

We also recognise, what is not of special interest in this connection, how this argument of de Lamennais brings him very close to some of the doctrines of Democracy and Socialism of which he, later on, became a prominent political exponent.

When Mr Balfour, towards the end of the century, again discussed the question of authority, of the centre of appeal in matters of scientific and religious doctrine, he had at his disposal the result of fully sixty years of philosophical criticism. The epistemological discussions raised by J. S. Mill as to the nature of inductive proof had gradually made it clear that the strictest and best established scientific theories rested upon a system of axioms which were generally accepted, and the truth of which itself rested on cumulative evidence, on coherence, and on practical success; and the same, he could argue, obtained in matters of belief. In addition to this epistemological argument which, since the appearance of Mr Balfour's 'Foundations of Belief,' has received further support through such eminent thinkers as Ernst Mach in Germany and M. Poincaré in France, as well as through the pragmatist movement in this country, we have the arguments drawn from the scientific doctrines of environment, of evolution, and of inheritance, all of which, applied to mental phenomena, teach us that nothing, not even the best-defined logical conception in the clearest of individual minds, can be understood if detached from its surroundings or removed out of the historical sequence in which it has been generated. Thus religious beliefs, as well as scientific truths, rest equally upon large and comprehensive bodies of doctrine