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THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON CIVILIZATION.

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XIII.

THE Church is a conventional standard of "respectability," and it offers certain social advantages not elsewhere to be found in our present transitional stage of belief. This consideration, with many minds long since freed from the trammels of theology, makes them give their influence, more or less, to sustain church organizations. And this will continue until Liberals, by organization, show their strength and offer as many social advantages as the Church possesses. In time, I have no doubt, the churches will drop their creeds and their senseless ceremonies, and be still sustained with all the good features that they now possess. There is to-day, perhaps, about as much infidelity in the Church as outside. Many orthodox clergy keep their theology to themselves, knowing that the people are tired of it. But comparatively few believe now all that the Bible plainly teaches. The most revolting portions of the Christian theology have been generally abandoned.

Liberal views have assumed a variety of phases. In the past, Universalism, an inconsistent though amiable form of Christianity, has been to thousands a stepping-stone from the evangelical theology to the position of the infidel. With such representatives as Rev. Dr. Miner, of Boston, it has, however, ceased to be a Liberalizing agency. The orthodox denominations are progressive; Universalism has become ossified, and its growth and development are no longer possible. Unitarianism is a "mild type of infidelity," and its talent and culture are all on the side of the army of progress. Modern Spiritualism has contributed to destroy confidence in the old theology. Its teachings have gone into the pulpit and pews alike, and thousands who do not cherish the name have, in reality, accepted the thing. The Free Religious Movement, led on by cultivated and earnest minds, like Frothingham, Abbot, and Higginson, is gaining strength rapidly, and shows how dissatisfied the people are with the creeds of the churches, and how ready they are to accept more advanced religious views. Materialism, which recognizes no other god but nature, no better worship than work, no better religion than morality, no "other life" than this, is the belief of no small number in this country as well as in Europe, and it is making