

earnestness which pervades the whole argument. The objections to theism, which are urged by the materialism and agnosticism of our day, and especially by various schools of antitheistic evolutionists, are most fully and satisfactorily met. It is shown with great force and truth that the great progress of scientific knowledge in this century has not diminished, but immensely increased, the variety and force of the evidence for the Being whom the Christian theist calls God.

We have been greatly interested in the author's statement and defence of the old so-called ontological argument. He takes the position that the existence of absolute Being "is a necessary and ultimate principle of reason involved in the constitution of man as rational." Absolute Being he defines as "the Being that exists, not dependent on or conditioned by any reality, independent of or prerequisite to itself." The argument, as elaborated by Professor Harris, we believe conclusive; but it has again raised in our mind the question whether the argument can rightly be called *a priori*. He insists that the belief in absolute Being is as truly intuitional, e.g., as the causal judgment; that the knowledge of the caused, to use his own phraseology, involves the knowledge of the uncaused, and so on. To the present writer, on the other hand, it seems that the belief in the existence of that which is absolute and uncaused, is not an intuition, but an inference from the principle of causation. The step is indeed but one, and is so evident and necessary that not to take that step is to act in defiance of the laws of thought; still because there is that one step, we cannot rightly say that the existence of the uncaused and absolute is intuitively perceived. To this evident objection Professor Harris replies that the principle of causation can never carry us beyond a finite cause. This we do not see. The principle of causation, as we understand it, insists simply that a cause shall be adequate; and we see not how this principle, applied to the phenomena presented in the universe, can rest short of the assumption of a Being, absolute and unconditioned, as the Cause of all that is conditioned; of infinite Being, as the only Cause adequate to account for the universe—material and immaterial—as it is presented to us. How can energy, for instance, though in any particular case it be finite and measurable, be accounted for by a finite source of energy? An unceasing outflow of power, as, e.g., in the case of gravitation, without diminution or exhaustion in the slightest degree from age to age, surely demands an infinite source of power as its primal origin. So also it seems valid to argue, as has been argued of old, that the idea of the infinite could never have arisen were there nothing existent but the finite. Still the conclusion in each case, simply because it is a conclusion, cannot be rightly held intuitional truth.

(To be concluded.)

### THE CONGREGATION.

MR. EDITOR,—The subject of this, my third letter, is "The Congregation," which we will now proceed to consider. In your issue of March 30 you editorially insert the views of a contemporary regarding the resignation of ministers. Its conclusion, which is your own, as gathered from your remarks, is that church troubles are often, if not always, trifling, and that the minister is too sensitive and too hasty in resigning his charge.

Now, sir, I hope you will pardon me if I say that I entirely disagree with you and the contemporary's conclusion. I make bold to say that in nine cases out of every ten the sensitiveness, hastiness and wrongdoing lie at the door of the congregation. Can you name one minister of our Church who has any practical knowledge of a probationer's life, who, because of a little trouble, resigned his charge to tramp the country for eighteen months or two years? Is there any man, in any walk of life, who will, on the slightest provocation, leave his certain work, fixed wage, cheerful home, happy wife and loving children for uncertain work, unsatisfactory wage, a disinterested boarding-house and the unpleasantnesses that attend a wandering life? What do reason and judgment and common sense and instinct and feeling and experience say? Will not all the probationers tell you they were forced to resign? Does not the very fact of fifty or one hundred settled ministers who are ever, week applying for a hearing in vacancies tell us that ministers will do all that it is possible for man to do

before resigning their charges? What minister joyfully sends his name to the probationing committee? Who is it that hails with delight the prospect of a two-years' tramp? Where is the probationer who cheerfully bids his wife and children and home and study good-bye?

Mr. Editor, let me, in this connection, place before you and the Church two questions, in the answering of which I will endeavour to show where the blame lies. The first question is, Why do ministers resign their charges?

Let the vacant congregations answer.

First we take the one-man-power congregation, of which there are a large number scattered throughout the country. This man is fairly intelligent, talkative, widely-connected and subscribes largely. He is a most important person, from a financial standpoint, and is anxious that the minister should recognize it. Not possessing the childlike meekness of the regenerate, he is not particularly anxious that the minister should preach the truth, and nothing but the truth. But the preacher is faithful; and this conceited soul often receives the home thrusts of the Word of God, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. The consequence is that his pride is humbled, and his vanity wounded; and he resolves to rid himself of this faithful servant of the Lord. Some congregations get tired of their twenty-years' pastor and friend, and long for a new, young, beardless face. They get rid of him by staying at home, withholding the supplies, and circulating the lie that he is too old to draw the young people.

Other congregations find fault because the minister calls for his salary on the day it is due. He is called mercenary, and when this spirit is attributed to the pastor, the end is not far distant. I know something of business and business principles; also of the manner in which employes are treated by their employers, but, sir, I never knew any class of men so completely at the mercy of another body as are the ministers of our Church at the mercy of their congregations. As a pastor, preacher, parent, in church, at home, abroad, his every word and action is watched, noted, commented upon. He must preach, pray, visit, speak, act, to suit the notions and views of the congregation. He dare not say organ and hymn book when the prominent man says psalms, psalms. He cannot preach total abstinence when some members take their glass. He is tied, and will remain so, unless he has grit enough in him to play the manly part, and speak the truth, and face a two-years' tramp. Have I answered the first question?

Let me put the second question, and try to answer it. Why are congregations so long vacant? Let me here say, most emphatically, not because of the poor preachers they have had. I could name several congregations that have been vacant for well on to two years; that have been supplied through the Probationing Committee; and with one or two exceptions have no fault to find with the probationers sent; in fact, could profit under any of them as preacher and pastor. Still they continue on the list of vacancies. Why? Well, many of the members during that long period have become keenly critical; in fact, professional critics. Faults are noted, a *lapsus lingue*, a slight hesitancy, an appeal to notes, an inelegant gesture, too much energy, or too little. Some again, less critical, watch his movements during the fortnight. If he visits, he is canvassing for a call; if he doesn't visit, he is unsociable. If he hasn't always the appearance of a new hat out of a band-box, he is untidy and slovenly.

Then there are congregations that seem highly pleased with any and every probationer. They have nothing but kindly words and deeds for them; and every probationer fancies a call will be presented in his favour at next meeting of Presbytery. But five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty ministers of our Church have preached to these congregations. Still no call comes. And you ask why is this, and the explanation simply is, these congregations are waiting for students—for next spring graduates. I know four vacant congregations that have been hearing probationers during the winter; and yet these charges wrote to students offering calls if they would accept.

Others again tell Presbyteries they are not yet prepared to call, not having heard any one they sufficiently liked. What is the truth? These congregations are wiping out church debts, or preparing to build new ones. Others are internally divided into family compacts; and when one faction expresses preference for one man, another faction immediately makes choice of another. Is not this state of matters

deplorable, Mr. Editor? They are acknowledged on all sides to be unpleasant, unsatisfactory and injurious, and yet those that have the making of our laws wink at the unhappy condition of things, and quietly lay the blame on the probationer. It is high time, sir, that the Church authorities should grapple firmly and determinedly with these crying evils, instead of slipping complaints into the waste-basket. It seems to me the Church has swung from the thinnest establishment to the thickest voluntarism.

ALIQUORUM.

### JEWISH STATISTICS.

The most reliable statistics give the following numbers, which, for brevity's sake, I state in round figures. They are not, however, of recent date, but nearly twenty years old, and in the interval the Jews must have multiplied considerably; but these are the most trustworthy I can find:

Russia and Poland.....	2,500,000
Austria and Hungary.....	1,200,000
Germany.....	500,000
Roumania.....	400,000
Turkey in Europe.....	280,000
France.....	90,000
Great Britain and Ireland.....	80,000
The Netherlands.....	70,000
Italy.....	60,000
Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden and Norway, Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar and Malta, at least.....	20,000
Total for Europe.....	5,200,000
Africa is supposed to contain.....	1,000,000
Asia.....	500,000
America.....	400,000
Australasia.....	10,000

Total..... 7,110,000

This tallies with Herzog's Royal Encyclopædia, which estimates the aggregate number of Jews on the globe as upward of 7,000,000. Beyond the Continent of Europe and the United States of America it is mostly guess work, for there are no official statistics. If, however, as I incline to think, 800,000 is nearer the mark for Africa, the number assigned to Asia is certainly underrated, and cannot, I think, be smaller than 700,000.

These figures represent Jews, still known as *Jews*. But what of the descendants of thousands upon thousands, who were forced by bitter persecutions and expulsions to profess Popery, in order to save their lives and substance; and tens of thousands who, for similar reasons, embraced Mohammedism?

Then, again, there can be little doubt that the Nestorians, of Kurdistan, and the Beni Israel, of India, are descended from the Ten Tribes; and there is much in favour of the opinion that our troublesome neighbours in India, the Afghans, are of similar origin. There are, besides, several Moslem tribes in the Caucasus and in Central Asia, who probably likewise belong to the Ten Tribes, so long spoken of as lost.

My conviction is, that if the Jews throughout the world were to assemble in Palestine, together with those tribes that present credible evidences of their Israelitish ancestry, their total would not fall far short of 10,000,000; and if we are prepared to admit the Anglo-Saxons, as some contend for with very remarkable arguments, worthy of serious examination, why, then, of course, we should be a match for all the world beside, Mahdi and all!

I have spoken of large numbers of Jews, who had in times gone by been compelled for dear life's sake to become Papists or Moslems; but, thank God, there is another class of Jews, little thought of. I refer to the descendants of the thousands who constituted the earliest Christian Churches, and of those who in more recent ages and in the present generation have confessed the Lord Jesus: and who are to be found mixed up with Christian Churches of all denominations in different parts of the world, and now difficult to identify. I cannot help thinking that it is in contravention of God's purpose that it should be so, for it is written: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."

Frequently in London, and even in Rome, I have recognized a dozen or more Jews, young and old, worshipping in the same Church, and felt sure that very few, if any, in the congregation were aware of the fact. There is unhappily so much to induce believing Jews, and more so their descendants, to merge themselves among Gentile Christians, and hide and forget their Israelitish origin, I verily believe that if it were possible to trace and identify these offsprings of Israel throughout the world in Papal, Greek, Protestant and other Churches, the total would astonishingly exceed any figures I could name under a million. Could a census be taken of all living Protestant Hebrews and their children they would probably exceed 100,000.—*Rev. A. Ben-Oliel*.