

## AN UNPUBLISHED INTERVIEW WITH THE LATE DR. GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER ON THE FUTURE OF RELIGION.

BY J. V. NASH.

NOTE: The late Rev. George Burman Foster, Ph.D., LL.D., was for many years Head of the Department of Comparative Religion at the University of Chicago and a widely known religious liberal. Dr. W. W. Fenn, Dean of the Harvard University Divinity School, declared him to have been, at the time of his death in December, 1918, the greatest theologian in America, if not indeed in the whole world.

**I**N MY article appearing in the Open Court for June, 1922, I gave some account of the life, personality, and philosophy of Professor Foster.

I had long known of his great reputation as a liberal thinker and the fierce opposition which many of his utterances had aroused in the ranks of Protestant Orthodoxy. As a religious inquirer of Roman Catholic antecedents, I was naturally interested in learning at first hand Professor Foster's views on the religious outlook in the light of the Great War, which, at the time of my first meeting Professor Foster, had been in progress over a year.

In the autumn of 1915 I requested the privilege of a personal interview, at which I might ask him certain questions. He invited me to call at his home. I did so on the evening of Monday, November 15, 1915. I had prepared in advance a list of questions, which I read seriatim to Professor Foster, taking down his replies in shorthand. The report of the interview, hitherto unpublished, follows:

Mr. Nash: Professor Foster, what is your idea of the mission of Christianity in the world to-day?



defined, any more than I would supernaturalism, and I discuss that matter in the first few pages of the sixth chapter of *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, where I show that a religion without supernaturalism and a science without mere naturalism will be our modern redemption. The spiritual is not exhausted in our naturalistic categories, and it does not require the affirmation of the old supernatural categories. The spiritual is as orderly as the natural.