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Ottawa, Wednesday, 23d Jan. 1900.

Many of the Presbyteries are disapproving of the remit in relation to the appointment of travelling Secretaries for Sabbath Schools, but few are giving reasons to the public, or suggesting an alternative. The subject is evidently being pretty fully discussed, would it not be well to take the Church more fully into confidence?

It is being pretty generally conceded that Synods should have greater powers conferred upon them. Will the increased dignity thus given tend to increase the attendance at this Court. We think it will not, and suggest two further changes to secure this, viz., Autumnal Synods, and the payment of travelling expenses of members.

As we go to press the sad intelligence is flashed across the Atlantic that our beloved Queen has obeyed the summons which invited her to "Come up higher." People in lowly stations in life, as well as those born to the purple, will feel this death as a personal loss, because she had endeared herself to all classes of her subjects, by her moral worth, her wisdom, but above all by her true womanliness of character.

It is pitiable when a man who occupies a public position of very considerable influence betrays a narrowness of view that marks him as entirely unfitted for the place he has been chosen to fill. Especially is this to be regretted when the position is one that has to do with the education of our children and youth. That a man should deliberately condemn as useless that system of education by means of which the men of the past generation have been trained, declaring it utterly worthless in comparison with a system which has become to himself a fad, only stamps that man is unfit for the position he holds. No man of sane judgment will declare the systems of the past entirely worthless.

## RELIGION WITHOUT THEOLOGY.

During the Nineteenth Century the area of human knowledge in many spheres has been greatly enlarged, and the new knowledge has been successfully applied in the arts and industries, furnishing improved means of communication and multiplying the comforts and conveniences of human life. During the same century attempts have been made to show that theology is not a form of knowledge, and that religion can flourish better without it than with it. This aversion to theology exists in a vague way among people well disposed to religion as they conceive it, who think that they need "a simple gospel," and also among certain cultured classes who admire the aesthetic side of religion but detest technical theology and despise dogma. But there have been definite attempts to formulate reasons why theology should be "improved off the face of the earth" and in some cases to provide a religion without doctrine. Not to speak of the Ethical Church, which is an attempt to cultivate morality in the members while letting specially religious truths alone, we may mention "Agnosticism" which claimed all the world of knowledge for "science" and left for religion the misty, unknown regions beyond, and Positivism which set up its ideal substitute for God in the form of the worship of humanity. It is not matter of surprise that with these things in the air so long they have produced a re-action, and many people now claim to know all about the spirit and in the name of religion profess to dispense with science and all its works. The same thing lies behind both these extremes—a lack of clear knowledge and definite, intelligent belief.

In "The Nineteenth Century," for December, Mr. Leslie Stephen gives a review of the life of Thomas Henry Huxley. Huxley cannot be classed as a doubting Thomas, for he was a great debater and he seemed to be cock sure about everything. He knew exactly what you can know and cannot know about body and mind, the world and God. Mr. Stephen has great admiration for Huxley's fighting qualities. He says:

"Whatever his success, the strongest antagonist could not deny to him the praise due to a strenuous and honorable combatant. The most careless Gallio looking on from the outer ring might be roused to applaud the intellectual gladiator who could hit out so straight from the shoulder and fairly knock accomplished prelates out of time. Many could admire 'Darwin's bulldog,' as he called himself, even if they felt some sympathy with the bull who had him pinned."

Here is the end of all philosophy according to T. H. Huxley:

"Adherence to fact is the base of his philosophy. Agnosticism according to him means simply, you are not to accept as an established fact anything not fairly proved. It led to conclusions which seemed paradoxical to some readers. He used, as he said, 'materialistic terminology' and repudiated materialistic philosophy. Physiology proves that, in fact, the brain is a mechanism and the organised body an automaton. Psychology shows equally that every phenomenon must, as a fact, be an affection of mind. You must not pervert or go beyond fact. Materialism and spiritualism are opposite poles of the same absurdity—the absurdity of assuming that we know anything about either spirit or matter.

This is quite sharp and definite, but it is absurd to suppose that such philosophy can satisfy intelligent men. It reduces all life and thought to a delusion and a snare.

What, then, is to become of religion? This is Huxley's statement in a letter to Romanes:

The only religion which appeals to me is prophetic Judaism; add to it something from Goethe, and there is a religion for men.

That is certainly not a religion for women and children, and we do not think it is a religion for men. The whole conception is a mechanical one. It furnishes a recipe for making a religion by culling a few fine things from here and there. Professor Huxley certainly did fine work in Biology, but we cannot regard his dabblings in philosophy or his making of religion as a great success. In our survey of the whole subject we are driven to the conclusion that men need an intelligent faith in God and a definite view of His dealings with mankind. Judaism, the Stoics, and the rest, can only be understood as a part of the great world movement; in many ways God has manifested Himself, but the highest revelation, which brings the key to all, is in His Son Jesus Christ. The man of science may find interest in his work, and to be a man of science at all he must recognize an universal order, an idea in which God is implied; but the mass of men, if they have no religious beliefs, will wander off into all kinds of absurdities and fall victims to impostors, who with brazen impudence give themselves out as possessing the key to life's mysteries. In fact one of the weaknesses of our own times is the lack of clear, strong, religious convictions, and we need to have the great truths of revelation set forth in all their strength and beauty so as to learn the meaning of that grand word, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

Perhaps the oldest magazine, and one of the best known, in the United States, is Harper's Monthly Magazine. The January number opens a year which is to be marked by the special attention given to fiction. The opening chapters of Gilbert Parker's novel, "The Right of Way," promise that the story will be one of the strongest yet written by this brilliant Canadian. Among the short stories, "A Mixed Proposal" and "Dr. Gowdy and the Squash" are very amusing. All readers of Harper's are glad to see the Editor's Easy Chair filled once more, and by so able a man as William Dean Howells. Harper and Brothers, New York.

The Church manager has his innings now, and from all reports he is thoroughly enjoying himself. The croaker is having a hard time of it this year. He has thriven amazingly for some time. Last year he began to weaken, but this year he has become hopelessly debilitated. The manager is so full of figures on the right side of the balance sheet, and of propositions for bigger things in the future, that the croaker has no chance to catch the chairman's eye, or to hold the floor if that functionary can no longer evade him. For the people only smile indulgently at such as he when the balance is on the right side. He must wait for the seven thin years to come back, and may he wait long!

Three names are now in nomination for the next Moderators of the General Assembly: Dr. Hamilton, of Motherwell; Dr. Bryce, of Manitoba; and Dr. Warden, of Toronto.