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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

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## Review.

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*La Science et la Religion.* By FERDINAND BRUNETIÈRE. Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie. 1895.

IN January, 1895, M. Brunetière, a member of the French Academy, and a well-known writer on philosophical and social questions from a religious standpoint, published a magazine article with the above title. It was inspired by a visit which he paid to the Pope, and contains reflections on the "social problem," as we term it—a vague expression, but one sufficiently well understood perhaps—that were more particularly suggested by the Pope's famous encyclical on the condition of workmen, a study of which appeared in these columns shortly after it was published. This magazine article provoked a great deal of discussion in France and Geneva. Radicals attacked it because of its reactionary bias, freethinkers because of the prominent part assigned to religion as a factor in present-day affairs, and Protestants because of many expressions derogatory to Protestantism. Accordingly M. Brunetière reprinted his article in a book form in April, 1895, with many additions by way of explanation and defence. This is the brochure before us.

It contains a good deal of interesting and stimulating matter. Several of the ideas and reflections are curiously similar to some in Mr. Kidd's great book on "Social Evolution." There is rather too much, however, of rash dogmatic statement on matters of opinion; and the author is not happy in the tone of his answers to several objections that were made to his original article. It is often querulous and feeble. If a writer will make arbitrary pronouncements on things that are very greatly open to argument, he cannot be surprised if those who hold diametrically opposite views take exception to his statements, and it does not become him to complain of them. Nevertheless, as we have said, the reader will find here and there several true ideas well expressed in forcible phrases. The weakest part of the book is, in our opinion, that which discusses the influence of recent Papal encyclicals on the modern questions to which they relate.

Briefly, there are three main theses: That science has failed in her promises of instruction and regeneration of humanity; that these blessings must be worked out by religion; that the best form of religion for this purpose is (Roman) Catholicism.

The first part is really valuable. Modern science, in all her manifold departments, has made imposing and brilliant promises. In these, says the author, she has failed. She is bankrupt. Scientific men undertook to renew the face of the world—they have left it as it was. When it is urged that these great claims have been made by literary men of science merely, so to speak, as a department of literature, and thus that they are without real weight—this is a delicate point, remarks M. Brunetière slyly; and indeed it is. To many of us the thought has often occurred—Are literary men of science proper persons to speak on behalf of science? If Matthew Arnold could write about "Literature and Dogma" with the endeavour to prove that often sacred writings must be regarded simply in their literary aspect, and their words not strained to bear meanings which they were never meant to bear, could not the same idea be expressed with regard to "Literature and Science"? For instance, are Renan, Huxley, Comte, and Taine men of letters or of science? The right answer to the question is that such men as these have made Science popular, and she ought not to repudiate them. But in any case, taking these promises as they are, it can be easily demonstrated that they have

failed in their fulfilment. We cannot here follow the author minutely in his arguments, but they are very interesting. Beginning with physical science, he points out that anatomy, physiology, and ethnology have done nothing to elucidate clearly either our origin or our destiny. Has philology, he goes on, kept her promises better? No; neither the Hellenists, who demonstrate that Christianity was inspired by Aurelius and Epictetus; nor the Hebraizers, who show us in the Bible a book like any other, the Mahabahrata of Semitism, the Iliad of Israel; nor the Orientalists, who compare Christ to Buddha—none of these have redeemed the bills to which they put their names. Rightly is all this termed a “debauch of criticism”; since, for example, if we desired to put the date of the composition of the Pentateuch in almost every conceivable period, the masters of modern philology would supply us with valid reasons for so doing! The historians have done no better—in fact, modern Science has lost her prestige, and Religion has won back what she had lost.

This is M. Brunetière’s first thesis, and it is the most valuable part of the book. The second, in which he claims that the remedy for social evils is in a return to Christian principles, is of no use to English readers, because the chief support of his contention is vested on the arguments of different Papal encyclicals.

The third division is interesting, as showing the ideas of a devout Roman Catholic man of science as to the relations of his religion to the world, and as displaying also his nearly complete ignorance of the true spirit of Protestantism. The author begins by confessing that he cannot prove either that morality is independent of religion, or religion of morality, but that both must work hand in hand; and by pointing out that all our modern morality is, even unconsciously, coloured by Christian dogma. He then goes on to say:

“So for all those who do not think that a democracy can afford to pay no attention to morality, and who also are aware that men are not governed by any other power so considerable as religion still is, the only question is to choose from the forms of Christianity that which is best adapted for the regeneration of morality, and that is—I say it without hesitation—Catholicism.”<sup>1</sup>

After this bold declaration the author immediately begins to “hedge,” but in such ungracious and really ignorant terms, that his expressions called forth a storm of Protestant protest in Paris and Geneva. The misconception of even educated foreigners as to the teaching and government of reformed churches, especially of the Anglican and the Presbyterian, is astonishing. We suppose that they do not take the trouble to find out. But, for example, we give a synopsis of M. Brunetière’s argument: Protestantism, he says, is an absence of government; Roman Catholicism is a government, and also a “doctrine,” and a “tradition”; and not only has it a theology, but a “sociology.” The essence of Protestantism is that it is individualistic, selfishly occupied with individual salvation. Catholicism is occupied in a common salvation for all by means of works of supererogation. “The barefooted Carmelite, who weeps over the sins of the worldly in his cell, blots them out.” Thus there is a great “circulation of charity,” in which the living pray for the dead, and the dead intercede for the living. By means of this the social regeneration will be wrought.

We have not, of course, given the arguments which M. Brunetière brings forward in support of his statements; but they are interesting, chiefly because obvious and conclusive retorts will leap to the mind of

<sup>1</sup> Page 69.

every English reader. But it is saddening to think that, in France, pious Papists are so misinformed as to our religion; and, further, we must regretfully add that pious Protestants have to defend the faith of the Gospel from rationalistic attacks within their own fold. M. Brunetière does not allude to this, but it is well known to every follower of the fortunes of the *Église Réformée*, and perhaps it induced some of his remarks. But we turn from this, and call attention to three contentions with which the author closes his book, and which he supports with arguments that are common to Christianity, and are really well and forcibly put. Can we expect from religion, he asks, what for three or four hundred years we have vainly expected from "science"? It is difficult to say, and we must only expect it in proportion to our faith; but in the meantime there are three things can be safely laid down. First, "moral" must be separated from "natural" science; it has nothing to do with it. Second, original sin is a fact; virtue is the victory of will over nature. Third, the social question is a moral question—*i.e.*, there will never be a scientific means of destroying the inequalities amongst men. Few will dissent from these doctrines, nor from the aspiration of the author that all "men of good will" may close up their ranks to fight for the welfare of humanity on a religious basis.

W. A. PURTON.

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## Short Notices.

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*The Law of the Church of Ireland.* By the Right Hon. R. R. WARREN.  
Pp. 141. Stevens and Haynes.

THIS little book is a valuable addition to the literature of ecclesiastical law. It also supplies much interesting information concerning an important event in Church history. When on January 1, 1871, the Church of Ireland ceased to be established, it was not only deprived of the greater part of its property, but it was also left without tribunals to declare and enforce its law, and without a representative or other assembly having authority to make such changes therein as were required by its altered circumstances.

Irish Churchmen were therefore called on to frame a constitution which, while interfering as little as possible with its continuity of the history of their Church, would be suited to an association resting solely, as far as legal right and obligation are concerned, upon the contract of its members. To this difficult task they applied themselves successfully; and the result is the present ecclesiastical law, consisting of the laws, constitutions, and ordinances in force at the time of disestablishment, as altered, modified, or supplemented by the new legislative authority that was then created. A treatise on this subject has been long required, and the want has been at length supplied by this book. Mr. Warren, in addition to being a distinguished lawyer, has always been one of the most active and prominent workers in the synods of the Church and in the Church representative body. He has thus been able to produce, under the modest description of an essay, a work that is at once scientific and practical. He deals with the principles underlying the law of the Church of Ireland and most of its important details. He has given special attention to such matters as Church tribunals, faculties, ecclesiastical edifices, burial-grounds, and marriage, the law of which has been necessarily modified by disestablishment, and in its present shape is not well understood even by the Irish clergy. Amongst the statutes and other docu-