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now so exclusively attached to it as once it was ; it seems rather to reflect somewhat the prevailing idea among young men at Cambridge that it is not well that they should make a formal adherence to any school of thought. If, however, it is to continue to do good work it must be conducted in the spirit of its founders, and rest upon that strength which has hitherto sustained it, and given it such a remarkable development. It was founded in humble dependence upon the blessing of the Holy Spirit. "It was commenced," says one of the earliest teachers, "with much prayer:" "we knelt down and prayed together for a blessing on the work in which we were about to engage," writes another : in the same spirit it is, we are sure, still conducted.

There are dangers in popularity and prosperity against which the Committee of Management will do well to guard, and we cannot do better than conclude with the wise words of Bishop Titcomb who, as will be most readily admitted, both in Delahay Street and Salisbury Square, showed no narrow or exclusive spirit in his dealings with others.<sup>1</sup>

In a work like that of Sunday School teaching, unless all are agreed in fundamental principles, how is success possible? What uniformity of action, or what union of spirit can there ever be, if some teachers are undoing the work of others? It is worse than useless for the sake of too broad a charity to overlook essential distinctions, and to attempt impossible amalgamations. Let us hope, however, that such dangers are in this case imaginary. The teaching of this school has hitherto preserved the simplicity of evangelical teaching; and I trust it will long continue to do so.

C. ALFRED JONES.

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### ART. III.—PRESENT ASPECT OF THE CONFLICT WITH ATHEISM.

**T**HE championship of Christianity against unbelief appears to be passing into the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race. France has lately returned, on mature deliberation, to that complete banishment of God from the national life which she had adopted for a brief period only during the fiercest frenzy of her first revolution. In Italy the hatred of religion runs so high that it cannot spare from insult even the ashes of a dead Pope. Not much can be said in favour of Germany while Häckel is a chief authority in science and Strauss in theology. Russia is strug-

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<sup>1</sup> See Introduction to the "History of the Jesus Lane Sunday School," published in 1864.

gling in the grasp of a Nihilism, whose creed is the negation of all accepted beliefs. On the Continent, therefore, the outlook, from the point of view not merely of a Christian but of a Theist, cannot be regarded as bright. In England, however, and in North America, whilst the struggle waxes hotter and hotter, there are no signs of defeat. There was never a time, I believe, when the fire of Christianity burnt more clearly, or was more widely spread. The extended and ever-increasing agencies for doing good—good physical, mental, and moral—all of which have their origin and their life in the religious motive, are in themselves a sufficient evidence of this fact. It may be said that Atheism is also advancing, both as to the number and calibre of its adherents. But even granting this to be so, it is clear that these new adherents are mainly recruited, not from the ranks of sincere Christians, but from the vast multitude of the lukewarm and the indifferent. This multitude, standing between the two contending hosts, is, I believe, diminishing rapidly, by inroads both from the side of Christianity and of Atheism. With regard to the former we may well rejoice; and even with regard to the latter we have warrant for holding that no state is so hopeless as that of lukewarmness, and that an open enemy is better than a feigned ally.

Such being the state of the struggle, it seems worth while to inquire what are the chief agencies by which, on the one side and the other, it is being carried on. In the present Article I propose to attempt this very briefly, confining myself entirely to our own country; and having done so, to consider whether the agencies on the side of religion deserve encouragement, and if so, how far the encouragement now afforded them is adequate to the need.

I will begin first with the forces of our opponents. There are in England two active societies existing solely for the propagation of Secularist ideas. The larger of these numbers many thousands of members, and the additions have lately been at the rate of 100 a month. It maintains some eight or ten lecturers, and procured in one year the delivery of over 1,000 lectures, and spent nearly £4,000 in propagandism. It issues three weekly publications, which have a large circulation, besides a deluge of pamphlets, tracts, and leaflets. Bundles of these latter are distributed gratis in factories and elsewhere; and the papers are issued to public reading-rooms. The other society is less energetic and influential, but still issues a weekly paper, and promotes the circulation of literature, which it recommends as being of the most destructive character possible. Such are some of the agencies at work for the spread of Atheism amongst the masses. With regard to the upper classes, there is not, of course, the same organization, and the missiles, so to

speak, are far fewer; but they are more powerful in at least the ratio of cannon-balls to rifle bullets. Scarcely a month passes but that one or other of the leading magazines contains an article of a distinctly anti-Christian character; and no one able to read between the lines can fail to see that the downfall of religion is an object dear to the editors of at least a large proportion of our daily and weekly journals.

The advocacy of one or two eminent men of science is a potent factor in the case; and probably not a day passes in which Professor Huxley's Agnosticism is not somewhere quoted triumphantly as a convincing proof that Christianity is a falsehood.

We will now pass on to the agencies existing on the Christian side. Amongst these the first place is fairly due to the Christian Evidence Society, which claims for itself to be the only Society whose sole and specific work it is to endeavour to check the spread of popular infidelity—the only organized missionary agency to Secularism. It was founded in 1870, has the Archbishop of Canterbury for President, and numbers amongst its Council such men as the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of Gloucester and Peterborough, Lord Carnarvon, Lord Shaftesbury, &c. Its main work has been the giving of lectures, especially in London. It has had the courage to grapple face to face with the great Propaganda of Secularism, described in the last paragraph. On several occasions the Society has taken for a course of lectures the Hall of Science, at Clerkenwell, which was built by Mr. Bradlaugh and his followers, and forms their acknowledged headquarters. These lectures have been given by clergymen or laymen chosen by the Society, and at the close of each lecture full discussion is allowed. This generally means that some one popular champion, put forward by the Secularists, engages in a kind of duel with the lecturer, each delivering alternate speeches of ten minutes' length, and each attacking his opponent's position and defending his own. Lectures under similar conditions are continually got up by the Society in different parts of London and the suburbs.

Speaking from some personal experience, I must record my belief that such discussions are productive of great good. It is not that many, or perhaps that any, are convinced and converted on the spot. A clever orator—and the Secularists have many such—will always have enough rhetoric on his own side of the question, to dazzle minds generally incapable of cool reasoning. Mr. Bradlaugh, for instance, has at command an endless flow of metaphysical phrases and fireworks, which have little or no meaning in themselves, but which are as inspiring to his audience as "that blessed word Mesopotamia" was to the old woman of history. What such discussions effect is to show, to

those still open to conviction, that conviction is possible; that Christianity has not merely authority but also evidence on its side; that its claims can be argued; and that its supporters are willing to come out and argue them in fair field, and are able at least to hold their own, even against the best champions of "free thought." Seed is thus sown, by which, through God's blessing, men may be and have been brought back from error to a sincere acceptance of truth.

A less attractive, but, I believe, equally important work, is done by the Christian Evidence Society in providing lecturers to meet the open air propaganda of the Secularists. In many open spaces of the east and north of London, Secularists regularly assemble every Sunday, and give lectures on their favourite topics to all who will listen to them. The arguments used at such times, as might be expected, are far more coarse, violent, and blasphemous than in their more formal meetings, but their effect is probably to the full as mischievous. The Society combats these by employing Christian lecturers to give addresses at the same time and place as those advertised by our opponents. These lecturers are laymen, chiefly clerks or tradesmen, and are thoroughly acquainted with the classes with whom they have to deal. Their task is a difficult one; it needs besides sound thinking and the power of clear expression, very decided gifts of temper, tact, and in many cases personal courage. Their chief temptation is to follow their opponents in descending to blacken the characters of the opposing leaders—a line of conduct which, though not without some justification, is not to be encouraged.

Hitherto we have spoken of work in London alone. The Society, however, does its best to carry out similar work in the provinces, especially in the manufacturing districts; and although it is difficult to obtain local assistance in the getting up of such lectures, yet a considerable number are delivered every year. Another department of their work consists in holding classes, and arranging examinations on the subjects of Christian evidence. The number of persons offering themselves to such examination is not large, but about 130 certificates were issued in 1881. Lastly, the Society endeavours, in some degree, to meet the want of publications on the question, which may be readily and cheaply obtained. Many of the lectures given at the Hall of Science, and elsewhere, have been collected into volumes and published, and these volumes have passed through several editions. Tracts are also widely distributed, and grants of books are made under special circumstances. No works aimed specially at the forms of unbelief current among the more cultivated classes have been published; but the Society has

lately promoted the writing of a volume on Christian Evidences, by Professor Redford, of New College, London.

An association, called the Guild of St. Matthew, has lately undertaken, at the East End of London, a work similar in aim, though very different in method from that of the Christian Evidence Society. In addition to lectures and discussions, held on neutral ground, the members of the Guild read papers before the Secularist Societies themselves. They all profess advanced and even socialistic views in political matters; and strive to recommend themselves to unbelievers by testifying their full accord with them in questions outside religion. They seem to say:—"We will go the whole way with you in your Radicalism and Socialism: will you not go a little way with us in our Christianity?" There will be various opinions as to the prospects of success from this method; clearly it must be left in the hands of the peculiar school who have originated it.

Of a widely different character is the Victoria Institute, or Philosophical Society of Great Britain, founded in 1866, "to investigate fully and impartially the most important questions of Philosophy and Science, but more especially those which bear upon the great truths revealed in Holy Scripture, with the view of reconciling any apparent discrepancies between Christianity and Science." This is its first avowed object, which it endeavours to carry out by the reading of papers at stated times, and their subsequent publication; and none could be named more interesting or more important. The Society owed its origin, I believe, to the stir excited by the publication of Mr. Darwin's theory of evolution. Unfortunately, instead of regarding this as an hypothesis to be investigated, the founders of the Society seem to have looked upon it rather as a heresy to be written down. As a natural result, the Society has, to some extent, failed to obtain, in the eyes of men of science, full credit for that strict impartiality which with them is the first requisite for successful research.

The above are all the agencies upon which it is needful to dwell. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge has, indeed, a Committee for Christian Evidence; but for some time past their publications have been few, and seem now to have ceased altogether. The Religious Tract Society are publishing a new series, some of which will be of an evidential character; but it is too early to say anything definite as to their value. There are, I believe, but two publications, weekly or monthly, which are devoted to this question—namely, the "Shield of Faith" and the "Champion of the Faith;" the latter of these especially seems to be doing good work; but neither of them has any outside support or means of attaining a wide circulation.

There are, of course, theological reviews, such as the *Expositor*, but they do not reach, and are not meant to reach, any who are not already believers.

Such is a brief sketch of the agencies which exist in England for the defence of truth and the combating of error. Our next step is to inquire whether it is desirable that they should exist at all. Probably there is scarcely any one who will answer this directly in the negative; but practically I am certain that many feel in their hearts a decided objection to any such undertakings. This feeling is, I believe, specially common amongst the clergy, and accounts in great measure for the lack of sympathy which they as a body unquestionably evince in this matter. The feeling itself springs no doubt from natural and, to some extent, praiseworthy ground. They shrink from dragging what to them are the highest and holiest of verities into the arena of coarse and violent controversy. They hold that we should convert the world, not by argument, but by example; that Christianity should win its way by the force due to the virtues and purity of its adherents. Mixed with this is perhaps a natural impatience with those who demand a reason for their faith, and will not accept it implicitly and thankfully from the lips of their appointed guides.

But whatever we may think of these motives, it is not hard to see that the conclusion is a false one. Its upholders have the whole history of Christianity against them. The Founder of our faith bade the Jews judge righteous judgment, and search the Scriptures which testified of Him. He rested His claim on the evidence of His words and works, and not upon His character, although to us that character has become an important part of the evidence. His followers did the like. What are the speeches of St. Paul? What were the daily disputings in the school of Tyrannus? but so many lectures on Christian evidence, given in the face of ridicule, opposition, and contempt.<sup>1</sup> The early Christians changed the religion of the world, not only by exhibiting patterns of virtue, but far more by preaching the Word, in season and out of season, throughout all the regions of the earth. St. Boniface converted the Germans, St. Augustine the Saxons, by going among them and preaching to them the truth as it is in Jesus. It may be said that the Church does the like now in her missionary enterprises to heathen lands. But it is a strange way of maintaining an empire, to be straining after foreign conquests while you refuse to check rebellion at home. Why are the enemies of the faith in East London less worthy of attention than those in India? The former, it may

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<sup>1</sup> The speech at Athens may well be regarded as a model for such lectures.

be said, have Christianity in their midst. They can enter the churches and chapels, they can admire the good works and the virtues of Christian teachers. The same might have been said in later Roman times, wherever Christianity had obtained a definite footing. But this did not prevent the ceaseless and successful efforts of the Church to defend the faith and to convert the pagans. I do not for a moment dispute that almost all the good work done in England for the bodies and minds of men, as well as for their souls, is done under the influence of the religious principle, and would shrivel to nothing if that principle were withdrawn. Nor do I deny that the effect of this fact, in predisposing persons to accept Christianity, may be considerable; but to have any effect it must be realized, and it can only be realized either by those who aid in such works, or those who reap the benefits of them. Now the great mass of the shop-keeping and artisan classes in this country neither dispense nor receive charity. The work done amongst the poor has little interest for them, and they have no means of knowing by whom it is administered. They are, no doubt, aware that the clergy take a great part in such works; but this, as it appears to them, is only what they are paid to do. On such, therefore, the great mass of Christian work makes but little impression, and it is precisely from such that the ranks of Atheism are recruited. Just as Christians must go out from home to the heathen, and preach to them in their own streets and in a way suited to their own needs, so they must leave their churches and chapels to preach to these home-heathen, and must address them in a way suited to their needs—viz., the way of fair argument and direct persuasion, to which, and to which alone, they will listen.

There is another point to be mentioned which prevents the spectacle of Christian virtue and Christian charity from having its full effect in turning the masses to the faith. This is the unhappy state of disunion and dissension which exists among Christians themselves. To one who stands apart from the conflict, it is somewhat perplexing to watch the keen and breathless interest with which the clergy of all parties follow every phase of the conflict between the reformed Churches and Rome; and to contrast this with the apparent indifference and even dislike with which they approach the struggle between Christianity and Atheism. A nation which spends much of its energies in internal quarrel cannot be said to show such a front as will make a lively impression upon the enemies who are without.

If, then, we grant that the direct warfare against infidelity should be maintained, we may pass on to inquire whether the means of doing so are adequate. On this head there can be no doubt whatever. The organization is less than deficient; the

resources less than scanty. The Christian Evidence Society is supported by Christians of all denominations; but its income from subscriptions, donations, and collections, was last year but £1,500, and of this about £500 was due to a special movement for provincial lectures, inaugurated and supported by a single wealthy layman. In the report for 1880 the income from the above sources was £1,009 19s. 1d., and out of nearly 400 subscribers making up this amount I find that ninety-three only were clergymen, and that the sum of their contributions reached the total of £112. This seems but a small pittance for the clergy of all denominations to contribute towards the carrying on the struggle against Atheism. The income of the Guild of St. Matthew is less than £50, so that their contribution is not, from the financial point of view, important. The Victoria Institute have about the same income as the Christian Evidence Society; this again is chiefly derived from laymen, and can only be said partly to be given to theological as distinguished from scientific work.

It is natural that, with so scanty a supply of the sinews of war, the arrangements for carrying on that war should be deficient. The Christian Evidence Society has done good work in combating the propaganda of Secularism among the lower classes; but it has not attempted to deal in any special way with the cultivated infidelity which meets us in the columns of newspapers and the pages of magazines. Moreover, its chief mode of operation, by lectures, is open to the objection that it necessarily reaches but a very limited audience. At one time the Society published a journal, the sale of which, though at first promising, gradually fell off. It was in consequence discontinued, and a movement lately made to replace it was vetoed on the ground of expense.

Those who call attention to a want are always expected to propound a remedy; and though this is no part of my plan, I will not shrink from making one or two passing suggestions. One has, in fact, been alluded to already—viz., the establishment of a high-class journal, issued in a popular form, which shall make the presentation of Christian Evidences and the meeting of Atheistic doubts at least one prominent feature of its arrangements. If it also had another side—such, for instance, as the advancement of popular science—this would be no harm, but rather an advantage. It is said such a journal could not make a profit. I do not believe it. Those who make the assertion know little of the interest which is felt on such topics by the intelligent laymen of our middle and lower classes. But granting it to be true, there are many religious journals which private persons or societies are content to carry on at a loss, for the sake of influencing men towards some particular party or sect. Are there

none such who will risk money for the sake of influencing men (and those the most difficult to reach by any other means) towards the living way of the Gospel of Christ ?

There is another suggestion I cannot help making, though I have little hope of its meeting with favour. I allude to the establishment of a Society for the scientific study of theology. In all departments of knowledge except this, it is recognized that some encouragement is needed for original research. To put the matter boldly, original research does not pay. A well constructed handbook, or a brilliant popular exposition of science, may obtain readers enough to give a direct return to publisher and author ; but a piece of original work, such as really advances the science, cannot hope to do so unless written by one who has already obtained a high reputation with the general public. In all departments of science this is fully recognized ; and the best means of overcoming the difficulty is found to be the formation of special societies. Those who are interested in the science join the Society as subscribing members ; its most eminent cultivators form the governing body, and the funds defray the expense of preparing and publishing original papers, which have been read and discussed at the meetings. Such associations are often very flourishing bodies. The Geographical Society and the Institution of Civil Engineers count their members by thousands ; while the Geological Society, the Chemical Society, the Zoological Society, &c., are the recognized organs by which these several sciences are nourished and advanced. Theology alone has nothing of the kind. There is no body before which a student, whether of evidential or devotional divinity, can bring the result of his labours for examination and discussion ; or which, if it is approved, might enable him to publish it to the world. To appeal to the bookselling trade is as hopeless for him as for any other student. He will be told (and here I speak of what I know) that theological works never pay, unless they are written by men of established reputation, or deal with some subject which for the moment has taken hold of the popular mind. There can be no doubt, I think, that if Butler were now an unknown young man, and were now to write the "Analogy," he would have to print it at his own expense if he printed it at all.

Is it too much to hope that this void might be supplied ? It might, perhaps, be said that the differences between theologians are too deep to admit of their thus working in concert. It is a miserable confession, if it be true ; but is it true ? No doubt in the extreme parties of the Church the heat of theological controversy is as intense as ever ; but there are, it appears to me, an increasing number of moderate and enlightened men (well represented among the dignitaries, as well as the rank and file

of the clergy), who are quite capable of discussing points of difference in a spirit of candour and charity. And nothing, I can say with confidence, tends more to foster this spirit than such free and fair discussion. Those who have debated theological questions, even with Secularists of the most violent type, will I am sure bear me out in this view.

The last and most important point which I wish to urge is the advantage that would result from a closer union between the clergy and laity on this matter. For want of such union the idea (entirely unfounded as regards England) has arisen that scientific laymen are, as a rule, disbelievers in Christianity, their studies leading them to see that its doctrines cannot be maintained. I firmly believe that this idea has more influence in promoting infidelity, whether amongst the higher or lower classes, than all the sceptical writings and preachings put together. As a matter of fact, the idea is altogether the reverse of the truth. I could fill pages of this magazine with a list of names, all of acknowledged eminence in some department of science, whose owners I myself know to be sincerely religious men. It would not, however, be right thus to mark out the living; but it may be allowed to speak of the dead. Three eminent names were lately lost from the scientific roll of England, Professor Clerk Maxwell, Professor Rolleston, and Sir Wyville Thomson. Now, all these three were men whose devotion to Christianity was perfectly well known to their friends, and was even mentioned in the Memoirs published after their deaths. I cannot but think it an enduring calamity for the Church that three such men should have been suffered to pass away without recording their several testimony on her behalf. Why this should have been is obvious enough. Men of such calibre are ever slow to speak on subjects beyond their special studies; and no impulse or encouragement from the religious world could ever have reached them.

For the last two or three years it has been my endeavour to bring the testimony of Christian men of science to bear on the religious controversies of the day. In this work I have met with the fullest sympathy and the most active assistance from laymen of all shades of opinion, and eminent in most departments of science. With them the interest in the subject is as keen as their insight into Nature is profound. From a few individual clergymen, some of them holding the very highest positions in the Church, I have also received aid beyond what I could have claimed or expected. There is no doubt as to their appreciating the full importance of the question. On the other hand, I have failed to meet with the slightest encouragement from what may be called the clerical world, as represented by religious societies and similar organizations. One example will suffice.

Among various publications which have been placed in my hands with a view to increase their circulation there were two of special note. One of them was written by the first surgeon in Europe; the other by the first botanist in America. I do not know why I should refrain from mentioning the names of Sir James Paget and Dr. Asa Gray. Both of them are men distinguished for brilliant qualities outside the special departments in which they stand supreme. Both their works were specially marked by such qualities, combined with a reverence of tone and full acceptance of the faith, such as might content the most conservative of theologians. If the Secularists could produce on their side (they cannot) two works of such import, and written by such men, they would cry them at the corners of the streets, they would disseminate them by thousands, and shower them upon the counters of every bookseller that would take them, in every town of the kingdom. But after much effort, I have failed in finding any society, or set of Christians, who were willing to spend a solitary shilling in making these works better known to their fellow-men.

The case, as it appears to me, may be stated very briefly. The main attacks upon Christianity at the present day are admitted to proceed from what professes to be science, whether the science of Physics, of Geology, of Biology, of Criticism, or of History. Such attacks must be met, therefore, by men who know what science is, as well as what theology is. Clergymen, however, with a very few brilliant exceptions, do not concern themselves with science, and are, therefore, incapacitated from the task—a fact which, no doubt, does much to account for their dislike of the subject. On the other hand, the many laymen who are at once scientific men and believers, shrink from posing as theologians. In point of fact, however, the difficulties of the present day have little or nothing to do with theology, if we restrict that term to ecclesiastical dogma and the literature written upon it. Agnosticism and Secularism will not be defeated by any extracts from patristic or modern divinity, or any writings founded upon such, valuable as these may be in their place. A master of science, who is simply conversant with the main principles of divinity, is therefore fully competent to undertake this noble and necessary task. Such volunteers exist by the score: is it not worth the Church's while to enrol them under her banner, and lead them into the battle?

Meanwhile—and I wish I could urge this with a force proportionate to my own conviction—the case for Christianity is going by default. The Church resembles a man who, accused of fraud in a difficult and important matter, refuses to plead, points to his character and his virtues, and declares that these should answer for him. Such a man has no right to complain

should he find himself condemned, even though his judges be very different from the half-educated masses who have to decide on Christianity. And if such a course be possibly permissible, where only the man's own character is concerned, can it be so with a Church, whose condemnation means eternal ruin to souls committed to her charge?

To show that I am upholding no mere fancy of my own, I will quote one of the latest testimonies of Agnosticism. The following passage occurs in the *Nineteenth Century* for April, 1882:—

To turn to the Church for enlightenment in this dilemma is vain. It has no clear and certain teaching to offer regarding the true place of science in the economy of things; and the laity must themselves carve or shape out a new philosophy of life, which will harmonize and give consistency to conduct.

The writer of the above is a Mr. J. H. Clapperton. Of his position in science I know nothing. I do know that there are hundreds of scientific men, certainly more eminent than he, who have perfectly clear views regarding the true place of science in the economy of things, both material and immaterial; and who find "a standard of conduct and a harmonizer of knowledge" in that old philosophy of life which was set forth nearly 1,900 years ago on the hillsides of Galilee. But they are passing from us year by year: and if their place is taken by men of other views and another spirit; if culture and Christianity are divorced in England, as they have been divorced in Italy and in France; then I make bold to say it will not be the fault of science or her followers, but of a Church, who, shrinking from the conflict herself, will have refused the aid of those able and willing to wage it for her.

WALTER R. BROWNE.

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#### ART. IV.—BUDDHISM.

THIS article is the substance of a lecture given at Sion College on the 22nd of June last, at the request of the Christian Evidence Society, in consequence of the assertions of Infidels and Secularists to the effect that Buddhism may be considered as equal if not superior to Christianity in its moral teaching and influence over the lives of its adherents. The authority with which such allegations are usually supported is, *as far as it goes*, unimpeachable; it is a portion of the Buddhist Scriptures, but it is only a portion. The remainder, which is neither inconsider-