

SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY

were many attempts at compromise to be found between the two extremes; but the conviction rapidly spread that dogmatic Christianity had lost every foundation, and that only its valuable ethical contents should be saved for the new monistic religion of the twentieth century. As, however, the existing external forms of the dominant Christian religion remained unaltered, and as, in spite of a progressive political development, they are more intimately than ever connected with the practical needs of the State, there has arisen that widespread religious profession in educated spheres which we can only call "pseudo-Christianity"—at the bottom it is a "religious lie" of the worst character. The great dangers which attend this conflict between sincere conviction and the hypocritical profession of modern pseudo-Christians are admirably described in Max Nordau's interesting work on *The Conventional Lies of Civilization*.

In the midst of this obvious falseness of prevalent pseudo-Christianity there is one favorable circumstance for the progress of a rational study of nature: its most powerful and bitterest enemy, the Roman Church, threw off its mask of ostensible concern for higher mental development about the middle of the nineteenth century, and declared a *guerre à l'outrance* against independent science. This happened in three important challenges to reason, for the explicitness and resoluteness of which modern science and culture cannot but be grateful to the "Vicar of Christ." (1) In December, 1854, the pope promulgated the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary. (2) Ten years afterwards—in December, 1864—the pope published, in his famous *encyclica*, an absolute condemnation of the whole of modern civilization and culture; in the *sylla-*