

MAY 1889.

The Theological Monthly

THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF THE TEMPLE.

A CHAPTER IN APOSTOLIC CHURCH HISTORY.

BUILT of immense blocks of beautiful white limestone from the royal quarries under Bezetha¹, a hill in the north of Jerusalem, and gleaming with gold and marble, the temple of Herod must have been a splendid spectacle. When Christ stepped within its precincts, at the beginning of His public ministry, six and forty years had passed since the Judæan king, in the eighteenth year of his reign, laid its foundation, as much for the honour of himself as for the glory of Almighty God. It stood upon the site formerly occupied by the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel, the threshing floor of Araunah, upon the summit of Mount Moriah, where Jehovah had appeared to David.² According to Maimonides, this was the exact spot on which Abraham had reared his altar when about to offer Isaac, and Noah his when he issued from the ark, the precise locality in which Cain and Abel had presented their gifts unto Jehovah, and Adam had first adored the Unseen. More reliable is the information supplied by recent explorations,³ that to it corresponds, either in whole

¹ Warren, *Underground Jerusalem*, p. 60.

² 2 Chron. iii. 1.

³ Warren, *The Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 8; Conder, *Handbook to the Bible*, p. 359; King, *Recent Discoveries on the Temple Hill*, p. 192; Schürer, in *Riehm's Handwörterbuch*, p. 1,637.

or in part, the quadrangular enclosure on which rests the modern *Haram esh-Sherif*, or Noble Sanctuary of the Mohammedans. The level area on which Herod's temple upreared its polished walls and golden gates, marble pillars and glittering roofs, had been first artificially prepared by Solomon, and afterwards enlarged, in fact, doubled, by Herod. It was surrounded by a massive wall, in the estimation of Josephus,⁴ "the most prodigious work that was ever heard of by man." Towards the north end of this area—according to Warren, "on the raised platform, paved with stone, from which now rises the well-known Mosque Kubbet es-Sakhra, with its beautifully-proportioned dome;" according to Ferguson,⁵ more towards the south-west part of the Haram—the temple, with its cloisters and courts, stretched from east to west. It also was encompassed by a wall or "partition made of stone all round, whose height was three cubits," of "elegant construction," and having pillars standing upon it at equal distances from one another, declaring the law of purity, "some in Greek and some in Roman letters, that no foreigner should go within that sanctuary."⁶ One of these pillars, with the above inscription, was recently found by M. Clermont Ganneau when inspecting an old wall near the north-west angle of the Haram.⁷ The temple proper, or "house," was erected on the last of a series of ascending terraces, reached by successive flights of steps—an architectural device not wholly dissimilar to that employed by the Chaldeans⁸ in constructing the temple of the Seven Spheres at Birs Nunrûd, and that of Jupiter Belus at Babylon, in the former of which seven, and in the latter eight, of such terraces conducted to a summit crowned with a shrine. As to outward appearance, the sacred edifice on Mount Moriah, if Josephus⁹ may be credited, "wanted nothing that was likely to surprise men's minds or their eyes, for it

⁴ *Antiquities*, xv. 11, 3.

⁵ Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible, Arts*, "Jerusalem" and "Temple."

⁶ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, v. 5, 2.

⁷ Warren, *Underground Jerusalem*, p. 75.

⁸ Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, p. 23.

⁹ *Wars*, v. 5, 6.

was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and at the first rising of the sun reflected back a very fiery splendour, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays," while to strangers who viewed it from a distance "it appeared like a mountain covered with snow, for as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceedingly white." As the outer wall possessed gates admitting to the larger quadrangle or court of the Gentiles—on the west, four; on the south, two; on the north, one; and on the east, one: so the inner wall had nine gates, three of which, on the north, south, and east, allowed access to a smaller square, called the "court of the women," while from this again another gate, opposite the last of the three just named, conducted to the court of the Israelities.

It is uncertain to which of these gates the designation "beautiful" applied. Bengel and Alford, with Conybeare and Howson, follow the traditional belief that it was the gate Shushan of the Talmud, on the east side of the outer wall, which led into the court of the Gentiles. Lightfoot, Delitzsch, Olshausen, Schürer, Stapfer, and Geikie advocate the claims of what is sometimes called the Corinthian gate, which opened from the court of the Gentiles into that of the women. Ewald,¹ Lechler and Gerok,² with others, prefer the gate Nicanor, between the women's court and that of the men. Conder³ selects "the entrance from the Tyropœon bridge in the south-west to the beautiful southern cloister built by Herod." Wilson⁴ suggests a gate which was approached by a flight of steps from the modern Bab el-Kattanin or Gate of the Cotton Merchants in the west wall of the Haram, "a handsome Saracenic portal at the end of the old Cotton Bazaar, said to have been repaired in A.D. 1336." In favour of the first, or Shushan gate, may be urged its proximity to the colonnade called Solomon's porch, which, according to

¹ *The History of Israel*, vol. v., p. 322, note 2.

² Lange on the *Acts*, *in loco*.

³ *Handbook to the Bible*, p. 385.

⁴ *Picturesque Palestine*, vol. i., p. 42.

Josephus, was the eastern cloister of the outer court. Into this the crowd ran to see and hear the Apostles after they had healed the lame man, and near this a multitude was more likely to be assembled, seeing that beside it the cattle and sheep markets were usually held. It may be added that the designation "beautiful," as applied to this gate, admits of explanation on one or other of two perfectly plausible hypotheses—either that the gate was called Shushan, or "Lily," because, in commemoration of Cyrus the Liberator, a picture of the royal residence in Shusan, the City of Lilies, was painted or carved upon its panels; or that it was so styled after the lily-shaped capitals with which it was crowned. Whether this gate should be identified with the Golden Door in the east Haram wall is doubtful. The architecture of the latter proclaims it to belong to the Byzantine period, and to have proceeded, in all probability, from the reign of Constantine—Ferguson regarding it as the "festal portal which Eusebius describes Constantine as erecting in front of his basilica;" yet there is ground for thinking the door it supplanted was the gate Shushan of the Mishna. Besides, if, as has been suggested, the name Golden, *aurea*, originated in a mistranslation of the Greek term for beautiful, *ὡπαία*, an additional presumption will arise that the modern gate occupies the site where once stood the Gate Beautiful of Scripture.⁵ The second supposition, that not the Shushan but the Corinthian was the gate at which Peter's miracle was wrought, has this to lend it countenance, that if, as seems probable, this was the door which Josephus represents as having excelled all others which were only covered with gold and silver, whereas it was in addition constructed of Corinthian brass, the epithet *ὡπαία* in its case must have been extremely appropriate. It was "a vastly heavy door," says the Jewish historian,⁶ "which could with difficulty be shut by twenty men, and rested on a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the floor, which was there made of

⁵ Schürer, in *Riehm*, p. 1,637; King, *Recent Discoveries*, &c., p. 24; Wilson, in *Picturesque Palestine*, vol. i., pp. 69, 70.

⁶ *Wars*, v. 5, 3; vi. 5, 3.

one entire stone." It may well, therefore, have been styled "Beautiful" on account of its massive magnificence. Only it is not quite clear whether it is not the gate Nicanor that is thus described; and, indeed, the assertion that it is, is the main argument offered in support of the third view. An obstacle, however, in the way of accepting this opinion is that a beggar would hardly have been allowed to penetrate so far into the interior of the sacred enclosure as the court of the Israelites, though this, on the other hand, cannot be regarded as conclusive, since, according to Wetstein, lepers were permitted to stand at Nicanor gate. The fourth suggestion is by no means improbable, that the gate in question led to the bridge which spanned the Tyropæon valley,⁷ and of which a fragment has been recovered in the so-called Robinson's arch in the south-west angle of the Haram.⁸ This gate was certainly nearer the city than the gate Shushan, and as the bridge, at the end of which it was, conducted to the King's porch, the *Stoa Basilica*, on the south wall, it was likely to be highly ornamented, as well as constructed of costly material. The fifth proposal, to find the Gate Beautiful in a door about the middle of the west wall, does not appear possessed of any special recommendations in its favour. It is possible that future excavations may result in an exact identification; but in the meantime, the first or second of the above solutions may be provisionally adopted as that at which Peter's miracle was performed.

Repairing to the temple at the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of evening prayer—for the disciples of Jesus had not yet broken with the outward forms of Jewish worship—Peter, accompanied by John, entered its precincts, it may be supposed by the Shushan gate, and passed in succession, or would have passed had he not been interrupted, through the Corinthian and Nicanor doors as above described. The interruption proceeded from a mendicant, a man of over forty years, a cripple from birth, whom

⁷ Josephus, *Antiquities*, xv. 11, 5.

⁸ Warren, *Underground Jerusalem*, p. 69; *The Recovery of Jerusalem*, pp. 94, 110; King, *Recent Discoveries*, &c., p. 87; Wilson, *Picturesque Palestine*, vol. i., p. 75.

his friends had been accustomed, carrying, to deposit at the first or second of these Sanctuary entrances, in order to solicit charity from such as passed either in or out. Having asked an alms of the two Apostles, the beggar was invited by Peter to look on him and John, while he at the same moment fixed his glance on the beggar. "Expecting to receive something from" men whose eyes beamed compassion on his misery, and whose accents sent an invigorating thrill through his hitherto nerveless frame, the suppliant could only have been struck with amazement when he listened to the words which fell from Peter's lips—"Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!" As if, too, that not an instant should remain in which doubt might invade his heart, the Apostle reached out his hand, and, having taken that of the beggar "with a firm, friendly grasp," raised him up, or invited him to raise himself. "Immediately," as a concomitant and result of his awakening faith, "his feet and his ankle bones received strength." Leaping to an upright position, "he stood and began to walk"—two actions he had never in his life before performed; "and he entered," with his two benefactors, "into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God"—*i.e.*, dancing about in unusual and perhaps extraordinary gyrations, as one might do who had suddenly become conscious of having acquired the new faculty of locomotion, and felt himself impelled by the unwonted and lively sensations of pleasure it occasioned to put it to every imaginable trial; and yet, at the same time, praising God, presumably in psalms and hymns, interspersed with brief and pious ejaculations, for a signal mercy bestowed on his soul as well as body.

Cornelius A'Lapide relates that on one occasion Thomas Aquinas paid a visit to Innocent II., arriving at a moment when the Pontiff was engaged in counting a large sum of money. "See, Thomas," said the Pope, "the Church can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have I none;'" to which Aquinas replied, "True, Holy Father, but neither can she now say, 'Rise up and walk!'" Whether this work of healing done

upon the lame man was, as Baumgarten supposes, or was not⁹ the first Apostolic miracle, it produced a profound impression on the persons congregated at the time within the temple and its courts, who forthwith crowded round the Apostles in Solomon's porch, where the healed man clung to them, as if unwilling to permit their departure. Solomon's porch was a cloister or covered portico which ran along the east wall of the outer court, on both sides of the gate Shushan, and overlooked both the brook Kedron and the valley of Jehoshaphat.¹ It had three rows of columns fifty feet high, and two walks thirty feet wide. The columns were each of one block of white marble, the walks were paved with variously-coloured stones, and the roofs were adorned with sculptures in wood. The porch was a survival from the Solomonic edifice, as the the Phœnician characters upon its stones indicated,² and received its name from this circumstance, rather than from the fact "that teachers of wisdom after the ancient Solomonian manner could there freely appear and gather hearers about them."³ Inferring from what they saw depicted on the countenances of the onlookers therein assembled that they were regarded either as holy men who, in virtue of superior piety, or as magicians who by means of occult arts had restored the cripple to soundness of limbs, Peter, acting as spokesman, explained, in an oration not "fiery," as Ewald calls it, but spirited, that the miracle had been wrought by no superior ability or goodness of their own, but directly and immediately by the name of Jesus—their connection with the amazing deed having been limited to the humble office of exercising faith in that name; that Jesus whom they (the people) and their rulers had ignorantly rejected and crucified had been raised from the dead and glorified; that it behoved them to repent, and turn to God, that their sins might be blotted out; that Jesus had been the very prophet, like unto himself, whose coming Moses had

⁹ See Acts ii. 43.

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, xv. 11, 5; xx. 9, 7.

² Warren, *Underground Jerusalem*, p. 61; *The Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 317.

³ Ewald, *The History of Israel*, vol. vi., p. 360.

foretold ; and that God was even now sending Him, the risen and exalted Christ, to bless them by turning them away every one from his iniquities.

Meantime the commandant of the temple, having been apprised of the situation, came upon the scene. This individual was probably the captain of the Levitical guard, an office afterwards filled by Ananus, the son of Ananias, a high priest.⁴ Along with the priests then present, who had just been released from their temple duties, he had most likely been moved to take action by some Sadducees among the crowd, who were "sore troubled" that the Apostles should teach the people, or vulgar crowd, the *Am-ha'arets*, upon whom educated persons like the Sadducees looked down, and much more that they should proclaim in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Having apprehended them, the temple guardian committed them to ward until the next day ; and so ended for the two intending worshippers their afternoon's adventure—they had left home to go to prayers in the temple, before many hours had passed they found themselves in jail.

How they spent that night in prison—for both a new experience—is not recorded, though it is scarcely a hazardous conjecture that, like Paul and Silas afterwards in Philippi, they prayed and sang hymns to that God "who giveth songs in the night," and of whom it is written that "He looketh down from the height of His sanctuary to hear the groaning of the prisoner, and to loose those that are appointed to death." With the dawning of the morning, it might be between the hours of six and seven, they were placed before an informal meeting of the Sanhedrim. That High Court of Jerusalem then consisted of seventy-one members, chosen from the chief priests and their families, the officiating high priest being president, from the elders, amongst whom were included both priests and laymen, and from the scribes, *i.e.*, professional jurists or experts in law, who mostly adhered to the party of the Pharisees as the priestly members commonly belonged to the Sadducees. On this occasion its composition

⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities*, xx. ; vi. 2 ; *Wars*, ii. 12, 6 ; vi. 5, 3.

was not such as to inspire the Apostles with confidence that their case would be either fairly heard or honestly considered. Its president was Annas or Hanan—"Gracious"—the aged head of the high priestly house before whom Christ had been set for examination when brought by His captors from Gethsemane,⁵ whom Josephus pronounced "the most fortunate man of his time," because for upwards of half a century he and five of his sons had occupied the highest ecclesiastical position in the country, and so had "practically wielded the sacerdotal power," but whom "the most unsuspected sources" compel us to recognise as "nothing better than an astute, tyrannous, worldly Sadducee, unvenerable for all his seventy years, full of serpentine malice and meanness which utterly belied his name."⁶ Associated with him was Caiaphas of evil fame, his bold and unscrupulous son-in-law, who first suggested the expediency of Christ's removal by death, and eventually put the crown upon his criminality by pronouncing Christ guilty of blasphemy, and handing Him over to the Roman Governor for crucifixion. Other members of that extemporised tribunal were "John and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest"—a note of the sederunt, from which it may perhaps be inferred that not only Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were absent, but also Gamaliel, Paul's celebrated teacher, who honourably figured in a later meeting. "It is indeed doubtful," says Farrar,⁷ "whether any of the more distinguished Pharisees were members of the degraded simulacrum of authority which in those bad days still arrogated to itself the title of Sanhedrim;" but in any case it must have been far from reassuring to Peter and John to find themselves at the bar of the men who had been mainly responsible for their Lord's death. Nevertheless, in neither of the two, and least of all in Peter, did there show the smallest semblance of fear. Asked by what power or in what name they had performed the alarming operation of healing a forty years old cripple, they replied substantially as they had done to

⁵ John xviii. 13.

⁶ Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, chap. lviii. p. 639.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 640.

the bystanders in the temple, that, properly speaking, they were not the authors of the miracle at all, that the "good deed" had been done by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they (the inquisitors) had crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead, that that Christ had been the stone which the builders had rejected but which God had made the head of the corner, and that neither for themselves, the speakers, nor for their hearers was there any other name under heaven given among men whereby they could be saved. The courageous bearing of the orator combined with the lofty character of his apology fairly staggered the priestly conclave. Having ordered the removal of their prisoners, the Sanhedrists discussed among themselves the perplexing situation that had arisen. The miracle, they acknowledged, was undeniable; yet, if possible, the report of it must be promptly suppressed. The two men, by this time identified as followers of the crucified Nazarene, must be threatened and straitly charged not to teach or even to speak at all in the name of Jesus. So these sapient Sadducees determined, imagining that thereby they could arrest the popular outburst of enthusiasm occasioned by this miracle, an expectation as foolish as to think of extinguishing a conflagration by pouring on it a cupful of water, of rolling back the tides of ocean by a dyke of sand, or of dispersing heaven's artillery by means of a pop-gun. Hardly had they recalled their prisoners and announced their decision than they found they had entirely reckoned without their host. Without a moment's hesitation Peter intimated to them the decision at which he and John had arrived, at the same time adroitly expressing it in terms which laid on them overwhelming responsibility, should they venture to dispute it—"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." Unable to discover ground for infliction of punishment, and afraid to proceed to violence without ground, in case of exciting against themselves popular indignation, the Sanhedrists repeated their threatenings, and dismissed from the bar their jubilant prisoners, who, immediately on gaining liberty,

repaired "to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them." With one heart and voice the assembled brethren poured out thanksgivings unto God, the Maker of the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is, who had already so controlled and overruled the rage of both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel against His holy servant Jesus, as by means of it to accomplish whatever His hand and counsel had determined should be done; entreating Him to look upon the threatenings which were being hurled against His servants, and to grant unto them power to speak the Word with boldness, while He Himself stretched forth His hand to heal, and "signs and wonders" were done through the name of His holy servant Jesus; and scarcely had their supplication ceased when its answer came—"The place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness."

The significance for the Church and the world of this striking passage in Apostolic history can hardly be overestimated. In the first place, the *miracle* was a signal attestation of Christ's continued presence with the Apostles, and therefore a confirmation of the reality of Christ's resurrection, which was then the principal theme of Apostolic preaching, as it ought still to be of the Christian ministry. The historicity of the record it is idle with Gfrörer to challenge. The reality of the good deed done upon the impotent man it is vain to dispute. The sole question open to the most advanced criticism is as to whether the effect was produced by natural or supernatural means. On this point the words of Keim⁸ relative to the "healings" of Jesus may be cited. "These works first of all were no mere more or less medicinal cures brought about by actual medical skill on the part of Jesus, similar to that practised by the Essenes, as Rationalism is anxious to prove; or by magical jugglery and Egyptian sorcery, as Celsus, the Talmudists, and to some extent also

⁸ *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. iii. p. 191.

Reimarus and Renan, have held ; or what is least objectionable, by the involuntary and voluntary transference of healthy nervous force to the sick, as Gutsmuths taught in the beginning of the present century, and as Weisse has recently maintained in his theory of magnetic forces. All these views are refuted by the fact that Jesus ordinarily wrought His works of healing simply and with surprising suddenness by His word, without means or instruments, without water or oil, herbs or stones, names or formulæ, incubation or even contact, without ceremonies or complicated processes of any kind ; and that moreover we have nowhere any evidence, certain or even probable, either of a medical training of Jesus, or of His possession of a superior nervous force." With the substitution of Peter for Jesus, every word of the above quotation, with two slight exceptions, will apply to this and other "cures" of the Apostle. Peter certainly in this case made use of a formula and of contact ; but not even the Sanhedrists suggested that Peter had effected the cure by natural forces resident in himself. Rather they felt themselves obliged, however reluctantly, to admit that "a notable miracle had been wrought," that it was "manifest to all that dwell at Jerusalem," and that they "could not deny it." Moreover, the close resemblance which this work of healing had to two similar works of Jesus of which as a court they had earlier taken cognizance—the healing of the lame man at the adjoining Pool of Bethesda (the modern Birket Israel in the north east of the Haram), and the curing of the blind man (perhaps at this very temple gate)—must have inwardly convinced them that the real author of the miracle was not the men before them, but the Man of Nazareth whom they had crucified. At any rate, that was the claim put forth by Peter. The miracle had been done by Jesus. To Jesus had he appealed for the power requisite to perform it. In Jesus' name had he commanded the cripple to walk. If all that was true, the inference was irresistible that Jesus of Nazareth was not in His grave, as perhaps some amongst the rulers hoped, but was risen as He had said, and as the Apostles then witnessed.

In the second place, the *sermons* of Peter conjoined with his

noble bearing not alone before the crowd in Solomon's porch, but also in presence of the Sanhedrim in the high priest's palace, proclaimed that a marvellous transformation had taken place upon him (and probably also upon his colleagues in the Apostleship) since the days when Christ sojourned with them in the flesh. More especially did this extraordinary revolution show itself in the clear spiritual insight to which Peter had attained with reference to Christ's person and work and the significance of His death and resurrection, as also in the unflinching confidence and fearless courage with which he confronted the enemies of his Lord and the opponents of his gospel. It is impossible in contemplating Peter at this stage of his career not to recall the earlier appearances in which his seemingly clear discernment of Christ's personality and mission, running far in advance of his companions, was nevertheless intermingled with much of sensuous and worldly expectation, which once at least drew down upon him the rebuke of Christ,⁹ which often caused him, along with his co-disciples to misunderstand Christ's words,² and which up to the last moment prevented them from seeing in Old Testament Scripture any pre-intimation of Christ's resurrection.² Nor can one help contrasting Peter's present attitude with that he so shortly before exhibited in the garden on the occasion of Christ's arrest, and in the court of the high priest's palace while a spectator of Christ's trial. But now the last speck of mental obscurity has vanished from the disc of his spiritual understanding, and the last shred of weakness from the fibre of his soul. His spirit's glance is clear, and his spirit's nerve steady. Something must have happened to effect such a change upon "the man of rock," to make him in reality what his name signified. Before death Christ had promised that something would happen in the experience of the eleven, to enlarge their mental horizon³ and clarify their spiritual vision, to deliver them from the last dregs of fear, and render them as courageous as lions.⁴ After His resurrection

⁹ Matt. xvi. 23.

¹ Mark ix. 10; John ii. 22.

² John xx. 9.

³ John xvi. 13-14.

⁴ Matt. x. 16-20.

also He assured them that the promise of the Father should be fulfilled upon them not many days hence, and they should be endued with power from on high.⁵ The latter of these statements explains the former, and both together explain the moral and spiritual revolution that had taken place in Peter. Peter's *apologia* before the Sanhedrim was proof that the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost was a reality—not for him alone, but for his co-apostles as well, and for the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

In the third place, the *dictum* of Peter—"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye"—announced that a new era had dawned for the Church of God upon the earth. When Peter spoke these words, says Pressensé,⁶ "liberty of conscience was born into the world never to be destroyed." Up till that moment liberty of conscience had been understood neither by Jew nor Gentile. Asa, king of Judah, and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, alike imagined the consciences of their subjects to be in their keeping. Both alike believed it to be among their kingly duties to prescribe a religion for those whom God had placed beneath their rule, and to enforce it by pains and penalties.⁷ Perhaps a plea in favour of the former may be drawn from the fact that in Judah Church and State were one by express appointment of Heaven, and that under a theocracy there is no clear standing room for liberty of conscience. But under Christianity the case is different. The dispensation of the Spirit is a dispensation of religious freedom. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty"—not liberty, as before God, to dispense with religion entirely, or to select any form of religion indifferently, as if all religions were alike good, but liberty, so far as one's fellows are concerned, to follow the dictates of conscience, rather than the commandments of men in determining what is that true religion which one ought to embrace, what is that supreme voice of God which one ought to obey.

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⁵ Luke xxiv. 49.

⁶ *Early Years of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 38.

⁷ 2 Chron. xv. 13; Dan. iii. 29.

EVENING CLASSES—RECREATIVE AND PRACTICAL.

EDUCATIONAL problems, like the problems of theology, vary in phase and in points of pressure ; and in each case the solution of one leads to the formulation of others. A few years ago the question was, How to provide for every child in Britain a sufficient and efficient elementary education ? To this the Act of 1870 was an honest attempt at a reply, and by means of it a vast stride has been taken in the right direction, although much still remains to be done. The problem of to-day grows naturally enough in great measure out of that other ; for the question which now demands attention, and presses under the severest pains and penalties for solution, is, How to conserve and turn to practical account the education given at tremendous cost in our public elementary schools ? It is practically the same question on a larger scale as that which Sunday-school teachers have long been asking with the gravest anxiety—How may we retain our elder scholars ?

“Nobody will deny,” said Lord Derby, not long ago, “that the years between fourteen and twenty-one are the most important years of life.” Lord Derby is right ; and yet as a people, as a State, we are *practically* giving it the most emphatic denial. Those are the very years of which our educational system takes no account. While nearly every other civilized nation provides for the continuance of the elementary education of its youth, and especially for the technical training of its artizans, we, who have most to lose by such neglect, allow our boys and girls to run wild in the streets, and “finish their education” amid the poison of the pot-house and the penny-gaff. Their education proper, costing the country about £7,000,000 a year, ceases when it has really only just begun. At the very age when the mind begins to awake, and

the bodily powers to develop—when a wise discipline and training are most needed and would be most fruitful—the scholars are permitted, both by law and by the public opinion of their associates, to enter on the work of life without any further educational assistance or restraint. The results are disastrous, and full of peril to the community. The little learned at school soon leaks away ; the scholars are cut adrift without any real equipment for the work of life ; and fall an easy prey to the temptations which beset the idle or vacant-minded. They have no resources in themselves ; their homes are often dull and dirty ; while the streets teem with attractions. The glare and music of the public-house allure them ; they crowd into the cheap theatres, dancing and music-halls ; in many cases they form habits and companionships which corrupt their whole life, or, at the very best, by early marriage wreck their own happiness and aggravate the miseries which arise from overcrowding and from the multiplication of the unfit. Nor is this all. The results from an industrial point of view are no less menacing. Vast numbers of our youth are growing up year by year to swell the ranks of the unemployed because unskilled ; while, at the same time, the demand for unskilled labour is year by year decreasing. These are facts of serious import. They are the raw material of revolutions. They constitute a social and political danger of the first magnitude.

The Recreative Evening Schools Association¹ was instituted three years ago in order to bring these facts fairly before the nation, and to attempt to grapple with them. It aims at showing the necessity for night-schools, and tries, by recreative and practical methods, to make these schools popular among those who have left the day-school.

It takes long to awaken and arouse the public mind on such a subject ; but the growth of conviction and sentiment in the right direction during the last two or three years has been something phenomenal. Her Royal Highness Princess Louise, the President of the Association, has taken the deepest

¹ Office, 37, Norfolk Street, Strand, W.C.

interest in its work, and has stimulated by her presence at public functions and private meetings the interest of others. All the leading educational authorities are of opinion that the general aims and methods of the Association are on the right lines—that the weapons with which to protect our young people during their leisure hours from the perils of the streets at night, and to attack the industrial paralysis which arises from incompetence in handicraft, are to be forged in evening-schools of a recreative and practical kind.

The next step, therefore, must be to promote and facilitate such schools by legislative enactments. What is wanted is to make evening continuation schools an integral part of our educational system—raising the age of total exemption from day-school to thirteen so as to tally with the operation of the Factory Acts; and raising the exemption standard universally to the fifth or sixth, with the proviso, however, to meet the case of children of the very poor, that the last standard or standards may be taken in an evening continuation school, two years being allowed to pass one standard; and providing that there be two schedules in evening schools—(a) Elementary, for those under the sixth standard and under sixteen years of age. (b) Advanced, for those above the sixth standard and over sixteen years of age. In both schedules, with a view to giving an education which shall be more attractive, healthful, and useful for everyday life, recreative and practical subjects should be included. These proposals would have the effect of greatly increasing the number of half-time scholars, whose education should be better regulated than at present, and spread over a longer period. It will probably be found necessary, however, to exempt agricultural districts at present from the operation of any such Act, making it apply only to our large centres where the Factory Acts are in force.

In the meantime, the Association seeks to multiply and to make popular such schools as already exist by the adoption of the best possible methods. Those methods must be *educational*. Unorganised and uneducational philanthropy will do little or nothing to elevate the life. What is wanted is a distinctly educational element which shall smite the rock and

make the waters of life to flow. The mind has to be awakened, to be fed, to be led on gradually to use its hands and feet, and to gird itself for effort; the moral faculties of attention and concentration have to be acquired and cultivated; and these can only be accomplished by systematic teaching. Desultory classes, however excellent the motives of their founders, will only be followed by desultory results. But at the same time the education must be recreative. If the school is not made thoroughly interesting, so as to be a real counter-attraction to the streets, there will be no scholars. The average boy of twelve or thirteen flings up his cap with delight when he shuts the door of the day-school behind him once for all. He is not to be caught again if he knows it!

Nor can we wonder, especially when we remember that he has to serve long hours in the office, the factory, or the workshop. At night he is tired; he needs a little recreation; and he will have it. The boy is right. Let him have it; but let it be in connection with an educational course which shall conserve the knowledge already gained, develop his powers of mind and body, and be of a sort to elevate and enrich his whole nature. All subjects may be taught recreatively, and in such a fashion as to bear healthfully and helpfully on the practical duties of life. By the teaching of drawing, modelling, fretwork, wood-carving, and other hand-work, the sense of beauty may be awakened and educated, and the whole being illumined. Fresh scope will be opened up for the mental and moral as well as physical activities, and pleasant occupations made available for the leisure hours at home. The practical value, too, of such pursuits will be obvious. The British workman is not wanting in *nous*, but what he wants is training of the hand and eye, and a wholesome hatred of bad workmanship. As it is, the English manufacturer is being steadily beaten out of those markets of the world in which he has long been *facile princeps*. The reason is not far to seek. The artisan who works by rule of thumb is certain to be beaten in the long run by one who brings a trained intelligence to bear upon his industry. The necessary training is given in Germany and elsewhere in compulsory continuation schools,

while amongst us it is not given at all, except in the case of from five to ten per cent. of our scholars, with whom the continuation of education is entirely voluntary.

The girls, no less than their brothers, require a thoroughly practical training. Cutting-out, making and mending, patching and darning, simple millinery, plain cooking, and laundry work—all these need to be taught not less in the elementary school, but more in the evening schools, when the woman within the girl is beginning to awake, and to perceive the uses and importance of these things.

One of the most valuable and attractive methods employed by the Recreative Evening Schools Association is the use of the lantern. By this means lessons of a sprightly and attractive sort are given in geography and travel, biography and history, and in many forms of elementary science, such as astronomy, botany, physiography, geology, and physics. Weekly lectures on these subjects, of about half an hour each, are given by ladies or gentlemen who have the requisite knowledge, and the no less requisite faculty of *simple talking* to the pupils. Similarly, object lessons are given in chemistry, electricity, ventilation, food, and food supply, &c., &c.

Singing and other musical classes are formed, and, as far as possible, every subject brightened by music, while calisthenics, or musical drill, is introduced into every school at least once a week. This kind of physical exercise is a delightful recreation to those who have been engaged all day at monotonous work in hot and ill-ventilated rooms, and often in constrained positions. For girls as well as boys it is conducive to health and good temper, and is of high value, from a moral point of view, as inculcating order, precision, harmony, and the self-command and sprightliness which are invaluable in daily life.

Branches of the Post Office Savings Bank are opened in many of these classes, so as to encourage thrift among those who are just beginning to earn wages; and clubs, reading circles, rambling parties, visits to art galleries, &c., &c., are parts of the scheme in operation. What need there is for such agencies! Within a few hundred yards of Westminster

Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, Lambeth Palace and the Tower of London, thousands of young people may be found who have never had the curiosity even to enter these buildings, much less to learn, to think, to listen reverently to the Voices of the Past, and of the mighty Dead whose names are there inscribed. All our historic buildings, museums, &c., should afford an endless series of delightful object lessons to our youth.

One of the most pleasing features of the work of the Recreative Evening Schools Association is this, that while it is wholly dependent for its funds on voluntary contributions (and has no small difficulty in securing them), its classes are conducted almost exclusively by voluntary workers. Those who have themselves tasted of the fruits of the tree of knowledge, and are permitted to enjoy the blessings of leisure and of culture, are invited to give an hour a week to their less favoured brothers and sisters. And they do it. More than 600 of such volunteers have been enrolled in London alone in the course of these three years. Many of these are engaged as teachers in day-schools, others in professional or business duties, or in the cares of home, but all have found that life's purest pleasures and dignities come as the spontaneous reward of unselfish service. But many more are wanted, both in London and in the towns and villages where local branches are started. The work, indeed, ought to be carried on throughout the whole land; and the need for voluntary workers is therefore infinite. The requirements, too, are so varied that we are justified in regarding this as one of the most important fields of service ever opened to the Church of Christ. There are vast numbers to whom Sunday-school instruction, district visiting, and other recognised forms of Christian activity are distasteful or impossible. Let them find employment here, each doing what in him lies to bridge over the gulf that separates class from class, to throw the shield of a kindly sympathy around the young of our land, and by such acts of Christian brotherliness to bring down from the region of the clouds to the common walks of life that Kingdom of God for which we pray.

J. EDWARD FLOWER.

THE CLERGY AND FREETHINKERS.

THE title of this article is intended to suggest the relations which ought to exist between the former and the latter, without, as to the one, distinction of denomination, or as to the other specialisation into schools. My claim to attention rests mainly on the fact that I have been long engaged in Christian evidence work.

It seems well to consider first the two positions implied. Until we recall what the clergy hold, and remember what freethinkers claim, we can scarcely determine what attitude we ought to assume. As to our own position : We believe in God, in Jesus Christ, in the New Testament ; and while ready to accept and hold fast whatever scholarship and science may *prove* touching the history, contents, and authority of the several books of the Bible, we have already made up our minds as to the great historical facts of Christianity, and as to the supreme claims of Christ. It is important to recollect that though we are in some things gnostics, in some agnostics, our peculiar mark is, not that we know, not that we do not know, but that we believe. Nor is this all. We have constructed a system of theology on a method more or less scientific ; we have developed a philosophy of religion on principles more or less just ; and we have given to the world eighteen centuries of historical Christianity. But not our theology, were it complete ; not our philosophy, were it perfect ; not our historical Christianity, were it blameless, is the specific object of our belief. That object is Jesus Christ. Blunders in our science, errors in our philosophy, crimes in our history, whether discovered by ourselves or exhibited by our foes, furnish but additional reasons not for less, but for more belief in Him, as distinguished from the teachings uttered or the deeds done by others in His name. The Christianity of the Church needs for the preservation of its purity constant comparison with the

Christianity of Christ. Again, it is not only a question of belief; it is also a question of trust. For while the faith objectively stands for the Christian revelation, faith subjectively is the condition of Christian life. It is a compound of two elements—belief sustained by the evidence for, and trust reposing on the character of Jesus Christ. But there is more than this. Objective Christianity is—Christ; subjective Christianity is more than faith, it is also love and obedience. And he in his measure is an opponent who fails in obedience and love, as really as he who fails in faith. I add one word of warning: let us beware of so treating the term Christianity as to make men forget that it is a Person they are to trust, love, and obey, and that this Person is God incarnate and the Saviour of men.

The position of freethinkers is somewhat difficult to define. Professor Huxley would, apparently, refuse the name to those who have arrived at any definite conclusions. But in everyday speech it is a synonyme of unbeliever in Christ, whether agnostic, atheist, positivist, pantheist, deist, secularist, or sceptic. These several classes have one feature in common, in virtue of which the term freethinker is claimed. It is antagonism to creeds. Every statement of beliefs, except as expressing the opinion of the moment, is regarded as unwise, since if we bind ourselves at all to the convictions of to-day we shut our minds beforehand against those of to-morrow. Some maintain that man cannot be held responsible for his belief, since belief depends upon evidence, and not upon will. Others, denying freedom of volition, assert that man is not responsible at all, belief and conduct being merely the natural effects of irresistible forces. And yet all, whatever their views of volition, apparently unite in claiming moral quality as thinkers. They say that to punish a man hereafter for any honest conclusions arrived at here would be absolutely unjust. And they hold that they have given to the world nobler ethical conceptions, a mightier impulse to progress, and a grander ideal of liberty than have entered the heart of the Church. As to the last-named, they say she is uniformly on the wrong side—the side of wrong.

They also allege that even when least offensive she has, by her doctrine of other worldliness, wrought infinite mischief, confusing and perverting the obligations and duties of the present life, and justifying the infliction of all kinds of cruelty by supposed advantage to the souls of men. Moreover, they affirm, the Churches are split up externally into innumerable sects, and internally into antagonistic parties, and this to such an extent that we cannot find one body or party of Christians that some other body or party would not condemn as unbelievers, or at least as unsound in the faith. And, they maintain, until Christians make up their minds what a Christian is, and agree among themselves as to what constitutes a Church, sceptics may well be pardoned if they turn a deaf ear to all invitations to participate in the "Communion of the Saints." I do not specify the sources from which these statements are drawn, because I am sure opponents would not question their accuracy; but there is not one of them that I have not read in the literature, or heard from the lips of sceptics; and those which refer to the Church may be found in substance in Professor Huxley's article in the *Nineteenth Century* for February.

We now reach the main point, how we, who hold the first position, ought to treat those who hold the second. I will endeavour to indicate as clearly as I can the right spirit and method of treatment, seeking rather to correct our own mistakes than to expose the errors of our opponents; yet without hesitating to do the latter where it seems necessary to the former. The only standard it is possible for us to recognise is the will of our Lord; and the very statement of this obvious truth lifts the subject at once out of the region, as far as we are concerned, of personal antipathies, and smart retorts, and all the meannesses which characterise low forms of controversy. It is not a subject on which there is any difficulty in ascertaining what our Lord's will is—at least, so far as the regulative principle of the discussion is concerned. It is impossible to read the Sermon on the Mount without perceiving that the principle must be that of truth and justice set in love.

The first question naturally is, how are we to regard freethinkers as to the sincerity with which they hold their professed position? It is a subject I would very willingly avoid, but in the presence of accusations on the one side, and of indignant remonstrances on the other, I do not see how this is possible. It is a pity the point should ever have appeared at all. For there is no subject on which an enquirer may be more easily mistaken. The outward and visible signs of sincerity or of insincerity are extremely difficult to determine. I have often met arguments so amazingly bad that it was difficult to believe that they could be honestly used, until experience proved that defects in logic did not necessarily mean an evil heart; otherwise the friends of Christianity would not always escape suspicion of dishonesty. I trust no one will ascribe this plea to "excessive lov'ngkindness." It would, no doubt, be pleasant to get credit for this not too common virtue, were it not for the implication that it is the heart rather than the head that speaks. It is not to me, at this point, a question of charity, but of truth and justice. I think that the clergyman who is ready to put down every illogical opponent as dishonest would do well to reflect how often he has used unsound arguments himself; and how possible it is that he may appear as insincere to others as others appear to him. Even if he has occasionally met sceptics whom charity itself would not regard as altogether honest, let him remember that it would not be difficult to find similar cases on his own side, and that absolute purity of motive is probably rarely found even in Christians until they have advanced within measurable distance of "entire sanctification." I know nothing in the world more difficult than to prove a man sincere—except it be to prove him insincere. If I heard any one say ninety-five per cent. of unbelievers are honest, I should be disposed to think it was charity, rather than knowledge, that uttered the words. When I heard a clergyman say, "ninety-five per cent. of sceptics are dishonest," I knew at once that it was neither knowledge nor charity that was speaking. For myself, I find it so difficult to be quite sure of the entire purity of my

own motives, that I do not feel qualified to sit in judgment on those of other men. But I am bound to add that I have met sceptics often who appeared to me honest, and that even if they had appeared to be dishonest, yet, as I could not be sure, I should still have treated them as if sincere ; and I have yet to learn that any other way is more likely to put their dishonesty, if it existed, to flight.

It is not, then, a question of charity, but of scrupulous justice. Charity comes in where justice cannot decide, or decides against. For to the honest man it is an insult to make his sincerity a question of charity at all. I entreat my brethren who come much into contact with unbelievers to denounce the vice of insincerity as earnestly as they can, and to do whatever they may find possible to make the sceptic's conscience loathe and abhor this worst of sins, but not to take it upon themselves to sit in judgment on individual cases. It is true that our Lord laid down the rule that a man's character might be inferred from his conduct ; in other words, that a bad heart would bring forth bad fruit. But apart from the fact that the context shows clearly that it was not of sceptics our Lord was speaking, the principle does not apply ; unless we assume that it is *impossible* for a man to be at once honest and unbelieving. I need hardly add that the passage in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel no more applies than does the quotation from Matthew. For even if it alleged, which it does not, that all bad men are sceptics, it by no means follows that all sceptics are bad men. Experience has confirmed a thousand times the truth that though light is come into the world men love darkness rather than light, because their works are evil ; but experience does not confirm, neither did our Lord make, the statement that whoever does not believe is dishonest. Nor does the famous passage in Mark apply more closely than the two already cited, "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." For even if the Revised Version had raised no doubt as to our Lord's having uttered these words, they must still be taken in the light of the passage in John, from which it appears that the

condemnation is simply of those who, from evil motives, reject the Gospel, not of those who nearly 2,000 years afterwards are, from intellectual difficulties, unable to believe. There remains the passage, "He that hath not the Son, hath not life." This is, of course, absolutely true ; but it does not follow that the sincere seeker, though a sceptic, has not the Son. On the contrary, so great a thing is sincerity, and so much does it mean, that I should take its presence in any one as a conclusive proof that the Son had already come to that soul. It follows, that while there is only one Saviour, and in the end only one way of salvation, one cannot assert, especially in view of children dying in infancy, that the process of saving requires for its initiation conscious faith. It is in the spirit of Christ to say that the sincere soul, turned aside by intellectual difficulties into "the wild and tangled forest," will yet pass through to the light beyond.

In attacking the position of the freethinker we are concerned, both for our sake and his, to keep whatever of good, reject whatever of evil, we find. We begin with the question of creeds. The outcry against these is not confined to sceptics. Many Christians heedlessly lend their voices to the chorus of indignation, not only against such documents as the Augsburg and Westminster Confessions of Faith, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the creed called, or miscalled, by the name of St. Athanasius, but against the very principle of doctrinal statements. Now, first of all, creeds ought to be true ; secondly, they ought to be as brief as clearness permits ; and, thirdly, they ought to allow as much variety of opinion as is consistent with loyalty to truth. It is a manifest duty, when these rules have been wittingly or unwittingly violated, to reconstruct dogmatic statements so as to secure agreement with the conditions named. But it is unreasonable to say that there ought to be no dogmatic statements at all. Were that principle carried out, the whole of the Epistles would have to be erased from the New Testament, for if the dogmas were cut away the remainder would be unintelligible. After all, what is a creed but a statement of beliefs ? If, then, we are to have no creed, we shall not be permitted even to say, I

believe in God. If the intention be to restrict statements of belief, on its objective side, to facts as distinguished from doctrines, we reply that, in practice, this attempt always breaks down. How is it possible to state one's belief in any fact without having some opinion as to what the fact is in which he believes? The alternatives really are, admitting doctrine, or having no statement of belief at all. Now, the freethinker believes in the value of freethought, and he believes religion to be a hindrance to men. If he states these beliefs, he has a creed; if he does not state them, he dooms himself to silence as to the merits of freethought and the demerits of religion. Let him carry out his principle, and the world will hear his voice no more. If it be said, no man should bind himself for the future, I ask, what is the nature of the bondage a true creed imposes? There is no other limitation than that of its truth; and this is a yoke from which no one can honourably escape. Let us correct every real fault the freethinker finds, not for a moment refusing to follow the path of improvement simply because it is *his* finger points the way. But correction does not mean destruction; and abolishing creeds to get rid of their corruptions would be like committing suicide to get rid of a headache.

With respect to accountability for belief, the preliminary question is, will the freethinker admit responsibility of any kind? Will he grant that *conduct* deserves praise or blame? If not, discussion is useless. But if a man speaks, as does Professor Huxley, of *honest* belief, the result of *due* deliberation, we have, of course, a kind that is praised; and by implication there may be a kind that is not honest, that is not preceded by due deliberation, and is therefore deserving of blame. We grant, then, that those who speak of belief in Christ as if it were merely a matter of will are much mistaken; but so also are they who affirm that it has nothing to do with will. For it does not depend on evidence alone, but on evidence honestly studied with due deliberation—a statement to which, as I would like all freethinkers to note, Professor Huxley would readily assent. It follows, then, that if a man does not study honestly and with due deliberation, it is in vain to plead

that it is simply a question of evidence. The jurors who do not honestly and carefully listen to the witnesses, or do not listen at all, who do not know the laws of testimony, and will not be guided by judges who do, cannot escape responsibility on the plea that a verdict depends upon evidence ; for in their case it manifestly depends upon nothing of the kind.

As to the historical value of what is called freethought, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, notwithstanding that freethinkers have sometimes rushed into infamous excesses, excited violent passions, and directly or indirectly committed or caused the most abominable enormities and crimes. But when we analyse the so-called freethought, we find that its revolt against tyranny was valuable, not as promoting ecclesiastical or intellectual anarchy, but as compelling the attention of the Church and the world to turn to the unjust and cruel restrictions which had been imposed on human thought and action. So far as it effected this, it was distinctly a force on the side of Christ ; so far as it caused not correction but abolition of creeds, and not the reformation but the destruction of Churches, it was a foe to human welfare and a barrier to human progress. As to its ethical characteristics, the more the subject is studied the plainer it becomes that the so-called freethought was frequently much more in harmony with the spirit and teaching of Christ than was the hard ecclesiasticism against which it so strenuously fought. Not its least merit is that it has been the occasion of a greater breadth of freedom and a more profound sense of humanity throughout the Christian world ; and has, therefore, helped to purify and ennoble the Church which it sought to destroy. It must not be forgotten, however, that many so-called freethinkers were believers in Christ. That the Christian Church has been frequently unchristian is undeniable, but no impartial historian will endorse the verdict so often pronounced against her by her opponents. When all is said, the debt of the world to the Church is as much greater than its debt to freethought as a mountain is greater than a molehill. Her doctrine of other worldliness, so far as it is *her* doctrine, may, indeed, have wrought great mischief ; but so far as it is *His*

doctrine, whose servant she is, it has wrought nothing but good. As to the divisions of Christians there can be no question, and a great shame and sorrow they are. But Christ is not divided, and freethinkers would do well to study Him instead of them.

We have employed the word freethinker as indicating a certain class of opponents, but we cannot pass without challenge their claim to its exclusive use. To deny our right as Christians to the title is to perpetrate an act of injustice. It is true, indeed, that we acknowledge Christ as God and Master ; and that we will have no title that implies revolt against Him. But if Christianity be true, we have as much claim to be considered freethinkers as any class of men whatever. To obey Christ is in our view to obey the truth, and there is no bondage in that. For my own part, I am conscious of no compulsion other than that which the honest unbeliever would himself acknowledge—the obligation to follow truth wherever it leads. We must, however, concede that the word infidel is, perhaps, often improperly used by us. We ought to restrict its application to those believers who are unfaithful to their convictions. It stands, like freethinker, in the popular sense, for agnostic, atheist, positivist, pantheist, deist, secularist, sceptic, but it carries with it also a suggestion of dishonesty. Now, as it is not right to suggest by a name what we cannot prove as a fact, namely, that unbelievers as such are insincere, the word ought not to be used. It gives to the best of our opponents a needless pain. And to use unnecessarily any language which hurts the feelings of others is to be guilty of cruelty. In doing this, not only are opponents uselessly offended, but our Lord Himself is "wounded in the house of His friends."

We have next to ask how we ought to treat freethinkers considered as sceptics. We must be on our guard equally against the Scylla of approval and the Charybdis of disapproval. For whether scepticism is good or bad does not depend upon itself, but upon its object. If the latter be wholly good or wholly bad, it is not well to doubt, but to accept or reject. Similarly, what is manifestly true or mani-

festly false is to be the object, not of doubt, but of belief or disbelief. Doubt is justified only where the real characteristics of the object are difficult to determine. These once decided, doubt is at an end. To exalt scepticism as a thing good in itself, and for its own sake, is excusable, perhaps, in very young thinkers, but in no one else. What shall we say then of those who, even in mature age, glorify doubt, *per se*, as a principle, instead of calling it simply the proper attitude of mind towards an object of uncertain character? The fact is, they have deceived themselves. Scepticism stands in their case for a creed, the number of articles in which varies at different times, and with different adherents. But the most prominent is always the same—I believe in doubt. There are, of course, no universal sceptics, *i.e.*, men who believe nothing. As Professor Huxley points out, there are principles upon which reasoning depends, without which reasoning cannot commence; and these, of course, must be taken for granted. Faith is the foundation of reason.

If sceptics cannot honestly take all they find, is that any excuse for not taking all they honestly can? I am afraid we are to blame here. The principle, that you must grasp Christianity in its entirety or not touch it at all, is, I think, unjustifiable. Our Lord plainly recognised the fact that there were certain things in His teaching which even His Apostles *could* not receive at the then stage of their culture. It is my profound conviction that our forgetfulness of this has greatly contributed to the increase of unbelief, and that our remembrance of it, if embodied in our conduct, would do more than anything else to bring sceptics back to Christ. So long as what are termed the damnatory clauses of the creed called Athanasian are interpreted as condemning to everlasting perdition a man who is literally unable to accept or retain the Catholic faith *in its entirety*, it seems to me that we are compelled to wield the sword of the Spirit with hands that are chained. I would say to sceptics, in this matter you would do well not to take these clauses of the creed as expressing the mind of Christ. Accept as much of Christianity as you honestly can, and not a word more; but do not fancy

without trial that because you cannot receive Christianity in what seems its entirety you cannot receive it at all.

In a town in the north of England there was seven years ago a man of considerable intellectual power and of great earnestness, who was, or believed himself to be, an atheist, and who held the position of secretary of the local secular society. He opposed me with keen intelligence, and with to me, at all events, *obvious* honesty. I requested permission to write to him, which he courteously granted. In the correspondence which followed I took the position I have taken in this article, that one should accept just as much of Christianity as he honestly can, and no more. I suggested to him a plan which I have found useful more than once. Obtain two copies of the New Testament. Take one of them, and begin with the four Gospels. Read very slowly and deliberately, striking out with your pencil every passage you cannot honestly accept. Now put this copy away, and wait for a time until you can digest the result. When I heard that this had been done, I wrote to him again, and found, as I expected, that he had struck out everywhere the physically supernatural element, without its occurring to him to touch the morally supernatural. I then asked him to take his other copy and to mark in pencil every passage which he *could* accept. It makes a difference practically infinite which of the two objects a man has in view. For if the emphasis is on the things to be cast away, the things to be retained are scarcely thought of, and are, therefore, in effect thrown away also. In his second reading he passed over the physically, but accepted the morally supernatural. On examining the conclusions at which he had arrived, he began to ask himself why he had accepted the greater and refused the less. After prolonged meditation he saw that whether or not the miracles accredited Christ, Christ accredited the miracles. He is to-day a Christian. I think the other method—all or nothing—would have left him an atheist still.

Nevertheless, any attempt to pare down the Christian faith in order to make it easier for opponents to become Christians would be disastrous in the extreme. As a matter of

course we ought to cut away all that we are sure is not true, and all, whether true or not, that does not properly belong to Christianity ; but we must not add to or take from Christianity itself so much as a single hair's breadth. To say that the sincere seeker is not able as yet to take in the whole, is the opposite to saying that Christianity is to be reduced until it suits his present capacity. To encourage a man on a mountain path to climb as high as he can, is a very different thing from levelling the mountain to the point he has reached. I fear that to Christians of culture the true character of unbelief often disappears in the beauty of the language in which it is couched. I would remind my brethren that men are not saved by the grace of style, but by the grace of God.

As regards uncertainty as to what Christianity is, to Professor Huxley, and to all freethinkers as honest as he, I would reply : However desirable it is in itself that all Christians should be agreed, you are not as a freethinker, a seeker for truth, a man entitled to wait for that. (If I had come on certain lines apart from the context, I should have imagined I was reading a plea for Roman Catholicism, or rather for some really infallible authority.) Permit me to say you cannot devolve upon us the responsibility of determining what in Christianity you shall regard as true. You cannot resign your function of inquiring into Christianity, and deciding for yourself how much of it you can honestly accept. Are you prepared to say that no man ought to be an unbeliever until unbelievers are agreed among themselves? Are you willing, as a matter of fact, to accept Christianity as soon as Christians generally are agreed among themselves? Will you then begin by accepting what we *are* agreed upon? I respect too much your loyalty to truth to suppose you will do anything of the kind, unless you have some other reason than our agreement. But if our agreement would not be an adequate reason for accepting Christianity, neither is our disagreement an adequate reason for rejecting it. And as we have already seen, the fact that there are parts that you cannot accept, is no reason why you should not accept what you can.

But you have come to the conclusion that the problem of Christianity is insoluble. It would appear, then, that an agnostic is not a freethinker, since he is tied down not to attempt the solution of what he believes to be an insoluble problem. Is your treatment of Christianity consistent with this position? In your expression, not of suspended judgment, but of positive disbelief touching the Gadarene story, and in the doubt you throw upon the Gospels as a whole, are you not asserting your belief that the problem *is* soluble? Are you, then, really an agnostic; and if you are, does not your agnosticism require a new definition? Such are some of the questions which may, I think, be reasonably put to Professor Huxley, and those who assign the uncertainty as to what Christianity is as a reason for unbelief.

It will be observed that I have carefully abstained from saying what our attitude is. The truth is, I do not exactly know. My absence from England for some years back, while it has given me certain facilities for the study of scepticism in France, has prevented me observing as accurately as I could wish the set of Christian opinion at home. I confess I have read, with the greatest astonishment, Professor Huxley's remarks on this subject. I had absolutely no idea that the temper of the Church in England was at all so ferocious as he imagines it to be. I do not raise the question whether Dr. Wace ought or ought not to have used the phrase that has excited Professor Huxley's indignation. But Professor Huxley might have noted that the tone of the Manchester Congress, as a whole, not only manifested no bitterness, but showed, on the contrary, the greatest desire to treat freethinkers with perfect fairness and courtesy. If, however, we have the faults Professor Huxley thinks, the sooner we get rid of them the better. On reflection, I am not prepared to say he is altogether wrong. For it may be that, were the votes of Christians taken, including, of course, those of Roman and Greek Catholics, the treatment of freethinkers might not be wholly unlike what he predicts. But the vote of the Anglican Church throughout the world—and I believe the same remark may be made of Anglican Nonconformists

also—would be given against the mode of treatment so eloquently denounced.

Be that as it may, what is puzzling beyond measure is Professor Huxley's apparent belief that the things he condemns are the product of Christianity. To me it is so evident that our virtues are of Christ, and our faults are of ourselves, that I should listen with less incredulity if Professor Huxley were to say that all the maladies of mankind were produced by medicine, for occasionally, at least, medicine does produce disease. There is here a confusion of cause and concomitant that in a man so profoundly scientific seems almost inexplicable. It is not our Christianity, but our want of it, that is at fault. It is not his unbelief that makes Professor Huxley himself so attractive; but that, in addition to his scientific genius, his keen logic, his imaginative power, his bright humour, his literary grace, he has retained so much of the profound humanity and of the ethical purity of the very Christ in whom he does not profess to believe. However little he thinks it himself, to us it is clear as noonday—that what he pleads for is that we should become not less, but more Christian. For this reason we cannot but thank Professor Huxley for every blot on our shield he discovers.

Our right attitude will become clearer yet if we consider some of the causes of scepticism. These often seem surprisingly small. I have had many confidential letters from unbelievers, and while some among these proved clearly that their writers had thought long and earnestly on the subject, others showed plainly enough that intellectual difficulties had very little to do with their unbelief. For example, one correspondent writes, "If I had always been treated by Christians as I have been by you, I should never have been a sceptic." Another tells how he has been wronged in business by Christians, and from disgust at their conduct learned to hate their creed. But in other cases unbelief had arisen from revulsion against the doctrine of eternal punishment; in others, from Biblical difficulties, especially in the Old Testament; and in others, from the character of ecclesiastics as shown in the history of the Church. Among working men I have met

comparatively few who became sceptics for distinctively scientific reasons—for example, the supposed exclusion of miracles and answers to prayer by the uniformity of natural law. On the other hand, I have known several who became atheists because, as they thought, there was no evidence, by answers to prayer, that there existed a God who cared for them. On the whole I should say that, apart from our common natural depravity, the general causes of scepticism are the moral difficulties of the Old Testament, the doctrine of eternal punishment, the apparent absence of answer to prayer, the inconsistencies of Christians, the multitude of sects, and want of sufficient sympathy with popular movements. But that these are, in all cases, causes which actually produce rather than reasons that defend unbelief, would be too much to say.

As to my own experience, I have found fairness in stating and answering objections, the frank recognition of the difficulties on the side of belief, coupled with a plain statement of the immensely greater difficulties on the other side, an earnest insistence that conscience and heart, as well as reason, should be allowed to speak, and that the Holy Spirit would assuredly guide them if they were sincerely seeking to be right, the most effective method of dealing with all serious sceptics. The case is much more difficult when the scepticism is light, cynical, and jesting. But even here, though sometimes compelled to use a weapon that is most dangerous to the cause of him who wields it, when used on improper occasions—I mean sarcasm—yet I have found direct appeals to the better nature of my opponents very often successful. There is a large number, especially of young men, who seem to become free-thinkers more from a certain mischievous levity, and a desire to become in a sense cheaply distinguished, than from anything else; but I have great confidence in the conscience of my hearers, which, when once aroused, makes short work of their levity. The most difficult class of all consists of those whose scepticism is, so to speak, guaranteed by the supposed examples of leaders of thought and men of science, like Spencer and Darwin, Huxley and Tyndall. They have never

understood the difficulties of these thinkers, nor mastered the reasons of their unbelief. But to be on the side of men such as these is enough. I am inclined to think that "authority" of great names is to-day a more potent influence in the freethinking than in the religious world. I suppose it is nearly hopeless to convince those freethinkers who do not think that the fact that certain eminent men have become sceptics after much deliberation, is no justification whatever for the scepticism of those who have manifestly not deliberated at all. In such cases most arguments are thrown away, yet not all. I do not much care to put the examples of celebrated men on our side against the celebrities on the other. I rather seek to bring sceptics near to Jesus Christ. All their "authorities" become dwarfs in His presence. Our great hope, however, is that our words may be a channel for the influence of the Holy Spirit, and that the dormant consciousness of God may be awakened in the sceptic's heart. Let the religious nature be once aroused, it turns instinctively to Jesus Christ, no matter what the arguments against that seemed so mighty but an hour before. A strong belief that the roots, if I may use the word, of every man's soul are in God, a profound feeling of brotherliness unchilled by the ice of the sceptic's unbelief, an almost overpowering conviction of the need of and intense faith in the *Saviour*, a bright and unfaltering trust in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, are even more necessary equipments than the yet indispensable intellectual capacity, knowledge of the nature and value of testimony, acquaintance with Christian evidence literature, and training in Christian evidence work. I will only add that not every man can safely breathe the air of controversy; and no one should dare the experiment who is not ready to pray day and night that he may not do more harm by his spirit than good by his arguments to the cause he seeks to serve. To him whose duty it is to come into frequent contact with sceptics, there is the most binding obligation so to live that men seeing and hearing him shall think of Christ.

ALEX. J. HARRISON.

THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY.¹

IT must be a matter of regret to every right-minded person that this book was ever written. To the sceptic and agnostic it must be almost equally distasteful as to the believer in Christianity. The scurrilousness of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists finds no echo among the sceptical writers of the present day, unless we descend to a level which lies below the sphere of educated thought and the cultivated intellect. Regarded from a human point of view, Christ, in the opinion of those most opposed to His religion, takes rank among the foremost teachers of the world. Nor Buddha, nor Confucius, nor Plato, have won for themselves a pinnacle of fame and honour like that of Jesus Christ; nor is the result their teaching has produced upon the moral condition of the world to be compared with that effected by the preaching of the lowly carpenter's Son. To give but a single example. The anonymous author of *A Candid Examination of Theism*, while he feels himself constrained to write against the credibility of the Christian faith, cannot find words sufficiently strong to express his admiration of the religion he is doing his best to uproot, and his veneration for the person of its Founder. We are thankful to be able to say that the time has altogether gone by, when men, addressing themselves to thoughtful audiences, may venture to speak disparagingly of the Preacher of the Sermon on the Mount; and Mr. Gill, in daring to overstep this limit, has not done dishonour to the Son of God, but has simply published to the world the fact of his own arrogance and self-conceit.

We would gladly have left the book to the obscurity it merits; but, unhappily, in this age readers are many, and anything which has the appearance of novelty catches only too

¹ *The Evolution of Christianity*. By Charles Gill. Second Edition, with Dissertations. London: Williams & Norgate.

quickly the public ear. *The Evolution of Christianity* has, we regret to say, reached a second edition ; and, therefore, we think that a word of warning should be raised to put those on their guard who may be taken with the catchword of the title, or the author's absurd assumption of originality.

Mr. Gill's book divides itself into three parts. The first is an attack on the Old Testament.

"The Hebrew religion rests on the promise of Jehovah that, in consideration of national adoption of the rite of circumcision, the descendants of Abraham should occupy the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. If, therefore, the Hebrew Patriarch could have foreseen Jehovah's violation of the solemn covenant, he would have, obviously, refused to ratify the fatal contract, which lured his descendants to destruction in the vain pursuit of a phantom empire ; and the world would never have heard of a Chosen Race or a Peculiar People" (p. 2).

The author, after affirming that ancient Hebrew literature is nothing more than the unattested compilations of Ezra, Nehemiah, and a succession of editorial scribes, proceeds to collect those incidents in which persons commit acts unworthy of their profession as servants of Jehovah, or commit deeds directly contrary to the moral law. We are told of the sin which Abraham committed in denying his wife when he entered the land of Egypt ; we are reminded how Isaac committed a similar transgression in Berar ; the treachery of Jacob and Rebecca in deceiving Isaac is brought forward as an instance of God sanctioning sin ; the murder of Sisera by Jael is narrated, and the Song of Deborah is duly commented on ; Jephthah's rash vow is instanced as affording proof that the Israelites believed that human sacrifices were acceptable to Jehovah ; David's sins are gloated over with malignant virulence, and the expression of his repentance in the fifty-first Psalm is stigmatised as unblushing hypocrisy ; Solomon's apostasy is characterised as "liberal concessions to his domestic circle ;" and these things are collected together in many pages, and dwelt on, as if it had not been shown a thousand times that it was not God's design to exalt even Hebrew prophets much beyond the times in which they lived,

or the environment which encircled them ; or, as if the most simple could not understand that the sins of individual men, even though they were God's chosen saints, detract nothing from the sanctity of the moral law, or from the unapproachable holiness of God.

It is, however, with the second part of his book, treating of the character and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we have most concern.

On almost the first page of the book Mr. Gill informs us what the idea is that he has formed of Christianity. We may pass by, as being the natural expression of the author's unbelief, the statement, that, on the threshold of his work, he is "arrested by the startling coincidence that Judaism, Christianity, and the Reformation, all originated in assumptions shown by the lapse of time to have been popular delusions ;" but what are we to think of a writer who can gravely assert as a plain matter of fact that,

"Christianity originated in faith that the Messiah should reappear in the clouds within a generation, to restore the kingdom of Judah, or to establish the kingdom of heaven" (p. 2) ;

or to this astonishing sentence can add,

"If, therefore, the simple-minded communists, who parted with all their earthly possessions in enthusiastic expectation of the impending advent, had not been ignorant that nearly two thousand years would elapse without any tidings of Jesus, the supernatural claims of Christianity could not have survived the first century."

It had been our own idea that Christianity had its origin in faith in Christ, in love for His person, and in belief in His teaching ; we had thought that men held to Christianity because they believed in a Saviour, who lived for them, and who had died for them ; we had fancied that Christianity had been accepted because men felt sin to be a burden, and trusted that in Christ they might be delivered from its power ; we had considered that the exceeding beauty of Christ's moral teaching, the principles regenerative of social life which He incidently laid down, had something to do with its reception by the Western world. It seemed to us in our ignorance

that it was in such things as these that the religion of Christ was founded. This, we had imagined, was the religion which Peter and John preached ; which St. Paul carried through Asia Minor and Europe ; which confessors were willing to suffer for ; which martyrs were content to die for ; and which to-day is being declared from Christian pulpits, and carried to heathen lands by Christian missionaries. It certainly had never entered into our conception, before Mr. Gill told us the fact, that Christianity originated in faith that the Messiah should come again in the clouds, within a generation, to restore the kingdom of Judah. A notion, it is true, had gained some ground in the early Church that Christ should reappear, not to restore the kingdom of Judah, but to judge the world, and to take His saints to reign with Him in heaven—a notion against which, if Mr. Gill had studied to better purpose those Epistles of St. Paul which M. Rénan allows to be genuine, he would have seen that the great Apostle was careful to guard.

The third part of Mr. Gill's essay is occupied with discussing the question of the Resurrection, and with the manner of the "evolution of Divinity ;"—that is to say, the mode in which, according to the author's thinking, the Christian Church gradually, during the second and third centuries, grew to the belief that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the co-equal with, and of the same essence as the Father.

Into this well-worn question we have no intention of entering. The belief in the Resurrection was from the beginning one of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity ; and the belief in the Divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, is traceable through the Apostolic fathers, and every subsequent orthodox writer. It is absurd to suppose that Christian writers received and adopted as their own the main doctrine of the gnostic heretics to whom they were bitterly opposed. If Irenæus was not persuaded of the truth of Christ's Divinity, why should he wish to believe it, and on account of this wish receive a gnostic gospel—the fourth Gospel of St. John ? Mr. Gill raises one of his favourite side issues when he sneers at the foolishness of Justin Martyr, or ridicules the illustrations of Irenæus. But although the language of these fathers

may not always be very sensible, it in no wise interferes with the main point of the contention, namely, that they did hold that Christ rose from the dead, and that He was the Son of God. But is not St. Paul a Christian father? St. Paul was a contemporary with our Lord; and if one thing is absolutely beyond contradiction, it is that St. Paul believed in the bodily resurrection of Christ, and in His Divinity. The undisputed Epistles—those allowed by F. C. Baur himself to be authentic—afford abundant proof of this position. We really need not trouble ourselves with Mr. Gill's (and others') unsupported statements, that the Epistles of St. Paul are proved by "internal evidence" to be interpolated in all those passages which it suits Mr. Gill to deny. St. Paul held the doctrine that Christ rose from the dead; and he maintains that the Lord was the Son of God as clearly and distinctly as the author of the fourth Gospel. There will always be unbelievers who deny what words expressly assert, and to whom no form of words suffice to carry conviction. But these persons deny that the Johannæan Gospel asserts the Divine Nature; and as Mr. Gill is not among their number, and indeed maintains that the fourth Gospel was a work published late in the second century for the express purpose of upholding the Divinity of Christ, in so far nothing more need be said.

Mr. Gill is lacking in all the essential qualities which a student of Christianity should possess. He brings to his task neither breadth of view, insight, nor power of comprehension. He is absolutely devoid of all reverence; he is a total stranger to any feeling of veneration; he is without any perception of moral beauty; the vision of purity does not appeal to his imagination, and the idea of holiness does not excite any corresponding emotion in his soul. He sees nothing of the sublime simplicity which is such a marked characteristic of the Gospels; and he can so little understand the charms with which the Lord Jesus Christ clothed the commonest objects of nature, that the parables of Christ, ever the delight, at once, of the simple and the scholar, are to him the "enigmatical subtleties" of Rabbinical casuists.

The pity and tenderness of Christ is only "a feminine softness of nature;" His utter renunciation and forgetfulness of self are only a "surrender" to the obligations of an "impossible idea;" His willingness to die is but a "fanatical submission" to prophetic superstition. Pathos is a word outside the author's vocabulary, as the appreciation of self-sacrifice lies outside his mental horizon. He displays a want of ability to enter into the thoughts and ideas of those who differ from him which is astonishing; he manifests an absence of consideration for the feelings of others, and an indifference to wounding their most sacred susceptibilities, which is almost incredible. Cased in a triple armour of arrogant conceit, the book betrays on nearly every page a ridiculous self-opiniativeness which blinds its author to a possibility of error on his part. Even a writer in the *Westminster Review*, who might be supposed to be in sympathy with Mr. Gill's sceptical ideas and godless sentiments, is constrained to rebuke his profaneness.

But the special features of the *Evolution of Christianity*, to which we purpose to call more particular attention, are a lack of sound and cautious scholarship, a want of candour and literary fairness which causes rash and unproved assertions to be made, and a flippancy of style which we can designate by no other word than vulgarity.

Mr. Gill has naturally a great deal to say about the authorship of the books of the New Testament. The fallacious criticisms, now abandoned by the best sceptical scholars of Germany and France, are reproduced and placed before his readers as if they were still received as true, and had not been completely refuted. More than once we find him referring to the obsolete theories of F. C. Baur. Only it should be noticed as a curious fact, that the great critics are not referred to by name; and, for aught any one can gather from the book itself, the criticism on which much of it is based might be the proper and original discovery of Mr. Gill himself. The basis of the synoptical Gospels are the lost *logia* of St. Matthew. The original Hebrew did not contain such "mythical legends," and "ecclesiastical interpolations,"

as the supernatural birth of Christ, or the visit of "anonymous sages," or the "grotesque" story of Satanic temptation; nor was the "gnostic" addition of the descent of the Holy Ghost to be found in it. Of course the author accepts as undisputed and indisputable truth the various supposed recensions of the Galilæan Gospels, upheld by Wiess, Hilgenfeld, Holtzmann, and other writers of that school, whose names, however, are not mentioned. There is no hint that the writer has ever heard of the famous comparison of M. Rénan, in which he draws a parallel between the four Gospels and four imaginary histories of Napoleon, supposed to be written by four soldiers of the Empire thirty or forty years after the death of their chief. "Pseudo-John," by which Mr. Gill, following the example of other sceptics, thinks it becoming to designate the fourth Gospel, is a "pious fiction" written by some "pious gnostic" for the deification of the Messiah in the last quarter of the second century. He does not seem aware that Rénan places, at all events in his first volume, the fourth Gospel "at the very cradle" of the second century, or that the learned French writer maintains that Valentinus and the other gnostics borrowed from St. John, instead of its author, as Mr. Gill says, borrowing from them. Candour obliges us to add that in his later volumes uncertainty revives in the mind of M. Rénan, and in a moment of irritability he exclaims, that "one can never touch the question of the writings ascribed to John without falling into contradictions and anomalies." Again, Mr. Gill forgets that in the critical sifting which Baur's theory has undergone, the date of the fourth Gospel has been receding further and further back in the second century, so that now hardly a critic with any pretension to fairness puts it later than the very beginning of that century, if not at the end of the first century—a date which pretty nearly coincides with that assigned by those who hold that it was written by St. John the Apostle.

So again, with regard to St. Paul's Epistles, Mr. Gill out-herods the Tübingen school itself, appearing to follow the lead of some obscure critics who deny any of the Pauline Epistles to be genuine; pedants who have not sufficient humour to

perceive the absurdity of supposing that genuine letters of St. Paul have vanished utterly without leaving any trace behind them, after having fulfilled their purpose in supplying shreds, and snips, and patches, for the use of forgers. But perhaps the critical acumen of Mr. Gill shows its greatest brilliancy when he maintains (or seems to maintain) that the Epistle of St. James, placed in the second class of inspired writings by Eusebius, almost rejected by Jerome, and with difficulty received by the Church, was written by James, the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, because it agrees with the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, and is opposed, as Mr. Gill imagines, to the doctrinal teaching of the fourth Gospel. Orthodox Christians can without much difficulty receive the Epistle of St. James as genuine and authentic; but it is rather droll to find a sceptical writer, who can hardly get himself to believe that St. Paul wrote the Epistle of the Romans, upholding its authority.

With regard to the question of interpolations, which rests on no MS. authority, and the proofs for which are purely subjective, we may content ourselves with reminding our readers of a fact which Mr. Gill apparently has overlooked. Throughout all this period of time the Christian Church existed, and had a widespread organisation. In every particular and individual local Church converts were being gathered in and instructed; catechumens were being trained in Christian knowledge; and throughout the whole body of believers Christian teaching was being instilled. Each Church was supplied more or less completely with copies of the sacred books, and these were constantly read publicly in their assemblies. In addition, many private members of the Church were possessed of manuscripts of their own. It was, moreover, an age characterized by much movement. Members of the Church existing in one place were constantly passing into other localities, where they met Christian disciples, and took part in their devotions, and in reading from the Scriptures. Consequently, all these assumed additions and interpolations were not so easy of accomplishment as the sceptical writers of Germany would have us believe.

This is shown by the well-known story told by St. Augustine. A Bishop, in reading the account of the growth of Jonah's gourd, allowed himself to substitute *hedera*, the word used by St. Jerome for the established *cucurbita*; but he was instantly interrupted by his hearers, who would not suffer the change, and obliged the Bishop to use the word to which their ears had become accustomed.

If we could overcome our disgust at Mr. Gill's arrogant treatment of sacred subjects, it would be amusing to note how, to his own satisfaction at least, he settles subjects of the most momentous import in a couple of lines of inconclusive and erroneous reasoning.

"Although the Jews could not accept the carpenter's son as the promised Prince of Judah, they did not cease to anticipate an early appearance of the national deliverer. Jesus, *therefore* [the italics are ours], inferred that, although the day and the hour were still unrevealed, his second and glorious advent would occur within the lifetime of his disciples" (p. 260).

Or notice the number of fallacies and unproved assumptions which occur in the following lines taken from the same page:

"When we consider that the form and substance of these startling announcements are borrowed from the Book of Enoch, and that, contrary to the expectations of Jesus, nearly two thousand years have passed away without their fulfilment, we inevitably see in him the innocent victim of illusory dreams originating in the Messianic fanaticism of some unknown enthusiast, speaking in the name of a man who had been dead three thousand years" (p. 260).

Or again, observe the deliberate purpose with which the writer assumes that our Lord borrowed His Divine teaching from Buddhist sources through the training of Essene teachers.

"The genius of Essene Buddhism inspires this famous discourse [the Sermon on the Mount]. 'Blessed are the humble, the merciful, the peacemakers, the pure in heart. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and suffer persecution for its sake, for great is their reward in heaven.' This language might well have been addressed to his disciples by an Essene sage, commending the virtues which they practised within the circle of an exclusive sect" (pp. 196-97).

Yet Mr. Gill is obliged to own that there is not the faintest trace "in history or legend" of any connection between Christ and the Essenes, or that he ever came in contact with them. Also, because the fact is indisputable, Mr. Gill is further obliged to acknowledge that there is no scrap of evidence that the teaching of Buddha had penetrated into Palestine, or had influenced the Essenes or anybody else. The evidence is indeed all the other way. There were ascetic sects in Palestine, as there were ascetic sects in India; but there is not the slightest indication of any *peculiar* Buddhist doctrine to be found among the Jews. But Mr. Gill does not honestly say this. What he says is,

"We do not *yet* [the italics are the author's] hold any historic proof that Buddhist missionaries visited Palestine; and a learned treatise could, no doubt, be written in refutation of our unattested assumption. But meanwhile the facts remain indisputable, that, antecedent to the Christian era, an ascetic sect existed in Judæa deeply imbued with opinions identical with the teaching of Buddha, and that these opinions filled an important place in the evolution of Christianity" (pp. 188-89).

A remark of Mr. Gill on the Gospels affords another striking instance of his candour and literary honesty. Speaking of the original Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew, he says:

"This priceless manuscript has perished. Egyptian papyri, written two thousand years before the Christian era, have reached us through a natural process of preservation; but all the miraculous powers of Christianity could not save for us an Apostolic transcript of the Sermon on the Mount" pp. 166-67.

and, with a disregard for truth which is shameless, Mr. Gill adds,

"Orthodoxy suggests that Apostolic autograms were withdrawn by Divine wisdom to prevent their becoming objects of worship" (p. 167).

"What has become of primitive Christian manuscripts?" asks the author of the *Evolution of Christianity*. Every child knows the answer to Mr. Gill's question. The Egyptian papyri have reached us because they were preserved untouched

in tombs and crypts ;² evangelical manuscripts have perished, as the originals of Homer, Virgil, or Euripides have perished,³ because men had them in daily use.

One other instance may be given, in order that our readers may understand the way in which this author insinuates what he does not dare to assert. On page 276 occurs the sentence,

“ Paul, or whoever may have written the first Epistle to the Corinthians.”

What are we to think of such a sentence as this? If Mr. Gill is not aware that Baur, not to speak of M. Rénan and more modern critics, accepts without question the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Corinthians, what are we to think of his scholarship? If Mr. Gill is perfectly well aware of the fact, what are we to think of his candour in attempting to suggest to the reader unversed in such matters that St. Paul did not write the Epistle in question?

Whether rightly or wrongly, the great mass of the people of England, educated or uneducated, worship Jehovah. He is their Lord and their God. To Him they bring the tribute of their adoration ; before Him they bow their faces ; to Him they kneel in the attitude of prayer. His law is the rule of their life ; His command carries with it Divine sanction ; to His word they owe their obedience. He is their God. All feelings of veneration, all accents of praise and honour, all thoughts of reverence and love, are brought and laid at His feet as His due right. Men's aspirations after good, their desire to do right, their endeavour to lead honest and pure lives, are based upon the duty they owe to Him. The higher thoughts which at times pass through their minds ; the nobler

²The papyrus Ebers—to which Dr. Ebers assigns a date of 1552 B.C.—“ was discovered between the bones of a mummy in a tomb of the Theban Necropolis.” Bolton : *Papyrus Ebers*, p. 4.

³There is a *fragment* of Homer dating from the first century before Christ. The oldest MS. of Virgil, in the Vatican, is of the third or fourth century A.D. ; that of Livy is of the fifth century ; that of Plato of the ninth ; that of Horace of the tenth ; that of Euripides of the eleventh century A.D. Obliterating and writing over—palimpsest—was a very fruitful cause of the destruction of MSS.

aspirations which raise their moral being; the ideas of justice and mercy, of truth and self-sacrifice they possess—all centre round the shrine they have erected to Him in their hearts. With some few exceptions, to all men and women living under the civilisation of the Western world Jehovah is their Lord and their God.

And yet Mr. Gill ventures to speak of Jehovah as "a capricious Deity annulling the Divine blessing in response to a human curse" uttered by "an angry man" whose "alcoholised brain" "disposed to malediction" (p. 17); or as "some petty heathen God aroused to jealousy of man's ambition" (p. 18). He thinks it in accordance with good taste to insult Christian consciousness by speaking of God as tampering "with the human conscience by commanding the commission of crime" (p. 19), or by insinuating that "successful treachery may win the blessing of God" (p. 20). Still speaking of the Lord God Almighty, Mr. Gill enquires whether "Jehovah appears to greater advantage in dramatic revelation;" and answers his own question with a sneer.

"As Job witnessed the growth of a second family amid scenes of renewed prosperity, he may have been consoled for the loss of the dead; but it can have been no compensation to the slain daughters of Job that their sisters and successors were the most lovely women and the richest heiresses in the land of Uz, whilst they rested in tombs on which might have been inscribed 'The victims of the gods'" (p. 22).

Or again, what is to be thought of a writer, who, in what purports to be a grave and learned work, thinks it becoming to call the Lord Jesus Christ "the great Hebrew Thaumaturgist" (p. 242), or to speak of Him as assuming "with light-hearted philosophy . . . the rôle [*sic*] of a popular Rabbi, or more humble meturgeman" (p. 196); in what school can a man have studied, or in what kind of society can he have lived, who does not think it derogatory, and a slur upon himself, to apply the term "lecturer" (p. 252) to Him whose greatness as a religious teacher all European scholars, believing and sceptical alike, acknowledge? What must be the habit of mind which can designate the Sermon on the Mount as Christ's "imaginative targum on the law and the prophets"

(p. 196), or can talk of the "marvellous simplicity and ignorance of" that "discourse" (p. 209)? What must be the literary taste of a man, who, writing of the parables, affirms that "Jesus did not possess the critical acumen indispensable to the nice adjustment of analogous conditions disclosed in the fables of an Æsop" (p. 220); or can bring himself to say that "*we* [the italics are ours] participate in the surprise and disappointment of the disciples [!] as we see him borrow Rabbinical parables from the educational system of men whom he had denounced" (p. 218). But, perhaps, though the previous irreverence of thought cannot possibly be exceeded, the height of vulgarity of style is attained when the author gives us his interpretation of the parable of the Prodigal Son. "The parable," he tells us (p. 223), "is devoid of any instructive efficacy;" its teaching is to the effect that "idle profligacy may attain equal rewards with steady industry;" if we could but know "the subsequent history of the prodigal" we should probably hear of a "catastrophe which would, of course, materially alter the moral of the whole," and should find that even "his affectionate old father" lost all patience, and sent "the young scamp" who had "dined so often on penitential veal" back "to husks and swine."

Mr. Gill has made a great discovery. In fact, he has made many great discoveries. He has first found out that John, the son of Zechariah, a man who "had he been postponed to the nineteenth century" a magistrate would have sent to some "benevolent asylum," accepted "the fanciful illusions of his excited brain as the precious whisperings of divine revelation." Forgetting that he has already informed his readers that a quite different circumstance was the originating cause of Christ's religion, the writer now tells us that to this Nazarite hermit, "controlled by the hallucinations of ascetism," may be traced the origin of Christianity. For, led astray by an "imaginative interpretation of . . . poetic language," he hastened to fulfil prophecy by proclaiming the kingdom and nominating Messiah. In a moment of exalted frenzy, he points to a Galilæan peasant, who had wandered from Nazareth to Jordan, as the promised Messiah. But the

announcement of John, says Mr. Gill, had been too abrupt and startling to admit of the Lord Jesus "promptly accepting the rôle" [*sic*]. When He had "grasped the gravity of his position as the nominee of John the Baptist," He "naturally," as Mr. Gill thinks, "experienced doubt and perplexity" in considering His future career. The author then goes on to inform us how "he [the Lord Jesus Christ] studies Moses, Joshua, and Samuel"; weighs every sentence of Job, David, and Solomon; and so passes on, without result, through the vague declarations of the prophets, until

"his attention is suddenly rivetted on the anonymous bard of the Captivity, whose poems have been published in the name of Isaiah: 'He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief'" (p. 253).

From His study of Isaiah Christ rises up

"with the sad smile of the doomed man upon his lips; we know that he has fallen under the dominion of that most pernicious superstition—prophetic fatalism—and will inevitably follow the example of John by fulfilling prophecy, under the fatal delusion of submission to the will of his father in heaven, as expressed in his reproof of Peter in the garden of Gethsemane: 'But how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?'—words of fatal import, which briefly define the true nature of the superstition in which the religion of Christianity originated" (p. 255).

Such a psychological analysis of the mind of Him, whom Christians regard as the Son of God, is sufficiently startling; but Mr. Gill's power of intuitive insight carries him farther still. He asks, if Isaiah forecast a crown of martyrdom, from which prophet did Jesus borrow the triumphant glories of futurity? On the writer's principles, we might answer from the Psalms, or from Daniel, or even from this same Isaiah. But Mr. Gill is ready with a much more subtle answer—indeed, it is the answer to this question which stamps the author of the *Evolution of Christianity* as a person of the most unequalled originality. Some considerable time has elapsed since the Book of Enoch was found and brought to Europe, and during all this period men's minds have been occupied, not with asking from what prophet did the Lord Jesus Christ

borrow the triumphant glories of futurity, but in tracing out the parallelism existing between the prophecies contained in the Old Testament and the revelation given by Christ. But, so far as we know, although the book of Enoch is quoted by St. Peter and St. Jude, it never occurred to any one previously to Mr. Gill to find in this Apocryphal book the key to the understanding of Christ's future glory. This is Mr. Gill's brilliant discovery; we may also say it is the very cause of his book's existence, and its justification.

"If Isaiah forecast a crown of martyrdom, from which prophet did Jesus borrow the triumphant glories of futurity? We answer, from the visions of Enoch, which depict with glowing imagery the advent of the Son of Man sitting upon the throne of his glory" (p. 255). "This marvellous book—the boldest and most definite product of Hebrew imagination—was, in fact, the Scripture which supplied Jesus with his vivid conceptions of angels, devils, the resurrection, judgment, heaven, and hell. . . . It is to the book of Enoch we must turn for full and elaborate details of the Messianic kingdom, the Son of Man, the Elect One, the Son of God, supreme in righteousness, knowledge, and wisdom, pre-existent 'before the creation of the world,' and 'proclaimed before the Lord of all spirits, before the sun and the stars of heaven were created'" (p. 257).

Then follow words we hardly dare to quote, they are so painfully irreverent and profane. But they must be quoted in order that our readers may thoroughly realise what sort of book is the *Evolution of Christianity*. Mr. Gill ventures to write—

"How intense the perplexity of Jesus as he studies conflicting prophets! Isaiah has doomed him to ignominy and death, but in the pages of Enoch his career is a triumphal march. Both are inspired prophets, and therefore cannot err; but who can reconcile predictions mutually destructive? Days and weeks pass away in doubt and perplexity, preventing even a hint to his disciples that he is indeed the Messiah of the prophets. . . . At length it flashes upon him as a revelation. There are two advents of the Messiah clearly predicted: one, as Jesus of Nazareth, doomed to persecution and death; the other, as a glorified being, appearing in the clouds of heaven to take vengeance on his cruel enemies. . . . The warning

voice of Peter was powerless to control the growing fanaticism of Jesus, and the severity with which he was rebuked finally silenced all the apostles. Thus Jesus became hopelessly entangled in the meshes of prophetic illusion, deprived of all advice and counsel which might have shown him that self-immolation, in harmony with the fanciful utterance of an ancient bard, was a form of suicide irreconcilable with the purpose of a beneficent deity" (p. 257-59).

As a matter of course, the miracles of Christ offer to Mr. Gill a fitting subject for sneers and ridicule. They are to him "actions susceptible of imitation by any dexterous juggler," and "scoffers," he tells us, might define them as "mere sleight of hand." "How deplorable," he exclaims, "that Jesus could not rise above the pernicious superstition of demoniac possession!" and he does not hesitate to call our Lord, in irony, a "supernatural physician." We do not care to follow the author through his pages of ribaldry, in which he talks of the "monstrous combination of the human and diabolical," of "the marvellous fish and wondrous crab" "of private resurrections," and asks why Lazarus did not travel as a "public lecturer" from city to city, detailing the wonders of the unknown region where the spirits of the departed dwell. Sceptics far better qualified than Mr. Gill have already discussed the subject of miracles a thousand times, and have a thousand times been answered. Two writers satisfy our own mind as to the possibility and credibility of miracles. Dean Mansel proves their possibility to all those who believe in a personal God. At early dawn a stone lies on the sea-shore a hundred feet below the level of the cliff. At noon it rests on the cliff's top. It has got there in spite of the law of gravitation. A man, acting in the good pleasure of his will, overcame the force of gravity by the exercise of other physical laws, and carried it thither. May not God, working in the exercise of His will, not contrary to, but in accordance with, the laws which He has set creation, do what lies beyond our power to effect, or our knowledge to explain? An anonymous writer has shown the credibility of miracles. Miracles are contrary to experience. Undoubtedly, or they would not be miracles. If miracles had been matters of

everyday experience, they would have been valueless for the purpose for which they were manifested. Miracles are almost unique in human history, because the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ in human form was a unique experience in the world's story.

It would have been well if, instead of carping at words which the civilised world has accepted as words of wisdom, the author of this book had laid to heart the profound saying of Christ, that it is only men of childlike spirit who can enter into His kingdom. Mr. Gill will fail to perceive any depth at all in this word of the Lord Jesus. To him it will appear as the ignorant expression of a Jewish peasant's folly. Yet it is only in this childlike spirit that faith can be comprehended. Whether a man accept or reject the religion of Christ, he is unqualified to pass any verdict upon it, unless he can understand what faith—the principle on which it is founded—means and implies. He need not to receive faith, but he must understand its meaning. But to Mr. Gill faith is what colour is to a man born blind, or it is as if one, to whom a simple melody seems the highest effect of music, should venture to criticise the harmonies of Beethoven. The author of this book lacks the sense by which alone the religion of Christ can be apprehended. Therefore all his criticisms are idle and worthless ; therefore does what a great classic of the day has called "the unconscious simplicity of the Gospels" appear to him as foolishness. There are many sceptical writers, who, though they are unable to receive Christ as their Lord and Master, have yet felt themselves constrained to bow down before a wisdom which, even to them, is all the greater on account of the garb of simplicity in which the great Teacher has clothed it. But Mr. Gill is not one of these. Consequently, to all earnest thinkers his book is worthless ; and although, perhaps, persons whose minds are cast in the same mould as his own, may mistake his jibes for wit, and may accept his sneers as proofs of superior wisdom, men of higher, and therefore, of more humble spirit will turn away from its perusal with feelings of mingled astonishment and disgust.

H. N. BERNARD.

CURRENT POINTS AT ISSUE.

EVANESCENT ASTRONOMY.

WHAT more permanent than the stars! What more fleeting than the theories concerning them! Just now the nebulae are exercising the minds of astronomers, as indeed they have been for some time past. This is, of course, necessarily the case, as until we know what the nebulae are, we are bound to conjecture; our only objection is that these conjectures have been put forward from time to time with too much the air of finality, as though the mystery were at last solved. They have been known for many years as cloud-like patches in the sky, and believed to be different in nature from the fixed stars. The first distinct observations were made by Sir William Herschell, who believed them to consist of a nebulous fluid. Lord Rosse, however, brought his more powerful telescope to bear upon them, and resolved some of them into bright points, which were affirmed to be undoubtedly stars. Some nebulae still remained unresolved, but this was attributed to their greater distance; no doubt, however, was entertained that if we had a sufficiently strong optical power they all would be resolved into systems of worlds. As the spectroscope has toppled over many guesses, so it overturned this, for when Dr. Huggins brought his spectroscope to bear on one of the planetary nebulae, he was amazed to find it give a bright line only, others gave two or three lines, which proved that they were not distant stars, or stars at all, but only masses of glowing gas or vapour. The stars give a continuous spectrum interspersed by dark bands, showing that they are surrounded by an incandescent atmosphere, in which exist the absorbent vapours of different metals. Mr. Norman Lockyer, however, contributes a brilliant paper to *Harper's*

Monthly Magazine, in which he attempts to prove that this also is a mistake, and that they, "like comets, consist of meteorites, and that they are neither very distant clusters of stars, nor masses of gas." This is all very well, learned and interesting; and will, no doubt, aid the progress of astronomy and increase our knowledge of the stars. All we protest against is that these nebular and other hypotheses should be made the test of the inspiration of the Bible. We yield to none in our admiration of the labours of these ardent students, and are, therefore, all the more anxious that they should not mar their work nor distract their thoughts by premature excursions into the realms of theology. Even here Mr. Lockyer drags in "evolution" and "species" by sheer physical force. He calls his article "The Origin of Celestial Species." We might as well name the solid, fluid, and gaseous conditions of iron as different species of iron. This is not science; and where does evolution come in? We are told in the following sentence, which is difficult of comprehension, "All celestial forms are due to an exquisitely simple evolution of matter in the form of meteoric dust." We fear there is nebulosity nearer than the stars.

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD'S THEOLOGIANS.

In the year 1881 the Bishop of Salisbury preached the Bampton Lecture, his subject having been "The One Religion." Mrs. Ward heard the first lecture, which displeased her exceedingly, because the lecturer did not go nearly far enough in her direction, and also because he appeared to unite sin with unbelief far too closely. Immediately, without waiting for the remaining lectures, she published a "Protest." The circulation was at that time stopped; but the Protest has now re-appeared in a recent number of the *North American Review*. It is chiefly interesting as containing the genesis of the two interesting young men, with whom we are now tolerably familiar, under different names. We are also familiar with their theological discussions and widening differences. They were created to refute a sup-

posed unfairness on the part of the Bishop, whom she charges with accounting for almost an unbelief by "self-indulgence and vanity." This, however, is unfair to the lecturer, who said most clearly in this very lecture, "we know that there is much sincere perplexity . . . and that from the time of Job a sense of revolt against the dispensations of God has been felt in certain moments by many a true heart that loved righteousness." This is neither denied nor doubted by any student of human nature; it is a fact that calls for truest sympathy and prayerful help on the part of an earnest, honest thinker.

The strange part of the story, however, is that she makes these theological differences arise primarily, not from intellectual convictions, but from varying temperaments. "A. is naturally of a more fearless and positive temper, liberal in politics, ardent for reforms." He is guided by his bias till he arrives—where? At the questions, "Is there really no rest in God, no peace in Christ? Is death the end?" If his temperament be only of the ordinary kind, Mrs. Ward thinks he will probably become an agnostic. But if he be more than usually strong, he will perhaps come to believe in "a possibility," and that possibility will be—God. In this *possibility* he will find "rest and permanence!" He will "have replaced a Christianity of one type with the Christianity of another." That other will be a Christianity without the Christ who said that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin because they believed not on Him. Poor A. will have but little reason to bless the temperament that drove him to a desert so dreary as this. The temperament of C. differs much from that of A. He is "slower and more timid, with a bias against change, strengthened, perhaps, by the politics of his family." To him, at last, there is "nothing less free than thought." Poor plight for both unfortunates!

All this, and much more of the same kind, might be allowed to pass without notice, were it not for the fact of our being informed that "it will be best for her in the future to confine herself, wholly or mainly, to that type of writing which has already won her a hearing." There cannot be any

doubt about the general reading of our authoress. We respect most heartily her evident sincerity; her wish to keep the noblest and the truest in man; and yet we are sorry for her decision, believing her not the most fitted for the task she has undertaken.

If, however, she does proceed to fresh discussions, may we ask for a little clearer thought, better definitions, a more adequate notion of the nature of Christianity, and a little freshness in her disputants? A. and C. are all very well, but when they come again as D. and E. we have had enough of them, and must hope there will not be a continuation of the alphabet. Above all things, if there is to be another fight, we trust it will be between equals, and not between an unbelieving giant and a Christian dwarf. Fair play is a jewel.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY ON THE BIBLE.

Professor Huxley's position in relation to Scripture is very peculiar. Read some of his opinions regarding it, and he might be mistaken for a most devout believer; read others, and they present him as a most determined opponent. So long ago as 1870 he asked, after glowing eulogies on the Bible, "By the study of what other book could children be so much humanised, and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities?" and more in the same strain. That he has not changed in this respect is shown in his reply to Dr. Wace in the *Nineteenth Century* for April. He there states, "I have always advocated the reading of the Bible, and the diffusion of the study of that most remarkable collection of books amongst the people." "It is so clear that the only immediate and ready antidote to the poison which has been mixed with Christianity, to the intoxication and delusion of mankind, lies in copious draughts from the undefiled spring." Had he stopped here, all would have been well; but will it be believed that in this very same article he calls St. John's

Gospel "a theosophic romance of the first order"? He does his best to show that Christ never preached the "Sermon on the Mount," nor uttered what is known as the "Lord's Prayer." He will not reject the idea of Christ's resuscitation after a prolonged swoon, but discards all thought of a resurrection from death. The dissecting-knife is so freely applied to the records of Christ's life that we have no longer a symmetric form before us, but a mangled mass of fragments. We would therefore ask, most deferentially, where is the "undefiled spring" to be found, at least by those who have not the Professor's culture? One might say, "Surely that beautiful silver stream, bright with all its 'blesseds,' is the spring where I am to drink." No, says the Professor, not there; Mark does not relate it, so Christ cannot have said it. Is this not somewhat cruel, to ask "the people" to drink, and then tell them they cannot possibly know what to drink till they ("the people") have mastered the latest results of the "Higher Criticism"? This inconsistency, not uncommon in many minds, is between thought and feeling, and is evidence how much our hearts need the story of the Cross. Criticism may lead some minds to doubt details, but the heart feels that its longings can only be satisfied by a some one more than man, and so these sceptics cling to the Christ, even in their very rejection of Him.

OUR GREAT SALVATION AND OUR LITTLE EARTH.

Old at least as the time of David is the thought, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, what is man that Thou art mindful of him?" If that were the natural feeling of the Psalmist when he imagined that the earth was the centre of the universe, how much more pressing does it become now, when our little world is placed in her right position, as a very small orb indeed amid countless mightier ones? If "geocentric" Christianity were improbable, how much more improbable becomes "heliocentric" Christianity. On the first blush the difficulty does not seem

strange; it has presented itself to many minds, and has called forth many replies. The exceeding greatness of the sacrifice involved in our Christianity, as compared with the insignificance of the earth where the cross was raised, causes the doubt. Dr. Freeman suggests a most interesting reply in the *Contemporary Review* for April. His answer is an expansion of St. Paul's words, "God chose the weak things of the world, that He might put to shame the things that are strong." Many illustrations are given to show how true this is in the realm of the physical. For example, man himself has less of physical resource in his own person than almost any other animal, and yet he, by reason and speech, has become the strongest of all in some respects. A germ floating in the air may, however, take possession of his body, fill him with disease, and lay him in the grave. So says Dr. Freeman, "If a world that is physically very small among worlds should really, in some sense other than physical, hold the first place among worlds much bigger than itself, such a state of things is in perfect agreement with what experience tells us is the ordinary course of things in that one world of which we know something." We have long been convinced that the solution of the difficulty lies in the character of the human inhabitants of this earth. The earth itself must share the fate of other worlds, and die in the general death of all, as foretold alike by science and by Scripture. Man, however, is not to die, but live. It was for the soul of man the Great Sacrifice was offered, and what relation has soul to bulk, or to the size of suns? We do not value intellect by weight, but worth. A human soul formed in the image of the Creator, a soul to live for ever, and grow eternally in spirit power, outweighs in value a hundred universes of matter, let that soul be located where it may, on a globe large or small. Carefully compare an immortality of happiness for countless souls, with the Cross of Calvary, by which that result has been obtained, and the sense of disproportion will vanish, and the consciousness of loving harmony will take its place.

JAMES MCCANN.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Commentaries. DR. PAYNE SMITH has already done good work as a commentator, but, in our judgment, this (1) is a perceptible advance upon any of his previous publications. For confidence of movement and thoroughness of treatment, for evident enjoyment of his theme and mastery of detail, this exposition will not easily be surpassed. And we have also the reverent scholarship and critical acumen which this author always shows. No preacher desiring an intelligent acquaintance with Holy Scripture need look farther for a commentary on the Second Book of Samuel than the one which the Dean of Canterbury has provided. The *Introduction* gives a sketch of David's life, abounding in subtle lines and delicate discrimination that only long pondering over the history could have furnished. Now and again the exposition reveals flashes of spiritual insight, especially as it points out the Divine dealings with the king. To 1 *Samuel* Dean Payne Smith contributed not only the Exposition but the Homiletics as well. In the present volume he has confined himself to the former, but he frequently adds homiletic hints to his commentary, brief, but wise and pertinent. Professor Chapman prefixes generally to his *Homiletics* a short survey of the "facts" with which he deals. Often he takes a different view of them from that of the Exposition. The lessons he draws are usually suggestive and skilfully put; and if one should agree rather with the Dean's interpretation, it is easy to make the necessary alteration. The evidence of independent study is itself valuable, and the choice of interpretations helpful to the preacher. The number of homilists is assuredly too small. But they cover their ground very fairly, and each has distinctive characteristics. Mr. B. Dale writes upon nearly the entire book, preferring, as his text, sections to passages. Mr. G. Wood selects particular texts as they commend themselves to him. Both are fresh and thoughtful. Altogether, this is one of the most satisfactory volumes in the Old Testament series.

From Adam to Abraham; or, Lessons on the First Fourteen Chapters of Genesis (2) is too realistic and mechanical for present-day teaching. Difficulties are intentionally avoided.

DR. WEISS, in the second volume of his *Introduction to the New Testament* (3), has taken for his subject the non-Pauline Epistles, the Gospels, and the Acts. The Epistle to the Hebrews, Dr. Weiss thinks, was written by a disciple of the primitive Apostles, and addressed to the Hebrew-speaking Jews of Palestine, about A.D. 66, at a time when a severe crisis was at an end. The Apocalypse (we follow his order), as recent criticism would lead us to expect, is placed early in A.D. 70, at a time when such a work had become necessary to strengthen the faith of the Church in consequence of a decline in the expectation of the Second Coming. James wrote after the middle of the year 50 to believers whose Christianity was immature. The authenticity and canonicity of the Epistle of Jude are unquestionable; the time of writing it was A.D. 60, although 62 is generally regarded as the earliest date. It preceded 2 Peter. 1 Peter is undoubtedly genuine. It was addressed to Jewish Christian Churches before Gentile Christianity had gained ascendancy in Asia Minor, therefore before 55 or 56. 2 Peter was written about ten years afterwards to the same readers, a Gentile element having meanwhile grown up as an effect of Pauline preaching. We have no means of knowing the circumstances which prevented the early and general recognition of its canonicity. The three Epistles of John undoubtedly proceed from the author of the Fourth Gospel; the second was addressed to a Church under the guise of a Christian matron. Space does not permit us to give details of his arguments respecting the origin of the Gospels, especially of the Synoptics; but it does not appear to us to be satisfactory. It may be summarised thus: St. Matthew originally wrote in Aramaic (A.D. 67); a translation into Greek was made by him or by some one else in the following year; this formed one of the authorities for our Gospels. St. Mark, with this document before him, and with his recollections of what he had read from Peter, wrote the second Gospel, A.D. 69. Our present first Gospel was compiled from the Greek Matthew and from Mark's manuscript, A.D. 71. St. Luke wrote from original sources, the original Matthew and our present Mark, A.D. 80. Now is not all this too complicated to be natural and probable? Dr. Weiss will at any rate command great respect for his opinions, based as they are on thorough research, sound scholarship, and real fairness.

A valuable addition to the excellent series of commentaries, known as the Expositor's Bible, is made by Mr. Findlay of Heading-

ley College. His *Galatians* (4) abounds with good *homiletic* material, and will be of great service to preachers. Probably the writer has had them rather than the general public in his mind in preparing this volume. At any rate he has departed, not always very wisely, as it seems to us, from the custom of his predecessors, and not infrequently introduces Greek words both in the text and notes. As the series is announced to be "essentially popular," this is a departure from first principles. Nevertheless, even the unlettered reader will find good reading here. As an exposition the book is excellent, and at times masterly. Professor Findlay follows pretty closely his distinguished predecessor Bishop Lightfoot, but occasionally differs from Professor Beet. Amongst the best portions are the terse definitions of terms, *e.g.*, the fruits of the Spirit, Grace and Peace, &c., in which a wise preacher may often find a good sermon packed into a short sentence.

Messrs. Nisbet & Co. wisely introduce to English readers a volume of *Studies in the Book of Acts* (5), written by Dr. Williams, Bishop of Connecticut. The first twelve chapters of this early history of the Church are divided into some sixteen sections. The version used is the "authorised," not the "revised." The keynote of the work is expressed in these words: "Before Pentecost His [the Holy Spirit's] work was done in individual souls, while after Pentecost He organises a society of men, the Church of God, and in that organisation works in a higher way, and through more powerful influences, than He did on individuals, and moreover is in it 'shed on us abundantly,' in a measure before unknown." The exposition is sound, dignified, and instructive.

The Gospel according to St. Paul (6) is a masterly exposition of the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. It is thorough, thoughtful, and eloquent, and forms a most useful addition to the commentaries extant upon that difficult but important portion of the writings of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Dr. Dykes does not claim for his book that it is a commentary or a treatise in theology; nor is it addressed to scholars and divines, although these will, no doubt, accept it with gratitude, as a sound and sensible exposition of a momentous subject. But besides attracting the notice of divines, which Dr. Dykes does not lay himself out for, the work cannot but prove extremely helpful to the ordinary reader who wishes to have clearer views of the fundamental truths of the Gospel. There is nothing novel in the work except the manner

of treatment ; and there is a novelty about that which is exceedingly charming. Dr. Dykes condemns no one for his opinions, he enters into no religious polemics ; but he simply states what he conceives to be the truth as given by St. Paul, and certainly a vast step has been made in disentangling the Apostle's statements and making them plain so "that all who run may read."

The "Coming Conflict of the Church" (7) is a little work in which Mr. Garratt gives what he calls "present truth for the present day," mainly drawn from his larger work the *Commentary on Revelation*. The purpose of the work is to show what parts of the Revelation have been fulfilled, what are being now fulfilled, and what yet remains. Mr. Garratt is led by his studies to believe that even if the decadence of the British nation with regard to Divine truth and morals does not lead to the scourge of war and invasion—yet the Protestant Churches, and our own in particular, will surrender their Protestantism in accordance with the public opinion of a world-wide commonwealth of nations, the ecclesiastical centre of which will be Jerusalem. The "image of the beast" is an Œcumenical Council which will claim obedience to its canons on the pain of death. This will continue for three years and a half, after which there will be a great revival of true godliness, which will change the whole aspect of things. Mr. Garratt does not attempt to say when all this will be, but he leads us to understand that he considers the coming of the Son of Man to be in the near future.

(1) *The Pulpit Commentary*. Edited by the Very Rev. H. M. D. Jones, D.D., and by the Rev. Joseph S. Exell, M.A. II. *Samuel Exposition*. By Very Rev. R. Payne Smith, D.D. *Homiletics*. By Rev. Prof. C. Chapman, M.A., LL.D. *Homilies*. By various Authors. London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1888. Price 15s.

(2) *From Adam to Abraham ; or, Lessons on the First Fourteen Chapters of Genesis*. By Rev. J. Gurney Hoare, M.A. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1888. Price 1s.

(3) *A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament*. By Dr. Bernhard Weiss. Vol. 2. Hodder & Stoughton. Price 7s. 6d.

(4) *The Epistle to the Galatians*. By the Rev. Professor G. G. Findlay, B.A. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1888.

(5) *Studies in the Book of Acts*. By Dr. Williams. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1888. Price 6s.

(6) *The Gospel according to St. Paul*. By Rev. J. Oswald Dykes, M.A., D.D. James Nisbet & Co., 1888. Price 6s.

(7) *Coming Conflict of the Church*. By Samuel Garratt, M.A., Hon. Canon of Norwich. William Hunt & Company, 1889. Price 1s.

Lectures. IN the Cunningham Lecture for 1888 (1) Professor Blaikie gives a series of sketches of the most famous and influential Scotch preachers, with a critical estimate of their merits and peculiarities. His book covers thirteen centuries, but he passes over ten of them at a bound. He divides the entire time into ten periods, but no lecture treats of the space between the early Celtic Church and the Reformation. The leap is a long one, but there is really nothing to detain the historian. Dr. Blaikie usually gives only the barest outline of each preacher's life, sometimes hardly that; but he takes great pains to set forth adequately and honestly both the matter and manner that each adopted. He does full justice to Columba, and the noble band of missionaries whereof Columba is the central figure. He does not draw too dark or ludicrous a picture of Roman Catholic preaching at the beginning of the Reformation period. He rightly traces the revival of preaching to revived religious life, nor does he overestimate the effect of preaching upon the political, intellectual, and religious progress of Scotland. As is natural, and indeed befitting, the lectures generally occupy the appreciative standpoint, but they do not shrink from indicating the defects and errors of either individual preachers or a school or period. Much stress is laid upon the polemics that formed so large an element in the typical Presbyterian discourse until the reign of Moderatism began. But Dr. Blaikie hardly perceives perhaps to what an extent Moderatism, with its serious, if not fatal, deficiencies, was a reaction from the fury, clamour, asperity, and narrowness which marred and concealed some of the finest qualities of the proclamation of the Gospel during the Reformation and succeeding periods. He notices and laments this harshness and roughness and the undue prominence of controversy, and he urges some forcible pleas in excuse. But he does not take sufficient account of their inevitable effects so soon as Christianity came to be studied from the side of culture. For all that, the lecture on "The Moderate School" is eminently fair. While passing a somewhat severe condemnation upon it as a whole, Dr. Blaikie allows that it rendered real service by calling the Church's and the preacher's attention to neglected fields which the pulpit might claim its share in. From first page to last, the lecturer never forgets the proposition which it is his principal object to prove, and which, nevertheless, is the outcome of independent observation and research, viz., that the success of preaching depends upon the faithfulness, earnestness, and vital

conviction wherewith evangelical truth is presented. So far as Scotland is concerned, he certainly makes his case good. He is a little too much disposed to assume that Calvinism and evangelical truth are identical, and alike exclusive of all other theological systems; and he is almost blind to the existence of other religious denominations in North Britain than the Presbyterian. But the reader can easily make due allowance for this slight lack of breadth of view. The concluding lecture on "The Pulpit of To-day" contains suggestions to which preachers of all sorts and conditions would do well to take heed. We may add that the book is eminently readable. The author knows when and where to touch lightly, and when and where to expatiate. His larger portraits are painted boldly and clearly, and not in too great detail. His smaller sketches skilfully seize upon the main features to be preserved. Many names worthy to be remembered are rescued from the oblivion into which they were falling. Professor Blaikie has done no better piece of literary work than the Cunningham Lectures for 1888.

One excellent feature of these lectures we have omitted to mention: their exposure of the misrepresentations of evangelical preaching and preachers given by Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Kingsley, and Mrs. Oliphant.

Boston Monday Lectures (2).—The covers of the eleventh volume of these lectures hold a rather heterogeneous collection together. As a sort of apology for the name, there are eight short lectures, or rather one lecture in eight small divisions. Each lecture has its "prelude," generally longer than the piece itself, and answers to one or two miscellaneous questions—the jam, apparently, which persuades big audiences to swallow the tiny dose of medicine provided for them. There is a "Symposium on Current Religious Perils," only a collection of letters answering a schedule of inquiries. You might as well call a bundle of examination papers "a symposium." There are also eight "Invocations," five addresses by Mr. Cook, four addresses, and four articles by others, and an appendix containing two more "Preludes," and a number of papers connected with the "Congregational Creed Communion of 1883." The lectures proper, exhibit "modern novel opportunity" in philosophy, theology, ethics, and so on. The preludes and addresses cover a good deal of ground, and are not altogether innocent of repetition. Their principal subjects are Probation after Death and Total Abstinence. Mr. Cook argues stoutly that every man's destiny is decided in this present life, and

exposes with intense earnestness the danger of proclaiming a probation beyond the grave. There is immense force in his pleadings. But he scarcely understands the difference between preaching to men, that they will have a "second chance," and holding that the Scriptures do not declare the manner in which God will deal with those ignorant of the Gospel, and that, therefore, it is permissible to seek intellectual relief in the speculative possibility of further ministries in the intermediate state. All the texts he cites are susceptible of this limitation. As to Temperance, Mr. Cook is an extreme Prohibitionist, and will not even listen to arguments on the other side. One commendable feature is the determined and partially successful effort to view politics in the light of Christianity. There is an attractive downrightness about Joseph Cook. He knows what he wants to say, and he says it plainly and boldly, so that no one can mistake his meaning. Decidedly the lectures were worth republishing in this country, and they will repay perusal.

**The Helps
Heavenward
Series.** THIS series (3) consists at present of fourteen small volumes, clearly printed and tastefully "got-up," and sold at a low price. The editors state that their aim is wholly devotional and expository. They confine themselves to their purpose with commendable strictness. Two, *The Beginning of the Christian Life* and *The Programme of Life*, are by the Rev. W. L. Watkinson. Both are terse, incisive, popular, judicious. The first addresses itself to young Christians; the second, to those in the midst of the struggle. More practically helpful and suggestive books it would be difficult to find. In *God and Nature* the Rev. N. Curnock gives some pleasant and suggestive studies of "the nature Psalms," and other portions of Scripture dealing with natural phenomena. It is a capital guide-book to the devotional study of physical science, and teaches the Christian how to turn to spiritual uses the ordinary occurrences that may be witnessed in sky, and field, and wood. The reader of *Christian Childhood* cannot fail to notice how strongly Bushnell's theory of "Christian Nurture" has taken hold of the Rev. A. S. Gregory, and how completely it has passed through the crucible of his own mind. It has now an evangelical impress which it certainly lacked before. The objects of the book, however, is not to set forth a theory, but to give practical counsels. The volume runs over with earnestness, kindness, and shrewdness. The aim of Professor Davison is to enable Christian people to combine in their reading of Holy Writ, a pair only too

often disjointed, devotion and intelligent study. The author sets the example himself. The book glows with fervent delight in the Scriptures, while evidences of minute and scholarly thought and searching mark every page, some of them too delicate to be noticed by the perfunctory reader. It is a wonderfully stimulating and informing guide to the reading of the Bible "with the spirit and the understanding also." *The Coming of the King*, by the Rev. J. Robinson Gregory, treats the Second Advent from the devotional and expository standpoint of the series. Carefully avoiding controversy, and seizing upon the points common to all hypotheses as to the time and manner of the Coming, it endeavours to turn all these to "the use of edifying."

IN the *Christian Conscience* (4) Mr. Davison makes a very successful attempt to supply something towards filling the gap which exists in the matter of Christian ethics. Works on this subject are plentiful in Germany, but not so in England, and, therefore, Mr. Davison does his best to supply a want; for while Christian doctrines are fully represented in the literature of this country, there is plenty of room for treatises on Christian duty. Mr. Davison's book is not an exhaustive work, but it treats the particular department of ethics with considerable fulness, with great learning, and in an interesting manner. While expressing indebtedness to Professor Green and Dr. Martineau, the author pursues his own line, and ably supports the old theory of conscience as against the evolutionary theory; his answer to the objections of Hegel, and Mill, and J. C. Morison are satisfactory; and, altogether, the book is calculated to arouse interest in the subject, and to advance the cause of morality from the Christian standpoint.

(1) *The Preachers of Scotland from the Sixth to the Nineteenth Century*. By W. G. Blaikie, D.D., LL.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888.

(2) *Boston Monday Lectures: Current Religions, with Preludes and Other Addresses on Leading Reforms, and Symposium on Vital and Progressive Orthodoxy*. By Joseph Cook. London: Richard D. Dickinson, 1888.

(3) *The Beginning of the Christian Life*. By the Rev. W. L. Watkinson. *God and Nature*. By the Rev. Nehemiah Curnock. *Christian Childhood*. By the Rev. A. S. Gregory. *The Word in the Heart: Notes on the Devotional Study of Holy Scripture*. By the Rev. W. T. Davison, M.A. *The Coming of the King: Thoughts on the Second Advent*. By the Rev. J. Robinson Gregory. *The Programme of Life*. By the Rev. W. L. Watkinson. London: T. Woolmer, 1888-89.

(4) *The Christian Conscience*. By Rev. W. T. Davison, M.A., Professor of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, Richmond College. London: T. Woolmer, 2, Castle Street, City Road, E.C., 1888. Price 5s.

Helps for Sermons. LORD BACON'S advice that an exceedingly valuable commentary might be furnished from the sermons of great preachers, has nowhere been carried out so helpfully to the preacher as in *The Sermon Bible* (1), now in course of publication. In the *Biblical Illustrator*, no doubt, more matter is given. But for arrangement of material, editorial skill, and due proportion, the importance of texts, viewed as to their homiletical uses, *The Sermon Bible* carries off triumphantly the palm. If the former is voluminous, the latter is luminous. Perhaps more care might in future be given to making the framework of sermon-sketches more symmetrical and suggestive. The art of making skeletons useful to another mind is but yet in its infancy. The homiletical writer who brings it to perfection has an open and large field for his literary energies.

FROM even an incorrectly constructed outline of *one's own*, a good sermon may be preached; but for an outline of another's to help a preacher the prime necessity is that its structure be scientifically correct. Though *The Weekly Pulpit* (2) is decidedly above the average of such periodicals, still the construction of the sketches are often faulty; so they sometimes fail to make complete sense, and rarely obey the laws of symmetry.

The Lord's Prayer. A NEW work upon *The Lord's Prayer* (3) surely needed a preface to show how far it occupies any independent ground of its own. We fail to discover in its matter and style anything very special which justified its publication. Here and there the writer deftly turns to good spiritual account some memorable saying, and he has the virtue of knowing when to "leave off," and not to bore the reader.

The Lord's Prayer (4), by Dr. A. Saphir, consists of eighteen lectures, in which the subject matter of the prayer and many ancillary subjects are treated with great fulness, deep reverence, and hearty earnestness. The work has reached a ninth edition, which proves that it has been appreciated; and it deserves appreciation.

(1) *The Sermon Bible*: Genesis to 2 Samuel; 1 Kings to Psalm lxxvi. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1888.

(2) *The Weekly Pulpit*. A Series of Suggestive Sermons, Outlines, Critical and Homiletical Notes, Illustrations, and Addresses, for the Use of Preachers. Vol. IV. Elliott Stock.

(3) *The Disciple's Prayer*. Being Notes of Sermons on our Lord's Prayer. By Rev. J. M. Gibbon, 1888. Elliot Stock.

(4) *The Lord's Prayer*. Lectures by Rev. A. Saphir, D.D. Ninth Edition. Price 5s. London: J. Nisbet & Co.

MAJOR SETON CHURCHILL'S volume, *Forbidden Fruit for Young Men* (1), has reached a third edition, and we are pleased to see that Messrs. Nisbet have issued it at the low price of one shilling, or bound in cloth, one shilling and sixpence, because we are sure that it will be an advantage to have it disseminated widely among the class for whom it is especially intended. It is a difficult task to write on the subject of purity in a way which is at once interesting, effective, and inoffensive, but Major Churchill has achieved this feat, and produced a work which will be of great benefit if widely read. The manly tone of the book will strike every one, and it is sensible without being goody or mawkish. The subjects it treats of are not such as can well be handled in sermons or in Bible-classes, and yet it is very necessary that silence should not be kept about such matters. Therefore many will be glad to know of a work which can be put into a young man's hand without fear of harm, and with good hope that there may be in its pages lessons which will point out the dangers and form guides in many of the difficulties which assail the rising generation, especially in large towns.

Another book for young men is *David, the Man after God's own Heart* (2). It appears to be a volume of discourses delivered to a congregation at the Nottingham Tabernacle, and is dedicated to the officers, fellow-workers, and members thereof by the author, who is their pastor. The sermons are somewhat jerky in style, and read more like notes of discourses than the discourses themselves. Thus, for example, on p. 144 we read, "Smooth places are slippery places. A full cup is not easily carried. Sloth in a servant is an indication of unfitness; in a king, of disease. There are more dangers in the heights than the dwellers in the valley can see. The climber needs strength, and he who stands upon the summit must be steady of eye and firm of nerve." It is said that these sermons proved a means of blessing to many; such a statement disarms criticism, and we can heartily wish the work all the success which can accrue to such a well-meant endeavour.

The Broad and the Narrow Way (3) is the story of a picture of the same title, which was thought out by Charlotte Reihlen, a Dutch lady who died in 1868, and drawn by Herr Schacher. The book and the picture too have met with an efficient expounder in the person of Mr. Gawin Kirkham, and in his hands they form a very quaint and interesting exposition of some of the deepest truths of the Gospel.

(1) *Forbidden Fruit for Young Men*. By Major Seton Churchill. London: James Nisbet & Co. Price 1s.

(2) *David, the Man after God's own Heart*. By Rev. H. E. Stone. London: James Nisbet & Co. Price 2s. 6d.

(3) *The Broad and the Narrow Way*. Morgan & Scott. Price 1s.

Winer's Symbolical Chart (1), translated by the Rev. Walter Carrick, St. Clement's, Aberdeen, exhibits a comparative view of the doctrines held by the Greek, Roman, Lutheran, Reformed (or Calvinistic), and Armenian Churches; to which are added the opinions of the Socinians. The information is furnished under the seven headings—The Rule of Faith, Theology Proper, Anthropology, Soteriology, The Appropriation of Salvation, and Christian Life. By the care with which the literary matter has been provided, and by the skill bestowed in its display, a difficult controversy is readily grasped. It would be an immense help to theological students at the outset of their studies.

Good interpreters of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are rare. For keen analysis of character, fulness of scholarship, attractiveness of style, and homeliness of spiritual teaching, we know of nothing to equal *The People of the Pilgrimage* (2). The first series of studies was on "true pilgrims;" this second series is on the "helpers," the "false pilgrims," and the "enemies."

The Spirit of Christ: Thoughts on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Believer and the Church (3). From the first page to the last there is one sustained effort of living faith in the thought that as "an indwelling life the Holy Spirit must be known." Necessarily, no doubt, in all works upon the realisation of "the higher life" (a phrase differently understood by different minds), there will be a sort of diffuseness of style and a certain mysteriousness of air. Still, as Lamartine remarks, "mystery hovers over everything here below, and solemnises all things to the eyes and heart." This book is sure to obtain a wide circulation among those who are striving after a life of more complete consecration.

We are very glad to note that the *Memoriais of the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer, M.A.* (4), late Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, and Missionary to the Moham-medans of Southern Arabia, has reached a fifth edition. It should quicken the Christian devotedness of young men.

(1) *Winer's Symbolical Chart*. Translated by the Rev. Walter Carrick, St. Clement's, Aberdeen.

(2) *The People of the Pilgrimage*. By Rev. J. A. Kerr Bain, M.A. Edinburgh: Macniven & Wallace, 1888. Price 2s. 6d.

(3) *The Spirit of Christ: Thoughts on the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Believer and the Church*. By Rev. Andrew Murray. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1888. Price 2s. 6d.

(4) *Memoirs of the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer, M.A.* London: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1888. Price 4s.

**Centenary
of Missions.** AMONGST the numerous jubilees and centenaries that have of late been celebrated, none was more interesting, in its way, than the Centenary Conference of Missionaries, held in Exeter Hall, from June 9th to the 19th, 1888, of which a very full and particular report lies before us. Some 1,600 delegates, representing in all 140 Missionary Protestant Associations, English, American, Canadian, European, assembled, and the speeches they delivered, the opinions they expressed, the suggestions they made are most interesting and valuable. To some minds it may be a drawback that there should be so many associations among Protestants for this one purpose; but at any rate it shows that Christians of all kinds are alive to their duty in this respect; and no one can read this report without feeling thankful for what is being done towards making the Gospel known abroad. The speakers were, for the most part, men whose names are little known beyond their immediate sphere; but this was all the better, for they were men who have been content to sink themselves in their great work. The section about the various religions which oppose themselves to the Gospel, or which the Gospel has to grapple with, is very instructive; the suggestions about polygamy are weighty; the descriptions given of India, China, Japan, Turkey, America, Africa, and Oceania are extremely good. The discussions about Missionary Methods, Medical Missions, Missions to Women, and by Women; about Missionary Literature, Missionary Colleges, and Bible Societies; as well as the employment of Native Agents, the organization of Native Churches, and the Training of Workers, are very suggestive. And lastly, the question of Missionary Comity—the desirableness of having a common understanding between Missionary Committees and workers—is very well handled. If Missionaries become mutually acquainted with each other wherever possible; if they naturally bind themselves to comity in respect of overstepping borders; if they constantly hold out helping hands to each other, the result must be that the cause they are all engaged in will be greatly stimulated and advanced. Praise is due to those who projected and arranged this Conference, and much commendation ought to be given to the secretaries who prepared the report. It forms two handsome volumes, which ought to find a place among the books of every one who takes an interest in the spread of Christianity, for they are a mine of information.

Report of the Centenary Conference of the Protestant Missions of the World, held in Exeter Hall (June 9-19th). London, 1888. Edited by Rev. James Johnson, F.S.S., Secretary. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1888. 2 vols., price 7s. 6d.

W. Arthur (9) are telling titles which aptly describe the two chief currents of thought which influence those who reject the revelation in the written Word. The work entitled *Religion without God*, shows that Herbert Spencer's gospel, "Unascertained Something," which in process may be evolved, and that Mr. Harrison's gospel, "Spiritual Power," which man unfortunately by nature has not, are no substitutes for religion, either as to the life to come, or even to the life that now is. The companion book, *God without Religion*, considers Sir James Stephen's case for Deism, which means a total abandonment of all religion,—an abandonment, however, admitting of a belief in God. In a most business-like and painstaking manner William Arthur deals with his opponent. He first of all clears the ground by showing what is the precise attitude of Sir J. Stephen to Agnosticism, Positivism, and Christianity. This is necessary, for though the Judge, from his legal training, is less ambiguous than Mr. Spencer and Mr. Harrison, yet he uses some ambiguous phrases to cover the weakness of his position and to hide his own perplexities. If Sir J. Stephen is less ambiguous than his non-Christian contemporaries, he treats his subject with a lightness beyond all parallel, consequently William Arthur, as a skilled controversialist, exposes the folly of this Deist. But to make Sir J. Stephen's discomfiture the more complete, his arguments are taken seriatim, and may be summed up as follows:—Men do not want a religion, they only take it through compulsion; men can get on very well without a religion; men are moral without a religion; besides, virtues will not be destroyed, but only transferred by the abolition of religion; and even certain poetic virtues are not exclusively Christian,—for example, patriotism. As the argument, that men do not really want a religion, is based upon the hypothesis that the scientific view of life destroys the foundation of religion, William Arthur brings the full force of his Christian artillery against this citadel of his opponent, not ceasing to fire until he has completed its entire destruction. Chapters v. and vi. are worth careful reading and re-reading. William Arthur now returns to the discussion about the absurdity of the very idea of doing away with religion, and especially with Christianity, and about the social and moral deterioration which would eventually result from any such attempt.

(9) *God without Religion, Deism, and Sir James Stephen*. By William Arthur. Bemrose & Sons. Price 7s. 6d.