

THE MEN WHO BORROWED \$500,000,000



THE ANGLO-FRENCH FINANCE AND CREDIT COMMISSION.

The British House of Commons has approved the loan negotiated in the United States. Great Britain must borrow abroad because her adverse Balance of Trade for the first six months of 1915 was £70,000,000. "We tried," said Rt. Hon. Mr. McKenna, "to get £200,000,000, then £160,000,000, then £140,000,000, but we could not get more than £100,000,000." This photograph was taken at the Hotel Biltmore, New York. From left to right: Sir Henry B. Smith (British); Octave Homberg (French); Baron Reading (British); Sir Edward Holden (British); Ernest Mallet (French); Basil N. Blackett (British).

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MR. BALFOUR'S GOSPEL OF BELIEF

A Review of His New Book, Entitled "Theism and Humanism"

By HAROLD BEGBIE

In the London Chronicle

OF all our public men, Mr. Arthur Balfour is the most picturesque and charming. He is perhaps our most ideal gentleman, the type we gratefully put forward just now to outshine the vulgar pretensions of the German superman. He is cultured and modest; he is aristocratic and gentle; he is refined and masculine; he is in earnest, and he is witty. The gracious temper of the man is amiably expressed in a singularly attractive appearance.

But if he is the most picturesque and charming of our public men, he is also, I think, by a very long distance, the most difficult and perplexing. For here is a man who loves music, who has an acute feeling for beautiful things, whose whole nature shudders at coarseness, and whose deliberate soul is definitely disgusted by vileness; and yet his public life has been largely given to stimulating one of the most harsh, ugly, and inhibiting religious quarrels of British history and to perpetuating a social condition which is clearly unaesthetic, unscientific, immoral, and antithetic to the whole spirit of religion.

A CRITIC OF THE CRITICS.

WE cannot understand such a temperament, but we may at least venture to assume that the political career of this most agreeable and delightful man has suffered damage from that powerful tendency towards a purely critical attitude which has been his main distinction in the field of philosophy. If Mr. Balfour has been an obstructionist in politics, if, because of him, social conditions are not better than they are and a righteous settlement of the Irish religious quarrel has tarried dangerously, with great hurt to the Empire, for a quarter of a century, still let us recognize that few English philosophers have shattered more effectually the strongholds of the Empiricists or more cunningly tripped up the rationalist with his own logic and his own terminology. He is a critic of the critics.

The publication to-day of "Theism and Humanism" (Hodder and Stoughton) carries me back to a scene in the Bute Hall of Glasgow University in the first half of the fateful year 1914, when I had the privilege

of listening to Mr. Balfour's final Gifford Lecture. I remember how I tried hard to follow the lecture through his tortuous sentences, wondering what in the world he was driving at, finally giving up all effort to listen and resting my whole attention on the charming profile presented to me by the tall and graceful figure in the heavy and forbidding rostrum, going away at the end of it all to say that here was a man who had a stammer in his thoughts. But the book of those lectures is now at my side, and instead of involved sentences, harkings back, sudden qualifications, and a succession of maddening parentheses, which made havoc of the extempore lecture, I find order and lucidity, a definite chain of reasoning, and a logical conclusion. The difference is amazing.

To begin with, here is a book published in the midst of an overshadowing War, which deals with the supreme question of life, the question which will endure long after the shadow of War has lifted, namely, the existence of God. It helps us to see that behind the importance of the War is a greater importance, and that the War itself, rightfully understood, is not so much a matter for political dissension and newspaper controversy as a matter for morals and religion. For if there be no God, if a rational man must conclude that this star is only a speck of unassociated dust in the midst of a mindless and meaningless universe, then there is something to be said for the German gospel of brute force. We might even Prussianize our institutions with advantage. But if there be a God, if the rational man must conclude that our planet is in intimate association with an infinite universe, and that the tendency of self-conscious life is towards Beauty and Goodness, then there is something to be said for the cause of the Allies, which is not often said by politicians and newspapers, something, too, which should lead us to so alter our social conditions and our international relations that war henceforth is impossible. It is a much more tremendous thing than most people realize to believe in God.

THE BELIEF IN GOD.

Loving God is a vastly different thing, as Pascal said, from believing in God. The man whose

morality is passionate, whose feeling towards God is that of adoration, must be either hurt by such a book as this, or amused by its serious politeness to agnostic critics. "It dare not fly; it will not walk." And certainly it is only love of God that will change the world. Philosophy may affect opinion, and may gradually produce a movement in thought, but it will never lift the multitude out of the mire or bring a glad and marching music to the heart of humanity. St. Paul as a Gifford Lecturer would have been a failure. Isaiah as a Fellow of the Royal Society would have left the world much as he found it. Mankind has quickened its pace because of St. Paul's sublime hymn of love, and the conscience of humanity has been strengthened by Isaiah's passionate insistence on an inward morality. Chief of all, consider what would be the state of Europe if Christ had debated the possibility of the existence of God, instead of asserting with a simplicity which makes a most instant appeal to every sort and condition of mind that God is Our Father. Intuition is a part of psychology.

To believe in God is to have the brute in leash. It may not be to make us reformers, it may not be to lead us out into the wilderness of self-abnegation, it may not be to make us shining angels of self-sacrifice; but it ought to make us reverent, it ought to make us humble, and it ought to make us fiercely determined to fight upon the side of righteousness. "God, freedom, and immortality . . . I believe in them all," says Mr. Balfour. And to believe in God, freedom and immortality, however different from adoring God, loving freedom, and hungering and thirsting after immortality, is to be on the side of the angels and opposed, vigorously opposed, to the iron forces of Anti-Christ.

LIFE IS SPIRITUAL.

LET any man who thinks that science makes it difficult to believe in God, read this book from cover to cover, and he must, I think, if he be open to argument, come to the conclusion that Theism is the inescapable faith of rationalism. Use your reason, your reason only, and you must believe in Mind. Contemplate the universe as a rational being, and unless you say that you cannot believe in your own agnosticism, cannot believe in anything at all, you must conclude that penetrating and interpenetrating all material phenomenon is the Spirit of Eternal Life. Empiricism is as dead as Deism. Atheism is only possible to the fool. No living mind can rest in agnosticism. There is reason in the universe. Life is spiritual. The march of the human race is towards God.