

Bradlaugh in England is fighting the fight of right against might; he is opposed ostensibly on the ground that he is an unbeliever, but really because he is the uncompromising foe of the many frauds by which the British people are robbed of their money to support titled idlers in luxury.

And after the heretic has been imprisoned, after his name has been covered with obloquy, after the rebellion has become a revolution, after that which was against law and order, has become law and order, then the priest mounts the pulpit and claims the credit and reward, saying to the people "see what we the Lord's anointed have done for you."

The priesthood with a few individual exceptions did all in their power to crush the land league at its birth; and it was only after they saw that the movement could not be stopped that they recognized the danger of further opposition and in some cases have given their aid to the movement.

For those priests, who, remembering they were men also, have from the first stood with the people. I have nothing but respect. But the policy of a priest or two has not the effect which the distinct utterance of the church would have. True, the pope "loves his Irish children;" but this is a very non-committal statement, and no doubt his Irish children have earned his love by their contributions to his coffers.

And now if your Reverence does not like to have the little peccadillos of christians held up to the light of day, pause before you ascribe a tendency towards a degrading sensualism" to those who do not obey your command to "bow down and humbly adore;" when you denounce Luther and the 8th Henry, remember Constantine and Borgia, when you would speak of Atheism as a "black blotch on the page of human Annals, turn first to the history of your church; think of the many bloody sacrifices she has offered to heaven in the name of God, think of the trials by combat, and neglect of sanitary precautions, which was the logical result of a blind trust in Providence.

When you speak of your God "providing for the widow and orphan" turn to our daily papers and read of widows and orphans starving to death, freezing to death, and worked to death, and hold your peace; and when you next deliver a lecture on "the infidelity of the present day," please to remember that it is not a question of how a man parts his hair, or buttons his coat; not a question of whether there are good protestants, good catholics, and good infidels, for there are good and bad of each; not a question of whether there is more brain above the christian ear than above the infidel ear; not whether socialism is the logical result of free thought, for with socialism some of the best men of the world are identified, and you cannot deny that its object is to remove ignorance, poverty, and misery, from among the people;—for which reason no doubt your church denounces it—not a question of whether there is one God or none, but whether you *know* anything about God?—whether Christianity as exhibited by the church of which you are a notable product, or as regarded in the light—or rather darkness—of its supernatural origin, and astounding miracles, is really true?

When you can transmute legend and fable into the gold coinage of fact, the bell-metal that rings so loudly through your lecture will pass as legal mintage among thinking men—but not till then.

And now, Rev. Sir, we part company. If I have handled you somewhat rudely, be good enough to consider that delicacy of touch is not to be expected of a man whose hands are hardened with daily toil.

And you, kind readers, brother-toilers, whatever your religious opinions may be, I ask that you will "speak me fair" and if you cannot allow that I have done "the state some service" you will not deny me honesty of purpose and love of truth.