

in fact, be what Carlyle called "a great heaven-high Unquestionability, encompassing, interpenetrating the whole of Life."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the various teachings of Rationalistic Thought, be they popular or metaphysical, in prose or in poetry, have not succeeded in bringing out any important point which is not to be found incorporated already in Christian doctrine. And a reasonable suspicion exists that the various elevating ideas which are to be found in this extensive class of literature have been imported, consciously or unconsciously, from out of the body of beliefs contained in the existing historical religions.

In fact, it may be held that no one who nowadays thinks or speculates on such subjects can escape the influence of the surrounding intellectual and spiritual atmosphere in which he or his teachers have been brought up, and that the elaboration of any creed whatever, without bias and preconceptions, is a sheer impossibility. But admitting even that there exist certain ideals—such as Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and the doctrine of universal brotherhood or Love—which, however they may have been discovered, exist and are upheld by a general consensus and incorporated in all civilised speech; it seems, nevertheless, impossible that they can, without some higher command or sanction, become sufficiently real and powerful to keep in subjection and ultimately conquer the Spirit of Evil. It may indeed be possible for individual persons living in seclusion and apart from the ways and interests of the

<sup>1</sup> See 'Past and Present,' Carlyle's Works, Library Edition, | vol. xiii. p. 76.