

fluenced these tradespeople, who however are well enough disposed towards us personally. Now we do not think they have correctly appreciated the state of public opinion, and that their timidity is not justified by the spirit of the age. Many ecclesiastics of course maintain the traditions of Cyril, and when they cannot refute incline to ban, but as a rule there is a wide tolerance among the laity, at least in the colonies, which, unless outraged, tends to judge fairly. It would be out of place to speak harshly of such refusals, for there are responsibilities of which we have no knowledge. For instance, when a man thinks he would be injuring his family by an act of what might be termed boldness, he is entitled to much consideration. But we are informed that in one instance the hand that condemned the Review in the press wrote privately congratulating the publisher. Nothing will justify such an act. As time goes on we have the hope that the courage of opinion unobtrusively expressed will be among the highest claims to the regard of one's neighbours.

Among the notices in the press on our first number, there is one to which a reply is perhaps due. Objection is made that we have taken reason as our guide,—an evident mistake, thinks this Christian editor, as “during the French Revolution this injunction was followed, and we know with what appalling consequences!” Then we have a reference to the thousands slaughtered and other horrors, painted in Rembrandt colors. “They [the devotees of the goddess of Reason] demonstrated in a terribly forcible manner the truth of the Christian's contention that a populace unrestrained by religion will soon degenerate into an assembly of devils in human shape.” This ill-digested piece of history forms the strongest indictment against Christianity. For fourteen centuries France had been under Christian teaching, and for its faithfulness its ruler had been styled by the Vicar of Christ the “Eldest Son of the Church,” when all at once the fruits of these centuries in the Revolution were exhibited. The crimes of the French Revolution therefore may not illogically be directly charged to the official Christianity which had been directing the religious education of the people. The political, religious, and social rebellion, led for a time by the Girondists (who were the representative Freethinkers of the period) was one of the most memorable and justifiable attempts ever made to overthrow tyranny based on the false doctrine of absolute submissiveness taught by Jesus. There are some Christians who will not learn or profit by the plainest facts of history.

Mr. Gordon Forlong has given two lectures in Wanganui on “Bible Difficulties,”—the beginning of a series on the evidences of Christianity. He represents himself as a converted Deist, and takes care to inform his audience that, having been educated as a barrister, he can translate Greek words and give them a meaning highly calculated to remove difficulties. This, we understand, is in keeping with the business of barristers *in Court*, but out of Court it has been held that Greek ought to be construed, even by barristers, according to recognised philological rules. It is quite proper for Mr. Forlong to contend that the standards are not infallible and need revision, that certain Greek words bear different meanings to those generally given to them, and that a revised New Testament, according to Forlong, is the want of the age. But if this is his opinion, on what moral ground does he withhold from the world at large knowledge so precious? Mr. For-

long, however accommodating, cannot personally be accessible to all who are perishing for want of a little pure Greek. Why does not this Grecian, greater than Bentley, at once issue a proper translation, and let it go forth with the imprimatur of ‘Forlong and Infallibility’? We are told by those who heard the lecture and understand English, that when Mr. Forlong got away from Greek, his arguments in the vulgar tongue disappointed his Christian friends, and greatly amused Freethinkers. But then it is generally understood that people who cannot reason in English are often overpowering in the tongue of Socrates.

The Wellington clergy came forward at a meeting of the Bible Society to defend the character of David from the attacks of “Ivo,” who had made the life of the “sweet singer” the subject of one of his discourses. Archdeacon Stock ingeniously suggested that “it would have been easy to leave out David's faults, as human biographies usually did; yet it was this very difference, this impartial history of his faults and his excellencies, which showed the divine origin of that record.” It requires more than impartiality to show a divine record. Has the Archdeacon not read Froude's *Reminiscences of Carlyle*? David's biographers may have been unconscious of the fact that he was so great a sinner, and so narrated with approval those very acts of which an Archdeacon now seems ashamed. It is not a little curious that the authenticity of the Bible is of more importance to the cleric, than the Bible picture, presented by the Freethought orator, of a very immoral personage being a man “after God's own heart”!

The apologies made for Christianity are sometimes very amusing. Archdeacon Stock the other day defended the Bible by producing an array of men who were devout believers in the book. He “mentioned Clarke-Maxwell, Faraday, Herschell, and Sir Isaac Newton, all firm believers in their day; also Havelock among pious warriors, Macgregor, the traveller, better known as Rob Roy; and the eminently useful Earl Shaftesbury.” This galaxy, we think, might have been considerably improved upon without much effort. It would be strange if the great institution of Christianity had not believers among eminent men, who, while engaged in physical research, do not trouble themselves greatly about a faith which transcends their reason and is beyond experiment. If miracles could have been arranged and examined like Faraday's lines of magnetic force, he would probably have told the Christian apologists all about them. Since he could not experiment, he read the penitential psalms on a Sunday among his Sandemanians, and resumed his philosophy on Monday. One Mr. Gordon Forlong has added a very notable name to the list. He has announced that Napoleon Bonaparte was “converted” at St. Helena, and acknowledged “the truth.” After this, who will doubt the truth of Christianity? It must, however, have been an oversight on the part of the “divine founder” that he left the matter in such doubt that it had to be resolved by “The Little Corporal.”

The circulation of Bibles by a wealthy Society does not appear to keep pace with the vice and heathenism of a large part of London. The Saturday Review has the following account of the success of Christianity in modern times:—“What a frightful picture might be drawn, and without exaggeration, of the things that go on daily in our streets; the millions of men who never open their mouth without an oath, and never utter a