

when they come to know the history of the Canon, and when once they find that the Canon of the New Testament was not fixed finally till the fourth century, they are apt to swing to the opposite extreme and fancy that the New Testament has little more authority than an ordinary book." Finally, he prefers the manly and honest course of facing doubt and ascertaining what it has to say for itself, instead of ignoring the "difficulty" and nibbling at the edges of it. The reason why there is so much cryptic scepticism amongst us is to be found in the systematic repression of all open statement of unpalatable views. These have full course amongst our young men, for they work their way in secret; and those who ought to meet them in the light of day, do not choose to do so. Human intellects cannot be always kept in leading-strings; the time is sure to come when the treatment which is natural enough where you have to deal with children, inquisitive on forbidden subjects, will no longer serve. The consequence is, as Dr. Blaikie justly observes, that as old illusions are dispelled, our young men "swing round" into hopeless and confirmed infidelity. We have no fears for the future of the Christian religion; but we believe that one of the chief dangers which menace it in Canada arises out of that evasive dread of criticism, often so morbid as to betray secret distrust in the power of truth. Objections, to be met, must be stated, and that by those who believe in them; the "shock" which comes to faith is the immediate consequence of a zeal without knowledge. The article on "Prayer," for example, in the present number, represents substantially the views of the Rev. Mr. Knight, of Dundee. Why should Canadian Christians fear to hear statements which were listened to with attention in General Assemblies, and scattered broadcast through the *Contemporary Review*? The same columns are open for reply, and that is all that can reasonably be asked; for where would be the utility of excluding an earnest and reverent, though it may be an erroneous, statement of the natural order of the universe, when almost every intelligent man or woman is fully aware that the view is maintained and expounded in England? It is not confidence, but the lack of it which is the parent of this unreasoning terror, and what we clearly want in Canada is a broader tolerance of opinion, with less tim-

idity; greater faith in Christian doctrine, and less of owlish blinking at current forms of doubt.

Before the middle of the month the English Parliament will have been prorogued. The session has been in many respects a singular one. Mr. Disraeli's government, with a majority of seventy at its back, has acted as timorously as if it held office on sufferance. Most of its measures will pass, so far as their titles are concerned; and that seems to be all the Premier cares for. Sir Stafford Northcote's scheme for the reduction of the National Debt, and Mr. Cross's Masters and Workmen Bill, are the only measures which have passed through the ordeal triumphantly. The Pollution of Rivers Bill, the Friendly Societies Bill, the Tenant Right Bill, the Food and Drugs Bill, were not worth much at the first, and they have been completely emasculated during their progress. The Merchant Shipping Bill would have been among the "innocents," if Mr. Plimsoll had not uttered some remarkably strong language. On the other hand, the Liberal party remains as demoralized as ever. Its leader, the Marquis of Hartington, spends most of his time in filling the part of *claqueur* to Mr. Disraeli. When Mr. Trevelyan moved the second reading of his bill to establish household suffrage in the counties, or, in other words, to assimilate the county and borough franchise, the Marquis approved of the principle, but refused to support the Bill. When the House divided, he and Mr. Goschen left the House; Messrs. Gladstone, Bright, Forster, and Childers voted for the Bill, and Mr. Lowe against it. It is clear that the Liberal party is not likely to emerge from the wilderness for many a long day.

The proposals of the Government touching the intended visit of the Prince of Wales to India can hardly be called extravagant or unreasonable. Those who know India best feel assured that, if judiciously managed, this six months' excursion may be productive of immense good. Prof. Fawcett, who is one of these, supported the Government scheme, his only objection being to charging any part of the bill to the Indian exchequer. The Marquis of Hartington thought the sum of £60,000 too small. Mr. Wyndham, who agreed with him, stated that Lord Elgin's tour cost