

which it would have been impossible for us to do, if we had nothing but the histories to guide our judgment. In truth, Cicero's letters form the most important historical documents which have been handed down to us from the ancient world.

A similar historical value attaches to all collections of contemporaneous letters. Modern historians are continually hunting them up in every direction, as the best means of throwing a clear light on the history of the past. They are far more valuable as a means of discriminating truth from falsehood, than formal histories, even when composed by historians who were contemporaneous with the events. Such are frequently written under a strong bias, as, for example, Lord Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*. But the incidental allusions in letters frequently put us in possession of facts and motives which have been carefully concealed from the world. This is especially the case in confidential communications between friends.

It is therefore impossible to over-estimate the importance of the concession made to us by the learned critical unbelievers of modern Europe, that beyond all question we are in possession of four documents of this description, carrying us up to the earliest days of Christianity. The latest date which can be assigned to them is *twenty-eight years after the crucifixion*. These letters put us into direct communication with the thoughts of the most active missionary of the infant Church, and of those to whom the letters are addressed. Their character is such that they present us with a living picture of the entire man who wrote them—what he did, what he thought, and what he believed, with a freshness, and a vigour, which is scarcely to be found in any other letters in existence. By their means we can hold direct communication with their author, and almost put him into the witness-box. They depict him as he lived, thought, and moved; and they render it indisputable that he was a man of the most unimpeachable veracity. It is of no little consequence then, that these letters thus admitted to be genuine, form the most important of those which have been attributed to the Apostle.

I rest my argument on these four letters alone. At the same time I must not omit to draw attention to the fact that no small number of eminent critical unbelievers admit the genuineness of four more; but the first four are amply sufficient for my present purpose, and I shall therefore rest no portion of my proof upon the disputed ones.

(To be Continued.)

Religious Enthusiasm Wanted.

A SERMON FOR THE TIMES. BY THE REV. C. H. MOCKRIDGE, D.D., RECTOR IN CHARGE OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, HAMILTON, ONT.

"It is high time to wake out of sleep."—Rom. xiii. 11

There are always people who are afraid of religious enthusiasm, and it is strange that it is so, for enthusiasm in itself is generally acknowledged to be a good thing. In war, politics, education, it is the enthusiastic men that rise, and the reason of that is very evident. Men feel that a cause is safe if it is under the control of one whose whole heart is in it. They may not themselves regard the matter in a very bright light, yet they like to know that there is some one who will take care of it, and guard strictly its interests. As a rule men like enthusiasm. When you see a man advocate a cause, or take any cause in hand in a manner brimming over with earnestness and energy, it is pleasant to you. "The thought comes to you, There is no doubt but that that man believes in what he advocates! In fact there is no doubt that he is advocating it because he believes in it."

Yes, men like enthusiasm. Conservatives like to have an enthusiastic Conservative at their head. Reformers like to have an enthusiastic Reformer at their head. The War Department likes to have enthusiastic generals to fight the battles of the nation. Generals like to have enthusiastic officers to carry out their plans. Things go heavily without enthusiasm. In every department of business

and commerce it is the same, and men like it. But, strange to say, there are many people who don't like enthusiasm in religion. Men may shout themselves hoarse in politics, and work themselves thin over projects pleasing to themselves in almost every department of life, and the more enthusiastic their leaders are the better, but it must not be so in religion. It is not proper to be enthusiastic there. Now, why is it not proper to be enthusiastic in religion? If we look back at the noble examples given us of men who were enthusiastic about the cause of God, we shall see that it was not the half-hearted or halting that won battles for Him, but it was themselves. Burning with a zeal for God, they made their way against every difficulty, not simply for their own welfare but for the welfare of others.

Such a man was Moses. What an Herculean task did he undertake for the cause of God! No half-hearted man could have done it. To face the King of Egypt in the teeth of his armies and his dungeons, and compel him to let the people of God go free and oppress them no longer; to lead those people for forty years against all kinds of opposition, to bear with them in their own waywardness, to bring them at last victorious to the narrow stream which lay between them and the Holy Land was the work of an enthusiast. And that grand man Elijah the Tishbite, who woke the slumbers of a nation spiritually dead, was another example of enthusiasm. And what shall we say of the Saviour himself? Is it right to speak of Him as being enthusiastic in his work? He who was able to seal His work by such a supernatural act as a resurrection from the dead must be spoken of as more than man; yet He was certainly the finest example of enthusiasm that has ever come to this poor world. Yes, and what it cost Him! He was nailed to a cross! Oh, wondrous Cross! How often does it strike one with amazement! They put an inscription on it, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Under it they might well have put another, "Enthusiasm for the souls of men." They killed the Lord, but, in doing so, they put such life into his work that eighteen hundred years of infidelity and sin have not been able to kill it. No! Thank God it is here to-day. It is here to save us and to take us back to God. Glorious work of Jesus! Who will say that enthusiasm goes for nothing in the face of work like that? Who will say that there should be no enthusiasm thrown into religion, when the very foundation on which it rests was laid in the most intense and burning enthusiasm that ever gladdened the face of this ruined world?

And, thank God, there were men who caught the enthusiasm of their Saviour. Next to Him could there be a grander example of it than St. Paul? The best single word that can be found to describe his work is enthusiasm. They might stone him at Lystra and leave him for dead on the common high way; they might scourge him and throw him into a foul dungeon at Philippi; it mattered not; the fire in him was too strong to admit of being quenched by anything short of death itself. Oh! noble enthusiasm for the souls of men! Where has it gone? Thank God, though we have not much of it in our own Church in Canada, we have enough in the mother land to show that it is not altogether a thing of the past. The flame leaps up occasionally to show that the ancient power of Jesus is still here. The protest that John Wesley, a priest of our own Church, entered against the dead formalism of his own day, the vigorous preaching by which he sought to arouse slumbering souls, shows us that even in the darkest hour, there can break forth from our own midst a zeal like unto that of Apostolic days. And in our own generation we have had a Selwyn and a Patterson, and a host of fine men, who, without any regard for their own life, have shown that the work for man's salvation was the object dearest to them of all things on earth. And to-day we have Englishmen, and men of other nationalities, of high birth and fortune, spending all their energy and means among the heathen and the poor simply to lead them from degradation to God.

That is enthusiasm. To-day the Church allows

it. She allows to-day what she well nigh turned John Wesley out of doors for doing. He had a burning desire to save the souls of men, and it was to fill that desire that the Lord himself came to this poor world. Ah! it is a noble work, my friends. Once realize it and you must become enthusiastic over it. You cannot help it.

But where is all our enthusiasm? Confess now. There has not very much of it ever burst from you. I mean to find no fault; I only want to press upon all the truth. You have a partner in business, confess you have talked with him about almost everything under the sun, except the eternal salvation of your souls. You are a lady of a household; you have servants under you; have you ever taken the trouble to find out from them whether or not they know that they have such a thing as a soul to save? I don't mean whether you simply ask them whether they go to church or not, but do you try to get at their true spiritual condition? I have a right to lead you to probe your consciences that you may understand what your own true position before God really is. I confess there is not very much encouragement for spiritual enthusiasm in our midst. Too many of our people have a dislike to what might be considered *too much religion*. When I appoint a prayer meeting or a "house devotional meeting," I fear it is looked upon by too many of you as a curious innovation, foreign to the genius of the Church of England. And yet I would love to know more of your real spiritual condition, brethren, than I do. You may ask what good it would do me? Why, it would do me this good, that if I found you stronger in the Lord than I am, it would help me; you could hold a helping hand for me and raise me up; you could give me a little of your spiritual warmth to help me; and if, on the other hand, I found you weak in the Lord I might be able in some way to benefit you. We want, all of us, to feel that there are souls to be saved, and that we are the ones who should do the work.

(To be continued.)

Book Notices, Reviews, &c.

CHURCH BELLS: A weekly paper for Church folk, 12 Southampton St., Strand, London.

This admirable publication, which we have frequently quoted in these columns, is now issued in monthly parts, which offer a convenient opportunity to readers on this side the Atlantic to acquaint themselves at a trifling cost with the doings of the English Church. The price is only 6s. 6d. a year.

THE CHURCH ECLECTIC (W. T. Gibson, D.D., Utica, N.Y., Editor) for April is received.

Among the articles written specially for the Eclectic we notice one on, "The Church Militant and Paradise," by the Rev. W. Staunton, D.D., in which he examines the question of "the degree in which the visible Church is observed and affected by the invisible, the Church in Paradise," and whether they are "aware of what is doing in the world from which they have been released," and are permitted to look upon those whom they have left in this vale of tears—whether God allows them to be the unperceived witnesses of our course of life, and to feel towards us the affection they were wont to display before He took them to Himself. Dr. Staunton decides these questions in the affirmative, and his argument is not only plausible but strong. Another valuable article is that contributed by Canon Jenkins (Canterbury), on the Corporate Nature and Succession of the Episcopate as opposed to the Personal and Dynastic Theory of the Modern Roman Church. The selections, too, are full of interest, and are taken from the *Church Quarterly, Literary Churchman, John Bull, &c.*