

Correspondence.

LECKY'S "HISTORY OF RATIONALISM."

To the Editor of the CHURCHMAN.

SIR,—I have read with much interest the Rev. C. L. Drawbridge's important paper on Rationalism, in which he effectively quotes from Lecky's "History of Rationalism." I do not think he will deem it irrelevant if I call attention to some of the closing words of that book. "At present [I think the book was published in 1865] the tendency towards the latter [*i.e.*, materialism, as opposed to the metaphysical and spiritual view of life] is too manifest to escape the notice of any attentive observer. That great reaction against the materialism of the last [eighteenth] century, which was represented by the ascendancy of German and Scotch philosophies in England and by the revival of Cartesianism in France, which produced in art a renewed admiration for Gothic architecture; in literature the substitution of a school of poetry appealing powerfully to the passions and the imagination for the frigid intellectualism of Pope or of Voltaire; and in religion, the deep sense of sin, displayed in different forms both by the early Evangelicals and by the early Tractarians, is everywhere disappearing. In England, the philosophy of experience, pushed to the extremes of Hume and represented by the ablest living philosopher in Europe [Comte?], has been rising with startling rapidity to authority, and has now almost acquired an ascendancy in speculation. In France the reaction against spiritualism and the tendency towards avowed materialism, as represented by the writings of Comte, of Renan, and of Taine, are scarcely less powerful than at the close of the last [eighteenth] century; while under the guidance of Schopenhauer and of Büchner, even Germany itself, so long the chosen seat of metaphysics, is advancing with no faltering steps in the same career. *This is the shadow resting upon the otherwise brilliant picture the history of Rationalism presents*" (pp. 135, 136, of Lecky's "History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism." Edition 1910. Published by R.P.A. 1s. net). (The italics in the closing words are mine.)

What was a *dark shadow* in the judgment of Mr. Lecky is the *rising sun* of the R.P.A. But does not the increasing influence upon the thought of the world of writers like Eucken and Bergson, as Mr. Drawbridge suggests, indicate a reaction against the philosophy of materialism, and raise the hope that the time may come when, to adopt the words of Pascal, it will be acknowledged that "there are but two sorts of persons who can properly be styled reasonable (rational)—those who serve God with all their heart because they know Him, and those who seek Him with all their heart because as yet they know Him not" ("Thoughts on Religion"). It is surely not irrelevant to add that, more than to any other source, this fierce and devastating war may be traced to the teaching of the most anti-Christian materialism that Germany has produced—namely, that of *Friederich Nietzsche*.

G. S. STREATFEILD.

"REUNION AT HOME AND ABROAD."

To the Editor of the CHURCHMAN.

SIR,—May I state at the outset that I was trained as a Baptist minister? My thoughts being turned to the question of New Testamental Reunion, I found a denominational position no longer possible for me. I have been a Communicant of the Church of England for over ten years. Dr. Moule's article in your September issue has interested me. He specially refers to the Baptists. Will you allow me, knowing the Baptist position from the inside, to point out difficulties to reunion his article does not touch, or apparently even recognize?

I was myself received as a Communicant of the Church of England upon Episcopal advice, without Confirmation, on the strength of my standing with my previous Communion. I have since attended Confirmation Services. I have continually been asking myself: What spiritual gift or blessing may I expect to receive, if I submit myself to Confirmation, which I do not already possess? For practically, I find—*pace* Dr. Moule—that lack of Confirmation is *a*, not to say *the*, barrier to the exercise of my ministry, either regular or occasional, in the Church of England. The point, then, to which I ask to be allowed to bring Dr. Moule's article down to is: Why is Anglican Confirmation a barrier to union, and is the barrier justified?

I ask to be allowed to put one side of the case, and I say that if it can be shown that any spiritual advantage not already possessed would come with Confirmation, I would apply for Confirmation without delay. To apply for it simply as a step to secure recognition or opportunity for ministerial service no honest man would expect.

Some may object to Confirmation as simply unnecessary. My point is that real and important blessings are secured in Confirmation, but that those blessings are secured in other ways—I write especially with knowledge of Baptist practice—which, *pace* Dr. Moule again and his claims for the Church of England (*vide* CHURCHMAN, p. 689), are more direct, effective, and New Testamental.

If the Baptists are recognizing more and more a place for a dedicatory service for infants, I think I am not wrong in saying that Anglicans insist more and more upon the Confirmation Service, because they have felt the force of the Baptists' arguments against their Baptismal Service taken by itself, and now urge that the Baptismal Service is only of effective value when crowned and completed by Confirmation. The Baptismal Service and Confirmation have to be taken together as forming one complete whole. Why is this? The reply I find given is: That in Confirmation the active response of the candidate comes into play, and that only as that personal responsibility is exercised do the benefits of Baptism operate. In a word, the effectiveness of Baptism depends upon the personal and conscious faith, love, and obedience of the baptized.

But that is the Baptist position. Only they go a step farther and say that that personal response is, according to the New Testament, a *pre*-requisite of Baptism. So far, then, as Confirmation stands for the blessings

that come with the response of personal and conscious faith, the Baptist requires as a condition of Baptism what the Anglican requires as a condition of Confirmation, in order to make Baptism effective. On this point I ask myself: What has Confirmation to add to me I have not already, having been baptized according to the Baptist faith and order? I cannot see that it adds anything. Yet lack of Confirmation is a continual barrier to ministerial activity.

I had thought of referring to another point, but this letter is already long. If you can allow it to appear, as a contribution to the discussion of the real difficulties of reunion, I shall esteem it a great favour and courtesy. Nonconformists need to understand Anglicans; Anglicans equally need—pardon the plain thrust—to understand Nonconformists. Dr. Moule's article plainly fails to understand Nonconformists and the grounded reasons which make his plan, as it stands, simply hopeless.

But discussion will help to clear the way.

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Studies in Texts:

SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

BY THE REV. HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A.

X.—GOD AND OUR BATTLES.

Texts:—My lord fighteth the battles of the Lord. And the souls of thine enemies shall He sling out.—1 Sam. xxv. 28, 29.

“The battle is the Lord's. So David prevailed with a sling.”—1 Sam. xvii. 47, 50.

[Book of the Month: “ANATOMY OF TRUTH”¹=AT. Other references: Blunt's “Undesigned Coincidences”=B. “Speaker's Commentary”=S. Robinson Lees' “Village Life in Palestine”=RL.]

ABIGAIL pleading for her husband uses an argument which appeals not only to the principle of David's whole life, but to his memory of the most dramatic illustration of it. The principle is “the present-worth of God-reliance” (AT. 157).

I. ABIGAIL'S ALLUSION. — Indirectly, but definitely, “the

¹ “Anatomy of Truth,” by F. Hugh Capron. Published by Hodder and Stoughton. See October number.