

any synthesis at all, and extols the anarchical character of a dispersive faith as a blessing.

Consequently we are not surprised at the tinge of sadness pervading his concluding pages; yet with pleasure note that everywhere there is apparent a sincere desire for Truth and a profound reverence for the ideal, together with an unfaltering trust in the future of Humanity, as the following passage illustrates:—

“Men have dwelt upon the love of God, because they could not satisfy the craving of nature for the love of their fellow men. They have looked forward to eternal happiness in a future life, because they could not find temporary happiness in this. It is these reflections which point out the way in which the void left by the removal of the religious affections should hereafter be supplied. The effort of those who cannot turn for consolation to a friend in heaven should be to strengthen the bonds of friendship on earth, to widen the range of human sympathy and to increase its depth. We should seek that love in one another which we have hitherto been required to seek in God. Were we thus permitted to find in our fellow creatures that sympathy which so many nearers, so many sufferers, so many lonely hearts, have been compelled to find only in the idea of their Heavenly Father, I hesitate not to say that the consolations of the new religion would far surpass in their strength and their perfection all those that were offered by the old. Towards such increasing and such deepening of the sympathies of humanity I believe that we are continually tending even now.”

We regret the loose and slipshod manner in which the American edition has been apparently hurried through the press. The frequency with which typographical errors occur, offending the eyes by their constant recurrence, and causing a suspicion that the scrutiny of a proof-reader was dispensed with, is not very creditable to the publisher.

D. D. L.

5.—*Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Vorträge.* Von WILHELM FOERSTER. Berlin. 1876. pp. 197.

*A Collection of Philosophical Discourses.* By WILHELM FOERSTER. Berlin. 1876.

OF all German literature, it is entirely safe to say, nothing is less known abroad than the essays in which her great men from time to time have elected to record such sentiments and observations as are necessarily excluded from large and more technical treatises. For the latter are almost always so limited in their purpose, and so exact in treatment, that all general thoughts and popular considerations, all fancies, personal preferences, and practical observations, if expressed

at all, must be embodied in pamphlets,—sometimes in a magazine, but generally in those interesting and delightful “miscellaneous writings” which a great many eminent Germans have left behind them. That their essays—generally posthumous publications—should not be extensively known, even in America, where German has been cultivated with so much success, is simply to be regretted. What American has not read a great many pages of Goethe’s prose and Schiller’s historical works, of stupid little comedies and worthless tragedies of Zschöcke and similar writers, all of which had better be left unread? And who, on the other hand, knows the minor essays of Schiller, the academy discourses of J. Grimm, the smaller articles of Savigny, of Wolf, of Schleiermacher, and a score of others? Yet they are all of permanent value, especially to foreign readers, and fully equal to the best articles that grace the English reviews; in fact, such excellent performances, even in a literary sense, that Germany can very well afford to suffer under a certain scarcity of compositions similar to those of the earlier essayists in Great Britain. We believe, then, that we are rendering a public service, in inviting studious attention to Professor Förster’s volume.

But who is Förster? The critic has done himself justice, if he proves in a satisfactory way that a book is either worthy or unworthy of attention, and in so far the author reviewed is of as little interest as the reviewer himself. Nevertheless, we may perhaps help the book into notice if we state that its author is a member of the University at Berlin, chief of the imperial observatory, the conductor of the nautical year-book of the German empire, and popularly known as an astronomical discoverer. But a short time since his name was in this connection telegraphed from the Smithsonian Institute all over the country. His volume of *Vorträge*, published lately, contains eight discourses, read to a highly cultivated audience of Berlin. Professor Förster merits general thanks for having united these lectures into a volume; he deserves good readers, if not many; and he should receive as soon as possible the honor of having his essays translated by a competent hand.

While every page of the book is admirable, and worthy of being read repeatedly, we wish to make one complaint about the length of some sentences. Not a few of them are ten and twelve lines in length,—altogether too much for an English reader.

The centennial discourse upon Humboldt is one of the very best brought out by the day, and fully equal to Grimm’s illustrious comparison between Goethe and Schiller. The essay on Copernicus belongs to that on the history of astronomical science, and is extremely inter-

esting. Mr. Proctor, who only in warmth of feeling is the equal of Förster, lately wrote upon the same subject, and told us that the Chaldeans, enjoying the leisure of pastoral life in a level country and under an unclouded sky, had the utmost facilities for celestial observations, and, consequently, were assiduous cultivators of astronomy; but that the Egyptians, although they have left behind them still fewer monuments of their labors in astronomy, have obtained a greater reputation, chiefly through the exaggerated statements of the Greeks. The astronomy of ancient China, Mr. Proctor says, consisted only in the practice of observations which led to nothing more than the knowledge of a few isolated facts. And, in a similar way, he disposes of Thales, Aristotle, and many others, reserving some limited praise to more modern names, just as if we were the wise men, and all the ancients fools; as it we had reached a high degree of perfection, and those before us an unlimited degree of absurdity. Förster, on the other hand, shows in an extremely beautiful way the organic growth of his science, a development every stage of which is as necessary and attractive as is the progress of an infant to maidenhood and maternal maturity. Hence he rejects even the famous dictum of Whewell, who compared the work of Kepler with a reaper that gathers at the same time wheat and wild flowers. Hence he warns against making light of Ptolemy; hence he praises the genius of Columbus, who had the pluck to carry out nautically what was then known astronomically; hence he does not consider the time between the Greeks and Copernicus as barren, but frankly, humbly, and solemnly admits that the astronomer of the nineteenth century is linked to the seer of ancient Babylon, as the man of to-day is linked to his own self of yesterday. Hence he grows warm as he pays homage to the steady and seemingly hopeless industry of the very earliest observers; and we, on the other hand, are grateful to Professor Förster, because he teaches us—what we need so much—respect for the past, it being made up of the same material and the same men as the present.

If these essays are the most interesting, those on Kepler are the most beautiful, while those on time, on cosmic problems, and on truth and probability, are by far the most valuable and important. It is some comfort, and in these days of absolute science a rare consolation, to hear the confession of an astronomer who is fully abreast of his science that the steps of astronomy henceforth are to be measured by centuries, and not by the numbers of scientific journals, as these would make the world believe. It is more than comfort to learn that there are other things than physical science, and that the objects of the latter are altogether relative, not absolute; not only in deep sympathy

with psychology, ethics, and transcendental philosophy, with poetry and art, but largely depending upon them, and, without their help, barren and unprofitable. Even mathematical science, we are here told truly, has grown up purely and visibly through a subjective and abstract process of the soul; hence its truth, ultimately, is relative, not absolute. In the same spirit we are told that at least science is conscious of what her partisans seem to have forgotten,—that the teachings of astronomy in our day cannot grant absolute truth, but only a high degree of probability.

There is a moral courage, an ethical manhood, in Professor Förster's gentle and poetic confessions, all of them uniting in the admission that, even in the most refined and cultivated of all the sciences, there is still a large remnant of dogmatism, a practical belief in the adequacy and infallibility of subjective or objective reason, of general consent, or of telescopes, microscopes, logarithms, and other contrivances made up of bronze, glass, and a half-score of numerals. Yet is it not mind that makes these instruments what they are? Is it not mind that uses them? Is it not mind alone that makes them the servants of human bliss and of the blessed life? There is nothing great but mind, and our mind is only one element in the evolution of mind which is unknown in its beginning, unknown in its end, part of a mind that, as to time, is eternal, and, as to volume, absolutely unfathomable. But science is only one expression of this same mind.

We commend Professor Förster's book to all those who relish interesting facts presented in an interesting manner; to all those who love beautiful thoughts expressed adequately; to all lovers of a tender and poetic mind; but, above all, to those who feel the hardship and tyranny of life, and who groan under the despotism of scientific, philosophic, and spiritual conflicts.

C. W. E.

6.—*The Religious Sentiment: Its Source and Aim. A Contribution to the Science and Philosophy of Religion.* By D. G. BRINTON. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1876. Large 12mo.

THIS is a work of research, written with care. The source and aim of the religious sentiment has never been better given than in this volume. The utilitarian origin of religion is stated so clearly that a child may read and understand. On this point the chapter on the "Emotional Elements of the Religious Sentiment" is especially to be

commended. There are other parts of the volume, however, which are not so clear and satisfactory. There is suggestiveness in almost every point that is made, and in many of them just enough of obscurity to tantalize the reader, and compel him to struggle for the sense. There is an interest imparted in this way to what has in itself, perhaps, no great value. With all the apparent care and precision of statement, there are yet gaps and incongruities which are really embarrassing.

Thus, the author maintains that all thought is double,—affirmative and negative, positive and privative. That is, it involves that which it is not as well as that which it is. "So the 'unconditioned' is really a part of the thought of the 'conditioned,' the 'unknowable' a part of the 'knowable,' the 'infinite' a part of the thought of the 'finite.'" He condemns "the assumption that the privative is an independent thought, that a thought and its limitation are two thoughts; whereas they are but the two aspects of the one thought, like two sides of the one disc," &c. Upon this basis he characterizes Spencer's treatment of the unknowable as "one of the worst pieces of work that metaphysics has been guilty of." Yet, singularly enough, while the author regards the unknowable as a privative of the knowable, and the infinite as a privative of the finite, he takes care not to speak of the irrelative or absolute as the privative of the relative. On the contrary, he erects the absolute into a positive thing standing in contrast with the relative, both absolute and relative being as real as subject and object. This absolute he assumes to be an intelligence, and declares that upon it alone can sanity find a basis for religion. Furthermore, after defining the infinite as the privative of the finite,—as only part of the thought of the finite,—he assumes that the very foundation and essence of religion is to be found in what is *infinitely* true. How much better is all this than Spencer's religion of the unknowable? If Spencer's scheme is substantially atheistic, as our author affirms, then is Brinton's infinite and absolute scarcely less so. He reaches the same result by a different route, and we think one route precisely as treacherous as the other. The author's mind appears to manifest two distinct and contradictory trains of thinking, the one clear and truly philosophic, the other metaphysical, obscure, and inconsistent. The one appears to have had its source in the methods of modern science, the other in the infection of German speculation. Allied to the latter appears to be the indulgence of certain fancies.

Thus, he believes that prayer for physical good,—such as recovery from sickness, rain in time of drought, delivery from grasshoppers, safety at sea, &c.,—may be effective by virtue of laws in consequence of which the prayer brings about its own fulfilment. He teaches that the

immortality of intelligence is the only form of survival to be desired, and that such immortality can only be the reward, or rather the consequence, of right thinking. Yet all these metaphysical absurdities, all these transcendental fancies, all this theory-building, are largely redeemed by the clear and truthful rendering of the essential nature of religion in its practical aspects. We conclude with a passage of the kind, adding the emphasis:—

"The eternal laws of mind guarantee perpetuity to the extent they are obeyed, and no farther. They differ from the laws of force in that they convey a message which cannot be doubted concerning the purport of the order in Nature, which is itself 'the will of God.' That message, in its application, is the same which, with more or less articulate utterance, every religion speaks. *Seek truth: do good. Faith in that message, confidence in, and willing submission to, that order,—this is all the religious sentiment needs to bring forth its sweetest flowers, its richest fruits.*

J. S. P.