

Lately there has appeared around the arena of polemics a timorous aggregation of clerics aspiring to reputations and calling themselves members of the "School of Higher Criticism." The "School" is composed largely of the pastors of fashionable churches, and of university professors without any denominational affiliation or any distinctive creed. With their eyes open and with full deliberation they are contributing their eloquence and learning to the destruction of all that makes for the permanency of Christianity. In his great speech, delivered at Oxford, Nov., 1861, Mr. Disraeli, afterwards Lord Beaconsfield, does not hesitate to stigmatise the members of this school and their views as enemies to Christianity, to the permanency of the British Empire, to law and order. After dwelling on the unrivalled extent of the Empire, the decay of faith among the English masses, and the attacks on the Bible insidiously delivered by some within the Christian camp, he continues: "Will these opinions (those of scientific Biblical criticism) succeed? Is there a possibility of their success? My conviction is that they will fail—for two reasons. In the first place, having examined all their writings, I believe without any exception, whether they consist of fascinating eloquence, diversified learning, and picturesque sensibility—I speak seriously what I feel—and that, too, exercised by one honored in this university, and, whom to know is to admire and regard (Dean Stanley); or whether you find them in the cruder conclusions of prelates (Bishop Colenso) who appear to have commenced their theological studies after they have grasped the crozier, and who introduce to society their obsolete discoveries with the startling wonder and frank ingenueness of their own ravages; or whether I read the lumber ions of nebulous professors, who seem in their style to have revived chaos, and who, if they could only succeed in obtaining a perpetual study of their writings, would go far to realize that eternal punishment to which they object; or lastly whether it be the provincial arrogance and the precipitate self-complacency which flash and flare in an essay or review, I find that the common characteristic of their writings is this—that their learning is always second hand."*

At a time when a certain brand of infidelity had become fashionable, and was deemed a mark of distinction in the London clubs, Disraeli fearlessly challenged the intellectual sauciness of society. With all the strength and power of his eloquence he contended that: "Whatever man may be biologically or physiologically he is something more; and this something more, which transcends all biological and physiological science, is the most essential and distinctive part of his being." "The scientific world," writes Mr. Buckle, "is now coming around to Disraeli's opinion." The course of events, Mr. Buckle adds, has largely justified the prediction spoken in 1864, that "The Teutonic rebellion against the Divine truths entrusted to the Semites" would ultimately meet with the fate of "the Celtic Insurrection of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists." And he further adds that the inability of science to take the place of religion is much more widely admitted than it was in the days when Huxley and Tyndall flourished. All of which goes to show that no matter how powerful or crushing the forces of materialism may be, in the end the moral and spiritual forces, which give character to a people, survive and triumph.

There was never a time in the history of Christianity when believers in Revelation looked the enemies of the Supernatural more steadily in the face than to-day. Christianity stands now, as in the time of Julian, the Apostate, for

* "The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield." Vol. IV, p. 372. The Macmillan Co., New York, and Lord Beaconsfield. J. H. Froude, p. 175. Samson, London.