

A striking instance has just now been furnished in the case of Mr. Erastus Wiman's evidence before the Interstate Commerce Committee, in New York. Mr. Wiman, if the latest report may be accepted, states to a reporter that the Associated Press despatches, upon which the general reader is obliged to rely, and which are scattered broadcast over the United States and Canada, are most incorrect and misleading. He instances no less than five or six statements of considerable importance ascribed to him, and declares that he not only did not say what he is thus reported to have said in each case, but that what he did actually say was radically different. The same issue of one of our morning papers gave on one page a long editorial article filled with quotations from the press reports, and arguments based upon these quotations, proving Mr. Wiman out of his own mouth, as thus reported, to be a dishonest conspirator, utterly unworthy of trust; and in another column Mr. Wiman's own emphatic declaration, not only that he did not say the things attributed to him, but that he did say in each case something almost the opposite, and wholly unobjectionable. Assuming the substantial correctness of Mr. Wiman's own version, as we may pretty safely do on grounds of inherent probability if on no other, the case is a hard one. All experience shows that no denial he may make, however vehement or well substantiated, can ever overtake the slander or undo the injury. The first perverted version of his words will be accepted and quoted, and made the basis of hostile comment, so long as the questions at issue continue to agitate and divide the public mind.

A SEVERE logical test will be applied to the British principle of free-trade when the Bill for giving effect to the Sugar Bounties' Convention comes up for discussion. Lord Herschell and Mr. John Morley have given notice that their political friends will oppose the Bill. It is not unlikely that a number of Liberal-Unionists will do the same. The question as it presents itself to the English mind is both interesting and difficult. It can hardly be denied that the sugar refiners have a grievance. Their business has been injured and in some cases ruined, and their workmen deprived of their employment. But, on the other hand, the manufacture of preserves, candies and other products into which sugar enters as a raw material, has been stimulated, so that it is claimed there has been no loss but rather a large increase of employment. If it be admitted that the effect of the foreign bounties has been to give the people of England cheaper sugar, it is pretty clear that they are gainers rather than losers, that the abolition of the Bounty System will be injurious on the whole, and that the Government, in seeking to secure this result, has been doing harm to the country. The discussion will, no doubt, be interesting.

A HORRIBLE interest attaches to the approaching execution of the murderer Kemmler in New York State, as it will be the first case of capital punishment under the new law. The murder was one of peculiar brutality, and the convict is entitled to no special sympathy. But the fact that he has incurred the death penalty will bring up afresh all the doubts and misgivings excited by the new and strange provisions of the New York Act. As a humane (?) innovation, no specific day of execution is to be fixed. Consequently, it is argued by some, the condemned wretch will be kept in constant apprehension that every moment may be his last, and thus the "humanity" prove to be excruciating torture. Strong exception is not unnaturally taken to the exclusion of press representatives and the prohibiting of publication of anything beyond the bare fact that the sentence has been carried out. This, it is forcibly contended, is contrary to the spirit of the Republic and of the time, and will be openly disregarded. But the most harrowing fears are called forth by the new and untried method of inflicting the death penalty—by electricity. It seems probable that the authorities must have satisfied themselves regarding the efficiency and certainty of the apparatus to be used, or will do so in time to prevent the possibility of miscarriage. But the public seem unaware that any such result has been reached, and are in dread of some unprecedented horror. It is freely predicted by some of the newspapers that the first execution by electricity will also be the last, and should there be any bungling the prediction is very likely to be verified. Otherwise, there is a possibility of its being speedily adopted in other States and lands as a substitute for the harrowing barbarity of the rope.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY IN REPLY.

NOT long ago Professor Huxley fell foul of a paper read by Principal Wace at the Manchester Church Congress on the subject of Agnosticism. In the course of his remarks he also referred to an expression employed by Bishop Magee of Peterborough, complaining that the Right Reverend Prelate had spoken of a "cowardly Agnosticism." As Dr. Huxley was the author of this term, at least in its modern application, he felt bound to take up the cudgels in its defence, and he did so in his usual uncompromising manner. His paper produced two replies, one quite brief from the Bishop of Peterborough, in his usual inimitable Pascalian style, and the other a thorough, learned, and elaborate essay by Dr. Wace.

To these two articles Professor Huxley publishes a rejoinder in the *Nineteenth Century* for April, to which we now propose to draw attention. One thing it is not quite pleasant to notice in this article, namely, that the writer is somewhat angry, writes, in short, as if he had been driven into a corner, and needed to strike out. Dr. Huxley is so able a writer, and has such admirable command of pure, nervous English, that it is much to be regretted that this feeling should interfere with the reader's pleasure in reading what he writes—a pleasure which may be lawfully enjoyed without one's agreeing with the opinions which he expresses.

It is not possible even to refer to many points brought forward in Dr. Huxley's article. To discuss even a small portion of them would require a volume instead of a brief paper. It is quite easy to scatter doubts right and left, to affirm and deny, to refer casually to authorities without occupying much space. When we proceed to meet those doubts, to negate the affirmations or affirm the negations, we cannot afford to be quite so offhand. We must, therefore, be contented to select some special points in this article, and give our reasons for thinking we may still refuse to admit that we "know nothing," that we are mere agnostics, with reference to the supernatural origin of the Christian religion. We, therefore, pass by Dr. Huxley's remarks on the Lord's Prayer, and on the Sermon on the Mount, and others of the same kind, as having very little bearing on the real question, and draw attention to some points which both sides must recognize as vital.

We should have a good deal to offer in the way of protest against some of the Professor's remarks on the Gospels in general; but we will here confine ourselves to what he says on the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, and principally to three remarks which we will here first set down in a condensed form. Dr. Huxley says (1) that the narrative of the resurrection in the first gospel and those in the third gospel and the Acts are "hopelessly discrepant with one another;" (2) that St. Paul, after having assurance of Christ's appearing to him, "abstained from any re-examination of the facts;" (3) that "the sepulchre might have been vacated" without any miracle at all. We propose to offer a few observations on these points.

1. With respect to the alleged discrepancies between the Gospels named and the Acts, we will venture to say two things, first, that the different accounts given of the resurrection are clearly independent, so that one does not borrow from the other. Of course the Acts of the Apostles is, by common consent, from the same hand as the third Gospel. But, secondly, we remark, that, whilst there are just such differences between the different accounts as we might expect from different witnesses who were giving honest testimony to what they had seen or heard, there is really no difference whatever between their substantial testimony. As Professor Huxley does not mention the points in which these discrepancies occur, we cannot be sure that we know what he means. But we would ask any honest and impartial reader to turn to the various accounts of the resurrection in the Gospels, to select, for example, those parts which present the strongest appearance of discrepancy, namely, the references to the discovery of the open sepulchre, and then to say whether they do not all leave very much the same impression upon the mind of the reader. We would ask whether the words which are there written down might not have been spoken, with perfect sincerity, in the witness box by men who had perfect knowledge of the events which are there recorded. No jury would regard the testimony of one of these witnesses as inadmissible or doubtful; and this is the question in point. How far these differences may be in accordance with any special theory of Inspiration is another question, and is a question which concerns Christians and theologians; but it is one which does not in any way affect the historical character of the narratives, and that is the question between Christians and unbelievers.

2. Dr. Huxley tells us that St. Paul, having become satisfied, by means of a vision, that Jesus had risen from the dead, "is most careful to tell us that he abstained from any re-examination of the facts." Now, we wish to treat Dr. Huxley with perfect respect, with more respect than he accords to our belief, but we must point out that here he falls into a double error. St. Paul, in the passage quoted by the Professor (Galatians i. 16, 17), is referring not so much, or at all, to the resurrection, but to the gospel which he received from Christ Himself. St. Paul was called and qualified for a particular work, and it seemed good that he should not get his knowledge of Christianity at second hand, but that he should receive it from Christ Himself, as the other apostles had done. Surely an unprejudiced mind might discover here some support for the apostle's view of his own calling. He says he received his gospel from Christ; he certainly taught the same gospel as the other apostles. Unless we have determined beforehand that there can or shall be no communication of truth from a higher world, there is surely here some evidence of such communication.

But, again, we are told that the apostle "abstained from any re-examination of the facts." This statement, in a literal sense, may be true; but it is calculated to convey an impression which is quite the reverse of true. It suggests that St. Paul set to work to teach men the truth of the resurrection, having nothing but his own (perhaps purely subjective) impressions to rely upon. Now, every reader of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians knows how far this is from being the case. No one now doubts the genuineness of that epistle, or that the fifteenth chapter, in particular, was written by St. Paul. Now, it is quite true that the apostle had no doubt of the reality of the resurrection; but it is equally obvious that he did not ask men to believe in the fact upon his own sole testimony. On the contrary he was careful to gather together the most remarkable appearances of Christ after His resurrection, so as to take away from men all pretext for unbelief.

The list of appearances which he furnishes is, in various respects, noteworthy. But one instance may be given which illustrates a part of his history and his relations to the other apostles. St. Paul mentions the appearance of Jesus, after the resurrection, to Peter and to James. The appearance to St. Peter is noticed by St. John; but there is no account, in any of the gospels, of the appearance to St. James. Now, St. Paul tells us that, when some time after his conversion, he went up to Jerusalem, he saw Peter and James. Doubtless it was on this occasion that they told him of the circumstances in which they had seen the risen Lord. At any rate there is no evidence, in St. Paul's manner of dealing with this subject, of the unreflecting enthusiasm which bids men believe what they want to find true, without any sufficient evidence. Here, as elsewhere, St. Paul is thoroughly rational and free from any trace of such enthusiasm as would have impaired his power of understanding the value of evidence.

3. If anything, the last point that we have noticed in Dr. Huxley's Polemicon is the most serious of the three. He insinuates that the body of Jesus was stolen from the grave between what we should call Good Friday and Easter Day. If an agnostic can be said to have any belief or disbelief on such a subject, it is clear that this is Dr. Huxley's belief. He does not say whether he accepts the theory that Jesus did not die on the cross, but was taken down from it in a state of suspended animation. But whatever he may think on this subject, we thought that all reasonable men had abandoned the notion that such a resurrection would account for the acknowledged facts in the history of the disciples of Christ.

These men, shortly after the death of their Master, went abroad through Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem through Palestine, declaring that their Master was the Lord of life, that He had conquered death and the grave and had gone up into heaven. Whence did they gain this conviction? As a matter of fact, they did gain it. No one imagines that they pretended to a belief which they did not really entertain. But how did they arrive at that belief? Will Dr. Huxley or his adherents read what Strauss has said on this subject? Dr. Strauss did not believe in the resurrection, but still less did he believe that the revivification of a half-dead man could account for the new faith that was awakened in the apostles.

But whether Dr. Huxley holds this particular theory or any other, he does clearly insinuate that Jesus did not "rise again from the dead," that the sepulchre was found empty simply because the body of the Lord had been stolen from the tomb between the Friday and Sunday. Now, this leaves us open to only one of two suppositions. Either the body was removed by the friends of Christ or it was