

what lies outside, we have to consider whether it could exist to the extent it does—whether it would not be showing some signs of diminution (which we know too well it does not), if all the ministers and members of our Churches maintained practically in their several localities the high testimony they ought to do, and a fervent zeal for the interests of righteousness? We cannot but fear that there are amongst us those of whom it may be said, that the salt has lost its savour—they partake too much of the evil that is in the world to do the part of the faithful reprovers of it. If we look more particularly to the large towns, which now comprise so great a part of our population, and exercise the most powerful influence over the whole, it must be confessed that the eager, driving, commercial spirit which prevails in them, brings with it many things that are unfavorable to the progress of the gospel and the Christian life. The engrossment of mind it occasions, almost inseparable from large undertakings and extensive connections, is alone unfavorable; for how difficult to sit loose to the world when one has so much at stake in it! And with the employed, at least with the great mass of the employed, amid the struggle for existence, the long hours, the oppressive toil they often have to encounter in such an artificial state of things, how apt is the mind to sink into forgetfulness of its higher good, and how hard is it for the ministers of the gospel to get even a proper audience for the tidings of salvation? Scanty support, crowded dwellings, a sickly and depressing atmosphere, employments protracted often to the verge of midnight or the sacred hours of Sabbath—yea, sometimes extending even beyond them—such things are undoubtedly great hindrances to the work which the Christian Church has had to do in our day, and cannot but materially mar its progress.

UNBELIEF AND RATIONALISM.

The things of this description which have emerged cannot properly be termed novelties; with the great bulk of them most of us who are students have been familiar for at least a quarter of a century. But the circumstance of their having been adopted and set forth with a kind of reforming-like energy and determination by some persons of note in the Church of England has acquired for them a notoriety they could not otherwise have obtained—has in a manner, forced them on men's notice, and thrown around them an air of interest and importance. And now we have the spectacle of a Church, which in time past has done much for the defence and elucidation of the truth, which has had the prestige of being one of the greatest bulwarks

of the Reformation, harboring within its pale, and sheltering, as by constitutional right, all shades of opinion, from the verge of Romish superstition and credulity to the bold negations of Socinianism. It is a matter deeply to be regretted, and cannot but tell to some extent unfavourably on the interests of religion in all the churches. Two results particularly are sure to develop themselves more fully than hitherto: First traditional belief will become widely shaken in many minds, that will not put themselves to the trouble of searching for any better foundation. Doubt and speculation are set adrift; dissatisfaction is felt with the old, simply because it is old, and there is a restless craving for something new, without any one being able to satisfy either himself or others as to what it should be, or where it is to be found. And then, among the more serious minded, there must be this other result—the growth of the spirit of individualism. Despairing of anything like Church order or consistency even in respect of things of the most vital nature, many will throw off all sense of responsibility regarding it; they will feel as if they must look simply to themselves enough if they can, in their own place, maintain and walk in the truth. Plymouthism is an example of this tendency, arising out of the confusion formerly existing. But the tendency may now be expected to receive a fresh impulse, as well with those who may continue a formal connection with the Church, as with others who may leave it. And in proportion as this tendency increases, the difficulty also will increase with those Churches that seek faithfully to carry out the Apostolic ideal of a true Christian Church.

STATE OF RELIGION IN ITALY, FRANCE, AND GERMANY.

DR. JOHN CAIRNS of Berwick delivered a most eloquent address on this subject—an address which has been compared to Dr Chalmers' finest efforts.

ITALY.

When we speak of Italy, let us remember that the great revolution, which alone made an evangelistic movement in it possible, at least beyond the kingdom of Sardinia, is not yet more than six years old. The decisive French campaign in Lombardy was in the summer of 1859; the memorable expedition of Garibaldi in Sicily and Naples, crowned by the Sardinian invasion of the States of the Church in the following year. These events are the foundation of the kingdom of Italy, and the foundation, in the adorable provi-