

Church, and perhaps the finest book on the subject is by the late Bishop Kingdon, of Fredericton. The question of Evening Communion is one solely for practical consideration. A High Church Professor in a Theological College once put a question in a paper on Pastoral Work, inviting from the men the frankest possible answers, "What would you do if a servant-girl said she could not possibly get out for early Communion?" One of the students replied: "I would have it at any hour of the day or night when she could come." This is how the matter should be regarded. We must do nothing to prevent people from sharing in "the children's bread." Holy Communion in the evening, or in the morning, or at mid-day, or in the afternoon is in fullest accord with the spirit of true liberty taught in the New Testament and in harmony with the practical needs of to-day.

Colour Prejudice

Two instances of prejudice against coloured people have recently become known, if not notorious. In the United States a negro was railway mail clerk on a train, and under him was a white subordinate. But this could not be tolerated, and the Congressman from the district was asked to investigate and bring about a change. He found that the circumstances were due to the merit system of the Civil Service, for the Commission had conducted an examination without asking any questions about colour of skin, eyes, or hair. As it happened, a negro answered them better than some of the white men, and but for the examination the man would have had no chance to obtain the superior position. The Congressman assured the authorities at Washington that the people in his district would not tolerate being placed in charge of a coloured mail car clerk with white clerks as helpers, and an order has now been issued, making the negro the helper. In England something similar seems to have happened. The best-equipped candidate for District Medical Officer in a part of London was a coloured man, but the Guardians refused him the appointment on the ground that "the poor are a great deal more fastidious than people imagine. They would refuse to be attended by a man of colour." It is at least satisfactory to know that in both cases the men of colour were competent and well equipped. But the problem has not been solved in either case.

The Bible on the Stage

It is with great regret that we have noticed the sanction of Bible plays for the English stage, because we are strongly of opinion that the result will be harmful to the interests of true religion. We are not now concerned with any principle of dramatic treatment, but we deplore the inevitable vulgarization of the matchless stories of the Bible by the addition of modern elements of a very objectionable character. From the description of "Joseph and His Brethren" it is clear that the Bible has not been permitted to tell its own story, and, although the "Times" favours the introduction of these plays, it takes exception to this particular feature. The adapter, with his eye on money interests, has introduced personal and melodramatic touches which, as one able dramatic critic says, tends to make the whole story a caricature. Then, in another play the writer actually follows up his sacred lines, as the "Times" remarks, "with a line of comic relief," the effect of which is only to make the audience uncomfortable. When we treat religion and the Bible as fiction we may be perfectly certain that the religious life of those who attend such exhibitions is not very strong or high, and we heartily agree with the writer who says that "the Bible is not meant to be acted, but to be revered, and studied, and loved."

"Forward-Looking"

A very distinguished surgeon, who died three months ago at the age of eighty-four, Sir Jonathan Hutchinson, left instructions for an inscription to be placed upon his gravestone: "A man of hope and forward-looking mind." In view of the great surgeon's life and work this inscription is wonderfully illuminative of his character. He lived with cancer, he discovered the cause of certain terrible taints in children, he believed he discovered the cause of leprosy to lie in badly-cured fish, and at an age when other successful men are pursuing their own health he was pursuing leprosy through Africa and India. To him human misery was almost always at its worst, for he knew practically every abomination from childhood up to old age. And yet, in spite of all the horrible experiences connected with the human body and mind, this physician, who had watched the world for eighty years and mingled with sin and suffering at their worst, expresses himself "a man of hope." Why should he have had this magnificent expectation? It was due to nothing else than his splendid religious convictions. He belonged to that noble section of Christ's Church, the Society of Friends, and in spite of all that he had to face in regard to human iniquity and wretchedness, he was certain that better days would come, and that the future would bring joy rather than sorrow. This is the true spirit of the New Testament Christian. The outlook on the future is always to be marked by true hopefulness. The Christian cannot help being optimistic; not, however, with the cheap, shallow belief that everything is for the best, but as the result of a steady, definite look at the worst in human life, and then of a conviction that through the redemption in Christ Jesus great transformations are certain to be effected.

RELIGION AND MORALITY

Is there any necessary connection between religion and morality? It is a definite and pertinent question. We ask it just now, in view of a recent statement by a well-known English writer, Mr. William Archer, who, in an article, has discussed the question of "Eternal Verities." He copied the phrase for the purpose of criticism from a book by Dr. H. B. Gray on "The Public Schools and the Empire." In Dr. Gray's opinion "Eternal Verities" are the truths found in the New Testament. Mr. Archer thereupon contends strongly as to the relative merits of morality and religion, and argues in favour of a morality that is altogether separate from religion.

His first point is that morality is superior to religion as a guide for human life, because it is older. This is certainly surprising, because the greatest authorities assure us that the earliest races of mankind invariably give us religion as the basis of their morality. Countries so dissimilar as India, Assyria, and Egypt are all alike in this respect. Not only so, but quite apart from history, when we examine the prehistoric remains found among existing savages it is impossible to discover any traces of a morality which is independent of religion.

Mr. Archer's second argument is that religion is decidedly inferior to morality simply because it is historic, thereby arguing that all religions are inferior because they are historical. This also is a puzzling position to maintain, for we cannot see why anything historical should be thereby robbed of value. Surely morality itself may be regarded as historical, and, so far as religion is concerned, it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand how you could have religion expressed except in the form of history, whether in persons or institutions.

Mr. Archer's third contention is that moral-

ity is safer than religion, because, unlike religion, morality can be continually verified in personal experience. It is astonishing that a thoughtful man can take this ground, because to many Christians the verification in experience is the chief reason why they cling to their religion. It is because they find nothing else so capable of meeting the storm and stress of life, nothing else that so effectively deals with the hidden realms of thought, feeling, and motives that they cling with tenacity to the Christian religion. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the New Testament is the most powerful work on morality simply because it is the profoundest book on religion.

The explanation of this is that Christianity provides a perfect morality in a perfect life. The great and unique contribution Jesus Christ makes to ethics and religion is Himself, and when this is realized we see that the Christian life is a unity in its conception of love as fulfilling all righteousness. The obligation of universal love as emanating from Christ is pre-eminently the contribution of Christianity to the ethical thought of the world. Further, as Lotze suggested, Christianity really gives much deeper meaning to the things in which it seems to agree with other religions. The moral law becomes the will of the personal father. This is only another way of saying that Christianity is Christ. Further, the Gospel may be said to add an entirely new realm of morality—that of the so-called passive virtues of the beatitudes. Then, too, it brings into morality an absolutely new spirit—the spirit of the free and joyful obedience of the child to the father. Nor may we forget the great thought of Romanes that the teaching of Christ is equally remarkable for what it does not contain. That able and thoughtful scientific writer speaks of "the absence from the biography of Christ of any doctrines which the subsequent growth of human knowledge—whether in natural science, ethics, political economy, or elsewhere—has had to discount. This negative argument is really almost as strong as is the positive one from what Christ did teach."

If only men like Mr. Archer realized the secret of the influence of their environment they would soon see that all the modern teaching about the Brotherhood of Man has really sprung from our Lord's teaching about the Fatherhood of God. As a great German writer has said: "Humanity in the highest sense was brought into the world by Christianity." If human life was not to spend itself simply and solely in expressions of sympathy, if the sacrifice of self for others was to rise to its highest pitch as a moral duty, then religious motives were needed, and this shows beyond all question the intimate and inevitable connection between religion and morality.

Last of all and greatest of all, the world's experience has proved beyond all question that Jesus Christ has had, and still has, peculiar power to make His moral teaching effective in the lives of men. It is not sufficient to provide man with an ideal; he must also have a dynamic whereby to realize the ideal. Men like Rousseau, Strauss, and John Stuart Mill are full of testimonies to the character of Christ and to the value of the New Testament as a rule of conduct, but as Lecky explicitly recognizes, there is something beyond this in Christianity, namely, the power to make morally energetic what is depicted as Christ's and the Christian's ideal. The more, therefore, we ponder the questions of religion and morality and view them in the light of history and experience, the more we shall become convinced that they are inextricably bound up together as cause and effect, and that of this, as of many more things, we may use the words, "What God hath joined, let not man put asunder."