

denying the charge. We are therefore reluctantly compelled to believe that a Christian preacher, from his place in the sacred desk, applied to one of the greatest, noblest and purest women that ever lived an epithet which is properly applicable only to the most degraded of their sex.

BELIEF AND CONDUCT.

Now, let us put the best possible face upon the matter. Let it be assumed that the reverend gentleman believed what he said. Does it not strike every reader of these lines that a man who talks so much about that of which he knows so little must be a very unsafe guide? Is it not fair to conclude that, since he is hopelessly astray about so many matters pertaining to the life that now is, he cannot be competent to tell us much worth knowing about the life that is to come? George Eliot's record has been before the world for years. Nobody who is interested in her has any excuse for remaining ignorant of it. Certainly no man who assails her memory has any excuse if he does so without making himself acquainted at least with the leading facts of her life. It is clear that Mr. Johnston knows no more about George Eliot's life than he knows about that of the author of *Common Sense*. To say that she was once a Methodist is to betray a depth of ignorance almost too profound to be credited. To use a classic phrase, it is a dead give-away. How would Mr. Johnston like it if the world at large were to say that gross ignorance like this is the direct and inevitable result of entertaining orthodox beliefs? Yet to say so would be just as sensible, just as manly, just as honest, just as truthful, as to say that immoral conduct is the legitimate result of heterodox beliefs.

THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST AND THE TEACHINGS OF THE REV. HUGH JOHNSTON.

BUT to say of George Eliot that she was a wanton—and we ask pardon of her august shade for repeating the foul epithet in connection with her name—is to reach a lower depth still. A man has no right to plead his ignorance in a case of this kind. It argues something beyond and much worse than ignorance. It is indicative of an utter disregard for the plain principle of right and wrong. Does the Rev. Hugh Johnston pretend to teach the doctrines of Christ? The Son of Man, it will be remembered, was the friend of publicans and sinners. In reply to the question: "Who is my neighbour?" he indicated a heretic and an alien. When the woman taken in adultery was brought to him for reprobation, his injunction was: "Let him that is without sin among you first cast a stone at her!" Such was the conduct of the Founder of the Christian faith towards those who were weak and erring, and even towards those who had sinned deeply and often. But George Eliot was a woman of spotless purity, who was led into taking a false position in the eyes of the world through her wish to secure the comfort and happiness of one she dearly loved, and whose comfort and happiness could be secured in no other way. She took this step after mature deliberation and a careful counting of the cost. All to whom her name and fame are dear will regret that she sacrificed herself, but those who are familiar with the circumstances will judge it from an altogether exceptional point of view. No one whose opinion was worth having ever thought the less of her for her sacrifice, whatever they may have thought of Mr. George Henry Lewes. She had the entrée of all that was best and purest in English society. Reverend bishops and prelates entertained her in their houses, and felt

honoured by her association with their wives and daughters. But why pursue the subject further? It is not debatable. The facts are accessible to all the world, and if the Rev. Hugh Johnston had made himself acquainted with them before preaching his sermon he would have acted not only more conscientiously but more wisely, for we should then, doubtless, have been spared the sermon altogether.

GRATIANO'S PHRASE REVERSED.

MR. WATTS, upon being made acquainted with the facts, doubtless felt that such a chance was not likely to come in his way again very soon. He probably regarded the reverend gentleman as his meat, and proceeded to make minced veal of him in his paper, after the most approved receipt. And here Mr. Johnston gave further evidence of his want of worldly wisdom. He allowed himself to be goaded into writing a long reply. This has formed the subject of a further response on Mr. Watts's part, and there have since been rebutters and sur-rebutters. "Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip," says Gratiano, in the play. In the present instance, however, it is clearly the infidel who has his opponent on the hip. The latter is evidently no match for his secular antagonist as a dialectician, and he had, moreover, laid himself open to the mince-meat process by his wild and unfounded statements. We would gladly sympathize with him if we could, but the man who, from a Christian pulpit, refers to George Eliot in such terms as Mr. Johnston has done, richly deserves all he gets.

—"If he may
Find mercy in the law, 'tis his; if none,
Let him not seek't of us."

MR. O'BRIEN IN TORONTO.

MR. O'BRIEN has come to Toronto, and has spoken his piece to a great crowd in the Queen's Park; but he and his friends can hardly congratulate themselves upon the result of his mission. Not ten per cent. of those who turned out to hear him received his remarks with any manifestations of favour, and this small percentage included the local members of the league who were in a measure committed to him beforehand. Fully twenty-five per cent. of his audience were actively or contemptuously hostile. His speech, which was from first to last a windy travesty, was not addressed to the people before him, but to the thousands of Irish in the United States who will know nothing about the matter except from newspaper reports. One thing is certain: those who are responsible for O'Brien's mission to Canada are no true friends of Ireland. His visit has been the means of alienating from the Irish cause thousands of persons who have all along been favourable to it, but who have necessarily been driven to the conclusion that no just cause needs to be bolstered up by impudent misrepresentation and lies. He has even been the means of making a popular hero of Lord Lansdowne, a gentleman who had not previously aroused any great amount of popular enthusiasm, and concerning whom most of us were considerably indifferent. Then, he has created ill-blood between persons who have to pass their lives side by side in Canada as neighbours, and who were getting along very smoothly together until he appeared on the scene to set them by the ears. All these things, we repeat, he has accomplished by his flying visit. As to any good which may be set off against all these things, there is not, so far as can be seen, a single particle. We repeat that he has seriously damaged the cause he came to advocate, and that he has created unnecessary prejudice in the minds of the jury. The Irish question fairly falls upon us. So far as Canadians are concerned, they want to hear no more of Ireland and her wrongs for many a day to come.