

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWSTRUE RELIGION THE BASIS OF
FREEDOM.*

By Rev. Professor Jordan, D.D.

This day is set apart by a certain section of the Protestant world to do honor to a great leader. Those of us who are not "Orangemen" are prepared to do justice and render grateful homage to the memory of a great man. We are prepared, also, to admit that it would be well if the Protestant pulpit paid a little more attention to history and biography as two of God's great books. We are not ready to accept a Church calendar: our fathers cast that off in their fight for freedom. When it comes to fighting for freedom, there may be loss, the small things have to be sacrificed in the supreme effort to hold fast the essentials. But this truth we must hold fast, which the calendar in its own way tries to express, viz.: that our religion and our social privileges have come to us, not through centuries of silent space, but through the lives of men and women like ourselves, through the toils of heroes and the tears of martyrs. We must place in the centre the life of our Master; but there are many lives which embody His teaching and reflect His glory, and through these we may find suggestions as to the varied meaning of divine revelation.

If we wish to deal with the history of our own race in a sermon, why do we take a text from the Bible which comes to us from a different race? Because we find in it the great principles of personal liberty and social progress. When we survey briefly the position to which our text relates we find suggestions of permanent and universal significance. Here is Judaism, a perfected system claiming finality and beginning to crush the souls it was meant to guide. The deliverance comes not through scepticism, not through mere discounted rebellion, but through a new revelation in Jesus. Freedom and joy came to these Galatians through Paul's enthusiastic preaching of this new gospel. The power of living purely was exemplified in Paul. He preached out of a deep experience: he had thrown off a tremendous burden and entered into a larger life. They caught something of his spirit, and, in a measure, tasted the same life. But when the first enthusiasm had passed they were attacked by fierce supporters of Judaism and found that it was difficult to be free. To enjoy liberty you must have clear, intelligent principles; after the hour of enthusiasm there must come the calm personal faith that can meet the attacks of the stern traditionalist.

Now we can take this situation and apply every point in it to the history of our race and our own life with its varied problems.

The Christian Church of the middle ages had become similar in spirit and method to that ancient Judaism. It claimed finality and perfection, yet there was much corruption and much noble life was hampered and crushed. The efforts to reform gently from within failed, and the great movement that we call "The Reformation" became absolutely necessary. Taken in its broad features the Reformation is a movement in which we glory and of which there is no need to be ashamed. Every young man should read Motley's History of the Dutch Republic; he would learn that William of Orange came of noble ancestry, and that a small country may play a great part. The political history

we cannot now discuss; but as we look back we must acknowledge that it was good for the nation to have done with the Stuarts, and by a drastic constitutional change to lay the foundation of real constitutional government and religious toleration. We may feel sympathy for Irish Roman Catholics who suffered for their loyalty to King and church; but if freedom was to be won there was no other way possible.

Who were the men who fought these battles? When we give due honor to men of science and philosophy for their contribution we can claim that the supreme battles were fought by men who were inspired by personal loyalty to Jesus Christ. In France the Roman Church succeeded largely in casting out the Protestants, and she has paid a terrible penalty. First, in becoming corrupt and time serving, and, second, in being rejected by the mass of the nation. We ought to thank God that in Britain nonconformity was not crushed; but through powerful processes, that are not yet ended, men of different forms of faith learned to live together.

In this great movement "the foolishness of preaching" has been honored of God and has played a great part in bringing comfort, inspiration and guidance to struggling men. Behind preaching there is this grand assumption that in every soul, in every hearer, there is a capacity of hearing the voice of God.

We can have sympathy with those Galatians. To maintain true liberty is a difficult task. Not by scepticism can it be maintained, but only by a pure, positive faith. Men cannot live on mere negation. A great historic church, with elaborate machinery, will always be stronger than the sceptical, indifferent crowd. But the attempt to force all Christians into one fold has had its trial and failed. In this land there must be liberty for all who obey the common law. The best way to protect our religion is by making it more intelligent and pure; a real service to God our Father and our fellowmen.

THE UNFAIRNESS OF STATISTICS.

(By Ulster Pat.)

I read that at a Toronto gathering a Rev. Isaac Hees said that the kid the women of North America wear "between their waists and their elbows" costs \$20,000,000; that they spend \$13,000,000 on poodle dogs; that the people spend \$14,000,000 on chewing gum, \$170,000,000 on confectionery, \$700,000,000 on jewellery and silver plate, \$300,000,000 on millinery and dress goods, an equal sum on tobacco, and \$1,200,000,000 on whiskey and beer, while the highest amount given in one year in Canada and the United States for missions has been \$8,000,000—price of a hair-cut for each Christian. It is right and proper to condemn extravagance and costly silliness, such as keeping poodle dogs and using chewing gum. But the expenditure on confectionery and jewellery, millinery and dress goods is not all waste, and since the speaker did not tell us, and we have not the means of knowing, how much of it was necessary, he would have done well to omit them altogether. As to beer and strong drink, both are not only unnecessary but pernicious, so the full amount of that expenditure is worse than wasted; and the figure indicates but a small part of the waste that evil entails.

It is, however, to the latter part of this statement that we take the strongest objection. It assumes that every man, woman and child in this Dominion and the neighboring Republic is a Christian and therefore is, or ought to be, a supporter of missions. Now this has only to be stated to show its absurdity.

A large proportion of the money so raised is for "home missions" to the very people who are included in order, one might suppose, to belittle what the churches are really doing—though, of course, Mr. Hees was not conscious of this. It is a popular fallacy that to become a Christian, a teetotaler, or to give up smoking or any other bad habit, tends to render a man stingy or selfish. The reverse is true. The drinker or smoker spends money freely upon himself or his boon companions, which the transformed or reformed man spends upon his family, with something over to aid others and support good works. But here such statisticians as Mr. Hees come in and help the scoffers in propagation of their fallacy, and many a Christian who is not a public speaker or writer does his little to spread the evil report. There are stingy Christians; but they are a small number, and they lose spiritually out of all proportion to what they gain materially. Instead of telling their neighbors of such, the brotherly part would be to pray in secret that they may see their folly, cease to be losers, and become gainers. This is a case in which the fervent love of brethren should cover faults.

It may surprise you, Mr. Editor, that I should believe anything so manifestly absurd; but it does appear to me that the average Christian—real, not nominal—gives more for what he regards as "God's work" than the average unbeliever spends for the wasteful things mentioned. Here again the statistics work unfairly. In each branch of "church work" the proportion per member is quoted as if that were the whole. And while ALL that is spent on drink and tobacco, etc., is included, the Christian does much that cannot be tabulated, in helping the poor, assisting those in difficulty, aiding the unfortunate, relieving the distressed, and a thousand and one ways the world never hears of.

Another mistake of the Church is calling what is done for men's comfort, or even what ministers to pride, "God's work." It may be necessary to have a place of meeting; but the luxurious temples, the grand organs, the chimes, the choirs—all these things, while they may be lawful, are as little connected with the service of God as are our ceiled dwellings, expensive furniture and lawns. Giving to them is not even "liberality" in the true sense of the word. One great evil in calling them so is that we thereby take from the sacredness of home. That was the plan established by God for His service. There Adam trained Abel and Seth. In the home Abraham ruled for God's glory. Isaac and Jacob brought up their families in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The people of God had their stated assemblies, but it was at home that the true Israelite was to teach his children and "talk" of the things of God.

As Ruskin points out, our church architecture is the sign and the outcome of the severance of our religion from our daily life. And the result has been, is, and must continue to be, disastrous to the family and to the Church.

Orillia, Ont.

The choir of Knox Church presented their leader, Mr. J. A. Aridge, with a mahogany music cabinet and a beautiful chair on the eve of his marriage.

Rev. D. C. Hossack, of Deer Park Church, has definitely resigned his pastorate, and will sever his connection with the ministry at the end of this month. Rev. G. R. Fasken, of St. Paul's Church, will act as Moderator until the vacancy is filled.

*Notes of sermon preached in St. Andrew's church, Ottawa, 12th July, 1908, from the words "Stand fast therefore in the liberty, etc." Gal. 5:1.