

ARTICLE XI.

NOTES.

A QUESTION IN CASUISTRY.

A GIFT of \$100,000 to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions by the founder and chief promoter of the Standard Oil Company adds new flame to the discussions which have been going on for several years concerning the question of the rightfulness and expediency of using for benevolent purposes money coming from sources which are supposed to be tainted with dishonor. The question divides itself into two: 1. Has the money of the contributor really been obtained by dishonest methods? 2. Is it clear that money obtained by questionable business methods cannot rightfully be accepted by the agents of benevolent institutions? We shall make progress better by considering the second of these first.

This question was discussed in a very practical manner by Paul in First Corinthians, in reply to the question, whether it were lawful to eat meat which had been offered to idols. The answer given, is that, out of regard to ignorant lookers-on whose consciences were weak, it was expedient, in certain cases, to pay respect to their infirmities and abstain from the practice. But in general he defends the practice of eating "whatsoever is sold in the shambles" and "asking no question for conscience' sake." Paul's discussion of this question brings out the very important principle, that a gift cannot be considered wholly in itself. The believer may partake of the feast of an unbeliever without compromising himself, if no questions be asked. But if the host ostensibly advertises his meat as that which has been offered to idols, the guest may be put in such a position that he should decline to partake, in order to avoid misunderstanding and the seeming approval of evil. The whole drift of the discussion in the first few chapters of First Corinthians, however, is designed to warn be-

lievers against going into extended questions of casuistry, to lay down hard-and-fast rules of conduct. We cannot live in the world and separate ourselves entirely from it. Good and evil are so inextricably mixed in human society, that, if one goes too far in questioning the motives of those with whom he has to deal in the ordinary affairs of life, he will find himself so entangled in puzzling questions of casuistry that all activity will be paralyzed.

While it may be clear that the gift of a saloonkeeper or of one who rents his property for immoral purposes might be bestowed upon a church or benevolent society in such a way as to close their mouths against testifying to the evil of his practices, when of course the gifts should be rejected, it is not clear that it is expedient or right to question every gift too minutely, lest we get into questions of casuistry where the lines of evidence are too attenuated to be of any practical value. For example, a large and most respectable class of Christians feel that they cannot raise hops, because hops are largely used in the brewing of beer; nor barley, because its price is enhanced by the demand for its use in the manufacture of distilled liquors. Among the Friends the members are asked at their quarterly meetings, if they use tobacco or raise it for sale. In case they can not answer in the negative, they are admonished. Before slavery was abolished, many radical reformers regarded the use of sugar as a sin, because it was largely raised by slave labor. In those days there were many who not only would not fellowship a slaveholder, but they would not fellowship one who would fellowship a slaveholder, and so on to an indefinite number of degrees.

Under present conditions, the operations through which wealth is produced are so complex that it is impracticable to investigate them so as to disentangle all the questionable dealings that have been employed. Consequently it is practically impossible for the agents of benevolent societies to take the responsibility of rejecting gifts, except in very plain cases, such as were mentioned at the outset, where the evident intent is to embarrass the recipient. A striking case of a supersensitive

conscience in such matters came to light two or three years ago, when Tolstoy's "Resurrection" had been translated into English, on condition that the proceeds of the sales should be devoted to the interest of the Doukhabours in Canada. As a result, some thousands of dollars were turned over to the member of the Society of Friends in England who had promoted the project. But he, upon reading the book, found some passages in it which he thought were calculated to promote lascivious thoughts in the minds of young readers; and upon that account judged it immoral to receive the gift, and returned it to the publishers. In this case the majority of readers would probably question the judgment of the censor, and say that he had improperly exalted himself, and over-estimated the value of his own judgment.

This leads us to consideration of the first question, relating to the justification of the business methods by which the Standard Oil Company has attained success. Are those methods so clearly unjust that the Company must be considered so far out of the pale of common honesty that, to have dealings with them, is to make a compact with the devil?

A few plain statements of facts which are too often overlooked by those who are denouncing Mr. Rockefeller beyond measure will tend to clarify our views upon this subject.

1. It is a condition that confronts the country, and not a theory. Modern instruments of production and distribution are not what they were fifty years ago. The whole trend of business during the last half-century has been in the direction of cheapening products for the general public through large combinations of capital, which are able to eliminate super-numerary agencies and make more economical use of the discoveries of modern science. The present cheapness of the necessaries of life and of many of the luxuries which are widely diffused cannot be secured by the old-time processes of individual production and of haphazard methods of distribution. This is seen to be especially true in the production of textile fabrics, in the manufacture of iron, and in the transportation of freight both upon land and water.

2. The Standard Oil Company is simply one of a large number of corporations which, by careful organization, close attention to the details of its business in effecting a series of small savings, and by the skillful utilization of modern inventions and discoveries, has succeeded in greatly cheapening the cost of living to the mass of the people. It is scarcely possible to question the statement, that the Standard Oil Company is producing better, safer, and cheaper oil than could be produced by a large number of independent organizations working at cross-purposes with each other. This has been accomplished largely by economies in transportation, in processes of refining, and in the skillful utilization of all the by-products of the crude oil. If now this be the case, it is a dictate of philanthropy that the people's interests should be guarded, rather than the alleged interests of rival competitors, who wish to share in the profits of the manufacture with little regard to the welfare of the people.

3. The bitter denunciations of the chief promoter of the Standard Oil Company which fill the press are largely made upon the basis of insinuations, slanders, and probably perjuries of opponents, which are persistently repeated without proper examination of the actual facts in the case. The Standard Oil Company has not been proved guilty of any practices more serious than that of underselling competitors, and of having at one time received rebates from the railroad companies upon transportation of freight which they were overanxious to get. The passions of the general public are being inflamed in this case by *ex-parte* testimony, which is received with favor because of the general jealousy almost universally exercised towards those who are more prosperous than the mass of the people.

4. The large dividends returned to the holders of Standard Oil stock, as compared with those distributed to the holders of many other large corporations, like that of the Steel Company for example, are largely due to the fact, that the stock of the Standard Oil Company has not been inflated by those fictitious increments of stock which are designed

to conceal the real state of the case. The stock of the Standard Oil Company has never been manipulated in Wall Street. The Company has strictly adhered to one thing,—the production, the collection, the refining, and the distribution of a natural product whose occurrence is so irregular, and the continuance of whose supply is so uncertain, that small capitalists cannot undertake the risk of supplying the public demand. To meet the recent demands in Kansas for the economical collection of oil in places where it can be refined and distributed has demanded the expenditure of several million dollars in advance of any return, with the probability that much of this permanent investment will prove useless in a few years, as has been the case in other fields of production.

5. The large returns of profit to the managers of the Standard Oil Company are derived from a very small margin of profit upon an enormous business. It is not easy to say offhand that this margin of profit should be further diminished, for it is already shaved down so thin that it is hard to split it again, lest it should come out with a margin of loss, which would be a calamity of the first class, not only to the owners of the stock, but to the vast army of contented employees (we believe the Standard Oil Company has never had a strike), and to the general public, who are dependent upon the steady supply, and the high quality of the product produced. We cannot safely judge the profits of a business corporation of to-day by those of a private company one hundred years ago, for they are made upon a very much smaller margin.

6. Most of the denunciation of the Standard Oil Company for obtaining lower rates for the transportation of oil than its competitors were able to do overlooks a most important fact, namely, that a public carrier like a railroad can afford to haul large quantities of through freight cheaper than it can small quantities of way freight. At the time when Mr. Rockefeller (1872) is charged with having received rebates from the railroads he was daily shipping "from Cleveland to New York sixty carloads of oil." As a well-informed writer has recently

said, "By moving these cars in solid trains, the time for a round trip was reduced from thirty days to ten days, the number of cars needed was reduced from 1,800 to 600, and the investment in cars from \$900,000 to \$300,000. To charge the same price for transportation which costs less is not to maintain equal rates; it is to discriminate in favor of small shipments, to furnish a service which costs more at the same price as one that costs less."

7. The unmeasured denunciation of the railroads for making favorable terms for the transportation of the oil of the Standard Oil Company is not based upon the Ten Commandments, but largely upon the opinions of inexperienced persons who are sitting in judgment upon business methods of which they have but a very imperfect knowledge. The equitable adjustment of railroad tariffs can be made only by experts. Apart from the judgment of competent and honest experts, the general public can have but a very imperfect idea of the real equities of railroad rates. The bill before Congress to commit the regulation of railroad rates to such a body of experts is an important move in the right direction. But in the present condition of our knowledge of the exigencies of railroad traffic, it is not likely that the clergymen, the ordinary editor, and we may say the ordinary legislator are competent to lay down the law upon the subject. In doing so, they are venturing upon ground where "angels might well fear to tread," and are in gravest danger of heaping denunciation upon the heads of conscientious and upright business men whose chief distinction is that they know better what is for the public's good than the public itself does, and have had the courage of their convictions to go forward in the accomplishment of their ends in the face of great misunderstanding and unjust obloquy. Mr. Rockefeller testifies under oath in court, that the Standard Oil Company has never received "special advantage [from the railroad companies] for which it did not give full compensation." In the specific cases which came before the courts, this statement was fully confirmed; and any one can satisfy himself of its truth by a careful study of the evidence. Such study has con-

vinced us that the head of the Standard Oil Company is a most conspicuous target of misdirected and unjust public opinion.

But even if this judgment is incorrect, it is clearly too much to ask of the agents of our benevolent societies that they should set themselves up as keepers of the consciences of the great captains of industry, through whose untiring labors and venturesome enterprises the marvelous prosperity of the present century is secured, and the general wealth of the people so largely increased.

RAILROAD RATES.

THE question of governmental control of railroad rates has become a burning one. Attention is centered on freight rates, which are seen to have almost unlimited power over the growth of industries. Discriminations may close the factories of one town and boom those of another. They may multiply the profits of one coal-mine and compel the owners of another to abandon it. Discriminations to a particular shipper may enable him to drive his competitors out of business, and eventually get control of that whole line of industry. The cost of transportation enters so largely into the price of goods that our domestic railroad rates for freight have vastly more influence on our industries than that of the tariff. The very life of many industries depends on the assurance of equal and reasonable rates for transportation. Hence there are powerful and concentrated interests bringing pressure on Congress to provide for official control of these rates. They are likely to succeed in spite of the insistence of railroad managers that they alone should fix rates.

Were there adequate forces acting upon them to insure their fixing reasonable rates, the matter might be left to their expert wisdom. There is no such force in competition, for we have found railroads to be essentially monopolies. Agreements have well nigh obliterated what used to be thought "com-

peting points." There is little restraint left on the managers except the fear of destroying the industries that furnish traffic. No far-seeing manager will charge more than "the traffic will bear." Where there is real competition, this principle will no doubt keep charges close to what is fair and reasonable. It also puts limits to the rate of any monopoly, but limits far above what is reasonable. The self-interest of a monopoly is not a satisfactory safeguard of the rights of the public.

That charges for freight have come as nearly to a reasonable rate as we find them to-day is not due to the self-interest of the railroads, or their regard for what is a fair rate, but has been brought about by the strenuous exertion of large shippers who had enough at stake to make effective resistance against extortion. This seems to be made perfectly evident by the facts in regard to passenger rates. For half a century, to take a concrete example from one famous road, the local passenger rate on the New York Central Railroad has been two cents a mile. In that period the charge on the same road for transporting freight has been reduced from 3.27 cents per ton per mile to .68 of a cent. This road carries freight for a little more than one-fifth the former rate, but continues its old passenger rate unaltered.

No doubt the railroad's expense in handling freight has been diminished by inventions and improvements much more than has the cost of carrying passengers. But it is not conceivable that there has been no reduction in the cost of passenger traffic. If the roads can make a profit on freight after such enormous reductions in rate, it must be that they could considerably lower their passenger fares, and still make a reasonable profit. When some great excursion is planned like a meeting of the Grand Army of the Republic or the Educational Association, rates are usually put far below this New York Central rate. These two considerations are sufficient evidence that the passenger rates may justly be styled "unreasonable." Some roads have a lower tariff than formerly, but in Michigan, as earlier in Texas, this has been brought about, not by the voluntary action of the railroads, but by legislative

compulsion. Shippers of freight on a large scale can contend with a road for a fair rate. A passenger is in no position to enter upon such a struggle. Is there any other force than government authority that can assure the public of reasonable passenger rates?

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BRITISH THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.

A NEW and important work from the pen of Professor Flint is "Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum."¹ It is highly characteristic of him. It shows him to be—as the world knows him—no mere professor of divinity, but the man who, in unexampled fashion, has, for a generation, maintained, in full view of his countrymen, the ideal and type of European scholar. To have done this is, in some respects, an even greater service than the works he has given us; for it means a valuable corrective to the radical defects of the provincialism and insularity of so much of our theological thought and writing.

The present work is worthy of the author of "The Philosophy of History in Europe." It opens with a lengthy and most interesting chapter on "Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum," after which the work is devoted to "A History of the Classifications of the Sciences," a subject which has long claimed Professor Flint's interest. The whole book is most enjoyable to a philosophical student, and will yield profit and pleasure to many such students on both sides of the Atlantic. The opening chapter "is meant to be a plea for philosophy as the legitimate but often disavowed and insulted queen of the sciences." And an excellent plea it is, containing much that might prove a wholesome corrective to the chilling and limiting effects of much modern specialism. I find myself in cordial agreement with the author's contentions against the blind and unilluminated positions of the positivist dwellers in the

¹Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons. 1904. Pp. x, 840. 10s. 6d., net.

valleys of science. If one has philosophical divergences from the author, all is here so just, balanced, and convincingly true, that these are nowise likely to come at all into view. Whether from inadvertence or for the sake of emphasis, the sentences on page 58 are almost wholly repetitive of those which make up page 30 and the closing part of page 29. So is page 60 of page 34.

Professor Flint's "History of Classifications of the Sciences" deals with the subject under the following headings: "From Plato to the Renaissance"; "From the Renaissance to Kant"; "From Kant to De Tracy"; "From Bentham to Gioberti"; "From Whewell to Zeller"; "From Bain to Wundt"; "From Masaryk to Karl Pearson"; "From Paul Janet to Present Time." There are many good things in each of these chapters, and for them readers of the *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA* may be confidently recommended to turn to the work itself. Only a few points can be touched upon here, though we are so grateful for this book that one had rather commend it without detailed comment. The portions on Plato and Aristotle are admirable. But I think the treatment of the Sciences by Boëthius should not have been omitted. Also the "Angelic Doctor," St. Thomas Aquinas, has, on occasion, spoken more finely and suggestively on the general order of the sciences than has St. Bonaventura, whose line of thought is here given. That, however, is a small matter, and matter only of opinion. The criticisms on Bacon, Locke, and Leibniz are as interesting as is the brief and much more appreciative reference to Vico. The remarks on Kant are relevant and just,—indeed the criticisms of particular schemes and authors are, throughout the whole book, singularly just. After Krug and D' Alembert, we are brought to Fichte, to Schelling, and to Hegel, all of whom are admirably dealt with. Nothing could better show Professor Flint's rare and genuine interest in the subject than the appreciativeness, independence, and discrimination of his treatment of Hegel, whether one agrees with every point in it or not. He has threaded his way through thorny and difficult paths exceedingly well.

Passing over Bentham, Coleridge, and certain Italian writers,—among whom are Romagnosi and Ventura,—we come upon a criticism of Comte's classification of the sciences. The criticism is, in the main, not new, but everything is put in Professor Flint's own independent way and is exceedingly well and clearly put. Soon afterwards we are favored with some criticisms of the views of those two interesting Italian philosophers, Rosmini and Gioberti. The next section of the work opens with a criticism of Whewell's scheme, and gives shortly thereafter, the similar scheme of Dove. When we arrive at Sir William Hamilton, it is to find one of the most sweeping criticisms in the book, his scheme being described as "erroneous from beginning to end—erroneous in its root and in all its ramifications." One is pleased to see that Professor Flint is also critical of Renouvier, of whom he has elsewhere spoken so sympathetically. Herbert Spencer's classification is ably dealt with here. In the next section, Wundt is among those dealt with. Karl Pearson is among those treated of in the next section. The criticism is severe, but certainly none too severe for that "rash and random" author. Paul Janet heads the closing section, and the notice of him by Dr. Flint is one of the most appreciative in the book. Already, however, I have said enough to show readers of the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA the character of this remarkable book, which will amply repay the study of all who are interested in its important subject. The publishers' part of the work is perfect.

A volume of sermons entitled "Faith and Knowledge" by W. R. Inge, M. A., Fellow and Tutor of Hertford College, Oxford,¹ may be noticed here. For there is theology in them as there is not in many volumes of sermons. And it is on their theological side I shall here touch, having noticed them ethically elsewhere. But, first, I take leave to express doubt whether the world realizes what it owes to the men who print sermons. They put themselves in hazard, for what are a man's sermons without him? Yet his personality you cannot put into the printed page. Still, who would want the sermons of a Bushnell

¹ Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. Pp. x, 292. 4s. 6d., net.

or a Phillips Brooks because we cannot have the men themselves? And when appeal is made to the printed page, criticism becomes necessary. Mr. Inge's volume of sermons is marked by a fine spirituality—perhaps its most distinguishing feature. They are good, sensible, thoughtful, discriminating—I should not think of calling them great or powerful. Many of them are too slight for that. At times finely suggestive, they at times fall to the level of commonplace. They are, in a way, practical, but they want, and it is a great want, the fire of those preachers who have a great practical hold upon life, and a large insight into real needs,—a defect probably due to the author's academical environment.

The preface is so good as to make one feel somewhat like the old Scottish beadle who, asked how he liked the sermon, said, "Ye had a grand introduction, Sir; could ye not have made it a' introduction?" The first sermon, on "The Risen Christ," properly remarks that "some think of the resurrection as an isolated and unparalleled portent"; but this sermon would have been greatly strengthened had something been said to show how the words and life of Jesus tended to the resurrection as their natural fulfillment—how his whole life pointed to, or seemed to presuppose, his triumph over death. This congruity of the resurrection is by no means unimportant, as commending it to a rational faith, and we cannot say that it has been set forth by Mr. Inge with the clearness and cogency of which it is capable. The sermons on "Wisdom," "Paul at Athens," "Truth in Love," and "The Mirror of Truth" are excellent. That on "Humility" is good, but lacking in the theological thoroughness and depth of Canon Liddon's University Sermon on the same text, with its rooted dependence of man's whole life on the infinite grace of God.

Mr. Inge seems slightly over-anxious to do away with "sudden" conversions. Why should we have any care in the matter? The Spirit of God has always scattered the pretty theories of men in such matters, and we should be well content to have it so. There are only too many men in every sphere—civic, commercial, academic—whom one would gladly see con-

verted to Christ and the practice of real virtue, for us to be overnice about the "sudden" development of their goodness. The trouble rather is, that it is so slow in appearing—so slow that one would rather welcome any "sudden" or summary working of the Eternal Spirit of truth and goodness upon them. Such a sentence as (p. 167)—in "The Inspiration of the Individual"—"Even the sudden conversions, which in some Protestant sects the young are taught to expect, occur with suspicious regularity about the age of puberty, when the nervous system in both sexes is often temporarily disturbed," is one which such a volume as the present could have very well spared. There is room alike for larger charity, and greater faith in the possibilities of Divine working, in respect of such matters. Has Mr. Inge made a study of what Dr. Munger has said on the other side, in his sermon on "The Reception of New Truth," in the volume entitled "The Freedom of Faith"?

We cannot particularize the sermons further. It must suffice to say their scholarly character is well maintained throughout, and they will be read with pleasure and profit by all.

Needless to say, the publishers have done their part of the work in a way that leaves nothing to be desired.

Kilmarnock, Scotland.

JAMES LINDSAY.

THE HIBBERT JOURNAL.

INSTEAD of the "Hibbert Lectures," appearing once a year, we now have, on the basis of the fund which secured them, the *Hibbert Journal*, appearing quarterly, which is a distinct gain. Its success indicates that the reading public is not satisfied with the ephemeral literature that had appeared to engross public attention almost exclusively. In the conduct of the Journal, the widest range of opinion is permitted to the writers, but apparently both sides of all questions are discussed in it by the ablest representatives. We welcome its appearance, and hope for it continued success.—ED.]