NOTES
ON
CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

BEING CRITICISMS ON
"THE OXFORD HOUSE PAPERS".

BY
CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

WITH REPLIES BY THEIR AUTHORS.

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NOTES ON CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

I.—"DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHRISTIANITY NO REASON FOR DISBELIEVING IT."

Some publications called "Oxford House Papers" have been avowedly issued to answer "an energetic anti-religious propaganda which primes even young men and lads with objections to Christianity", and to strengthen the position of Christian Evidence advocates in East-London when in contact with working men. These papers have been the subject of some criticism in the columns of the National Reformer, where, on the application of the secretaries of the Oxford House Committee, replies appeared from some of the authors. Such replies are reprinted here. No. 1 of the series—from the pen of E. S. Talbot, M.A., Warden of Keble College, Oxford—is intitled "Difficulties about Christianity no Reason for Disbelieving it", and the Warden of Keble maintains that "true religion" is an admitted equivalent for "Christianity", though if his working-men doubters should happen to include Jews, Mahommedans, or Hindus, Mr. Talbot would probably find that, while all of these admitted Christianity to be a religion, they would one and all concur in denying that it was "the true religion". Mr. Talbot affirms that "there are difficulties in religion", and he writes:

"Of course difficulties must be considered and fairly met, and each difficulty counts for something, at least at first sight, in an argument against religion; and difficulties many enough or great enough would serve to crush religion."

If Mr. Talbot here uses the word "religion" as the
equivalent of "true religion," he seems to concede that there might be difficulties great enough to crush a true religion. He would possibly say that he only means that to some minds the difficulties raised would appear insurmountable, and that in such cases the religion, though true, would be rejected. But this is in itself a very huge difficulty; it assumes that there are some men and women so mentally constituted [and that these are purposely so constituted] as to be unable to solve certain difficulties, and to be therefore compelled to reject religion, i.e., true religion, i.e., Christianity. Would Mr. Talbot regard Mark xvi., 16, as increasing or lessening the difficulty? Mr. Talbot says:

"There must be difficulties about religion. . . . it would be a new world altogether, and not the world God made for man, if true and false, right and wrong, were always as plain and distinct as north and south on a compass."

The words "and not the world God made for man" may for the moment be omitted. In these words Mr. Talbot assumes (1) that "God" exists, (2) that he made the world, and (3) that God made the world for man. These are assumptions which, though not blameable in a sermon for believers, can hardly be passed as unobjectionable in a controversial paper addressed to anti-religious persons, especially as it is not quite clear that Mr. Talbot could tell his working-men doubters what he precisely means when using the word "God." Then we demur to Mr. Talbot's declaration. True and false of any given proposition of fact are not always plain and distinct to each individual, but surely true and false of every proposition of alleged fact, of which it is possible to have knowledge, can be made as plain and distinct as north and south to every individual of sufficient capacity. All scientific teaching follows the line that such and such truths are capable of demonstration. Mr. Talbot says:

"Let us suppose someone coming to us with a religion which had no difficulties. He must tell us all about God, so that nothing shall remain unexplained, and all about God's ways of working, so that they may be spread before us just as a man's work might. He must know all that we can ask about death and another world; he must be able to tell us, without any hesitation or any uncertainty, what is right, i.e., God's will, in
every case. Now, what should we think of a man who came professing all this, this religion without difficulties? Probably we should feel disgust. And we should feel this disgust because there is nothing more offensive than to be 'cock-sure', to have a pat answer on the biggest matters that the mind can think of; because there is absurdity in thinking that they do not pass the understanding of such beings as ourselves."

But a "true religion" should be from "God", if "God" exists, and should come direct from such God with equal clearness to every human being. And it may be replied to Mr. Talbot that if religious matters do "pass the understanding of such beings as ourselves", that is a very good reason for not asking such beings as ourselves to have any belief on the subject, and if the things which are difficult in religion avowedly "pass our understanding", does Mr. Talbot mean that they are therefore credible? Does he, in fact, mean that the difficulties of Christianity are some reasons for believing it to be wholly true?

The Warden of Keble explains that

"First and before all else religion gives a knowledge of God. If it is a religion made by men, it contains what they think they know of God out of their own minds, or from what they have seen in the world around them. If it is a revealed religion, like Christianity, it claims to contain what men believe God has taught them about himself. Either way it gives a knowledge of God."

But does it "either way" give any such knowledge? All religions cannot be equally true, for some of them conflict utterly on most vital points. Does Mr. Talbot mean that a false religion, equally with a true religion, "gives a knowledge of God"? Then what is "a religion made by men"? Are the ancient and varying religions of Egypt man-made religions? Did these give a "knowledge of God"? Were the "religions of Greece, Italy, and India" man-made religions? Did these too give "knowledge of God"? Is Obiism man-made religion? Does it likewise give knowledge of God? And what is a revealed religion as distinguished from man-made religion? Is Leviticus revelation? are the laws of Menu man-made? Are the Psalms revelation? and are the Vedic hymns man-made? Are Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel revelation? is the Koran man-made? Mr. Talbot may fairly enough say
that these are only additional difficulties, but if they are difficulties ought he, as Warden of Keble, to make these admitted difficulties the ground for claiming our belief in any one more than in any other of the religions of the world? Or would he contend that each of the religions should be equally believed, and that the impossibility of this is no difficulty?

"But", says Mr. Talbot, "now, according to nineteenth century ideas, if there is a God at all, what do we all agree that he must be? Certainly the God of the universe."

But does the God of the universe mean "creator" of the universe? or "substance" of the universe? or what? If it means ruler of the universe, are cyclones, volcanoes, and earthquakes, difficulties which help or hinder the belief? Having said that "God" is "the God" of the universe, Mr. Talbot says that there are difficulties in geology and astronomy, but he does not add that astronomical difficulties are no longer answered as they were in the days of Galileo, and that Mr. Pengelly and Sir Chas. Lyell found geological difficulties much increased by the pious horror of all facts which seemed to conflict with biblical chronology. A difficulty in astronomy or geology is a reason for further investigation and test. Why should a difficulty in religion be a reason for belief?

Mr. Talbot is a little confusing when writing on time and space. Does time mean more than measure of duration? or space other than the measure of extension of or between or beyond given objects? Does he intend that the difficulty of estimating the age of given coal formation, which can be examined, makes it justifiable in him to ask our belief for an assumed coal-maker, of whom nothing is known, and to whom no verification is possible?

In speaking of the world God made for man, what is Mr. Talbot's view of the result of the manufacture on those smothered in Pompeii? or destroyed in the eruption at Java? or famine-killed in Hindustan?

Passing to another branch of his subject, the Warden of Keble writes:

"Man's feeling that he is utterly subject to a power above, and yet that he is free; his fear and pain caused by having done wrong, and the possibility of that painful sense of wrong being cured; the way in which the Divine spirit can touch his human
spirit; is it not enough to name these things in order to make us feel at once that religion must be accompanied by difficulty?"

But what does Mr. Talbot mean by saying that man "is utterly subject to a power above and yet that he is free"? Does Mr. Talbot mean that this is man's feeling, but that one of the alternatives is inaccurate? and if yes, which? and what is meant by "utterly subject"? and is "power above" carelessly used as the equivalent for the undefined "God"; or is "power above" the equivalent for "nature"? Then do all men suffer fear and pain on having done wrong? Or is the fear and pain a result of education and organisation? and what does Mr. Talbot mean by "the possibility of that painful sense of wrong being cured"? Does he mean that what has been considered to be wrong will cease to be so considered? or that the painful sense, i.e., remorse for having done wrong, will terminate? or what does he mean?

Describing Christianity as "a historical religion" Mr. Talbot says:

"It speaks of certain facts or events which happened at a certain time, and upon which all a Christian's hope rests."

How much or how little does Mr. Talbot mean by this? Are all the alleged facts or events so related material to the Christian's hope? or only some of them? Are the star and the wise men from the East amongst the facts on which all a Christian's hope rests? or are there any of the facts or events which a Christian may justifiably disregard? Mr. Talbot asserts for Christianity beyond any other religion in the world "its power and influence in the bettered lives and ways of men". But is this quite true? Have not many of the great Christian nations been remarkable for their fierce cruelty and gross depravity? Has not the improvement been more in proportion to the civilisation than to the Christianity of a nation? Even now do not Christian nations readily forget their "bettered lives and ways" when in contact with inferior races? Mr. Talbot says in answer: "All this belongs to a religion which trusts itself to weak and erring men". But then the further difficulty arises: If religion be from God, is it not God who trusts the religion to weak and erring men with full foreknowledge of the deteriorating consequences
to religion? and if God made man, does not the weak and erring result evidence that God intended man to be so weak and erring? or would Mr. Talbot suggest that man has turned out worse than was expected? or what is the process of reasoning by which Mr. Talbot believes that omnipotent God did the best he could to make all men perfect, but only succeeded in making most, or all, men weak and erring?

In a brief note in reply the Rev. E. S. Talbot says:

Mr. Bradlaugh misconceives my purpose and position in one quite essential respect. Mr. Bradlaugh asks whether I mean that the difficulties of Christianity are a reason for believing it, and further on in his article he assumes that this is my meaning. It is material therefore to point out that what I urged was the very different proposition that difficulties about Christianity were no reason for disbelieving it. That this is a vital distinction a moment's thought will show: that it is not an afterthought of mine, is shown by the title of my paper, "Difficulties about Christianity no Reason for Disbelieving it".

But if it should still seem to anyone that I draw a verbal and uninteresting distinction, let me explain myself by briefly restating the precise object of my paper. The paper covers no wide extent of ground: it only seeks to assist one who is seeking truth at one particular point in his search.

I suppose a man, then, to enquire about the truth of Christianity; I suppose him to find that, while there is much in its favor, there are certain difficulties concerning it, whether raised by others, or occurring in his own mind. I suppose him to observe that those difficulties are some of them very profound (that is, that they touch some of the deepest and hardest things that the human mind can consider), and that they are very various. I suppose that this staggers him, and that he says to himself: "I see whatever happens I shall never get rid of difficulties in the matter: if Christianity were true there would not be all this difficulty about it," and so he despairs of, or absolves himself from, any further search.

And then I ask him to think again, and to consider whether this is really so, whether on such a matter there
must not be difficulties, and in particular to think out the other alternative, and ask himself what he would think of a religion which professed to be perfectly clear, a religion which spoke as if there was nothing in it that "passed the understanding of such a being as ourselves"; a religion, in fact, in which there were no difficulties. My hope is that upon such reflection he will say: "Yes, there must be difficulties, even profound difficulties, and various kinds of difficulty—of itself this shows nothing against Christianity! nay, if Christianity should be true, this would be sure to be the case. This does not stop me; the fact of difficulty does not stop me."

Obviously this is only preliminary; it only sets him free to go on. He has still to consider the difficulties themselves, in order to see whether they are such as can be explained or accounted for. And he has still to examine the positive reasons in favor of Christianity. But all that is beyond my subject, as writer of the particular paper. I have one point, and one only, that the existence of difficulties is no reason for disbelieving. Whether this is a point to which it is worth while giving a paper may be a question; but I doubt its being so, as will anyone who will reflect how often the occurrence of this or that difficulty to his mind has half inclined him to give up the whole thing; or how often the statement of a difficulty takes the triumphant tone of a demolition of Christianity.

I do not touch upon any other points in Mr. Bradlaugh's criticism, not because they are not interesting, but because they are aside from my particular purpose. And I am convinced that, both for intellectual and moral clearness, we must in these matters deal with one thing at a time.

[I am content to leave Mr. Talbot's courteous reply to be read with my notice, which it does not seem to me to really touch. If the points of my notice not dealt with by Mr. Talbot are "aside from his particular purpose", it is almost to be regretted that these points formed by far the larger part of No. 1 of the "Oxford House Papers". I certainly must plead guilty to believing that such points were intended by Mr. Talbot to be relevant to the proposition of that paper—i.e., that the difficulties about Christianity were no reason for disbelieving it.—C. BRADLAUGH.]
II.—"**Everlasting Punishment.**"

The second of the "Oxford House Papers" is on "Everlasting Punishment", by the Rev. Francis Paget, D.D., Canon of Christ Church, and he fairly enough puts the following as a question coming from one raising difficulty against the Christian Church as teaching the doctrine of everlasting punishment:

"How can you tell me first that God is good, and then that he has created a vast multitude of people for no other end than that they may burn for ever in a place of torment which he has devised for them?"

In 1876 (see *National Reformer* No. 852, Sept. 10th, 1876) in a written dispute with the Rev. John Lightfoot of Heath Town, Wolverhampton, I affirmed "that the Church of England teaches the doctrine of eternal torment as punishment for unbelief"; so I can scarcely object to the manner in which the proposition is formulated in the above quoted words. Dr. Paget, having thus stated the question, says:

"As a matter of fact, the first statement, that God is good, is the very starting point of Christian teaching; the second is a caricature of Christianity, which any well-instructed believer would disown. In four points it is inconsistent with deliberate declarations of the most exact and careful writers in the Church."

Here the Rev. Dr. Paget is, I respectfully submit, hardly frank. Many well-instructed believers—as the Rev. Prof. Salmon, D.D.—affirm the doctrine of eternal torment, though few of them face, as did Jonathan Edwards and as does the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, the terrible and horrible doctrine in the directness of its present language. But I do not think the proposition, even so extremely stated, is fairly describable as "a caricature of Christianity"; and though it is possible many believers would disown it, and very many good men would shudder at it thus brusquely put, I am prepared to maintain it as the true Church of England doctrine. Dr. Paget takes separately four points of alleged inaccuracy, and I will follow him step by step.

"I. That God has created a vast multitude of people for no
other end than that they may burn for ever. On the contrary, the Bible says expressly that God would have all men to be saved (1 Tim. ii., 4).

The difficulty of thus quoting the Bible by paraphrasing half a verse is that you may make it in turn maintain most contradictory doctrines. If Matthew vii., 13, 14, be accurate, God can hardly have intended all men to be saved:—

"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

And this is a result foreseen by God, according to Christian theories, prior to creation. Nor can the salvation of human kind be said to be dependent on their own efforts if Luke xiii., 24, has any meaning:

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

God's foreknowledge is clearly declared. Romans viii., 29, 30, expressly says that those who are to be saved "he did predestinate", and emphasises this (ix., 11) in the case of Jacob and Esau:

"The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth."

If Bible language is to be regarded as having any meaning at all, it is clear there are some whom God prevents or has prevented from securing salvation; see John, xii., 40:

"He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

What is intended by Matt. xx., 16, and xxii., 14, "many are called but few are chosen", if not that the "vast multitude" suffer?

To again quote Dr. Paget:

"II. 'That a vast multitude of people are to burn for ever'. Far from asserting this, the Bible and the Church only speak positively of one man in all the centuries of history as lost—namely, Judas Iscariot. Of no one else who has ever lived has any man any right or warrant to deny that he may be found at last in heaven."
But is it really a "caricature of Christianity" to urge that a vast multitude of people are to burn for ever? If so, it is a "caricature" for which many eminent Christians are responsible. It is only just to Dr. Paget to say that he recognises "that many Christian writers and preachers have given ground" for what he considers a misrepresentation. The Rev. John Hunt, D.D., writing one of a series of papers on Canon Farrar's "Eternal Hope", sets out with this admission:

"If there be any doctrine ever taught in the name of Christianity which can claim to be really Catholic, it is the doctrine of never-ending punishment. This has been believed by the majority of Christians in all ages, in all churches, and with very insignificant exceptions, of all sects. Fathers, schoolmen, and reformers, zealous Roman Catholics and ardent Protestants, have agreed that this is an undeniable portion of the Catholic faith."

And the Rev. Dr. Hunt, whilst pleading that the language of Jesus was metaphorical, concedes that

"To the English reader of the Bible the plainest and most obvious doctrine concerning the future punishment of the wicked is that it shall be endless, in a place called hell, and with fire and brimstone; and the strongest words are those of Christ himself, where he says of the wicked that 'their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched'."

Yet the Rev. Dr. Paget asserts that this "plainest and most obvious doctrine" is a "caricature of Christianity".

"III. That anybody will burn for ever in a place of torment."

On this Dr. Paget, on the authority of Dr. Pusey, asserts that "the Church has nowhere laid down as a matter of faith the material character of the worm and the fire" and adds that

"One whom the whole Church honors as a saint believed and declared: 'There is no gnashing of corporeal teeth, nor any perpetual fire of corporeal flames, nor is the worm corporeal.'"

But what meaning then has Matt. xxv., 41:

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

And what is meant by "everlasting punishment" in v. 46? or by Revelation xx., 10:

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of
fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Matthew xviii., 8, 9, speaks of "everlasting fire" and "hell fire"; Matthew viii., 12, and xiii., 2, describe the "gnashing of teeth"; Mark ix., 43, tells of hell as

"The fire that shall never be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

And yet Dr. Paget alleges that this is a caricature of Christianity. But the Church of England in the Athanasian Creed affirms "everlasting fire"; in the Litany it speaks of "everlasting damnation"; and in the Commination service of "the fire everlasting". The homilies of the Church of England describe "the everlasting captivity of the devil and his prison of hell". They tell of "the everlasting pain prepared in hell"; they affirm "as well that there is an hell and everlasting fire as that there is a heaven and everlasting joy"; and they declare "the condemnation of both body and soul, without either appellation or hope of redemption, into everlasting pains of hell". Famous Jeremy Taylor writes of the soul carried "to the abyss of hell, there to be tempted for ever"; he says "the prison of the damned is void of all comfort; the torments thereof are intolerable because they are eternal"; and he pictures the wicked "burning without interruption as long as God is God". And the very Dr. Pusey on whom Dr. Paget apparently relies to make out that the allegation of everlasting punishment is a caricature of Christianity, himself writes: "We see the fire unquenchable, the ever-dying worm"; and that "they who deny eternal punishment as inconsistent with the attributes of God do not really believe in the same God . . . whom Jesus revealed".

"I do fully and freely assent to this as unto a most necessary and infallible truth", says Bishop Pearson, "that the unjust, after their resurrection and condemnation, shall be tormented for their sins in hell, and shall be so tormented for ever"; and the Rev. Canon Liddon preaches: "Our Lord's express references to the worm that dieth not, to the fire that never shall be quenched, certainly oblige us to think . . . of a perpetual state of penal misery". Surely the Rev. Dr. Paget will regard some of these as "well-instructed believers", even if he still holds the view that they caricature Christianity. That the
Church view is that a "vast multitude" will be damned is clear, for the Baptismal Office teaches that except through baptism "none can enter into the Kingdom of God".

Dr. Paget further denies:

"IV. That any torment is 'devised for' any given man by God. If hell contains one lost soul", he says, "it is not God's doing."

Are the specific texts already quoted from Romans and John without meaning? What does 1 Peter i., 2, mean in speaking of "the elect according to the foreknowledge of God"? or Ephesians i., 2, where it tells of those "pre-destinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"? Or is this, too, the caricature of Christianity?

Dr. Paget wrote on this:

I shall be very grateful if you will allow me to say a few words in regard to your criticism upon the second of the "Oxford House Papers", in which I tried briefly to distinguish the main points of Catholic teaching as to Everlasting Punishment from some current misconceptions of that doctrine.

I trust that you will let me first acknowledge with gratitude and respect the temperate and courteous character of your criticism. Believe me, I sincerely appreciate it.

It seems to me, after a careful study of your review, that your objections to my paper can be grouped, with only one exception, under three heads; and I think that I shall evade no point if I so approach them, reserving to the end that separate matter in which you have, I venture to think, been misinformed as to our belief.

(1) You object, sir, with a repeated protest, to my describing a certain representation of the doctrine under discussion as "a caricature of Christianity", and you support your objection by citing passages from various writers resembling, more or less closely, the several expressions which I disclaim.
Now, in regard to some of these passages, I would only remind you that I have allowed (concerning all the four points which I discuss) that many Christian writers and preachers have, by their harsh or one-sided or presumptuous language upon this awful and perilous theme, given grounds for much misconception and misrepresentation of the truth. Thus, while I am thankfully convinced that it is indeed a caricature of Christianity to say that God "has created a vast multitude of people for no other end than that they may burn for ever in a place of torment which He has devised for them", I must sorrowfully admit that you are right in saying that "it is a caricature" for which "many eminent Christians are responsible".

But in regard to the passages of Scripture which you quote as bearing, if taken alone and unqualified by other aspects of truth, some likeness to the several points in that statement which I disclaim, I would maintain this:—That such a statement may be none the less a caricature, because its features can be recognised as resembling some traits of the original. For is not this the very nature of a caricature: that it has an injurious likeness to its subject—that by the isolation and exaggeration of some features, by misplaced emphasis, by omission of qualifying characteristics, it at once recalls and wrongs the truth? It is easy to recognise the caricatures of our leading statesmen, but they are not always acceptable to their family or friends; nor would it be fair to regard them as historic portraits. In exactly the same way, I would plead, such a statement as that which is now under consideration may with perfect justice be called a caricature of Christianity, although there may be even in the true presentation of Christian doctrine elements which can be marked as the starting-points of its several exaggerations. The likeness in some respects is indeed a necessary part of the justification for the term.

(2) In the second group of objections you lead us, I venture to think, away from the special question of everlasting punishment to the great and encompassing difficulty of predestination; as, for instance, when you quote Romans viii., 29, 30; ix., 11; Eph. i., 2.

I have no right to complain that you so diverge from the narrower issue; it is extremely difficult to keep the two tracts of thought entirely distinct; but I must refuse to follow you. In the depth of that boundless maze the
unhappy Calvin elaborated dogmas upon this point which have, perhaps, done more harm to the cause of truth than any other products of a hard heart and a narrow mind. One thing only I would urge under this head. The perplexity which may be engendered on this or on any other point, by thinking about or arguing from the doctrine of predestination, or from the clearly separable doctrine of the divine fore-knowledge, is not peculiar to Christianity; nor can any man escape it simply by ceasing to profess himself a Christian. Even though he should renounce all belief that there is a God, still, if he believes in the reality of his own freedom, he will have just as much difficulty in bringing all life under the absolute dominion of physical law as Christians have in reconciling their own free will with the fore-knowledge of the Almighty. And if, further, he believes in the reality of the distinction between right and wrong, he will find, I think, very serious difficulty in winding up the moral history of the universe without either acknowledging an impenetrable mystery, or suspecting, at least, that there may be such a thing as everlasting lovelessness—which is, perhaps, the most nearly sufficient conception that can be formed of everlasting punishment. Of course, anyone who really succeeds in dislodging from his own mind and heart all belief in his own freedom of action and in the distinction between right and wrong, can hardly be asked to consider the evidences or the difficulties of everlasting punishment: for clearly punishment will not last when there is nobody and nothing to be punished. But so long as these two convictions about one's self are retained there is no getting rid of difficulties analogous at least to those which you, sir, have brought from the ground of predestination against the doctrine of everlasting punishment.

(3) You have, at the head of page 54, spoken of me as attempting “to make out that the allegation of everlasting punishment is a caricature of Christianity”; and you have quoted against that attempt a number of passages from the Bible, and from theologians of acknowledged authority, in which mention is made of everlasting and unquenchable fire, of everlasting damnation, of torment, for ever and ever. But, sir, you have, I think, misunderstood my intention on pages 8 and 9 of the Oxford House Paper. I entirely believe that the texts which you quote
do point to the awful reality of some form of sin's penalty which will last for ever. What I deny is that Christianity involves the belief that that everlasting penalty will be of the nature of material suffering in any sense in which we can conceive it. My anxiety throughout was to show to anyone who might be desiring to hold the Christian faith and yet shrinking back from the thought of this mysterious doctrine, that the Church has never sanctioned a certain presentation of the doctrine which is often proffered in her name; that, in particular, "the vivid pictures of all kinds of horrible and savage and elaborate torture, which may be drawn sometimes by popular preachers, sometimes by indignant antagonists or distressed critics of Christianity, are no necessary part of the Church's teaching, and a man may be the most thoroughgoing of Christians, and yet believe that all the punishment of the lost will go on in their own wilful hearts, and be no more seen, no more inflicted upon them from without, than the passions, the hatred, the envy which they may have cherished all through this life". Following the teaching of St. Ambrose and others, I think it probable that the language which some have understood of physical pain should be taken rather as pointing to that awful reality of spiritual anguish with which inveterate hatred or lust torment the soul that has welcomed their tyranny. And so I should accept Dr. Liddon's expression, when he speaks of "a perpetual state of penal misery". I should myself avoid such language as that which you quote from Bishop Pearson; for, while it admits of a sense in which I could accept it, it seems to me likely to mislead many minds, and it does not correspond in tone with my own thoughts. What I think about the mysterious future of any soul that may be wholly given over to hatred of all good is sufficiently shown in the last two pages of my paper. I would only add that any such thought seems to me at once more probable, and far more appalling, than any conception of physical pain.

Lastly, sir, I am indeed glad to be able to assure you that the Church has no such doctrine in regard to the eternal state of the unbaptised as you, at the close of the third section of your article, attribute to her. Those who would speak most strongly of the blessedness of our sacramental union with our Lord would still declare unhesi-
tatingly, in the often-repeated language of theology, that God is not fettered by sacraments. Even S. Augustine, in spite of the severity to which he was urged by the conditions under which he wrote, speaks of the state of children dying unbaptised as one which may well be preferable to non-existence; and Dr. Newman says of the heathen that "we have reason to trust that they are not in danger of perishing, except so far as all are in such danger, whether in heathen or Christian countries, who do not follow the secret voice of conscience, leading them on by faith to their true though unseen God."

I hope, sir, that in asking you to find room for this letter in the National Reformer, I have not presumed too far upon the permission which you have given to the writers of the "Oxford House Papers".

III.—"Why Do we Call the Bible Inspired?"

The fourth of the "Oxford House Papers" series is written by W. Lock, M.A., under the title "Why Do we Call the Bible Inspired?", and by the Bible Mr. Lock says that he means "the Hebrew original of the Old Testament and the Greek original of the New Testament", and not "the authorised English Bible used in our churches, or the new revised Bible published last year, or the translation which the Roman Catholics use". But this is not quite satisfactory to those who, from their condition in life, know nothing of Hebrew or of Greek, and who are compelled to accept the Authorised Version as a part of Board School education. If the inspiration of God's revelation is limited to the Hebrew and Greek text, how can those who know nothing of Greek or Hebrew benefit by the inspiring influence? If the effect of the inspiration extends to the translations, why this going behind these accepted editions to the dead Hebrew and the comparatively little known Greek? And the position of Mr. Lock is defective as assuming that there is indisputably an agreed "Hebrew original of the Old Testament", for this is most assuredly
not the case. In my volume on "Genesis" I have collected from various authors some of the difficulties which stand in the way of agreeing on any "Hebrew original" for the Old Testament, and specially as to the impossibility of recognising any such "Hebrew original" for the Pentateuch. As Mr. Lock refers to Hebrew and Greek originals, he is hardly ingenuous in passing by in silence the various classes of objections with which all biblical students have been familiarised by the learned criticism of the last thirty years. Mr. Lock, it is true, says: "Even of these [the Hebrew and Greek originals] we cannot be quite sure that we have every word. The books were written long ago; they have been preserved in a number of copies written by hand, and so differences are found in these copies, but the differences are slight, and for our particular purpose in this paper unimportant." As a matter of fact, it is not at all sure that any of the Hebrew books can be possibly carried back beyond the date of the Babylonian captivity; some of them may be much more modern. It is certain, with regard to the bulk of the Hebrew books, that we know nothing whatever of their several authors, nothing of their respective dates of issue, and we do know that the differences in many of the MSS. are far from being slight or unimportant. Even in the much more modern Greek of the New Testament there are, as the Revised Version shows, or as might be gathered from the author of "Supernatural Religion", differences which are most certainly neither slight nor unimportant, especially as they affect the doctrines of salvation by faith and damnation for unbelief, and the doctrine of the trinity. It is certainly not quite safe to count on an undisputed Greek original. The Rev. Dr. Malan, Vicar of Broadwindsor, writing on the select readings in the Greek text of St. Matthew, published about six years ago by the Rev. Drs. Westcott and Hort, says: "And as to the new Greek text, the changes in it are so many and so great that one no longer knows the book". Mr. Lock is a little startling in some of his allegations, as, for instance, when he declares that "Before and since the books were written, the Church has been teaching the truths contained in them; and it is as unlikely that any serious changes could have been introduced into the Bible while the Church was carefully guarding the truth as that any change should have been introduced
into Magna Charta without the knowledge of Parliament". Clearly this cannot be meant, or at any rate ought not to be meant, to apply to the Old Testament; and what Church does Mr. Lock contend was teaching the truths contained in the New Testament before the New Testament books were written; and at what precise date, if ever, during the first few centuries of the Christian era, did any organised Church become guardian of the text of the New Testament in the fashion in which Parliament is assumed to be guardian of the text of its statutes?

Mr. Lock defines what he means by inspiration, and he says "it means that the spirit of God has breathed into the hearts, or minds, or wills, of certain men, and thereby given them a power which they would not otherwise have had"; and that "in the case of the Old Testament we have what we may call an inspired nation; a nation inspired in a way in which no other nation ever was inspired with a faith in a God of righteousness and with a hope in the ultimate triumph of good over evil". "This is a fact," adds Mr. Lock. But is it a fact? Taking even the Old Testament to guide us, is there any evidence that the Jews, even in a considerable minority, had any sort of faith in "a God of righteousness"? or that they had any kind of "hope in the ultimate triumph of good over evil"? Were not their hopes rather limited to the extermination or subjection of the various peoples whose cities, persons, or property, they desired to control or possess?

In the early stages from Abraham to the Exodus, the evidence of the alleged faith and hope is totally wanting; from the Exodus to David there is small trace of anything of the kind. If God inspired the Jews in Egypt, neither Moses nor the Jews seemed very conscious of the inspiration. If the Jews under the judges and kings were inspired with the hope of the ultimate triumph of good, there were few outward and visible signs of the working of this hope. The story of the Jews, of their wars, of their crimes, of their treacheries, of their lusts, of their brutalities, gives little evidence of moral inspiration outworking in their lives "in a way in which no other nation ever was inspired". They were, as they may be judged by their deeds, very brutal, very dissolute, very cruel, very lustful, very dishonest. The definition of inspiration assumes the existence of what Mr. Lock calls "the spirit of God", and
further assumes that this spirit can and has "breathed into the hearts, or minds, or wills of certain men", and that the result of such breathing is the Bible. Breathing into the heart is probably intended as a figurative phrase, and I leave it to Mr. Lock to explain. By breathing into the minds, does Mr. Lock mean that the spirit of God suggested or dictated the actual words which appear in the Hebrew or Greek MSS.? Breathing into the wills is again probably figurative, unless Mr. Lock means that the spirit of God impelled or influenced certain men to write down, or cause to be written down, the words suggested or dictated. Yet if this be meant, hosts of grave difficulties arise. Who were the "certain men"? where and when did they live? is there any evidence that any one of them ever wrote a line of anything? what became of any written document? how is it identified? who was its custodian? where was it kept? Mr. Lock describes the writers of the various books in the Old Testament as "all members of one and the same nation"; where is the least evidence of this to be found? Mr. Lock says the Jews had an "undying hope and faith" in God, "who had protected them in all their history". If the Bible be true, the faith of the Jews in God was often very weak, and their hope not very clearly manifested. God's protection to the Jews "in all their history" was, if the Bible be true, of a mixed character, not inconsistent with his sometimes forgetting and often persecuting them. Mr. Lock declares that the Jews form "a nation which stands out above all other nations in its knowledge of right and wrong". Again, if the Bible be true, it is clear that this knowledge of right did not prevent the commission of a very considerable amount of crime by the nation having this knowledge.

The most audacious of Mr. Lock'sdeclarations is to be found in his reference to Jesus:

"The Apostles, and all who came in contact with him, were inspired with greater hopes and greater faith in what was in store for the world. The spirit of God fell upon them, and formed them into one united body; instead of the Jewish nation, the Catholic Church, without any limits of race or class, is the inspired body which thus became the great 'school of virtue' in the world, which lives the life of righteousness."

The faith of all who came in contact with Jesus was not sufficient to prevent the whole of his disciples from
forsaking him on the occasion of his arrest; it did not prevent Judas from betraying him; nor did it hinder Peter, to whom he had given great trust, from denying him with an oath. To say that the spirit of God fell on the early Christians and made them a united body, is most assuredly flatly contradicted by the writings attributed to the Apostolic Fathers; and to declare that the Catholic Church, without any limits of race or class, is the inspired body, is a little too defiantly to ignore the bickerings, hatreds, hostilities, and persecutions, always prevalent between the conflicting sections of the Christian Church. Does Mr. Lock really mean that the history of the Roman Catholic Church from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries shows it to have been a great school of virtue during that period? Would he even make that claim for Luther, and for some of Luther's strongest friends and supporters? Is he quite sure that, re-reading in Sir W. Hamilton's famous essay his comments on the obligation of the academic oath, he would like to make such a claim as well founded always, even for Oxford?

"We know," writes Mr. Lock, "that the New Testament is inspired, because those who had known Jesus Christ best, who had been chosen by him to represent him after his death, and who were filled with his spirit, recognised these books as containing a true account of his life and of his teaching."

But is there one shadow of foundation for the statement that anyone who had known Jesus whilst alive recognised after the death of Jesus "the books of the New Testament", or recognised any of them "as containing a true account" of the life and teachings of Jesus? It is surely unworthy the high character of some of the men connected with the "Oxford House Papers" to permit the circulation of an allegation so utterly wanting in foundation.

Mr. Lock wrote:

I see that the editors of the National Reformer are good enough to invite replies to Mr. Bradlaugh's criticism on the "Oxford House Papers". As this is so, I gladly say a few words in answer to his notice of my paper.

These criticisms mainly deal with three points.
(1) Mr. Bradlaugh complains that I ignore the critical questions which affect the dates and the authorship of the books of the Hebrew and Greek originals, and that I minimise the differences which are found in the MSS.

I did not ignore either of these subjects, but mere want of space compelled me to speak shortly of what would have been much better treated at fuller length. That is true. But a fuller treatment was not necessary for my central point. Questions as to the exact date of writing and the authorship of the books are not important for the particular purpose of discussing their inspiration. The Church accepted these books as inspired, without basing that acceptance upon any decision of these points. Consequently, I was quite justified in passing over the first point. The only question for us in this connexion is: "Are these books, as we have them now, substantially the same books which the Church accepted as inspired?" This, as Mr. Bradlaugh rightly urges, is important. Now, here I urge two considerations. In the first place, we have far stronger MSS. evidence for the New Testament than we have for any classical author. Let me take one instance. No one doubts the genuineness of the plays of Æschylus (a); yet the best MS. of them is one of about the eleventh century, A.D., while for the New Testament we have several MSS. in existence whose dates can be placed in the fourth or fifth centuries at the latest. Then, in the second place, besides the evidence of the Greek MSS., we have the evidence of the Church, which had existed ever since its foundation, teaching the truths contained in these books, translating the books into different languages, and building up the creeds out of the statements in these books. Here, again, there is something analogous in the case of Æschylus. One reason why we do not distrust our one good MS. of Æschylus is that there had always been a body of teaching and literature in connexion with the drama, and we find that the plays of Æschylus, as contained in this MS., agree with the allusions to them in that literature. But the argument is far stronger in the case of the Church, because the amount of extant literature is far greater, and the Church was a body confessedly occupied in preserving the spiritual knowledge and in handing it on to others. Mr. Bradlaugh does indeed call in question my statement about the Church. (He will see, by the way, that in my paper
the statement is only made in connexion with the New Testament. (b). He asks me: "What Church was teaching the truths contained in the New Testament before the New Testament books were written?" I answer unhesitatingly: The Catholic Church, of which the main centre at that time was Jerusalem. Here are two proofs of this. About the year 51 A.D. occurred the great meeting of the leaders of the Church of Jerusalem (vide Acts xv., or, better, take the undoubted evidence of St. Paul in Galatians ii.). They agree that St. Paul and St. Barnabas shall preach among the Gentiles the Gospel of Christ without insisting on circumcision. This great doctrine of the Catholicity of the Church was then enunciated at this time. But it is almost certain that no single one of our New Testament books was then written. Once more. About A.D. 58, St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to Corinthians, having preached there about A.D. 54. Now, in this (1 Cor. xv., 1-8) he treats the great central doctrine of the death and resurrection of Jesus as traditions which he had received from others, and which he had handed on to the Corinthians. Here, again, we have central doctrines taught by the Church before any writings were in existence. These instances are sufficient, though they might be easily multiplied.

But then, Mr. Bradlaugh urges, the manuscripts as a matter of fact are very different, and he quotes a saying from Dr. Malan to this effect. No doubt the number of differences—if you only count quantity—is great; and a scholar like Dr. Malan, who has pored over the New Testament until he knows the whole by heart, and who has probably been accustomed to regard every letter as inspired, feels keenly the smallest difficulties and speaks exaggeratedly about them; but the essential difference is slight. Take any practical man of common sense and let him read the two versions one after the other. He must tell you that practically they are the same book and teach the same doctrines. Strike out, if you like, all the places that are different in the different manuscripts, and you will yet leave all that is essential. I should absolutely deny that any of the three doctrines—"salvation by faith, damnation for unbelief (c), the doctrine of the Trinity", are dependent upon disputed texts. With regard to the latter doctrine, indeed, the objection seems plausible, because of the
removal from our Bibles of the disputed text—John i., 7. But a moment's thought will show that this does not affect the doctrine. Why was it omitted? Because there is no trace of its existence in any manuscript, or any translation, or any Father, before the fifth century at the earliest. But before that time, the doctrine of the Trinity had been distinctly formulated and defended against mistaken opinions. A doctrine, then, cannot be dependent upon a text which was not known until the doctrine was clearly established. It is dependent upon the many other places in the Bible to which the Fathers appealed, when the subject was being discussed.

(2) Mr. Bradlaugh objects that I attribute too high a character to the Jewish-Christian nation, whereas it really only reached a low moral and spiritual level. This objection is again plausible. There is no doubt that there was much that was immoral and unfaithful in their conduct. But that is not the whole truth. In estimating a nation as in estimating an individual, we should try to judge it not only by its failures, but by its good deeds and by its ideal. Now we do claim for Israel that there was in it an ideal of righteousness higher than in other nations, that there were constant witnesses to this ideal representation of it. And that even the faithless part of the people did in its heart acknowledge their claims to rebuke this unfaithfulness. The fact that the Psalms and the writings of the prophets were written in Israel, and that they were preserved as its national documents, is a proof that the nation had an ideal of righteousness and a hope in the ultimate triumph of good over evil, such as no other nation had. That is all that I wished to claim. In the same way, if Mr. Bradlaugh were to claim for the students of science that they are inspired with the love of truth, with the desire to examine all facts from whatever quarter they might come, with the determination to reject all falsehood at whatever cost to themselves, and to benefit humanity, I should admit the justice of his claim; and yet there is no doubt that I could point to many narrow-minded students of science, and to others who had used their knowledge for immoral or destructive purposes.

(3) Lastly, my claim for the Christian Church, that it aims at being one united body and at being a "school of virtue", is said to be inconsistent with history.
The answer just given applies here also. It is quite true that the Christian Church has failed much in its want of unity and in its untruthfulness to its high standard, at all times, and especially at particular epochs in its history; but yet I should urge unhesitatingly that it has never had a free hand for doing its work. It has always had to fight against heathen, uncivilized races, or direct opposition, so that it ought not to be judged as though it could have done exactly what it liked; and yet, in spite of this, even in the “fifth to the fifteenth century” it was the only school of virtue, and it did much to tame the uncivilized nations of Europe, to raise the position of women and of slaves, to protect learning in its schools; and, above all, its ideal has always been to unite all the nations of the world into one body—with “one heart and one soul”—and to raise and purify them when they had become its members (d).

Perhaps I ought to have dealt with the criticism in the last paragraph on my statement about the canon of scripture; but I have trespassed already on your kindness, and whatever I have said on that has been said with much more detail and more exactly by Dr. Sanday, in No. 9 of these papers, so that it may be left to that paper.

Notes.

(a) “No one doubts” is a very strong phrase to use of the plays of Æschylus. Many have never heard of them; few have classical knowledge enough to warrant an opinion on the subject. No one is asked to regard the plays of Æschylus as of higher authority than any other books. There is no law imposing penalty for denial of the genuineness of the plays of Æschylus.

(b) Certainly Mr. Lock’s language seemed to me to go further than the New Testament. He said (p. 8): “As with the Old Testament, so with the New Testament, this inspired body existed before there were any written records”; and on pp. 5 and 6 he uses repeatedly the words “the Bible” and “the whole book”. Mr. Lock appeals to the Church for evidence of the New Testament and to the New Testament for evidence that the Church existed.
but he is surely hardly entitled to ask me to accept this. There should be other evidence of this Church.

(c) But is not Mark xvi., 16, included amongst disputed texts? The revised version says: "The two oldest Greek MSS. and some other authorities omit from 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel."

(d) Here, on the one hand, Mr. Lock makes claims for the Christian Church which are uncorroborated by the history of the Middle Ages, and, on the other, entirely ignores what is due to the Arabs. C. Bradlaugh.

IV.—"Can Man Know God?"

In No. 8 of the "Oxford House Papers", Mr. T. B. Strong, B.A., asks: "Can man know God?" The difficulty to me pervading the treatment of the question in this paper arises from the loose use of the word "God". Not only is the existence of "God" assumed, but the word "God" is treated as if it were a word on the exact meaning of which all were agreed, and which, therefore, needed no definition; while at the same time it is clear, from Mr. Strong's own words, that he is well aware that the word "God" has been repeatedly used in very different and sometimes contradictory senses. Mr. Strong tells us that "all religions agree in this, viz., belief in a God"; but he agrees that "all men do not worship the same God," and he gives us no means of clearly determining to which "God" his own question relates, except so far as may be gathered from his phrase, "we mean by a God a being whose power is not limited". There are different "Gods" which have been worshipped by various peoples, for each of whom their several worshippers would make this claim of unlimited power, but all which "Gods" would be rejected by Mr. Strong as not being identical with "God" in his question. Mr. Strong, in the words above quoted, uses the word God as though more Gods than one actually existed, or might be easily conceivable as existing. This will be made very clear by slightly changing Mr. Strong's
phraseology: "All cavalry agree in this, viz., riding a horse"; but all cavaliers "do not ride the same horse". "Horse" and "God" may, in Mr. Strong's mind, be words serving as names of description for individuals, or doing duty as generic names. He writes: "Many nations believe in a vast number of Gods", just as I might write: "Many nations own a vast number of horses". But Mr. Strong can hardly mean that the word "God" in the question "Can man know God?" may represent some one of a "vast number of Gods" believed in by many nations, for he says: "To us the worship of material things, or of a variety of Gods, seems incredible. We know too much of material things, and we cannot understand a confused horde of Gods." Will he be offended if I again, with slight change, paraphrase his words and write: "To us the worship of anything seems incredible; we do not know enough of nature, but we have already learned too much of its phænomena, to understand any God". To Mr. Strong "a variety of Gods is incredible", but to me an undefined "God", plus an undefined "Nature", are equally incredible.

Mr. Strong says: "We may admit, at the outset, that God is not to be perceived in Nature like earth or sky". It is not quite certain whether in this sentence Mr. Strong means that God is not to be perceived in Nature at all, or whether he only means that God is not to be perceived in the manner that earth and sky may be perceived. If the latter, it was hardly worth writing. Mr. Strong does not define "Nature". This, too, is a word which he treats as too clear to need explaining. I mean by Nature "all phænomena and all that is necessary for the happening of each and every phænomenon"; that is, with me the word Nature is the equivalent of "everything". What is it that Mr. Strong means by "Nature"? In another place Mr. Strong for a moment seems as if he would make his position more distinct, at least so far as suggestion goes. He says: "The conclusion which I wish to suggest is this—that man can know God in Nature". But he adds: "It is in Nature where men have most easily lost sight of him and of their own spiritual nature too". From this use of the word "him" as an equivalent for "God" it would appear that Mr. Strong thinks of God as a person, so that his before-quoted definition would read: "We
mean by God a being, i.e., a person, whose power is not limited”. It is not easy to understand what Mr. Strong means when he writes of God as a person who, having been once known, can then be “most easily lost sight” of. This is a phrase which one man might well use of another man of whom he had lost sight in a crowd, or of a balloon of which he had lost sight in the sky. A threepenny piece dropped in the sea would be properly described as “most easily lost sight of”; but it is not easy to gather Mr. Strong’s meaning when he writes of “God” as “most easily lost sight of”. Man’s “spiritual nature” is another unexplained assumption; the doctrine that it can be most easily lost sight of by man in nature needs some explanation to save it from rejection as nonsense. Mr. Strong asserts that “there is an idea which runs through all forms of worship, from the worship of the savage upwards, and it is this—that the world and all that is in it is dependent on some ruling and sustaining power. It must not be supposed that a savage, when he makes up his mind to worship his clumsy, odd-shaped stone, thinks of it to himself as containing the power which moves the world. The idea of such a power only comes out later when religion has grown by means of reflection. Yet it has been present all along, and has governed and guided the growth of religion.” But is this true? Can a savage have thoughts which he does not think? Is an idea truly “present all along” when savage men by the million live and die without thinking of it to themselves? When Mr. Strong writes of the “world” as dependent on some ruling power he possibly means the “universe”, but does he really mean that in the dawn of history amongst the human race that there is any trace of any such idea as he alleges? Was not each “God” to each man the personification of that man’s ignorance or wonderment as to some ill-understood or misunderstood effect? Were not all the phenomena of nature in turn deified? Mr. Strong says that early man found God in nature because man “exercised creative power”—that is, man made “Gods” and “ghosts” and “demons” and “fairies” and “genii” for all phenomena he could not explain. “Can man know God?” “If”, answers Mr. Strong, “we rest in the material, and hold back our will within the limit of our senses, then in truth man cannot know God”. What does
Mr. Strong mean by the "material" as distinguished from the "spiritual"? He nowhere tells us. What is meant by letting volition loose from the limitation of the senses? Are not such wild and uncontrolled thinkers placed in our Hanwells if they go beyond the limit of their senses in any matter save the accepted religion of the day? Man has senses; by and through these senses alone he is capable of knowing; but Mr. Strong rightly enough declares that limited to his senses he cannot know God, and it is with such declaration that the Committee of Oxford House hope to check anti-religious views!

Mr. Strong replied as follows:

I should be glad to avail myself of the opportunity of defence which you kindly allow to the authors of the "Oxford House Papers", and to say a few words in vindication of my treatment of the question "Can man know God?".

I am sorry that I should seem to have left the idea of God vague or indefinite, but I think this vagueness will disappear if the method of my paper be called to mind. My argument was that the process which you have called the deification of the powers of nature contained a real truth which Christianity has developed and completed. In other words, I accept the position that belief in God has passed through various stages of development, and I maintain that this does not affect the truth of the belief as held by Christians. I do not think that this process of development was purely natural, but I do think that the revelations by which it was aided were themselves progressive. The personification of the various powers of nature, which means the representation of them as caused by spiritual powers—by powers that is, not material in origin or limited by material conditions—this process I regard as a first step to the idea of the universe as created by one such power; and this idea itself I regard as a lower form of the idea by which the course of the world is seen as a moral order dependent on a Personal Being—its God. I therefore do not think of the God whom I worship as one of a class, but I look upon the confused hordes of heathen deities as clumsy and partial efforts, which we
now see to be attempts to reach the one and only true God.

This will, I hope, explain also my position that this idea of God has been present through the whole process of development. Such an idea seems to me to be involved in the whole theory of evolution. Supposing we say that man's bodily organism has been developed out of lower forms: this does not, I think, mean that he is not widely different from them; nor again should I think it right to say he was merely the developed form of an anthropoid ape, because this tends to cover the fact that he is really different, and half suggests that he only differs from the ape in details. It would be truer, I think, to represent the lower stages as expressing in an incomplete form the climax of the development in man. This is what I mean by the "presence of an idea all along"; the changes which take place in the process are governed by the idea of that which is to come. So in religion the early heathen treatment of nature is only truly to be explained if we allow that it was an incomplete effort towards the apprehension of God.

Your own use of "nature" in this connexion makes it unnecessary for me to undertake a definition of it.

Lastly, I cannot accept your position that man attains knowledge by and through his senses only. My reasons for this cannot, I am afraid, be set forth here without unduly trespassing upon your space, and I will therefore content myself with referring you to Dr. Martineau's book, "Types of Ethical Theory". In the preface Dr. Martineau explains how he passed "from the empirical and necessarian mode of thought" to the metaphysical position which he now holds. If you will consult the book, you will see that this change took place on merely philosophical grounds, without reference to any accepted religious theory. Perhaps I may be permitted to quote a passage in which he describes this change. Pref.: p. xiii. "It was impossible to resist or distrust this gradual widening of apprehension; it was as much a fact as the sight of Alps I had never visited before. . . . The metaphysic of the world had come home to me, and never again could I say that phenomena, in their clusters and chains, were all, or find myself in a universe with no categories but the like and the unlike, the synchronous and the successive."
V.—“Salvation.”

No. 5 of the “Oxford House Papers”, by the Rev. V. S. S. Coles, M.A., the Librarian of the Pusey House, Oxford, is on “Salvation”, which Mr. Coles defines as “a right relation to Jesus”. Writing as “a priest of the Church of England”, Mr. Coles on this question often puts himself in flat contradiction to the ordinarily understood teaching of his Church. The 18th Article of the Church of England, on “obtaining eternal salvation”, says:

“They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.”

This article has been subscribed by Mr. Coles, yet having defined salvation to be a right relation to Jesus, he goes on to say:

“It would therefore be a gross misrepresentation of the Christian faith, to teach that those who, not through their own fault, are living without any profession of faith in Christ, and who do not yet receive the sacraments of his Church, cannot be in a right relation to him. If they are true to the voice of their maker within them, they will do their best to be unselfish and good to others, they will be less and less satisfied with what they are, and will long more and more for that peace and relief from a condemning conscience which only comes through God made man.

“Even though such persons pass away from this life without coming to believe in Christ, I confidently trust that they will be amongst those to whom he will say, when he comes to judge the world. ‘Inasmuch as ye have done,’ your work of mercy, ‘unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me.’ . . . If a man who belongs to a false religion is saved, it will be in spite of its being false, and because the falsehood has not poisoned his inmost heart. It will be because he has done his best to be true to God’s secret dealings with him, and to the knowledge which he possesses, and because by these things he has been made to feel his sinfulness and prepared to welcome our Lord as his Savior when he is revealed to him, whether in this life, or after death.”

But surely this is the exact opposite of the explicit
declaration of the 18th Article. Mr. Coles in effect says that a good Mahommedan, or good Zain, may be saved. The Church of England, to which he belongs, says that this is not true, and that Mr. Coles ought to be accursed for presuming to say so. The notion that a good and unselfish Fire worshipper may "welcome our Lord as his Savior when he is revealed to him" "after death", involves many very curious considerations. Does Mr. Coles hold that there is any sort of purgatory between death and the "day of judgment"?

In reference as well to this as to the latter part of the paper by the Rev. Dr. Paget, National Reformer, August 8th, p. 86, it may be permissible to quote from a little volume by the Hon. A. S. G. Canning, "Intolerance among Christians", p. 65.

"Dean Milman ('Latin Christianity', vol i., p. 148) thus mentions the intolerance of the Latin Christian Church—

"The Church was the predestined assemblage of those to whom, and to whom alone, salvation was possible. The Church scrupled not to surrender the rest of mankind to that miserable damnation entailed upon the human race by the sin of their first parents. As the Church, by the jealous exclusion of all heretics, drew around itself a narrow circle, this startling limitation of the divine mercies was compensated by the great extension of its borders, which now comprehended all other baptised Christians. The only point in this theory at which human nature uttered a feeble remonstrance was the abandonment of infants who never knew the distinction between good and evil to eternal fires. The heart of Augustine wrung from his reluctant reason, which trembled at its own inconsistency, a milder damnation in their favor. But some of his more remorseless disciples disclaimed the illogical softness of their master."

"What Dean Milman means by a milder damnation does not seem very clear, but is amazing that a man of the noble character of St. Augustine, which he certainly was in many respects, could have believed a doctrine so unspeakably shocking."

Of course Mr. Canning argues that this "shocking" doctrine is unchristian.

Mr. Coles fairly enough admits that he cannot ask any man "to accept the Church of England merely because her faith is the established religion", but he urges that "a man who believes that God's guiding hand is over his life and circumstances may well take that [i.e., the fact
that the religion is established] as a reason for considering her claim”. If this sort of argument has any force it would be equally potent for the acceptance of the Church of Rome in Madrid; and before the temporal power of the Pope was destroyed should have been as effective for the acceptance of the papacy in Rome. So too in Moscow it should have force for the acceptance of the Greek Church, and in Constantinople should avail for Islam. Mr. Coles clearly connects the establishment of the Church of England with some action of “God’s guiding hand”. But if this be his contention, what would be his view of God’s guiding hand in maintaining the establishment of the Church of Ireland until 1868, and in participating in the disestablishment of that Church in 1869? And does Mr. Coles hold that God’s guiding hand is over the life and circumstances of every individual? If yes, what relation has the perpetration, or happening, of crime to the action of this guiding hand? And has God’s guiding hand any influence in compelling a man to “belong to a false religion”? or to accept a religion which Mr. Coles would so describe?

“If,” says Mr. Coles,

“Jesus Christ were to show himself in London in all his glory to-day, the multitudes would fall apart to his right hand and to his left, and we should see in clear and unmistakeable separation, the companies of the saved and of the lost”, and he adds: “The saved would not be the wealthy, or the learned, or the fair, or the strong, or the healthy, or the respectable; nay, they would not coincide with the number of those who are baptised, or who communicate, or who profess and call themselves Christians; and the lost would not be simply the men who do not go to a place of worship, nor those who are not enrolled in the family of Christ’s Church; still less would they be the wretched, or the ignorant, or the weak; least of all would they be the poor”.

So that even believers who are actually receivers of the communion in Mr. Coles’s church may not be saved, and unbelievers who do not go to church may not be damned. This is pleasant, but is it orthodox? and by what right does Mr. Coles say this, when his Church and his Bible certainly say exactly the opposite so far as the unbeliever is concerned? It is an enticing view to preach in the East End of London that the wretched, the ignorant, the weak, and the poor are less likely to be damned than the wealthy,
respective, baptised and professing Christians. If such preaching were intended to put salvation after death as compensation for misery during life it would be effective. "I feel," writes Mr. Coles,

"great sympathy for a man who says, 'My father worked hard and did his best for me, and I will not believe that his Maker has rejected him because he never had a fair chance of being a Churchman or a Christian'. I think that it would be a shortsighted presumption to condemn such a man, and I know of no doctrine of the Church which requires that I should condemn him."

Mr. Coles's sympathy does credit to his humanity, but if a man, being hard-working and honest, who has never had a fair chance of becoming a Christian will be saved, what need of Oxford House to peril his prospect of salvation by creating the possibility of a refusal. But is the ignorance of the condemnation doctrine real? Does Mr. Coles know nothing of the 18th Article of his own Church? Does he not know that priests of his own established religion have refused Christian burial to unbaptised persons even of tender age? Is he not aware that such priests have been justified in this by the canon law and by the highest ecclesiastical authority?

Mr. Coles himself holds the doctrine that

"every baptised person who has not lost the help of our Lord by refusing to claim it, or by committing wilful sin, is in a state of salvation, and would be saved if he were to die".

Presumably, therefore, all baptised babies up to, say, three years of age, or four years of age, or even to five or perhaps six years old, will inherit eternal salvation, dying before they "refuse" or before they commit wilful sin. But what becomes of the unbaptised babies? are they too saved, despite the want of baptism, or are they eternally damned? The order for the burial of the dead in the Book of Common Prayer—which book it is a criminal offence to deprave—forbids the priest to commit the body of an unbaptised person to the ground "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection". Will Mr. Coles explain the bearing of this prohibition on the question "are unbaptised babies saved or damned?" It is hardly possible that Mr. Coles can have forgotten the comminatory clauses of his Bible and of his Prayer Book. Why does he avoid all mention of them in this paper? It is quite honest to
hide or deny the explicit doctrines of the Established Church when trying to make that Church acceptable to the "young men and lads" of East London?

Mr. Coles affirms that

"all our fellow-creatures with whom we can hold communication are convinced of two things: first, that there is a right and a wrong; and, secondly, that they cannot attain to the right."

The first of these propositions is misleading, and the second is untrue. The standard of right and wrong is not the same everywhere through the world to-day. That which is adjudged to be right of a given act in one country is condemned as wrong in another. The doctrine that men cannot help being wicked is a Church of England doctrine, and is expressed in the first half of the 10th Article:

"The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works."

But this is certainly not the doctrine of all mankind. Mr. Coles says that "faith in him is our salvation", but the article declares that such faith is unattainable by man's natural strength.

"Wherefore, we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."

On this Mr. Coles wrote:

I avail myself of the courtesy which has led you to print replies to your reviews of the Oxford House Tracts, and beg leave to offer the following remarks on your criticism of what I wrote on "Salvation":

1. The 18th Article does not deny that a Mahometan may be saved, though it does deny that every Mahometan may be saved by the false religion which he professes. What the writer of the article has in view is the opinion very commonly held, that consistency in any religion is all that is needed for salvation. The article teaches, on the contrary, that consistency in error will not help a man's salvation; but it is far from asserting that none can be
saved by the name of Jesus Christ who do not profess belief in that name. If this had been the meaning of the writer, he might easily have said, "for no man can be saved who doth not, before he die, profess faith in Jesus Christ". The writer is not considering how far salvation may go, but what answer should be given by the Church to the question, "How shall I be saved?" The answer must not be, "By acting up to whatever you profess", but "By the name of Jesus Christ".

2. That I may not seem to conflict with another Article, I may say that I do not hold the "Romish doctrine" of Purgatory, but it does not follow that I am bound to reject every doctrine of Purgatory. As a matter of fact, I do not hold, that is, believe and teach, as certain revealed truth, anything about Purgatory, but I am quite certain, and teach fearlessly, that while each man’s eternal state is fixed at death, the education of the saved for everlasting happiness does not end at death, and it seems to me highly probable that this education includes such disciplinary chastisement, lovingly endured, as is suggested by the interpretation of Purgatory given by Cardinal Newman, in his "Dream of Gerontius". But the question whether a man, who has not known the name of Christ on earth, may welcome Him as his Savior, when he is revealed to him after death, is independent of any question about Purgatory. In St. Matt. xxv. our Lord teaches that "all the nations"—not only those who have known his name on earth—will be divided by him into the blessed and cursed, and that the blessed will be surprised to find that they did works of charity to him, when they did not know His name, inasmuch as they did them to the least of His brethren. Such men will be shown to have enjoyed the "grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit" (Art. 13), though it did not please him to allow them to be conscious of it on earth. They will be saved through His name, by the acceptance which their prepared hearts will give, as soon as it is adequately presented to them, to the Catholic faith in the Trinity and the Incarnation. God alone knows what, in any individual case, is an adequate presentation.

3. Though I am responsible for the exact statements of the Articles, I am not responsible for Dr. Milman’s representation of the mediæval doctrine of the Western Church;
but (if I were not writing in Switzerland, far away from books,) I think I could show by references that St. Thomas Aquinas, the great representative theologian of the Middle Ages, is not open to Dr. Milman's attack. Certainly, the "milder damnation", which shocked Mr. Canning, meant only the withholding of certain joys, never experienced or expected, not the infliction of any pain.

4. I fully admit that the duty of considering the claim of the religion which he finds nearest to him, is the duty of every man in Madrid, Moscow, or Mecca; I may venture to add, of every child brought up by Secularist parents. It is only from such consideration that dissatisfaction with what is false, and hearty adherence to what is true, in the teaching he has already received, can arise.

5. Surely I believe that God's guiding hand is over all circumstances, whether (i) those in which good and evil are largely mixed, such as the establishment and disestablishment of churches; or (ii) those which are in themselves unmixed good, such as our knowledge of the truth; or (iii) those which are, in themselves, unmixed evil, such as crime—even the greatest of all crimes, the Crucifixion of our Lord. It is of God's wisdom to allow the free-will of His creatures to refuse to love him, and so to produce evil. It is of His wisdom to allow evil to show its true nature by working itself out. But it is of His wisdom and His goodness to preserve each true heart amongst His creatures from being mixed in the mazes of evil, if each will seek Him and find Him, who is not far from every one of us.

6. In answer to the question whether my statement as to the possibility of those who do not profess Christianity being saved, and of those who make the fullest profession of it being lost, is orthodox, I will only quote our Lord's words: "Many shall come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness".

7. Those who work at Oxford House are well aware of the awfulness of what they are doing, but they have no choice. It is by our Lord's command that we set forth his truth, and we are sure that he will not let those who seek him be confounded through us, if we are faithful. But no doubt those whom he (not we) knows to be wilful rejecters, will suffer for their rejection.
8. As to the unbaptised children. The Church has no commission to judge those who are outside her pale. She states in the Prayer Book: “It is certain by God’s word that children which are baptised, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved”. About the unbaptised, she makes no statement, because they are only committed to her missionary efforts, not to her pastoral care. Some churchmen may have made rash statements about the suffering of infants dying unbaptised; by far the greater number will agree with Hooker, that it is the parents who neglect to have their children baptised, and not the unbaptised children, who will be punished.

9. No doubt the standard of right and wrong differs, but everywhere there is some standard. No one denies that all men have a source of pleasure, yet the pleasures of an educated man differ widely from those of a Hottentot.

VI.—Christianity and Slavery.

No. 7 of the “Oxford House Papers” is by Geo. W. Gent, M.A., Tutor of Keble College, Oxford. In it I find the following:

“The large share which Christianity had in bringing about the abolition of slavery is admitted by all thinkers.”

If it be true that all thinkers made such an admission, then I dare not claim to be enrolled amongst thinkers; but I would respectfully submit that well-informed thinkers ought not to make any such extravagant admission, and that if they do make any such admission, it is not only not based on fact, but is absolutely untrue so far as the bulk of Christian history is concerned.

Spain, a Christian country, has done much to promote slavery, and is only just now liberating her slaves in Cuba, having about thirteen years ago declared the abolition of slavery in Porto Rico. The United States of America only emancipated its negroes about twenty-five years ago; a Christian judge had, a few years before, solemnly held that a slave was a chattel. Christian England only enacted
the prohibition of the slave trade in 1807, and the abolition of West Indian slavery came much later. The Hon. Albert S. G. Canning writes ("Intolerance amongst Christians", p. 85):

"Not until 1841 can it be truly said that the slave trade was effectually abolished by the joint agreement of the European Christian powers."

Christian France held slaves until after the non-Christian Condorcet had pleaded against the longer continuance of the iniquity. Christianity is nominally in the nineteenth century of its existence; it maintained slavery in its midst—and instituted slavery in the various countries where it planted the cross—for nearly eighteen centuries; and now it is claimed as a universally-admitted fact that Christianity had a large share in bringing about the abolition of slavery. For centuries Christian Portugal and Spain held thousands of slaves in their midst. The discovery of the new world opened up a fresh page in the history of slavery. It was Charles V., a Christian monarch, who granted a patent for introducing 4,000 negroes yearly into Spanish America, and thus legalized the horrid slave trade between the old world and the new. It was a Dominican friar, Bartolomeo de las Casas, who, from curiously-mingled humanitarianism towards the Indian aborigines, joined in the scheme, if he did not suggest it, of supplying enslaved African negroes to New Spain. Canning says (Ibid., p. 88):

"In the north, which was chiefly invaded by British Protestants, the Christian profession was accompanied by the systematic slavery of the unfortunate negroes brought from Africa to labor for their Christian purchasers, and also by an exterminating warfare against the native Indian savages, who were doubtless not improved by their experience of Christian colonists."

Wilberforce, when advocating the abolition of slavery, found the whole influence of the English Court against him. George III., a most Christian king, regarded abolition theories with abhorrence, and the Christian House of Lords was utterly opposed to granting freedom to the slave. When Christian missionaries some sixty-two years ago preached to Demerara negroes under the rule of Christian England, they were treated by Christian judges, holding commission from Christian England, as criminals for so
preaching. A Christian commissioned officer, member of the Established Church of England, signed the auction notices for the sale of slaves as late as the year 1824. In the evidence before a Christian court-martial a missionary is charged with having tended to make the negroes dissatisfied with their condition as slaves, and with having promoted discontent and dissatisfaction amongst the slaves against their lawful masters. For this the Christian judges sentenced the Demerara abolitionist missionary to be hanged by the neck till he was dead. The judges belonged to the Established Church; the missionary was a Methodist. I do not mean that the Church of England Christians in Demerara were worse than Christians of other sects: their Roman Catholic Christian brethren in St. Domingo fiercely attacked the Jesuits as criminals because they treated negroes as though they were men and women, in encouraging "two slaves to separate their interest and safety from that of the gang", whilst orthodox Christians let them couple promiscuously and breed for the benefit of their owners like any other of their plantation cattle. In 1823 the Royal Gazette (Christian) of Demerara said:

"We shall not suffer you to enlighten our slaves, who are by law our property, till you can demonstrate that when they are made religious and knowing they will continue to be our slaves."

In 1830 Henry Brougham told in Parliament how in the British West Indies the Rev. Thomas Wilson Bridges, Christian clergyman, had his female slave punished for not cooking his dinner. "She was stripped of every article of dress and flogged (by two men) till the back part of her, from the shoulders to the calves of her legs, was one mass of lacerated flesh." The case was brought before the Christian magistrates, who awarded no punishment against the Christian torturer. These illustrations might be multiplied by the score, and some very terrific instances might be given of horrible cruelty to slaves, winked at, if not sanctioned, by Christian English Government.

Mr. Gent talks of the large share Christianity has had in bringing about the abolition of slavery. Let him turn to a speech made by William Wilberforce in the House of Commons on 18th February, 1796, contrasting what was then called "infidel" France with "Christian" England:

"What," asked Wilberforce, "would some future historian say
in describing two great nations, the one accused of promoting anarchy and confusion and every human misery, yet giving liberty to the Africans—the other country contending for religion, morality, and justice, yet obstinately continuing a system of cruelty and injustice?"

When Mr. Gent speaks of the large part which Christianity has had in abolishing slavery, what answer has he to the fact that for at least ten centuries Christians held and traded in slaves? that during the ninth century Christian Italy sold slaves even to the Saracens? and that this trade was so well known that Pope Adrian, being charged with complicity in it before Charlemagne, does not deny that the trade exists, but puts the blame on the Greeks (Christians), and denies that he or the Roman clergy have any part in it? Under Leo IX. in the eleventh century women convicted of prostitution were publicly sold in Rome as slaves, and the profit went to the Church.

On the 4th September, 1835, there was a great pro-slavery demonstration held at Charlestown, South Carolina, and in the report in the Charlestown Courier, it is stated that "the clergy of all denominations attended in a body, lending their sanction to the proceedings, and adding by their presence to the impressive character of the scene". Yet Mr. Gent boasts of the large share of Christianity in bringing about abolition.

When William Lloyd Garrison, the abolitionist, delivered his first anti-slavery address in Boston, Massachusetts, the only building he could obtain, in which to speak, was the infidel hall owned by Abner Kneeland, the "infidel" editor of the Boston Investigator, who had been sent to gaol for blasphemy. Every Christian sect had in turn refused Mr. Lloyd Garrison the use of the buildings they severally controlled.

When abolition was advocated in the United States in 1790, the representative from South Carolina was able to plead that the Southern clergy "did not condemn either slavery or the slave trade", and Mr. Jackson, the representative from Georgia, pleaded that "from Genesis to Revelation" the current was favorable to slavery. Elias Hicks, the brave Abolitionist Quaker, was denounced as an Atheist, and less than twenty years ago a Hicksite Quaker was expelled from one of the Southern American Legislatures because of the reputed irreligion of these abolitionist "Friends".
When the Fugitive Slave Law was under discussion in North America, large numbers of clergymen of nearly every denomination were found ready to defend this infamous law. Samuel James May, the famous abolitionist, was driven from the pulpit as irreligious because of his attacks on slaveholding. Northern clergymen tried to induce Wendell Phillips to abandon his advocacy of abolition.

"Slavery," says Mr. Gent, "is an institution so very far removed from our day and habits of thought, that we do not always realise the tremendous revolution which its disappearance from the world involved. But, in truth, the abolition of slavery meant an entire change in the way men thought of labor. As long as slaves were an institution, labor itself was held in contempt; it was something which no free man could handle and yet retain his self-respect. It meant giving up one's own free-will and becoming a machine in some one else's hands. Now, Christianity changed all that. It asserted that labor was an honorable thing, because it was the natural use of those gifts of strength or intelligence which our heavenly father has given us; and it pointed to the example of him who had worked in a carpenter's shop, and who had chosen a few humble fishermen to be his apostles for the conversion of the world. But it did more; it asserted that every man, just because he was a member of the whole human family for which Christ died, had a worth of his own. Therefore no man had a right to use his fellows merely as a means to the end that he himself might be made great or rich. Every man has a right to that freedom without which he cannot be a man at all—cannot serve his God as he would; cannot develop his faculties or rise to the sense of responsibility within him. It was by repeating and insisting on these truths that Christianity abolished slavery, and it has been acting on the same lines ever since."

The following texts from the Christian Bible need some explanation from Mr. Gent. Leviticus xxv., 44—6:

"Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of the families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever."

The "Christian" slave law as to the Hebrews was supposed.
to be more humane. It may be judged from Exodus xxi., 2—6:

"If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever."

Of course, Mr. Gent may reply that Exodus and Leviticus form no part of the "Christian" Bible, but in that case it is to be regretted that these books are forced, as being "God's word", on little children in Board Schools.

As a fact, slavery—which originated when force made right and the strong few controlled the weaker many—has only been abolished in proportion as civilisation has enforced the assertion of human right, and vindicated the equality of manhood at least before the law. Serfdom in Christian Russia lasted to within the present generation. When the great French Revolution burst out there were at least 50,000 slaves of the body in France. The sale of English men and women to the plantations, paupers or criminals, was of common notoriety during the reigns of the first three Georges. Pious Bristol and Liverpool merchants made endowments to English churches out of the profits of the infernal slave traffic. Slavery in Scotland actually grew up and flourished for two centuries in modern Protestant times (see "Perversion of Scotland ", by John M. Robertson, pp. 197 and 208). If Christianity in truth worked for the abolition of slavery, why had its efforts failed so long? If Christianity had been really always hostile to slavery, why was it that the slave-owner found so many pulpits ready to aid his cause and to resist the progress of the abolitionist movement?

That many professing Christians have been abolitionists is true: but they have been so because of their humanity, not because of their creed, and they have nearly always found their bitterest foes in the ranks of their own Church.
Guizot, notwithstanding that he tries to claim that the Church exerted its influence to restrain slavery, says ("European Civilisation", vol. i., p. 110):

"It has often been repeated that the abolition of slavery among modern people is entirely due to Christians. That, I think, is saying too much. Slavery existed for a long period in the heart of Christian society, without its being particularly astonished or irritated. A multitude of causes, and a great development in other ideas and principles of civilisation, were necessary for the abolition of this iniquity of all iniquities."

"In the Spanish conquests of Mexico and Peru, especially, the spirit of religious bigotry", writes Mr. Canning (Ibid. p. 88), "was more apparent even than avarice, which, from all accounts, was the ruling principle among the first British colonists in America. They cared little for preaching Christianity. To destroy the Indian natives, seize their lands, and employ slaves to labor them for their own profit, was apparently the steady desire and practice of most British colonists, while the religious opinions of Indian foe and negro slave were alike comparatively disregarded. But the Spaniards, though eager, indeed, for plunder, were inspired also by strong feelings of religious fanaticism. The Indian idolators listened in terrified wonder to men who seized their lands, robbed and slew them without mercy, and yet professed and attempted to teach a religion of love, charity, and self denial."

Mr. Gent suggests that labor, which was theretofore "held in contempt", was made honorable by Christianity, but is this justified by the text? To Adam labor comes as a curse, and in the New Testament we read in Matt. vii., 25—31:

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"
To show the Christian estimate of labor, Mr. Gent says that Jesus "worked in a carpenter's shop". I know that this is alleged in the Apocryphal Gospels, but is there even any color of orthodox evidence for the statement?

VII.—"What has Christianity Done for England?"

In No. 13 of the "Oxford House Papers" the Rev. H. O. Wakeman, M.A., asks "What has Christianity Done for England?" That is, he enquires "what parts of our national well-being are due to our national religion?" and his first answer is, "that Christianity made England a nation". To prove this allegation he writes that, "before the Church was planted in England—for the Church was the only form of Christianity known in England for a thousand years—England was split up into a number of little tribal states, which made war upon one another and had no idea of uniting themselves into a nation. It was the unity of the Church that pointed the way to the unity of the nation." The first note on this is that "the Church" was the Roman Catholic Church, and that the Christianity of that Church has not only been specifically denied by English Protestants, but that "the Church" has been treated as criminal, and the very fact of membership in it as the most horrible crime. Next, it may be noted that "the Church" co-existed in Europe for centuries with a number of little ducal, princely, or tribal, states, without in the slightest degree promoting or encouraging national unity. The history of the penal laws against Catholics in England and Ireland shows, beyond possibility of refutation, that membership of "the Church" was treated by the Church of England as crime unpardonable, involving death and forfeiture of all goods if "the Church" was not abjured; and yet Mr. Wakeman on behalf of the Church of England claims credit for the work alleged to be done by "the Church" which the Church of England tried to crush out of existence by laws and practices of the most horrible harshness and cruelty.
On the authority of Dr. Stubbs, Mr. Wakeman claims that the Church of England is "the tamer of cruel natures, the civiliser of the rude, the cultivator of the waste places, the educator, the guide and the protector whose guardianship is the only safeguard of the woman, the child, and the slave against the tyranny of their lord and master". As not the slightest evidence is offered for this very general and very flowery declaration, it is sufficient to meet it with a general traverse; the onus of proof rests with Mr. Wakeman. Hume contends that the Christianity received into England through the influence of the Church of Rome had proved "equally destructive to the understanding and to morals. The reverence towards saints and relics seems to have almost supplanted the adoration of the supreme being. Monastic observances were esteemed more meritorious than the active virtues. The knowledge of natural causes was neglected from the universal belief of miraculous interpositions and judgments. Bounty to the Church atoned for all vices against society; and the remorses for cruelty, murder, treachery, assassination, and the more robust vices were appeased, not by amendment of life, but by penances, servility to the monks, and an abject and illiberal devotion" ("History of England", The Heptarchy, cap. 1). There is no one point on which Dr. Stubbs might not be challenged; the harshness and cruelty of "the Church" to all outside its pale are evidenced by our legal records. Civilisation has been more often hindered than advanced by the conduct of the Lords Spiritual of "the Church". The enfranchisement of women has been resolutely opposed by the clergy, who gave but small aid to the agitation led by Wilberforce in the last century.

Mr. Wakeman says: "At the great crises in English history, when the freedom of Englishmen was trembling in the balance, it was the Church which, by throwing her weight into the scale of liberty, decided the question". This is absurdly untrue; and, so far as the Church of England is concerned, the untruth has been clearly and emphatically shown by Mrs. Besant in her "Sins of the Church" (see especially Tract 8).

The illustrations given in evidence by Mr. Wakeman are: (1) "It was the Church which, in close alliance with the wise Alfred, assisted him to give to the united nation good government and equal laws". This is as nearly the
reverse of the truth as it is possible to write. When Alfred succeeded to the throne, chiefly by his own wonderful courage, "the Church" was practically powerless in England; the "good government" lasted only through Alfred's life; and if the Church had any part in its initiation, it was not powerful enough or desirous enough to maintain either "good government" or a "united nation" under Edward, the son of Alfred. The next illustration is: (2) "It was the Church which, under the leadership of the archbishops Anselm and Becket, put the first effectual limitation on the all-absorbing tyranny of the Norman kings". Mr. Wakeman conveniently forgets that "the Church" "consecrated" the first inroad into England of the tyrannical Norman kings, and in turn "anointed" and "crowned" each of these royal tyrants; and he omits to state that the quarrel between William Rufus and Anselm was commenced, not on behalf of popular liberty, but because the king "kept possession of a considerable part of the revenues belonging to the See of Canterbury". The quarrel was continued because there were two rival popes, Urban and Clement, and because Anselm "was determined, without the king's consent, to introduce the authority of Urban into England". The strife was embittered because Anselm unsuccessfully demanded "that all the revenues of his see should be restored to him". There is no record of any law in favor of the people secured or attempted to be secured by Anselm from William Rufus. Anselm quarrelled, too, with Henry I., but almost only on the ground of the insult to the supremacy of the Church and of the violation of ecclesiastical privileges. Henry I. claimed then the right of episcopal investiture which Queen Victoria exercises to-day. Anselm disputed it, and is praised by Mr. Wakeman, who claims for the present Queen that right which he regards Anselm as praiseworthy for denying to Henry I. If Mr. Wakeman thinks that the whole story of the quarrel of "the Church", under Anselm, with William Rufus and Henry I., redounds to the honor of Christianity, I am willing to help him to tell it in full detail. I have no love for the Norman kings; I would not champion them, they were tyrants; I would venture to plead for the people against both Church and King. And does Mr. Wakeman really put forward à Becket as a champion
of the poor and weak? The proud and haughty archbishop and baron, the pomp of whose retinue, the sumptuousness of whose furniture, and the luxury of whose table "exceeded anything which England had ever seen in any subject". Becket, who spent his leisure in "hunting, hawking, gaming, and horsemanship; who himself took personal part in war at the head of 1,200 knights and 4,000 attendants, maintained at his cost for 40 days on the frontiers of Normandy. It is true that Becket for a brief space mimicked a dervish's sanctity and insisted on the right of the clergy to receive atonement money for remitting penances. It is true that Becket claimed that a priest who had committed rape should not be subject to the criminal jurisdiction of the king; but where did Becket make any plea for the liberties of the poor of England? The next illustration is: (3) "It was the Church that under Archbishop Stephen Langton won the great charter of English liberty from the false and rapacious John". That King John was false and rapacious is very true, but so have been many other kings, all supported by the Church. It was the Pope's desire to monopolise the appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury which first arrayed Stephen Langton and "the Church" against John. John was first interdicted and then excommunicated, not because he opposed the liberty of the people, but because he seized the revenues of the Church. Langton at Dover would have made the peace of the Church with the king if John would then have agreed to make pecuniary reparation to "the Church". Langton did agree to the ignominious treaty by which John ultimately submitted to the Pope, and agreed to hold this kingdom as the Pope's feudal. Nothing then was said by Langton about Magna Carta, and enormously large sums of money were extorted for, and actually paid to, "the Church". It was not until after all this that Stephen Langton joined with the barons in the scheme to compel a renewal of the charter of Henry I. Even after this, "the Church", having got a charter for its own clergy, sided with the king against the barons; but the barons had gone too far to give way without some prize, and they made actual war. It was to this force of arms that John gave way at Runnymead and signed Magna Carta; but even then "the Church", by formal bull, "annulled and
vacated the whole charter", and the barons actually in­
vited the French to invade England, and the French did so
invite England, because "the Church" refused to allow
them to keep the charter they had won.

I have at present exhausted my space for comment on
Mr. Wakeman's curious clerical mis-readings of English
history. Under the Stuarts he had his real Church of
England, and he admits that under the first three Stuarts
"the Church" is seen "allying herself with the cause of
despotism"; and though, as I have noted, he has quoted
Dr. Stubbs, that "the Church" is the rescuer of the slave
from the tyranny of the master, he frankly acknowledges
that the "monasteries retained the system of villeinage
longer than anybody else", and that "the bishops voted
against the Bill for the abolition of slavery". Whilst
quoting Dr. Stubbs as authority for the declaration that
"the Church" is "the educator", the Rev. Mr. Wakeman
honestly adds that "the Church" has greatly failed in her
duty" with reference to education.


[Neither Mr. Gent nor Mr Wakeman availed themselves
of the opportunity of reply.]
ETERNAL TORMENT.

A WRITTEN DEBATE

BETWEEN

THE REV. JOHN LIGHTFOOT
(Heath Town, Wolverhampton),

AND

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

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