

Easter and People.

Ritualism and Romanism.

Dr. Liddon in a letter to the Times in reply to Monsignor Capel defends himself thus:—

"It is impossible to admit that we are 'unintentionally' but not the less assuredly disseminating several doctrines of the Romish Church. If in anything I have written or said publicly I have ever done this I shall be glad to be set right, but I do not concede that doctrines which are common to the Churches of Rome and England are in Monsignor Capel's sense Roman doctrines. The old error, 'If you believe in the Trinity you ought to believe in the Pope,' is a trick of controversy which has been sufficiently exposed, and ought to be abandoned. Certainly I plead guilty to believing the Athanasian Creed, in its integrity, and all of those precious words in the sacramental and occasional services of the Church of England which are now denounced as 'sacerdotalism'; but at any rate this belief, however unpopular just at present, is morally respectable in a clergyman, nor can I allow that it has a 'real tendency' to make converts to the Church of Rome. The Church of Rome finds its most efficient ally not in the 'extreme High Church School,' not even in its own highly-disciplined corps of proselytisers, but in the restless, faithless, fatal policy which at one moment would rid us of our creeds, at another would ignore our orders, at a third would invite a Parliament, consisting of any or no religious belief, to regulate our worship of Almighty God. Too many, alas! have been my opportunities of knowing how things tell upon the most earnest and devoted members of the Church of England, but I must not enter on a subject which would carry me beyond the purpose of this letter. After the liberty that has been taken with my name, I shall trust, sir, to your wonted justice for an opportunity of explaining myself thus far.—I am, Sir, your most obedient, H. P. LIDDON. "3 Amen Court, St. Paul's, Dec. 24."

Wide of the Mark.

The Christian Union thinks that many preachers misunderstand the actual wants of their people, and thus fail of any practical good, though their sermons may be very truthful. The shrewd jury lawyer never contents himself with ever so good logic on general topics, but puts himself fully into the case before him. He means, if he can, to get out of the twelve men in the jury box a verdict for his client. Ministers are not always as wise in their generation.

A great many preachers in Christian communities seem always to have before their mind's eye a company of heathens. Sunday after Sunday they go on expounding the most elementary truths of the Gospel. They tell their hearers that they are sinners, that Christ died to save them, and appeal to them to accept him. They praise the Bible as the best of books, and extol Christianity as a divine system. Perhaps nothing could be better if it were addressed to people ignorant of these things. But the preacher's congregation rank them in almost with their mother's milk. They no more question the excellence of the Christian religion than the necessity of food and drink. They have no doubt that in a general way they are sinners, though they may have very vague ideas as to what their particular sins are, and still dimmer notions as to how really to get rid of them. Other ministers deal much with an imaginary congregation of infidels. They argue and declaim against the errors of Strauss, Renan and Colenso. They have constantly present to their imagination a host of sceptics who must be convinced. So they turn their pulpit into a battery. The great guns boom away against materialism and rationalism. And the good folk who sit quietly listening, and who hardly ever hear of infidelity except on Sunday—mothers of families, and hard-working business-men, and mechanics, and people absorbed in the practical cares of life—get a sense that the devil is being handsomely pommelled by their eloquent minister, and rejoice in his discomfiture. But for their own individual concerns with the adversary they get little assistance. No greater mistake is possible to a minister than to misunderstand the wants of those with whom he has to deal. That he preaches the truth will not save him from utter failure, unless he preaches that truth which his hearers need. If a doctor misunderstands his patient's symptoms and gives the wrong medicine, it does not mend the matter at all that the medicine is good of its kind. The requirements of men's spiritual natures are as various and individual as those of their bodies.

Arrangement of Rooms.

Concerning the arrangement of rooms the Art Review gives the following advice:—"Give your apartments expression—character. Rooms which mean nothing are cheerless, indeed. Study light and shade, and the combination and arrangement of drapery, furniture and pictures; allow nothing to look isolated, but let everything present an air of sociability. Observe a room immediately after a number have left it, and then as you arrange the furniture, disturb as little as possible the relative position of chairs, ottomans, and sofas. Place two or three chairs in a conversational attitude in some cheery corner, an ottoman within easy distance of a sofa, a chair near your stand of stereoscopic views or engravings, and one where a good light will fall on the books which you may reach from the table near. Make little studies of effect which shall repay the more than usual observer, and do not leave it possible for one to make the criticism which applies to so many homes, even of wealth and elegance—fine carpets, handsome furniture, a few pictures, and elegant nothings—but how dreary? The chilling atmosphere is felt at once, and we cannot divest ourselves of the idea that we must maintain a stiff and severe demeanor, to accord with the place. Make your homes, then, so cheerful that if we visit you we may be joyous and unconstrained, and not feel ourselves out of harmony with our surroundings."

The Established Church in the Highlands.

A Highland correspondent of the Glasgow Mail thus describes the state of the Established Church in the parish of Uig, in the island of Lewis:—"A fallacious return of the number of communicants in Uig has been made in June last by some irresponsible party. I find, likewise, Dr. Cameron, M.P., in his opening address in the Glasgow City Hall, quoting from that misleading return, giving seven as the number of members in that extensive parish. The truth is, that there has been neither member nor adherent in that parish since the disruption. The present minister—the third since 1843—is under sentence of suspension for drunkenness for the last two years, and lives about ten miles away from the church. The manse has been let to sportsmen for the last seven years. The parish school has been occupied for a similar period by a gamekeeper and his dogs, and the school held in a hut, on whose floor the waters from above, and the waters from below (tides) often met. There is, of course, no session clerk to make any returns. Marriages are registered in the books which once belonged to the parish church by a Free Churchman. The walls of an empty church and the shooting lodge—once a manse—are the only traces of anything in connection with the Established Church. I challenge anyone to gain-say the above facts."

Dr. Begg on the New Disestablishment Movement.

Under the title of "Voluntaryism Indefensible," Dr. Begg has just issued a pamphlet of eight pages, in which he puts the arguments against Voluntaryism in the most emphatic form. "The calculation is," he says, "that if the friends of national religion are only passive, and if a considerable interest can be awakened, especially in connection with a large expenditure, a new ministry may soon arise, making disestablishment and disendowment part of its political programme;" and he urges all wise men to face this possibility and "to be alive to its possible consequences." Voluntaryism, is but a thing of yesterday, he argues, and had its rise in the French Revolution. It is one of the most dangerous forms of national infidelity, a flat denial of the religious and moral obligations of nations and their rulers, and if adopted by the State it would overthrow "the whole existing constitution of Great Britain, interwoven as it is with Christianity, from the throne downwards." There can be no thorough manifestation of national religion, in Dr. Begg's opinion, but by the maintenance of a Church Establishment and the territorial system. There is no other arrangement by which the same all-important object has ever been effectually accomplished. But the argument on this line does not exhaust the question. The question of property is an important one, or at least it is made so by the Voluntaryists. He says:—"If a serious question of disestablishment and disendowment were raised in Great Britain, therefore, apart from all other questions of a moral and social kind involved—and these would be numerous and great—a very momentous financial question would arise. The disendowment, if conducted fairly, would extend far beyond the limits of the Church Establishments. The same right which may be assumed on the part of the State to reclaim the property held by the Church would be at least equally good as against all the property of the nobility and others, which at one time belonged to the Church, and even against the accumulation of Dis-senters." He concludes his pamphlet by a strong appeal to "resist these dangerous novelties and stand firmly in the good old way."

Invigorating Power of Faith.

Then let us take this great word with us as we enter on the New Year. Deeply settled in our hearts, let there be a reverent faith in God, which no scientific theories can shake, no sceptical philosophy destroy. Let us believe that He sits upon the throne of the Universe, and governs it with infinite wisdom and boundless goodness. Let this idea be more to us than an article of our creed, a dogma of faith. Let it be a settled principle in our hearts; let us take it with us every day we live; everywhere we go; whatever we do, whatever we bear. God lives; God reigns; God cares for me, God will make all things work together for my good; and we shall find it to be a principle of strength, and courage, and hope. There is no such invigorating principle as faith. Men who believe most are the strongest men. Doubters never accomplished anything. Doubters never discovered a new world; a doubter never invented a printing press, or a steam engine, or a power loom, or a wing machine. Doubters never constructed a Pacific railroad, or an ocean telegraph. A doubter never wrote an epic, or built a Cathedral, or painted a Madonna, or chased a Venus de Medicis. A doubter never won a battle, or founded an empire, or inaugurated a successful revolution, or added a statue to the temple of Fame. The world's best and bravest work has been done by believers, not by doubters; and if you want the best work done for the coming year, the word that will help you to climb some mountain of sacrifice, to struggle through some Slough of Despond, to conquer some Valley of Humiliation, and be one of the over-comers of the earth, here it is, "Believe." The word will provide. —From Dr. F. P. Kovars' New Year's Discourse.

Variety of Light.

Sick people often crave for change; they often sigh to have a new view. If you can manage for the patient to look out of the window, do. Place in his sight a new picture, a plant in bloom, or a few cut flowers. These will give some considerable pleasure. Always endeavor to make the surroundings of the sick chamber pleasant. Unless told by the doctor to keep the patient in the dark, never do so. Light is essential to health, and therefore the patient should be so placed that he may be able to see the sun and the sky; and if a choice can be made, choose the window at which the sun comes in the morning.

Missions.

The greatest surprise in connection with the Indian census of 1872 was the discovery of a population in Bengal far exceeding what was previously regarded as the most exaggerated estimates. Within the limits of this one presidency was found more than the fourth part of the dwellers in British India—a population of nearly sixty-seven millions, giving about 530 souls to the square mile, or twice the average number to the same space in Great Britain. In language, about twenty millions in the north-western part of the presidency (Bihar etc.) are Hindustanis; the Bengalis number about thirty-eight millions, or nearly the population of the whole United States; and the remaining nine millions are divided up among a variety of tongues. The discovery that upward of twenty millions of these people were Mohammedans created both surprise and alarm, and led the London Times to declare that the Mohammedans were converting multitudes of Hindus to their faith. The Mohammedans are not equally distributed throughout the Province. In the north-west, in Patna and Behar, they are comparatively weak, forming only 12 per cent. of the population; in Bengal proper they constitute one-half; and in Eastern Bengal, on the Banks of the lower Brahmaputra, they form the population (ten millions out of thirteen). More careful investigation has shown that, while their natural increase is far greater than that of the Hindus, they are making scarcely any converts. Very little is being done or apparently can be done for their Christianization. While Hinduism is being weakened by the English school system, and numbers of educated Hindus are identified with the government, the Mohammedans are sinking into a more sullen isolation than formerly, holding themselves aloof from government schools and government offices, and are stirred up to a fiercer spirit by Wahabee fanatics. Their ignorance of what real Mohammedan doctrine is binds them still more tightly under their fatalistic notions, etc., and the wish has been expressed that the Koran might be circulated among them at cost price, as a basis for subsequent Christian argument. The census counts up 93,000 Christians, of whom one-half are Europeans and Eurasians; and, therefore Calcutta and the districts make the strongest showing (about 37,000). 25,000 of the sum total must be given to the Roman Catholics. The districts in which native converts are most numerous are the Chota Nagpore, where they are 16,000 Christians, mostly converted Kols; and Dacca, in the extreme east, where there are nearly 9,000. Bengal is the hardest soil which the Gospel has found in India. With the most considerable preparatory effort expended, it shows the least encouraging result. We have been going over the annual reports of the oldest and one of the strongest missionary societies engaged in the Bengal field, the English Baptist, and these reports are a fair sample of what the other societies are doing in Bengal. The work is mainly a village work, as there are remarkable few large cities in the presidency. The chief centres of Baptist labor are the district of the 24 Pergunnahs and that of the Backergunj—the former on the Hoogly River, the latter on the Ganges proper. Both are low, alluvial plains, where rice and other cultivated lands alternate with jungle, pierced through by many watercourses, which sometimes lie in flood and at other times are nearly dry. The heat is intense, and fevers prevail among natives as well as foreigners. The people are tenant farmers (ryots), often sorely oppressed by the land-owners (zemindars). The evangelistic work is mainly done by native agents, and the converts are slowly rising to ideas of self support, though the late famine will have greatly interfered with their contributions. The only districts which report a material increase of members during 1874 are Sauthalistan, with 120 baptisms (accounts vary considerably here), and the Backergunj, with 70. The reports have generally a disheartening tone. Many Hindus seem to be persuaded of the truth of Christianity, but lack the zeal and courage desired to profess it. Others look for temporal advantages, which the missionaries now no longer offer; while the spiritual and even more deadness of the mass of European and Eurasian Christians is the great stumbling-block to the idolaters. The recent revival at Calcutta among these nominal Christians may work a happy change in all Bengal. The Baptists display considerable activity in their schools, the most prominent among which is the college and high school at Serampore, with 869 scholars. The most notable labor, however, of the English Baptists in India during the half century has been Dr. Womersley's translation of the Bible. For thirty-four years this great scholar has been engaged in this work. The first edition of his Bengali Bible, issued in co-operation with Dr. Yates, was published in 1845. Since that time he has been employed on four new editions of the whole Bible in Bengali, has revised the whole Sanscrit Bible, has published six editions of the Bengali New Testament, besides numerous reprints of portions of Scriptures. As he judges his latest edition to be the last on which he shall be engaged, he says: "I resolved with the help of God, to make this fifth edition as satisfactory as I could." The Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society has adopted his version, with the single exception of the rendering of the word "baptize." The English Baptist Missionary Society has in Northern India (mostly in Bengal) 46 missions, 131 native preachers and pastors, 125 stations and substations, 271 baptisms during 1873, 2,488 native members, 107 schools, and 2,524 scholars.

A Strong Church.

"Is it a strong congregation?" asked a man respecting a large body of worshippers. "Yes," was the reply. "How many members are there?" "Seventy six." "Seventy six! Are they very wealthy?" "No, they are poor." "How then do you say it is a strong church?" "Because," said the gentleman, "they are earnest, devoted, at peace, loving each other, and striving together to do the Master's work. Such a congregation is strong, whether composed of a dozen or five hundred members." And so spoke the truth.

Evangelistic Work in Calcutta.

We learn from our private correspondence that the Rev. A. N. Somerville, of the Anglo-Indian Winter Mission, arrived at Calcutta on the 30th November, and was welcomed by the ministers and missionaries of the Calcutta Missionary Conference of all the Protestant sects. They had arranged to hold meetings for him during three days in the Free Church, which is the most central and the best adapted for that purpose in the city. It was filled, and some remained behind to talk with Mr. Somerville. A daily prayer meeting has also been begun in the city part of Calcutta; and on the subsequent Sabbath, the first of this month, Mr. Somerville was to address the young men of Calcutta in the Dalhousie Institute, and the English speaking Bengalees in the General Assembly's Institution. The organ of the native Christians, the Bengal Christian Herald, edited by the native Professor of the Free Church College, contains detailed accounts of the earlier meetings, portions of which we extract:

A Christian Conference was held at half-past seven in the morning of the 30th November. At the first evangelical meeting in the evening the Rev. Mr. Ross (late of Stirling Congregational Church) engaged in prayer, and the Rev. Mr. Richards (Wesleyan Methodist) bade welcome to the Rev. A. N. Somerville, of Glasgow, who was to conduct the service. Mr. Somerville, having thanked the congregation for the kind wishes they had expressed, stated in few words the object of his visit to Calcutta. He had come out, he said, to labour for the outpouring of a blessing on this city, similar to that which had already been poured out on Scotland and on Ireland, and which was fully expected to prove the portion of England also. He had not come out to inspect missions, or even to visit the churches, but to evangelize. He was indeed a minister of the Free Church, and had just entered on the thirty-eighth year of his ministry; but he had not come out as a representative of that Church or of any other Church. His mission was purely un denominational, and he would thankfully be associated in his work with the brethren of all denominations. It was also a mission of love; he received no salary from any society nor expected any from the people here, for his labours. He then spoke to the meeting from the text, "Fear not thou woman Jacob, &c." Isaiah xli, 14-16. The venerable countenance of the old servant of God, verging to threescore years and ten, beamed with unearthly brightness, as he electrified the congregation with his inspiring portraiture of the promises of God in Christ, breaking down every barrier in the way of the frail gospel-preacher, and of the everlasting arms of Jesus, outstretched to uphold all that realized their native happiness. Dr. Thoburn (American Methodist) exhorted the congregation jointly and severally to pray that the city may be prepared by the Spirit, for the work to which the Lord had called his honored servant from a distant land. The meeting was closed after an hour, with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Macdonald (Free Church).

Mr. Somerville presided at a second meeting on the 1st inst. A number of requests for prayer on behalf of certain individuals were read, and the Rev. Mr. Clifford led a concurrent congregation in presenting them before the throne of grace. The Rev. Mr. Weland (Church of England) spoke from the text, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me," explaining how the uplifted Christ, by a three-fold cord, the rhetoric of the brain, the rhetoric of the conscience, and the rhetoric of the heart, draws all men unto Him. The Rev. Mr. Somerville preached from the text, "Who is this that cometh from Bozrah?" and as he delineated the terrors of unforgiveness, and expounded the saving preciousness of the Word of the Gospel as spoken by the voice of Christ, who is mighty to save, albeit it is not in His might, but in His weakness, that He saves, the fiery breathings of his evangelistic enthusiasm sent, we dare say, a thrill through the congregation, of potent enough to convert them into Christ intoxicated men and women. On the 2d the evangelistic meeting in the evening, at which Mr. Somerville, who has come out with his father to conduct the service of praise, played the harmonium, was numerously attended. A number of requests for prayer were read, and the intercessory prayer was offered by the Rev. Mr. Kerry (Baptist). The Rev. Mr. Thomson (Church of Scotland) addressed the congregation on the deepest and yet the commonest sin of which the Comforter sent by Christ reproves the world, even the sin of not believing on Jesus, or not acknowledging the love of God in Christ. The Rev. Mr. Somerville, who was in the chair, preached from the text, "For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath you covered," and in his own soul-piercing, soul-subduing way, described and illustrated the danger of the spiritual slumber which is characteristic of the unconverted state, a thing that nothing but a touch of the hand of Jesus, can rouse the sinner out of his fatal insensibility.

Brilliant but Useless.

Sir Astley Cooper, on visiting Paris, was asked by the surgeon-in-chief of the empire how many times he had performed a certain wonderful feat of surgery. He replied that he had performed the operation thirteen times. "Ah, but, monsieur, I have done him one hundred and sixty times. How many times did you save his life?" continued the curious Frenchman, after he had looked into the blank amazement of Sir Astley's face. "I," said the Englishman, "saved eleven out of thirteen. How many did you save out of one hundred and sixty?" "Ah, monsieur, I lost them all, but the operation was very brilliant." Of how many popular ministers might the same verdict be given! Some are not saved, but the preaching is very brilliant. Thousands are attracted and operated upon by the rhetorician's art, but what if he should have to say "his admirers, 'I lost them all, but the sermons were very brilliant!'"—The Guardian.

Random Readings.

Mr. FINNEY was preaching years ago in one of the central cities of New York, to a large audience in a time of revival. He had been explaining that men, under conviction of sin, would sometimes show their conviction in singular ways. Sometimes it would make them cross and fascinating. They would scold their wife and make all about them uneasy. Then he added, "If I knew you as well as your pastor does, I could point to you where you sit. You are in this condition;—You know you are a sinner, and need now to repent; and will not. You have been scolding that good wife who has been praying for you these years. I could call you out now by name!" At this point he was interrupted by a voice from a further part of the room saying, "Call me." The man afterwards explained that he verily expected to hear his name announced, and only spoke to be beforehand. He could not at first be persuaded that Mr. Finney did not know his case, or had not been told it by some one. He said:—"This very morning I scolded my wife, and everything else besides, all the while knowing I was a miserable sinner; then I harassed my horse and came into the city with her to church. I supposed, somehow, that you must know my name," O, for such preaching as makes men feel "I am the man."—Congregationalist.

SACRED places for pure thoughts and holy meditations are the little graves in the churchyard. They are the depositories of the mother's sweetest joy, half unfolded buds of innocence, humanity nipped by the first frost of time, ere yet a canker worm of corruption has nestled among its embryonic petals. Callous, indeed must be the heart of him who can stand by a little grave-side and not have the holiest emotions of the soul awakened to thoughts of purity and joy which belong alone to God and heaven, for the mute preacher at his feet tells of lives begun and ended without stain; and surely if this be vouchsafed to mortality, how much purer and holier must be the spiritual land, enlightened by the sun of infinite goodness, whence emanated the soul of that brief sojourner among us? How swells the heart of the parent with mournful joy while standing by the earth-bed of lost little ones! Mournful, because a sweet treasure has been taken away—joyful, because that precious jewel glitters in the diadem of the Redeemer.

HONESTY, frankness, generosity, virtue—blessed traits! Be these yours, my boys, and we shall not tear. You will claim the love and respect of all. You are watched by your elders. Men who are looking for clerks and apprentices have their eyes on you. If you are profane, vulgar, theatrical, they will not choose you. If you are upright, steady, and industrious, before long you will find good places, kind masters, and the prospect of a useful life before you.

TAKE HEART, all who toil; all youths in humble situations, all in adverse circumstances, and those who labor unappreciated. If it be but to drive the plough, strive to do it well, if it be but to wax thread, wax it well, if only to cut boots, make good ones, or to blow the bellows, keep the iron hot. It is attention to business that lifts the feet higher up on the ladder.

THE mind of Christ is the mind of the Father and of the Holy Ghost, and it is revealed in the Scriptures. Whoever then wishes to know the mind of Christ need not climb on high and seek it from far, but let him hold fast to the revealed Word. There he will learn what God means, and what he intends to do with us.—Ibid.

PROFANITY is a mark of low breeding. Show us a man that commands respect; an oath trembles not on his tongue. Read the catalogue of crime. Inquire the character of those who depart from virtue. Without a single exception you will find them to be profane. Think of this, and don't let a vile word disgrace you.

To become a believer is not the result of a fit of enthusiasm, as if the wind were to blow upon a person and he straightway become perfect; but we must hear, learn, pray, read, inquire, until we are transformed from one degree of conviction to another.—Ibid.

SINCE the knowledge imparted by the Spirit, respecting what is in God, is as eternal and unchanging as the Spirit of God himself, the conviction thus obtained that "God is love," becomes also the deepest and most reliable truth of our existence.—Schleier.

IT is reported in Glasgow that Mr. Baird, the donor of half a million sterling to the Church of Scotland, is to be made a baronet, and that his principal partner, Mr. Whitehead, one of the members for the city, is to second the address to the Queen in the Commons.

TRUTH is one of the rarest gems. Many a youth has been lost in society by allowing a falsehood to tarnish his character, and foolishly throwing it away. If this gem still shines in your bosom, suffer nothing to displace or diminish its lustre.

"THAT is a good rough job," said a foreman in our hearing recently; and he meant that it was a piece of work not elegant in itself, but strongly made and well put together.

No one need hope to rise above his present situation who suffers small things to pass by unimproved, or who neglects, metaphorically speaking, to pick up a farthing because it is not a shilling.

CHRIST, and everything in Him and with Him, is an incomprehensible mystery; fail but to explore it, and thou art a fool; but believe what is revealed to thee of it, and it is enough for thy salvation.—Starke.

BEST of all is it to preserve everything in a pure, still heart, and let there be for every pulse a thanksgiving, and for every breath a song.—Gosner.

WHATEVER you do, do it well. A job slighted, because it is apparently unimportant, leads to habitual neglect, so that men degenerate insensibly into bad workmen.

TRAINING the hand and eye to do work well leads individuals to form correct habits in other respects; and a good workman is, in most cases a good citizen.