

**H**ARDLY anything can be worse, or ever has been worse in the history of Parliaments, than the conduct of the Opposition in the English House of Commons. Even if they were as much in the right as most educated people consider them to be in the wrong, the manner in which they seek to obstruct every kind of legislation is scandalous and iniquitous. It is no matter what the measure may be, even if it is one which has been advocated by themselves, some member of the party will be found to object to it; and if the objection is too absurd, the leaders will stand aloof and allow the business of the Government to be impeded by their irresponsible followers. In consequence of these obstructions, measure after measure of obvious utility has to be abandoned, and an Autumn Session is not unlikely to be held. Among those measures which are held over is the Tithes Bill, a matter of pressing necessity, unless we are willing to legalise plunder or else to enforce an unpleasant impost at the point of the bayonet. But worst of all is the opposition to the compensation clause in the Licensing Bill. Mr. Gladstone himself, in former years, would not consent to robbing the inn-keepers and liquor-sellers, but now that he is in opposition and sees a way of embarrassing the Government, he thinks there is a great deal in the principle upon which compensation is refused. It has been discovered, forsooth, that the publican has no legal right to the renewal of his lease. No one, however, save the most fanatical of prohibitionists, can deny that he has an equitable right; and equity is a fully recognized principle in English legislation. Even if the trade of the liquor-seller is a sin, it cannot be called a crime, since it has been sanctioned by law; and it can hardly be thought worse than slave-holding. Yet the British Parliament paid a large indemnity to the owners when the slaves in the West Indies were emancipated. It was only the other day that closure was first found necessary in the English Parliament, and now this provision seems to be ineffectual. This is a "Reformed Parliament" with a vengeance; with a House of Lords merely permitted to exist on condition of seldom venturing to put on the brake.

**I**T appears that we are to have "the simple truth" about Russia at last. Not only has Mr. Kennan made revelations as to the treatment of political offenders and non-offenders, the accuracy of which has not been seriously impugned; but everything which we are learning from other sources tends to confirm and strengthen the impression which he produced. One great obstacle in the way of real knowledge of Russian affairs is found in the frightfully mendacious character of the people. This quality of the Russian Government has been illustrated by many travellers in Central Asia, and it was set forth in a manner which would have been highly entertaining, if it had not been so horrible, in some articles recently published in the *Fortnightly Review*. In the current number of this periodical there is an article by Mr. E. B. Lanin, on "Russian Prisons: the Simple Truth," which reveals a terrible state of things. "No wonder," says the writer, "that the bewildered British public is at a loss what to believe, and is desirous of unearthing fresh facts, unvarnished by political prejudice and uncoloured by personal feeling"; no wonder, he says, when, close upon the revelations of Mr. George Kennan comes the assurance of an official representative of Russia solemnly declaring "that the only trait in the Russian prison system calculated to astonish Englishmen is the excessive indulgence with which Russian convicts are treated!" And so Mr. Lanin decides to give us the simple truth, although he warns us that every statement of his, however abundantly proved, will be denied by the agents of the Russian Government. At the same time we are glad to see that a more systematic effort is being made in the same direction by the publication of a penny monthly magazine, entitled "Free Russia," in London, which is also issued from New York. The conductors declare that the object of their "small leaflet"—it is rather more than this—is to utilise in the interests of Russian freedom the knowledge already acquired, and the feelings which that knowledge has already aroused. "As Russians," they say, "we cannot regard the ill-treatment of political offenders by the Russian Government as our greatest grievance. The wrongs inflicted upon the millions of peasantry, the stifling of the spiritual life of our whole gifted race, the corruption of public morals, created by the wanton despotism—these are the great crimes of our Government against Russia, urging her faithful children to rebellion." We fear that all this is too true.

WORDS should be used as the signs, not as the substitutes, of ideas.

### PROFESSOR HUXLEY ON "LUX MUNDI."

**D**R. HUXLEY seems never to lose a chance of having a fling at Christianity. Whether it is a speaker at a Church Congress whom he thinks he has caught tripping, or a preacher out of whose unguarded rhetoric he sees an opportunity of making capital, or a controversy between contending sections of the Christian army, he is ever ready to embrace an opportunity of making an assault upon the Church and the Bible.

It is of no use expressing regret at such exhibitions on the part of a man so distinguished and apparently so much in earnest as Professor Huxley. We might, indeed, hope that a man, who is himself a product of Christianity, might handle a little more tenderly the source of his own intellectual and moral life. It would not be unreasonable to expect that so eminent an advocate and promoter of human civilization should show some reverence for that religion, and for the concrete embodiment of that religion, which has been the greatest civilizer that the world has ever seen; but none of these things move Dr. Huxley. Let any rash theologian venture for a moment into the region of science, let him come in the most conciliatory spirit, wishing to make terms of peace between religion, or even theology and science, and he is instantly assaulted, and generally in a most unscientific temper, by one whose business it is to know nothing of human passions.

Such being the disposition and habit of Dr. Huxley, it was not to be expected that he should keep aloof from the discussion excited by the publication of "Lux Mundi," and he seems to derive great satisfaction from the conclusion at which he arrives, that both sides in the controversy are equally in the wrong. It is of no use, he says, trying to reconcile the authority of the New Testament with recent theories of the origin of the Old Testament. Unless the contents of the Old Testament, he says, are historical in the same sense as the received accounts of the execution of Charles I., then the references to them in the New Testament cannot be justified; and in that case the New Testament must go after the old.

Thus far, he seems to take substantially the line adopted by Canon Liddon in his assault upon the book. But having, for a moment, adopted the conservative, orthodox point of view, he immediately turns upon its defenders, and virtually tells them that no man in his senses can accept the accounts of the Fall and the Deluge for example, as historical narratives. One story of which he makes sport more than once is the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt. His speaking of this as the "transubstantiation of Lot's wife" reminds us of the kind of taste which he showed in his controversy with the Bishop of Peterborough, in his allusions to the "Gergasene pigs." Surely the story of Lot's wife is a perfectly intelligible one. A person caught and smothered in a tempest of the kind which often rages in the valley of the Dead Sea might quite properly be spoken of as being turned into a pillar of salt. This is so small a matter that it was scarcely worth a reference except to show how small a big man like Dr. Huxley may be at times.

One great source of satisfaction to this scientific student is found in the different theories which Christian writers and theologians have propounded with regard to the contents of the Bible, and their relation to history and to science. Thus the history of Creation has been handled in many different ways, and Dr. Huxley would infer from the disagreements among theologians that there is no reasonable way of understanding the first chapter of Genesis, except that of simply regarding it as Hebrew mythology. So with regard to the Fall. Is it a fact, or an allegory, or a legend? So with regard to the Flood. Are we to hold that it covered the whole earth, or only a certain portion of the earth?

He has two ways of dealing with these theories. On the one hand, he sets the defenders opposite to each other, and asks us what we think of a position which needs to be kept in so many different and contradictory manners. Then he assaults this or that defender, and shows that his position is untenable. Now, if the temper of Dr. Huxley's attack were tolerable, we should welcome him, not as an enemy, but as a friend. What Christian, who believes in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, can for one moment desire to remain in error on any subject? Falsehood can do good to none; and we know that, if our Master were personally and visibly among us, He would urge us incessantly to seek truth and ensue it, whether it was moral truth, historical truth, or any other kind.

But as we follow the criticisms of Professor Huxley, we do not feel that he has proved to us the uselessness of

the Old Testament or the untrustworthiness of the "Founder of Christianity." Supposing that we admit that there have been great differences between the methods adopted by theologians in the exposition and defence of the Bible and of the Gospel—and these two are not identical—what inference must be drawn from such a concession? Surely not that the thing defended is indefensible. Men of science have differed widely. One generation has overthrown the work of its predecessor, to be itself left behind by that which came after it.

Or suppose that we confess our inability to decide between Mr. Gore and Dr. Liddon, is that a reason why we should reduce the contents of the Old Testament to legend, or deny the authority of the New Testament? Supposing that it should finally be settled that the Old Testament Scriptures consist of a series of documents, edited and completed by writers living long after the time of their origin, and that these documents so edited were employed by prophets sent from God to illustrate the Divine dealings with the world, how should such a theory interfere with their value or their authority? And, after all, Dr. Huxley has not proved that there is no supernatural agency in the world.

But even if we confess, which we are not prepared to do, that we must leave the Old Testament as an unsolvable problem, is that a reason why we should give up the Gospel of Jesus Christ or any part of its contents? Dr. Huxley will hardly speak with contempt of the recently departed Dr. Delitzsch, of Leipzig; and we think he might learn a lesson from the simplicity and candour displayed by that great scholar in his recent publication on Genesis. Dr. Delitzsch frankly admitted that the school of Wellhausen had led him to reconsider some of his earlier theories; but he says this does in no way disquiet or unsettle his faith. "I believe," he says, "in the Easter Message;" and so long as we can believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the hope of the Gospel cannot be torn from us.

### MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

**"THE WEEK,"** I am glad to see, fully recognizes the difficulties in the way of anything like systematic religious instruction in the public schools as part of a legally-prescribed course of study. At the same time it is rightly anxious that moral education should not be neglected; and it thinks that such education might partake of a certain religious character without giving just cause for objection in any quarter, provided the matter were left to be regulated, locally, under some arrangement not of too formal a character between ratepayers, trustees and teachers. This at least is my understanding of THE WEEK's position, which to me seems a very reasonable one. The chief reserves I am disposed to make are not on grounds of equity, but are connected with the question of feasibility.

In a former article I indicated my opinion that the best intellectual results were not to be expected from any state-directed system of education; and to-day I must profess a more deeply-founded conviction that state schools have a special inaptitude for moral and religious teaching. Who would dream of asking any form of political government to supply our pulpits—to train and appoint ministers of the gospel? The idea will strike everyone as absurd. But when we come to think of it a certain portion of the same absurdity adheres to the idea that the state can adequately provide, what THE WEEK desiderates, preachers of righteousness in all our public schools. It is the duty of the State, we are told, "to prescribe and enforce a course of thorough moral training in the schools." But would not a course of "thorough moral training" imply an army of thorough moral trainers? A text-book will not do the business, however intelligently expounded; and, in most cases, it is not too much to say, such a book would not be very intelligently expounded. It is a grave question whether the learning off by rote of moral precepts might not do more harm than good. Certainly I should consider it dangerous to have a text-book of morality taught in a half-hearted indifferent way; better no moral teaching at all than that. What is wanted above all things in a teacher of morality is a certain high moral quality, which not only gives a natural insight into moral questions but creates a desire for the moral elevation of others. Such a person will speak with conviction and power and will sow seeds, even in apparently thoughtless minds, that may afterwards germinate into right principles. But what proportion of teachers of this stamp can we get? Is there one to be had for ten that can teach arithmetic and geography with a fair degree of efficiency? Perhaps even in the pulpit it is the exception rather than the rule to find men who can really touch the hearts of their hearers; and yet no one enters the pulpit without having been, as he professes at least to believe, divinely called thereto.

It may be asked how much better off we should be if education were left to private enterprise? The question is a fair one and should be answered some day; but to-day I prefer to apply myself to the practical question of what, under the disadvantages, whatever they may be, of our present situation, may be done to infuse a sound moral element into our public school education? The hopeful