

**FROM PHILISTIA:
ESSAYS ON CHURCH
AND WORLD**

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From Philistia: Essays on Church and World by J. Brierley

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CHURCH AND WORLD.

BY

J. BRIERLEY, B.A.

La Vérité étant au sommet, tout chemin qui monte, y conduit.

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PREFACE.

THE essayist, of whatsoever degree or pretension, may claim his privileges. One of these, if regard be had to the best known precedents, is a happy independence of either historical or logical sequence in the arrangement of his topics. Nobody criticises Montaigne, the father of the tribe, for making a disquisition on Odours to precede his treatise on Raimond of Sebonde, or asks why Lord Bacon should choose that the essay on "Unity in Religion" be followed by one on the subject of Revenge. The rule, in fact, in this Bohemian region of literature, seems to be that the dwellers therein are free, at a given moment, to think to any one of the thirty-two points of the compass, provided only that their thinking be to purpose.

The present writer has availed himself to the full of the liberty thus accorded to the forth-

putters of *obiter dicta* of all ranks. What follows in this volume is a collection of scattered studies, the result of varying moods, circumstances, and mental preoccupations, whose only link of connection may be said to be their individuality of standpoint and general drift of purpose.

From a literary point of view, they will possibly, with a not uninfluential class of critics, be regarded as suffering from two serious disqualifications. The first is the possession, on the part of the writer, of a positive religious faith, which he does not, indeed, dogmatically obtrude, but is nevertheless at no pains to conceal. In criticism, especially where it touches theology, nothing better fits the fashion of the hour than that attitude of religious detachment of which, in our day, Renan and Edmond Schérer have given such brilliant examples. The assumption of it enables the writer to treat the differing faiths somewhat as imperial Rome dealt with the religions brought under her sway, with the toleration, namely, and patronage which a superior and governing class feels it can afford to extend to inferior and subject races. It is a literary manner full of possibilities for effective

posing. Its capabilities must, however, be sought elsewhere than in these pages.

That is not the worst. What is here written will be found, not only definitely related to religious faith, but to a form of it which polite society has, with impressive unanimity, pronounced upon. These essays are dated from the heart of Philistia. In other words, their author belongs to that region of *esprits bornés*, and of intellectual density, connoted by the terms Protestant Nonconformist. To enter here will be doubtless, to many cultured persons, an adventure as serious and unwonted as to traverse the realm of

Antres vast and deserts idle,
Of anthropophagi and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.

If any such make the venture we can only wish them a safe and happy issue out of it. Should they emerge alive it may, perhaps, be with the tidings that the tales of intellectual savagery in vogue concerning its inhabitants owe, like some of Othello's stories, a good deal to the imagination of their authors.

It remains to be said that the acknowledgments of the author are due to Mr. John

Murray, to the Editor of the "Sun" Magazine, to the Rev. J. G. Rogers, and to Messrs. James Clarke and Co., for permission to make use, in this volume, of articles that have previously appeared in publications with which they are, or have been, connected.

London, May, 1893.

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