

EVANGELICAL CHRISTENDOM:

A Monthly Chronicle of the Churches.

CONDUCTED BY

MEMBERS OF THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

“WHEREBY WE HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED, LET US WALK BY THE SAME RULE, LET US MIND THE SAME THING.—PHIL. III. 16
“UBI AGNOVIMUS CHRISTUM, IBI AGNOVIMUS ET ECCLESIAM.”—AUGUSTINE.

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paper, for which I hope you will find room in another part of your pages. Professor Riegenbach, of Basle, read a beautiful paper on questions connected with "The Life of Jesus;" and Mr. Birks, one concise and suggestive, which, indeed, was more spoken than read, on "Scepticism and Theology." He put physical science in its right place, and rebuked the pretensions of its modern masters. While in their doctrine of development they make man to be but an improved gorilla, their science, of the certainty of which they boast so loudly, may for aught they know be only at present in the gorilla stage. Dr. Vincke, of this city, treated on the kindred subject of "The Supernaturalism of the Bible and Physical Laws."

Salutations followed from many countries. The Rev. E. T. Bliss said, "I bring you messages of love from the Christians of Macedonia, Bithynia, Galatia, Cappadocia, Mesopotamia, and of all Asia." Count Bernstorff saluted the Conference in the name of the Christians of Prussia. The Rev. D. Wortman conveyed the greetings of the United States, General Burrows those of Canada, and J. Finch, Esq., spoke for British Christians.

In the evening a theological discussion was held, conducted chiefly by Germans, in a smaller room, while the large hall was given up to preaching. The Rev. G. Fisch, of Paris, was the preacher. But after him Mrs. Daniell gave an account of her work among the soldiers at Aldershot.

On Wednesday, the Rev. Chantepie de la Saussaye, of Rotterdam, was called up first, and discoursed on "The Gospel and Modern Society." Dr. Steane and Professor Astie, of Lausanne, read each a paper on "Religious Liberty." Professor Lange, of Bonn, followed on "The Universal Adaptation of Christianity to Mankind." Dr. Pressensé read an eloquent paper on the question of "The

State in relation to Schools," taking the same side as the voluntaries of England. His arguments were controverted by Pastor Rognon, and sustained by Professor St. Hilaire. M. A. Naville, of Geneva, paid an affectionate tribute to the memory of Sir Culling Eardley, and brought to the notice of the Conference the persecution under which the Jews were at present suffering in Roumania, suggesting some interposition on their behalf. Mr. Neufville, of this city, spoke of education in Holland, and especially on the State schools, from which the Bible is withdrawn; and M. St. Hilaire again ascending the rostrum, addressed the Conference on the same subject, and made a touching appeal to mothers themselves to undertake the religious training of their children.

In the evening, the townspeople were invited to the Hall, and the nature of the whole proceedings was explained to them in an admirable address by the Rev. Cohen Stuart, the Secretary of the Dutch Committee, which appeared to give them much gratification. He then said that Lord Radstock, and other distinguished visitors, would address them on the claims and privileges of the Gospel. Lord Radstock was followed by Dr. Krummacher, of Potsdam, Professor Tholuck, and Mr. Baxter, each speaking in his own language, and being translated into Dutch by Mr. Stuart.

I have thus brought down this sketch of our proceedings to the close of the fourth day, furnishing your readers with what I trust they will find to be a not uninteresting though rapid narrative. I must now necessarily despatch my letter, or I fear it will not reach you in time. Let me only add how much I wish that more of my countrymen were here to participate in this rich festival of Christian fellowship in the truth and of brotherly love. E. S.

"MORALITY INDEPENDENT OF THE GOSPEL," AS SEEN IN ENGLAND.*
BY THE REV. DR. McCOSH.

In a paper read in 1864 at a Conference of the British Branch of the Alliance in Edinburgh, I spoke of the period as one of transition in respect of religious thought and conviction. Opinion has progressed rapidly since that time, and we are seeing more clearly the final issue. People were then trying to stop half-way on the sliding-scale; they are now made to see that they have no footing; they must either remount to the top, or sink to the base. We are now far beyond the age of

the "Essays and Reviews," which made such a noise a few years ago. The writers of these papers are reckoned antiquated by younger thinkers, who have gone a good many steps further on in the same direction. This advanced school is seizing some of the tutorships and professors' chairs in our colleges, and watching the examinerships in our competitive trials for public offices, which have now such influence over the reading and studies of our educated young men. Parents

* From the paper, referred to above, read at the Amsterdam Conference.

and ministers of religion, and thinking men generally, should watch with deepest anxiety the effects of such a training. I happen to know some of our youths have had their hearts wrung till feelings more bitter than tears have burst from them, as they feel that they cannot reconcile their old faith in Scripture with the sensational philosophy or materialistic psychology in which they are now being instructed. "Before I attended these lectures," said a young man to me, "I thought I had a soul; but as I listened to them I was not sure whether I had a soul or not." Not a few of those who were sent up to the colleges with the view of entering the office of the ministry have felt that they could not go on, and so have turned aside to other pursuits. Some of them have become active contributors to our literary journals, and are writing against the old orthodoxy, and all that is peculiar in Christianity, with the bitterness of personal animosity. Others, with their faith shaken, have entered into the Church only to find how uncongenial the office is to them; and some of them have fallen before the temptations to which they are exposed, as they find themselves bound to articles which they no longer believe, and reading prayers into the spirit of which they cannot enter.

And what is to be the moral influence exercised by such a training on our young men generally? There is a combined attempt in the present day to make the articles to be believed in as few as possible, both in ethics and theology. Some of the would-be leaders of opinion lay down the principle that we are to look solely to what we should do, and not trouble ourselves with what we are to believe. But it can be shown that men's practice has always, consciously or unconsciously, been swayed to a large extent by their beliefs or convictions—not, it may be, by their formalised creeds or professed beliefs, which may be formed for them, and which may, I admit, have little hold of them, but by their heart convictions—that is, their real beliefs. Surely in the worship of God, and in all the service we pay Him, there must be a belief in Him. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In the very performance of the ordinary duties there must at the basis of it be a conviction that the duty is binding on us. Undermine the convictions, and the performance of the duty will be apt to cease; or, if it is continued, it will be very much as the effect of an old habit; and the habit will never be

produced among the young, who have never had the conviction. I hold, then, that there is a very intimate connexion between our faith and our works. There is such a dependence in the experience of the individual, and there certainly is such in the history of communities. I do not maintain that all infidels have been immoral, but it can be proved that a generation trained in infidelity has become immoral. Train a generation to say that there is no essential distinction between good and evil—no distinction except in the pleasure and pain which they may bring; undermine faith in God and in a judgment day; and you have left nothing to a large proportion of young men to enable them to resist the temptations of life.

But then we are constantly being told that infidelity is not characterised in these times, as it was in former ages, by immoral practices. But those who argue thus overlook the circumstance that the new form of infidelity has not yet had time to bring forth its proper fruits and show its effects; these we cannot discover until we have a generation trained under its influence. We all know what debasing and immoral consequences flowed from the prevalence of the sensational philosophy in France; but these results did not appear till half-an-age after the time of Condillac, the founder of the school. We cannot see the full influence of the training to which some of our young men are being subjected till a generation reared has shown what it is to the world—i.e., till the evil has been done; and those who have sown dragons' teeth will be made to acknowledge their criminality and folly only when they find that armed men have sprung up, and are working havoc and destruction.

Is a youth setting out in life with a belief only in what this philosophy allows prepared to meet the temptations which will assail him—the temptations to pride and self-righteousness, and the temptations to vice? Is a generation so fed and nurtured likely to maintain an elevated standard of purity and generosity, and to resist the vanities and vices to which mankind are prone? Though the negative philosophy and theology have not yet wrought their full effects, I believe that we have already too abundant evidence that the moral corruption has begun to work among the upper and the educated classes—i.e., the only classes who have as yet been so trained. And if the influence has already been evil in these circles, how deleterious must it be when it has time to penetrate the whole of society, and go down in its results

(not in its processes) to the lower orders! Meanwhile, what mean these exposures in the pages of our highest literary journals of the coarseness in manner, speech, and conduct of a certain circle of our ladies and gentlemen belonging to our very aristocratic classes, denoting a state of things to which we had nothing similar twenty or even ten years ago? Whence the complaints of fast living among so many of our educated young men? Every one knows that this coarseness and recklessness is associated with—I believe that in fact it proceeds from—a spirit of unbelief and scoffing; it exists in the classes whose faith in Christianity has been undermined. Let me tell some of these journals that they are chargeable, directly or indirectly, with helping to produce the very coarseness and immorality which they cannot bear when it appears. They profess to wish to have a high morality, but they have done their best to destroy the belief from which alone morality can proceed; they have cut down the tree, and they wonder that they have no fruit; they have killed the hen, and then are amazed that they cannot have the golden egg. Some of them have been smitten with an excessive admiration of Thomas Carlyle, who, again, was greatly swayed by Goethe and the German pantheists; and they are great hero-worshippers, and ever deploring that we have fallen on a low age, and have not the heroes of former ages. They forget that these heroes of bygone ages were all men of faith, and owed their courage and their conscience to this faith, which faith

is all the while pictured by these writers in an odious light. Such men as Carlyle and Froude, belonging themselves rather to the past age, but helping to form the present, have pronounced the highest eulogiums on Knox and others of our Protestant Reformers; and then they jeer at the creed which made these men what they were, and undermining the faith of the past, they do not profess to be able to furnish anything to take its place.

The question is pressed upon us: what is to be done to meet this evil?

In answering it I must confess that I do not expect the evil to be counteracted by the mediæval, or, as it calls itself, the Catholic reaction, which has set in so strongly in the Church of England. I am quite aware that this church revival sets before it a very high moral model, and has a strict discipline. But the tendency of the reaction is evidently towards the Church of Rome; and Popery, so far from being able to wrestle with infidelity, has been gendering it in all countries under its sway. The sceptic points to the unbelievable dogmas and intolerable pretensions of the Church of Rome with a sneer, and justifies himself in rejecting all religion; and the great mass of the people, standing at a distance, viewing the combatants, and not knowing what to believe, content themselves with securing as many as possible of the pleasures of this world. In Oxford, mediævalism and infidelity at this moment meet face to face, and I rather think the one tends to produce the other.

AMERICA.

[From our own Correspondent.]

New York, July 13, 1867.

PROGRESS IN RELIGIOUS EFFORT.

This country will be represented by several commissioners at the Conference in Amsterdam in August. By request of the Executive Committee, its Chairman has sent a report on the general state of the country and its Churches. Some of the results arrived at, from a careful comparison of the statistics of the Churches, and of our benevolent and missionary societies, are matters of deep interest, in respect to the prospects of Evangelical Christianity in this land. Our great civil war was a time of trial and of crisis, as well for the Church as for the State. The result, it may be fairly said, surpasses even our most sanguine expectations. The Churches are stronger than they were before the war, better able to do their work; and they are

laying out their plans for the future with a consciousness of this increased power. A comparison, for example, of the receipts of one leading benevolent and missionary association in the year before the war and at the present time, shows that these have about doubled; the same is the case in respect to the support of popular education by the States. Our leading Churches, without any exception, are larger in numbers, and more compact for action. In some respects the general benevolence of the land is augmented in yet greater ratios. Thus, the voluntary donations for higher education, collegiate, ministerial, and scientific, have increased beyond all former precedent; in the last four years not less than seven or eight millions of dollars have been given for these objects, and most of it not in legacies, but by men still living, and seeing and reaping the fruits