stated thus: 'God is a Being apart from the universe. The universe is an immense and wonderful machine which he made a long time ago. He imparted to it sundry qualities and properties by which it works. All the ordinary events in nature were thus arranged for at the start. But God still watches the machine, and now and then, when he sees occasion, he interferes by a special act of divine power overcoming or suspending the action of natural forces by the introduction for the emergency of his own divine force. This intervention it is that constitutes miracles and special providences which are outside of the regular working of the machine.' Carlyle is satirizing this way of thinking of God when he speaks of 'an absentee God sitting idle ever since the first Sabbath, at the outside of his universe, and seeing it go.'
Now it is this way of thinking of God which is responsible for much of that miserable and senseless squabble which we call ‘the conflict between religion and science.’ There is and can be no real conflict or shadow of a conflict between religion and science. Each is the complement and supplement, the natural friend and ally of the other. But there is and always must be a fierce and bitter conflict between science and this kind of conception of God. Neither can afford to give the other any quarter. For just reflect what it is that science is always doing. The whole occupation of science, ever since there has been any science at all, has been gathering up the happenings in the universe, showing that they are not irregular, but regular, classifying them, doing them up in neat bundles each with its label bearing the name of some law of nature. That is what true science always is at, and it is never at anything else at all. It does a perpetual tidying up of our observations of natural phenomena, and it cannot bear to leave any of them lying about unclassified and undocketed. First of all it laid its hands on the motions of the planets and showed that they were all regular. But comets and meteors it left alone for a long while; and the kind of religion I have been speaking of could say and did say: ‘Yes, the motions of the planets are part of the constitution of the universe and do not need God; but look at
the comet’s tail sweeping across the skies, and look at the shower of falling stars. God does not leave the universe alone, you see; here is his hand scattering these irregular lights about.' But science presently stretched out her hand and swept these also into the drawers of her cabinet—did them up in bundles, labelled them, and showed that they, too, were part of the regular order and not special interferences at all. And that has been the procedure of science all along. Religion (of the sort I have described) has based the evidence of God on exceptional events which she has called miraculous. These she used to find plentiful enough. She could point to them in every department. But science keeps steadily filching away these evidences, one after another, and arranging them in her own territory as regular, orderly parts of the universe, till it looks as if the religion which relies on the special interferences of God would not long have nothing left at all, for science will have parcelled out the whole area of phenomena as belonging to her domain.

This is why such religion as is commonly considered orthodox cries out in angry protest at every fresh advance of science. Every such advance seems to this sort of religion to be the substituting of natural forces for the action of God in some fresh sphere. So that the progress
of science necessarily seems to be a progress towards atheism. As science shows that natural law covers the history of the heavenly bodies, of the earth, of organic life, each of these seems to be taken away from God. And so a false theology has successively fought against the astronomy of Copernicus and Galileo, the geology of Lyell, and the biology of Darwin, and execrated each of these men as the enemy of God.

But the other way of regarding God's relation to the universe is that to which all that I have said in the earlier part of this chapter conducts us. The philosophical name for this conception is the 'Immanence of God'; and it looks on God not as outside the universe, but ever operating within it; not as having once for all created, and then confined his action to occasional interference, but as continuously creative from the first till now; not as having set up certain laws of nature as substitutes for his own action, or certain forces other than his own will-force, but as himself energizing in all the forces of nature so that the laws of nature are only the habits of his own activity. This conception thus does away absolutely with all distinctions between the immediate action of God and natural forces. Natural forces are the action of God. Whereas the former conception of God leaves the universe empty of God, this conception finds the universe full of
God. Between this conception and physical science there never can by any possibility be any conflict. Science says, ‘This is the way the heavenly bodies move.’ ‘Yes,’ says religion, ‘that is the way in which God moves them.’ Science says, ‘That is how the different tribes of living things have come into being.’ ‘Yes,’ says religion, ‘that is how God has brought them into being.’

And now the whole universe will seem, not like a machine wound up and set going once for all, but more like a plant which is never cut off from the forces which vitalize it, but is always drawing on them and transfusing them into its life and substance at every part. We think of the divine force or energy, not as applied at one end of the machine as when a man turns a handle or works a treadle, but as flowing equably through every vein and nerve of the whole mass as the sap pulses in every vesicle of the great tree.

The picture which modern science draws of the universe is indeed surpassingly sublime. This universal force is declared to flow through every atom of matter—solid, liquid, gaseous—throughout the infinite area of the boundless whole. Take the minutest particle of matter which the eye can see. That itself is a whole universe of energy. Within its bounds molecules are vibrating, darting from side to side, with inconceivable velocity all the
time. And the like is going on in every particle of matter from the spot on which we stand right away to the stars whose light takes ten thousand years to reach us—and on as far—a thousand times as far—beyond that. Yes, and motions are continually passing from end to end (if there were any ends) of the universe itself. So that every stroke of the pen I made in writing this chapter and every vibration of the air you make in shaping the spoken words, if you read my book aloud to a friend, goes flying forth on the wings of the ether to those far away moons and suns. It is all one whole, pulsing with one beat, yet ten million beats in every cubic hair’s-breadth, transfusing themselves through the total mass unceasingly. Imagination reels before the effort to conceive it all. But take with you the firm conception that every individual motion, be it ever so minute, is in fact the direct expression of a Power akin to the will-force which we know in ourselves—and have you not truly a transcendent idea of God? He is not in the shape of a man. You can set no bounds upon him. The Zeus of the Greeks, the Jehovah of the Jews alike fade into insignificance before him. He is the Energy, the Will-power, the Spirit that flows through the whole, conscious at every point, with attention concentrated everywhere.

Let me dwell for a moment on that conception, ‘attention concentrated everywhere.’ We men
and women are capable of but the most limited range of attention. When we were children we were continually told that we 'could only attend to one thing at once.' That was never quite true: we learn by degrees to attend to three or four things at once. The art of the conjurer consists largely in drilling himself to attend unobserved to other matters besides those to which he is obviously attending in the view of the spectators. He is attending closely to his secret manipulations at the same moment that he is also attending to the by-play which is to divert the attention of his public from the machinery of his trick. To the non-musician it seems a miracle that the skilled pianist should be able at once to attend to the score that he is reading and to the swift movements of both his hands and all his fingers on the keyboard, and perhaps to carry on a lively conversation at the same time. But just as the little child who at the first venturous steps across the floor has to give absorbed attention to the planting of each foot and the balance of his body, ere long learns to walk without any attention at all and to occupy his mind with other things while he is walking, so in all the affairs of life we are continually learning to hand over the operations we most frequently perform to automatic action while we turn our conscious attention to other things. Now that is the necessary economy of our limited
mental powers; and we can only conceive that these automatic actions are discharged, like our breathing and the circulation of our blood, by the working of those natural forces which everywhere carry on the processes of the natural world. But, on the other hand, God has no natural forces outside and distinct from his own energies to which to hand over areas of the universe removed from his own attention; nor, on the other hand, can his power of attention be conceived as limited in any way analogous to the limitations of human attention. So that while I would willingly find, if I could, some word less anthropomorphic, less man-like that is, than 'attention' to describe the conscious touch of God on every fibre and every atom of his universe; on the other hand I am convinced that we approach much more nearly to the truth when we conceive the attention of God 'concentrated everywhere,' than when we try to imagine any natural processes whatever as carried on apart from his instant and continuous heed. And thus I conclude that when Jesus said, 'Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father,' so far from over-stating, he was immeasurably under-stating the fact, since in every feather of the sparrow, and in every thread of down upon each feather, and in every chemical atom in each thread, the Divine Consciousness and Power are operating at every moment.
And this unescapable philosophical conclusion has incomparable religious significance, since it is the absolute refutation of that objection to religion which consists in arguing that the Supreme God cannot concern himself about aught so humble as a single human soul. It is the irrefutable reply to the cry of the Psalmist, ‘What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?’ For shall he whose energy is concentrated on each molecule of a grain of sand, for whose care no mote floating in a sunbeam is too minute, be heedless of a human soul looking forth with wonder on the heaven of heavens, or have no care for the heart that approaches him in reverent love and prayer?

But when we look not only at the universe in the present moment, but in its history, the panorama is more impressive still.

Let us ask science what she can tell us of the story of the universe. Taking not only the absolutely demonstrated facts of science (if there are any), but also such probable conjectures as seem to be generally accepted by scientific men, the history is something like this. ‘In the beginning,’ that is, before there was any organized universe at all, there was a thin fluid evenly diffused throughout space;—no suns, no planets, no moons, but everywhere this evenly diffused fluid. Then at certain centres this fluid became thickened, while outside
those centres it was further rarified, and the thickening of these centres produced a rotatory motion, till each one of them became a globe revolving on its axis with immense velocity and at a prodigious heat. The rotatory motion led to smaller masses being flung off from each central sun, and these, though first forming rings, like the present ring of Saturn, gradually themselves also became globular, with motion round their own axes as well as motion round the central sun. These again in many cases flung off further films which formed into moons having a treble motion, rotation on their own axes, motion round their planets, and with their planets motion round the central sun. The cooling of these sundry bodies by radiation of their heat into space by degrees has brought, is bringing, or will bring each for a period to a temperate heat such as that now enjoyed by our Earth, suitable for life akin to that on Earth. Science can only guess whether there is actual life on other globes, but it knows that there is on this. It sees atoms of matter shifting into such combinations as at last to constitute protoplasm, the physical basis of life; though why just this combination of atoms should suddenly put on that entirely new set of characteristics which we call ‘life,’ science can form no sort or kind of guess. There is a great chasm between inorganic or non-living and organic or living matter which
no bridge of thought can span. But this protoplasmic matter goes on building itself up into more and more highly organized material, till at last there is one more great leap, and it becomes the seat of a new thing—unknown in the universe before—that which we call 'conscience.' And here also, however rudimentary, dim, and vague the consciousness, another bottomless chasm is crossed, over which thought can never fling a bridge. After that, this consciousness-sustaining life-substance branches out and pushes on along sundry lines of progression till all the varieties of the animal kingdom are formed, from the simplest skin-bag in the ocean slime, through the molluscs, the crustacea, and the vertebrates, up to regal man himself.

Now some philosophers, trying to get rid of the will-power in the universe on which I have laid so much stress, tell us that the laws of motion impressed on all the molecules of matter as part of their very nature at the beginning of all things could not but work out as they have worked out. They say that they can prove this of the simpler motions at the beginning, and that it is only reasonable to believe that it is so right on to the end. Give us, say they, those thickenings, at certain centres, of the primeval, universal, glowing world-stuff, and we can show that the rotation and the sun-making and the planet-making and the moon-making must follow by the primary laws of
motion; and so the universe, even as it is, could not help being evolved, if only you give it time.

Now in my view, as I have said, it is absolutely necessary to true thinking to require actual will-power always, everywhere, in every motion of matter from first to last. But suppose I am wrong there. Suppose that unconscious matter is itself endowed with certain energies and forces which act automatically without the presence of will. Still I find hitches in this so-called scientific theory of the universe. First of all, what about the start? An evenly diffused fluid everywhere and then a thickening here and there. What or who brought about that thickening? Grant that all the universe would follow when once you had got those little unevennesses—that rotating and cooling and hardening would forthwith begin. But how did the evenness turn to unevenness? You must have some power there to start the evolution. Evenly spread fluid that had been lying evenly spread from all eternity—even supposing it had existed from all eternity, and had never been created—could not by sudden spasm gather into knots and nuclei, unless some power other than itself were applied to it. Push God back and back, if you will; but at the outset, the first start of the stupendous evolution, you must have divine volition, or your even fluid will remain even and unorganized for ever and ever.
And there are at least two more hitches. Let the laws of motion work on the material of the universe till planets with rocks and sea and air have been developed, no evolution can ever carry you from inorganic to organic matter. *Life* is an absolutely new beginning. Who or what gave the magic touch to the first lump of protoplasm made of the ancient elements, carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, and oxygen, so that of a sudden its particles began that quite new kind of shifting and renewal from surrounding matter which we call 'life'? And finally, after this vegetable life had become common on the earth, by what possible evolution did it suddenly become the seat of that quite new and unprecedented thing which we call 'consciousness'? This too was a sheer and clean new beginning, and no possible or imaginable laws of motion or of matter can as much as begin to account for it. Stamp matter, then, with what endowments you will, there are these three points where you can by no possibility get rid of the divine will-force—the beginning of the whole evolution (if there ever was a beginning), 'the beginning of life, and the beginning of consciousness.

There are indeed certain deep and ingenious speculations which strive to smooth away these 'hitches' by supposing that both life and consciousness have been in some dim way inherent
in the universe from all time, and that the building up of the vegetable and animal kingdoms are but the development and specialization of the vague life-power which lies in all things, and that this new world of consciousness in bird and beast, and in man himself, is but the brighter blaze in higher organisms of the dim consciousness which stirs even in the humblest atom of inorganic matter. But even if we were to allow this somewhat strained speculation, and so to get life and consciousness out of the universe at the end by putting it in at the beginning, we should still, I think, have to recognize what I have called a 'hitch,' the necessity, that is, of the application of some power other than and above the inherent properties of the universe, in the first rise of self-consciousness the appearance of one who is a person consciously distinct from all the universe around, and saying to himself, 'I am I.' And this sense of being a separate self, a person distinct in consciousness from all other being or beings whatsoever, is the assurance and conviction that lies deepest, clearest, and most secure in the heart of every one of us.

But, indeed, it is absurd to say that the mere inherent laws of motion or of matter produced just this universe and no other. No sane man can steadily contemplate the whole course of evolution which has led up to the existence of civilized
nations of men, without feeling that this is no chance or accidental result, but reveals steady purpose ruling and shaping from the beginning to the end. Nature seems always to be working on from climax to climax, each in its turn the goal in some long road, yet each again the path towards other goals beyond. All inorganic Nature is a pathway of forces working towards the consummation of that which we call Life. The rocks, the seas, the atmosphere are the prior requisites which make possible the seaweed, the green herbage, the great forests, the fragrant flowers, the luscious fruit. These in themselves are ends; but they are also means. For without them the air could be filled with no buzzing and twittering life, the surface of our globe could give no support to beasts and creeping things, the sea would be empty of the vast shoals which crowd its depths. The plants furnish the great laboratory which prepares the food for these;—‘only,’ says Dr. Martineau, ‘that, unlike our chemists’ apparatus and processes, their experiments are all silent, their alembics all sweet, their products the grace and beauty of the world, and their very refuse a glow of autumn glory.’ And all this conscious life, itself an end, is in turn in a thousand ways, the means towards human life; and within the scope of this human life, the appetites, the affections, the sentiments, in ascending scale, step after step, lead
up towards the final realization of the ideal of the conscience. So that from the lowest motions of minerals and gas in the framework of the globe—nay, from the first thickening of the primeval fluid world-stuff—the controlling Power moves on and on, step by step, vibration by vibration, till it produces the godlike being of the prophet and the saint.

But this steady progress through means after means on and ever on towards a noble end, is the mark not of the clash of purposeless, mindless atoms, but of conscious, self-determining will, 'seeing the end from the beginning, weaving the ages as a work upon the loom.'

Prof. Flint, in a powerful argument on this matter, points out that it is millions of millions to one against the atoms, if left to themselves, producing a universe like that which exists. 'Did the atoms take counsel together,' he asks, 'and devise a plan and work it out? That hypothesis is un-speakably absurd; yet it is rational in comparison to the notion that these atoms combined by mere chance, and by chance produced such a universe as that in which we live.'

A chapter on 'God revealed as Power' might easily be expanded into a volume. The writer's difficulty is to decide not what to say, but what to leave unsaid. As for me, I shall only ask you briefly to consider one more change in the manner
of contemplating God which is involved in our modern notions of the way in which the universe has grown.

The famous Archdeacon Paley elaborated a famous argument which stands to this day at the very centre of ordinary English theology. He imagined himself finding a watch on a heath, examining its works, being struck by the evidence of contrivance and design in the making, and immediately inferring that it had an intelligent maker. Then he argued, 'But the world is like a watch; it too shows innumerable marks of contrivance and design; therefore it has a maker, and its maker is God.' The argument belongs to that wrong mode of thinking of God of which I have already said so much. It thinks of God as outside the world, constructing it, and setting it going. It thinks of the forces in the world as something other than God, as the mainspring of the watch is something other than the artisan. But its great vice is that it destroys the omnipotence of God. The artisan who makes a watch has to contrive, to get over difficulties, to hit upon a plan for making the hands go round in spite of their natural inertness. But if in this chapter I have rightly spoken of the divine will as itself constituting the force and energy in Nature and the whole of the force and energy in Nature, then the divine will cannot have to contrive, to get over difficulties,
to dodge and baffle adverse forces; and the flooding of the universe with the divine energy is in no way like the construction of the watch. If you insist on likening the world to a watch, then you must liken God, not to the artificer, but to the mainspring, a mainspring living and energizing through every part and particle of the whole.

But we shall prefer to cast aside the likeness of a watch, and to think of the universe as a living organism, an organism of which God himself is the life and power, an organism in which the divine will and wisdom need resort to no contrivance, because there are neither difficulties nor adverse forces—but move, as we have seen, evenly and steadfastly onward from the beginning through all time towards the ever higher and higher purpose that is to be.

But I have often been confronted, when pressing the general argument of this chapter, with an important and most relevant question. 'Is there any distinction,' I am asked, 'between the doctrine of the Immanence of God in nature, as you state it, and Pantheism? And if there is a distinction, wherein does it lie?'

Now there is no doubt that such writers as Theodore Parker and Carlyle, who have both dwelt eloquently on the Immanence of God in nature, have occasionally slipped into forms of expression which are not easily distinguishable from Pan-
theism. But, for all that, Pantheism and the Immanence of God do not mean the same thing, and belief in the Immanence does not involve the Pantheism.

What is Pantheism? It is, as its two Greek terms imply, the doctrine that All is God, and that God is All, that every existence is Deity and that Deity is every existence, that God and the Universe are conterminous and identical.

Now it is true that I have contended that the divine energy flows through every particle of matter, that every motion, every vibration in the physical universe is nothing else than the immediate action of God’s volition. So far I go with the Pantheist; but I do not say but that there are measureless reserves of divine force wholly beyond that which acts in the physical universe. In other words, I hold with Dr. Martineau that the Immanence of God is by no means opposed to the Transcendency of God, that the fact of divine action everywhere and always through the physical universe, affords no inference that there are not spheres of divine existence transcending and beyond that universe.

But I would much rather put it in this way: the relation of the physical universe to God is, within certain limits, analogous to the relation of my body to myself. The movement of my tongue as I speak, of my eyes as I glance at my friend, of my hand as I
write these words, proceeds from that stream of conscious energy which you may call my mind, my soul, my spirit, my will, or myself. Instantaneously the command of my unseen self flows through my seen self and modifies its attitudes, its gestures, its several and separable parts. But the intimate connexion between myself and my body does not imply that I am my body or that my body is myself, the ‘Ego.’ If they are in absolute alliance, they are also in absolute antithesis. Nor, even if you went on to imagine my body the absolute product of my own will, and its automatic and reflex action, the breath, the circulation of the blood, the beating of the heart, the growth of the hair and the nails to be the effect of my will, and my consciousness to be perpetually engaged in conducting these processes, would you be one step nearer identifying me, the ‘Ego,’ the self, with this body. The ‘Ego’ would be immanent in the body, but it would be other than the body, above and beyond it, transcending it, of a nature belonging to a superior order to it, in another and a higher plane than it. Press that analogy home, and you have a safeguard against Pantheism. The Universe may be thought of as the body of God, but as it is gross to confound the body with the man, so it is gross to confound the universe with God. The soul is in the body only in the sense that its energies flow through the body; a man’s soul
(that is the man) is not in the body in any physical sense. The body is its organ and its instrument.

But why do we shrink from Pantheism? Not from dread of losing the physical universe in God, but from dread of losing our own souls in God. Pantheism only becomes deadly to vigorous religion and morality when it makes the man’s soul, the man’s self, a portion of God. Theism claims that the human soul is a free Cause, a separate island of individual will in the midst of the great ocean of the Divine Will. Leave us man confronting God, not absorbed in him, and the conditions are preserved for the ethical life of the individual and also for that communion of the soul with God as another than itself, the very possibility of which is destroyed if a separate personality is wiped out. On this matter of the *otherness* of man from God, I hope to say more in a later chapter.

So much then of God as Power, or God as revealed in the outward universe. We discover a boundless, intelligent life-force moving through all things that are, always, everywhere. That life-force we sum up under the name of ‘<God.’ We feel that before this living Power, embracing all things, we are feeble and powerless indeed. All the strength of our manhood may beat against his laws, but we cannot break them. We are filled with unspeakable awe. We know that we are in absolute subjection. But that is all. As yet we
have found nothing in God to love, nothing to persuade us that his goodness is as infinite as his power, nothing to waken in us the longing to be good ourselves, nothing to strengthen and cheer us in the struggle. We must open and search other chambers of our nature for all this; and we shall find God revealed to us in other aspects by which he feeds the springs of righteousness and religion in our breasts.