

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

scientific and æsthetic consideration so happily in his standard *Prospects of Nature*, he justly indicated how closely the higher enjoyment of nature is connected with the "scientific establishment of cosmic laws," and that the conjunction of the two serves to raise human nature to a higher stage of perfection. The astonishment with which we gaze upon the starry heavens and the microscopic life in a drop of water, the awe with which we trace the marvellous working of energy in the motion of matter, the reverence with which we grasp the universal dominance of the law of substance throughout the universe—all these are part of our emotional life, falling under the heading of "natural religion."

This progress of modern times in knowledge of the true and enjoyment of the beautiful expresses, on the one hand, a valuable element of our monistic religion, but is, on the other hand, in fatal opposition to Christianity. For the human mind is thus made to live on this side of the grave; Christianity would have it ever gaze beyond. Monism teaches that we are perishable children of the earth, who for one or two, or, at the most, three generations, have the good fortune to enjoy the treasures of our planet, to drink of the inexhaustible fountain of its beauty, and to trace out the marvellous play of its forces. Christianity would teach us that the earth is "a vale of tears," in which we have but a brief period to chasten and torment ourselves in order to merit the life of eternal bliss beyond. Where this "beyond" is, and of what joys the glory of this eternal life is compacted, no revelation has ever told us. As long as "heaven" was thought to be the blue vault that hovers over the disk of our planet, and is illumined by the twinkling light of a few thousand stars,