

The Coming Day.

APRIL, 1891.

SERMONS IN THE GREEN PASTURES.

‘QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.’—*1 Thessalonians 5, 19.*

UNITARIANS have been forced into making a very natural and very necessary protest against the confusing metaphysical subtleties which attempted to dissect the Deity, and against the bewildering recognition of the Holy Spirit as a “separate Person.” But, in doing so, they have been apt to miss the profound truth which lies at the heart of true faith in the Holy Spirit.

In the face of that great saying, “God is a spirit,” and under the pressure of the fact that God must be a spirit, and that we have really no faculties for comprehending what spirit is or what spirit-personality is, we might reasonably be suspenders of our judgment, while holding fast to the undoubted truth that if there is anything beyond the world of the senses the word “spirit” may very reasonably be applied to it. In that case, the phrase “The Holy Spirit” may very seriously be taken as descriptive of the purest and highest source of all goodness and blessedness in the unseen world; and what is that but the great mysterious Being we call “God” or “Our Heavenly Father”?

But what we have to specially note is that this divine spirit belongs not to the unseen alone. It is a spirit or an influence which is ever-present in our sphere, by whose mysterious power the human race is being spiritually created, and led on, out of the animal darkness into God’s marvellous light. Here we come upon the most vital element in Christianity, the very life and soul of the teachings of Jesus and of Paul. The inter-communion between heaven and earth;—the presence of the ever-quickening heavenly spiritual force in human affairs; the inspiration of man by God, of the earthly by the heavenly, these are the fundamental facts of the Christian Religion, as set forth especially by Paul. Take only one of his inspiring explanations of this great central thought;—“We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Father, Father! The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. The spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the

mind of the spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." "The spirit," then, is that higher heavenly influence which is ever-present in the world,—a power, a presence, a subtile inspiration, an explanation, carrying us farther than the mere senses can go, giving even to every material thing a subtile significance, a mysterious meaning, a heavenly beauty, not visible on the surface, and giving to human life a fulness, a depth, an intention, and a future, not at all discernible by the instruments of science, or the aids of the senses. This we can either neglect or cultivate. In proportion as we neglect it, we are in danger of becoming merely animal, of letting the very noblest things and the very noblest part of our own nature drift. But in proportion as we cultivate it, we can look above and beyond the demands of the senses, the accidents that attend all material things, and the teachings that come to us merely through these poor senses: and the spirit bears witness with our spirits, as Paul says, that we are the children of God—i.e.—that we are not only earthly animals, but that we belong to the upper regions of life; and have abiding interests beyond the satisfactions of the flesh. This is the fundamental fact of the Christian Religion: and it was this that led Paul to say; "Quench not the spirit." As though he said;—Believe in that upper life, and attend to it. Give it room; look and listen; and let the higher things take their rightful place in your outlooks, your hopes, your affections, and your life.

Many curious instances could be given of the influence of absorption in material things. But we have, in the case of Charles Darwin, an exceptionally instructive instance of the influence of neglect of the spiritual upon an essentially great and good man: and, if I refer specially to his case, I do so to my own disadvantage—or to the disadvantage of my argument,—because we should all admit that Darwin lived, in one sense, on very high ground and was of immense service to the world. But he lived entirely for his plants and his pigeons, his insects and his worms;—and he did quench the spirit. He could see nothing beyond his plants and his pigeons, his insects and his worms;—no God, no immortal life beyond. One of his biographers says;—"In youth, Darwin was a lover of poetry, had great delight in music, and was a religious believer, to the extent that he purposed entering the clerical profession. After giving himself up to his life-work his emotional nature gradually ceased its activity, and it came at last to have little influence on his life or his thinking. In his 'Autobiography' Darwin describes this decay of his emotions, and says that he has lost his love for poetry and music. He found Shakespeare 'so intolerably dull that it nauseated' him. His former exquisite delight in natural scenery nearly all passed away. Although Darwin had thus permitted his emotional nature to decay, he was conscious that he had done himself a great wrong. What he says about it is very instructive: 'My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive. A man with a mind more highly organized or better constituted than mine, would not, I suppose, have thus suffered, and if I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week, for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness and may possibly be injurious to the

intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of my nature.' Had Darwin been as well informed in psychology as he was in those sciences to which he devoted his life, he would easily have seen why it was that his higher faculties became atrophied. It was a penalty due to the neglect of his æsthetic and religious nature, that they should have become dormant. Darwin clearly taught that in the process of evolution those creatures grow which are active, while those which neglect their gifts fall back into a lower order of existence. This law of constant activity would have explained the process of atrophy in his own mind. He used the analytical faculties, and they developed to a wonderful degree. He neglected the æsthetic, moral and religious, and they became atrophied." It was perhaps inevitable. A man, perhaps, cannot be great at the two extremes. Darwin was an extreme case of the great naturalist, just as Jesus was an extreme case of the great spiritual genius. (Probably the one naturally excludes the other).

But, not to take such an extreme example as Jesus, set over against the life and experience of Darwin the life and experience of Channing. (Two equal cases in two different spheres). Channing said:—"I call that mind free which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds, in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement."

Channing did in the sphere of the invisible,—the sphere of the spirit—(i.e., in the sphere of the moral imagination, in the sphere of aspiration, and hope, and love) as great a work as Darwin did in the sphere of the visible. We need not disparage Darwin, in saying that he lived for the lowlands, and in expressing the belief that the Christs, the Pauls, and the Channings of the world are diviner geniuses, and for diviner uses.

My own very decided opinion is that rationalists have lacked something in the past in relation to this. We necessarily cut ourselves adrift from the supernatural, the miraculous, the belief in a God descended to the earth, and the belief in a divinely inspired revelation. The effect of that is to build a barrier between us and the things of the spirit: and it is this barrier we need to pass: for we must get back to the spirit—the inspiration of the spirit, the joy of the spirit, the hopes of the spirit—or we may die. I am not at all sure whether even the poorest and least exalted form of Spiritualism would not be a blessed thing for us. In fact, many rationalists have so far quenched the spirit that only the rudimentary forms of Spiritualism could arrest them, and bring them back. Some of our best men in America see this, and many of them admit that Spiritualism is a mighty agent for bringing back the wandering rationalist to the fold. A very thoughtful man lately put this on record;—"Conversing once with a Unitarian clergyman of large mind and heart, and manly courage, who had paid some attention to this matter, I said to him: 'Unitarians and other liberal religionists are in a peculiar situation:—no infallible book, no miraculous Christ, the old evidence of immortality and of the being of God gone out, no high trust in the soul and its powers of discovery yet strongly developed, with the external tendency of inductive science, dealing only with crude matter and blind force, and ignoring spiritual causation, drifting your thought toward materialism. Suppose

Spiritualism to be true; its proven facts, evidencing through the senses the great truths of the soul; knowledge added to intuitive faith; blessed manna for the heart-hunger of the bereaved,—would it not meet your great need? With your scholarly culture and large thought lighted up and made warm and vital in this new atmosphere, would you not gain a deep assurance, a conquering and affirming power to supplant the old theology and put something stronger and more rational and uplifting in its place? After a moment's thought his deeply earnest answer was: 'We should gain new and deeper life, and be able to move the world with a mighty power.'" I believe that; but, in any case, I am persuaded that we must do all we can to stop this quenching of the spirit. We must not let the fanatics drive us away from the reasonable. If they exaggerate everything, we must not discard everything. God is as great a reality for us as for them: nay, a greater reality for us when we get rid of the limited and partial God of the Old Testament and the man-God that some people find in the New. And the glorious spirit-self, beneath these poor wrappings and muddy vestures of the flesh, is as real to us as to them. And the wondrous unseen forces and peoples, and the immense possibilities of them, and the unutterable hopes of the soul concerning them, and the ever-present communion and inspiration, lifting the human up to the divine—all—all are for us, and are possible for us even in transcendent degrees. So then quench not the spirit, but, rather, give it special audience, and a special welcome: and, whatever the science of outward things may say, or the flesh may urge, and whatever the limitations of the senses may be—hold this fast, that, beyond all, the spirit lives and moves and has its being, and that in it we live, and move, and have our deepest being too.

SUNDAY EVENINGS WITH JOHN RUSKIN'S "CROWN OF WILD OLIVE."

In his lecture on Work, Mr. Ruskin is not at his best: but on that subject he is of great practical use. No one would ever think of taking him for a stump-orator, with a blustering bias in favour of "the horny-handed sons of toil." He is an artist, and essentially an aristocrat—a poet and a dear lover of dainty things. But he is also a hard-worker himself, and has, for his guide, that passionate love of beauty and delight which rouses him to make war against all kinds of degradations and brutalities. His fling against such phrases as "working men," and "upper classes," is more than useful. It is increasingly needed. We are really suffering for want of better designations of the persons to be indicated. Is Mr. Gladstone "a working man"? Why not? He never has an idle hour. Is the acting head of a large firm "a working man"? Why not? He is "busier than his errand boy, and never would think of stopping in the street to play marbles." And, as for "the upper classes," it may suffice to remember that there are plenty of real gentlemen who work hard for 25s. a week, and plenty of blackguards who are idle on £25,000 a year. No: we sadly want a new vocabulary. Ruskin divides the industrious into four classes, with four distinctions, thus; "I. Between those who work, and those who play. II. Between those who produce the means of life, and those who consume them. III. Between

those who work with the head, and those who work with the hand. IV. Between those who work wisely, and who work foolishly." Amongst the industrious players he classes those who spend their lives in making money. That, with multitudes, is a game; and nothing more. He rightly says; "The first of all English games is making money. That is an all-absorbing game; and we knock each other down oftener in playing at that than at football, or any other roughest sport: and it is absolutely without purpose; no one who engages heartily in that game ever knows why. Ask a great money-maker what he wants to do with his money,—he never knows. He doesn't make it to do anything with it. He gets it only that he *may* get it. 'What will you make of what you have got?' you ask. 'Well, I'll get more,' he says. Just as, at cricket, you get more runs. There's no use in the runs, but to get more of them than other people is the game. And there's no use in the money, but to have more of it than other people is the game. So all that great foul city of London there,—rattling, growling, smoking, stinking,—a ghastly heap of fermenting brick-work, pouring out poison at every pore,—you fancy it is a city of work? Not a street of it! It is a great city of play; very nasty play, and very hard play, but still play. It is only Lord's cricket-ground without the turf:—a huge billiard-table without the cloth, and with pockets as deep as the bottomless pit; but mainly a billiard-table, after all."

The next great English game is hunting and shooting, and their near neighbour, gambling—vicious inventions for industrious idleness,—energy and hopefulness miserably misspent.

Another game—a ladies' game—is dressing—which, by some, is made a life-work of, and a costly and profitless one, too. Ruskin advises the ladies who play at this game to play it to some purpose. By all means dress well, he says,—both yourselves and everybody else. "Lead the fashions for the poor first; make them look well, and you yourselves will look, in ways of which you have now no conception, all the better."

But the greatest game of all is War. It is a ghastly suggestion, but it is based on fact. Men play at soldiers to a greater extent than appears. Even the serious soldiers are more occupied with the brilliant game than anything else. "It is entrancingly pleasant to the imagination; we dress for it, however, more finely than for any other sport; and go out to it, not merely in scarlet, as to hunt, but in scarlet and gold and all manner of fine colours: of course we could fight better in grey, and without feathers; but all nations have agreed that it is good to be well dressed at this play. Then the bats and balls are very costly; our English and French bats, with the balls and wickets, even those which we don't make any use of, costing, I suppose, now about fifteen millions of money annually to each nation; all which you know is paid for by hard labourer's work in the furrow and furnace. A costly game!—not to speak of its consequences."

But pass on now to the real work of the world: and it is real work we need in England, and work done for love, both of it and of the Brotherhood. There are far too many idlers. Ruskin is right in his suggestion that many read the command; "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard," as though it was; "Baby, go play to-day in

my vineyard." "The jewel-cutter, whose sight fails over the diamonds; the weaver, whose arm fails over the web; the iron-forged, whose breath fails before the furnace—they know what work is—they who have all the work, and none of the play, except a kind they have named for themselves down in the black north country, where 'play' means being laid up by sickness. It is a pretty example for philologists of varying dialect, this change in the sense of the word as used in the black country of Birmingham and the red and black country of Baden Baden. Yes, gentlemen, and gentlewomen, of England, who think 'one moment unamused a misery not made for feeble man,' this is what you have brought the word 'play' to mean, in the heart of merry England! You may have your fluting and piping; but there are sad children sitting in the market-place, who indeed cannot say to you, 'We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced:' but eternally shall say to you, 'We have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.'"

The second of these four classes brings us to the greatest problem of the age. Looking the reality of work in the face, we at once find ourselves facing the spectre of the 19th century—the excessive dependence of work upon wealth, concerning which Ruskin lays down the perfectly divine doctrine that, in all noble work, money is not the first object. There will indeed always be "a number of men who would fain set themselves to the accumulation of wealth as the sole object of their lives. Necessarily, that class of men is an uneducated class, inferior in intellect, and more or less, cowardly. It is physically impossible for a well-educated, intellectual, or brave man to make money the chief object of his thoughts; just as it is for him to make his dinner the principal object of them. All healthy people like their dinners, but their dinner is not the main object of their lives. So all healthily-minded people like making money—ought to like it, and to enjoy the sensation of winning it: but the main object of their life is not money; it is something better than money."

The reason why capital has proved and is proving itself a tyrant as well as a helper is this—that money, sought for its own sake, and relentlessly and successfully pursued, is sure to grow too strong for the mere worker, gradually enabling the capitalist to take all the produce of labour to himself except what is necessary to keep the labourer in fair condition for work. Here is the problem. We must stand by the fundamental doctrine that "he should keep who has justly earned," and yet we must somehow make capital answer before the judgment-seat of the world. Ruskin joins the most advanced socialist in describing Capital as the exploiter and brigand of the 19th century. He says; "Money is now exactly what mountain promontories over public roads were in old times. The barons fought for them fairly:—the strongest and cunningest got them; then fortified them, and made every one who passed below pay toll. Well, capital now is exactly what crags were then. Men fight fairly (we will, at least, grant so much, though it is more than we ought) for their money; but, once having got it, the fortified millionaire can make everybody who passes below pay toll to his million, and build another tower of his money castle. And I can tell you, the poor vagrants by the roadside suffer now quite as much from the bag-baron, as ever they did from the crag-baron. Bags and crags have just the same result on rags." There is our gravest problem. Ruskin finds the solution in his definition of noble work, and in a noble conception of duty—

such a conception both of work and of duty as will lead the capitalist to pull himself up, and to see that the power of money in his hands is not allowed to work its will unchecked by thought for others. The real remedy is in his own hands. The old much-burlesqued phrase, "Am I not a man and a brother?" must at last come to have a meaning.

In the third class we find the old distinction between those who work with the head and those who work with the hands, concerning which Ruskin has something rather startling to say. Much of the work of the world must be rough and painful. He says "There is rough work to be done, and rough men must do it; there is gentle work to be done, and gentlemen must do it; and it is physically impossible that one class should do, or divide, the work of the other. And it is of no use to try to conceal this sorrowful fact by fine words, and to talk to the workman about the honourableness of manual labour and the dignity of humanity. Rough work, honourable or not, takes the life out of us; and the man who has been heaving clay out of a ditch all day, or driving an express train against the north wind all night, or holding a collier's helm in a gale on a lee shore, or whirling white-hot iron at a furnace mouth, is not the same man at the end of his day, or night, as one who has been sitting in a quiet room, with everything comfortable about him. . . . The perpetual question and contest must arise, who is to do this rough work? and how is the worker of it to be comforted, redeemed, and rewarded?" One of the practical questions of life, then, should be;—How may the doers of the rough and painful work of the world be rightly "comforted, redeemed, and rewarded?" In other words, how can we be thoroughly just? for we are not just until we comfort and redeem as well as reward or pay labour. But the real truth is that justice is not our main concern—would to God it were! "People are perpetually squabbling about what will be best to do, or easiest to do, or advisable to do, or profitable to do; but they never, so far as I hear them talk, ever ask what it is *just* to do. And it is the law of heaven that you shall not be able to judge what is wise or easy, unless you are first resolved to judge what is just, and to do it. That is the one thing constantly reiterated by our Master—the order of all others that is given oftenest—'Do justice and judgment.' That's your Bible order; that's the 'Service of God,'—not praying nor psalm-singing." But—how to be just? That is the puzzle: and yet, to him who is willing, light shall arise in the darkness. One question is; Who is to do the hard and painful work of the world? That question will settle itself. All we need to do is to steer clear of the old pernicious doctrine that it is every man's duty to rest content "in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call him." Ruskin is justifiably severe upon that cant. He says; "*Did Providence put them in that position, or did you? You knock a man into a ditch, and then you tell him to remain content in the 'position in which Providence has placed him.'* That's modern Christianity. You say—'We did not knock him into the ditch.' We shall never know what you have done, or left undone, until the question with us, every morning, is, not how to do the gainful thing, but how to do the just thing, during the day; nor until we are at least so far on the way to being Christian, as to acknowledge that maxim of the poor half-way Mahometan, 'One hour in the execution of justice is worth seventy years of prayer.'"

Then, as to the reward of work, that is as vexed a question as the other. "Reward," in this world, proceeds on strange lines. The highest work of the world

is hardly ever paid for. "How much do you think Homer got for his *Iliad*? or Dante for his *Paradise*? only bitter bread and salt, and going up and down other people's stairs. In science, the man who discovered the telescope, and first saw heaven, was paid with a dungeon; the man who invented the microscope, and first saw earth, died of starvation, driven from his home." The Christs of all the ages have only asked for a little bread, but they, as often as not, got only stones,—stones that beat them when alive, and that were piled up in their memory when they had long enough been dead. But, about these doers of the hard and painful work of the world to-day. The urgent problem is—how to deal justly by them. We all know the present standard of justice;—get work done at the lowest possible price, and work the labourer as long as he will stand it;—make the standard simply what you can get out of him, and what you can get him for. But that is where the tyranny of capital and the slavery of work come in. What we have to do now is to check that, and to find out how to protect the producer, so that what he produces shall not be snatched from him, leaving him only a bare subsistence—just enough to keep the human machine going. How to give the workers time for play, for change, for education, for some knowledge of the world in which they are;—how to enable them to provide well against sickness and old age,—these are the urgent problems of our day: and we need as much a Christ as a political economist, to solve them.

The last class brings us to the distinction between wise and foolish work. Here we have three tests. Wise work is "honest, useful, and cheerful."

Dishonest work is fatal. The first thing is to get all work sound and honest. "You drive a gambler out of the gambling-room who loads dice, but you leave a tradesman in flourishing business, who loads scales! For observe, all dishonest dealing is loading scales. What difference does it make whether I get short weight, adulterate substance, or dishonest fabric—unless that flaw in the substance or fabric is the worse evil of the two? Give me short measure of food, and I only lose by you; but give me adulterate food, and I die by you."

Concerning "useful" work, Ruskin does not here say his best word. But it is a subject of unspeakable gravity, as he has often fully shewn. No one can escape the degradation of doing useless things. Not because work is foul will it ever hurt any man or woman, but because it is foolish. The daintiest lady in England might feel ennobled by being the means of unstopping a sewer, while her sister would be in some subtle way lowered and weakened, without knowing it, by spending the same number of hours in preparing pretty rags for her body and pretty colours for her face, in anticipation of the coming ball.

Finally, all wise work is cheerful, and always will be, just in proportion as the worker finds rational delight in it, and especially in proportion as he discerns the truth that when a child of earth does the work of the earth in a right spirit he enters into the kingdom of heaven which is here amongst us,—a kingdom which knows nothing of locality and calling,—a kingdom which is indifferent to the distinction between shop and church, and which is entered by every one who is willing to serve, with wise work, for right and beautiful ends.

THE ASCENT OF MAN.*

"THE ascent of man" is an interesting and highly original attempt to present in poetic form the finest results of modern thought and discovery concerning the development of man:—a difficult undertaking, requiring not only scientific knowledge but the poet's sympathy and fervour. The writer is fairly equipped with the first, and is all on fire with the second. She sees what the mighty evolutionary process means; and contemplates it, not as a scientific process, but as a spiritual unfolding. She sees the early forms of life—ugly embodiments of "hunger, hatred, lust," fighting in a veritable "hell" of mere appetite.

"And in the long portentous strife,
Where types are tried even as by fire,
Where life is whetted upon life
And step by panting step mounts higher,
Apes lifting hairy arms now stand
And free the wonder-working hand."

Then man appears, in his first wild form.

"And lo, 'mid reeking swarms of earth,
Grim struggling in the primal wood,
A new strange creature hath its birth:
Wild—stammering—nameless—shameless—nude;
Spurred on by want, held in by fear,
He hides his head in caverns drear.
Most unprotected of earth's kin,
His fight for life that seems so vain
Sharpens his senses, till, within
The twilight mazes of his brain,
Like embryos within the womb,
Thought pushes feelers through the gloom.
From age to dumb unnumbered age,
By dim gradations long and slow,
He reaches on from stage to stage,
Through fear and famine, weal and woe,
And, compassed round with danger, still
Prolongs his life by craft and skill.
With cunning hand he shapes the flint,
He carves the horn with strange device,
He splits the rebel block by dint
Of effort—till one day there flies
A spark of fire from out the stone:
Fire which shall make the world his own."

All things and all experiences teach him and develop him,—even sorrow, loss, disappointment, and death.

"Cowering blankly by the flickering flame,
Man feels a presence without form or name,
When, by the bodies of his speechless dead,
In barbarous woe he bows his stricken head.

* The ascent of man. By Mathilde Blind. London: Chatto and Windus.

Then in the hunger of his piteous love
 He sends his thought, winged like a carrier dove—
 Through the unanswering silence void and vast,
 Whence from dim hollows blows an icy blast—
 To bring some sign, some little sign at last,
 From his lost chiefs—the beautiful, the brave—
 Vanished like bubbles on a breaking wave,
 Lost in the unfathomed darkness of the grave."

So is he led on, to wonder, awe, yearning, hope. His lost chief, his heroes, become gods, who guard or punish him. And

"Ever as man grows they grow with him ;
 Terrific, cruel, gentle, bright, or dim,
 With eyes of dove-like mercy, hands of wrath,
 Procession-like, they hover o'er his path
 And, changing with the gazer, borrow light
 From their rapt devotee's adoring sight.
 And Ormuzd, Ashtaroth, Osiris, Baal—
 Love spending gods and gods of blood and wail—
 Look down upon their suppliant from the skies
 With his own magnified, responsive eyes."

The story of the march on is told, until, in a poem called, "The leading of sorrow," "a Voice" comes "from the peaks of time"—the Voice of the great Producer, at last facing his child ;—

"Wilt thou judge me, wilt thou curse me, Creature
 Whom I raised up from the Ocean slime !

' Long I waited—ages rolled o'er ages—
 As I crystallized in granite rocks,
 Struggling dumb through immemorial stages,
 Glacial æons, fiery earthquake shocks.
 In fierce throbs of flame or slow upheaval,
 Speck by tiny speck, I topped the seas,
 Leaped from earth's dark womb, and in primeval
 Forests shot up shafts of mammoth trees.

' Through a myriad forms I yearned and panted,
 Putting forth quick shoots in endless swarms—
 Giant-hoofed, sharp-tusked, or finned or planted
 Writhing on the reef with pinioned arms.
 I have climbed from reek of sanguine revels
 In Cimmerian wood and thorny wild,
 Slowly upwards to the dawnlit levels
 Where I bore thee, oh my youngest Child !

' Oh, my heir and hope of my to-morrow,
 I—I draw thee on through fume and fret,
 Croon to thee in pain and call through sorrow,
 Flowers and stars take for thy alphabet.
 Through the eyes of animals appealing,
 Feel my fettered spirit yearn to thine,
 Who, in storm of will and clash of feeling,
 Shape the life that shall be—the divine.

' Oh, redeem me from my tiger rages,
 Reptile greed, and foul hyæna lust ;
 With the hero's deeds, the thoughts of sages,
 Sow and fructify this passive dust ;

Drop in dew and healing love of woman
 On the bloodstained hands of hungry strife,
 Till there break from passion of the Human
 Morning-glory of transfigured life.

'I have cast my burden on thy shoulder;
 Unimagined potencies have given
 That from formless Chaos thou shalt mould her
 And translate gross earth to luminous heaven.
 Bear, oh, bear the terrible compulsion,
 Flinch not from the path thy fathers trod,
 From Man's martyrdom in slow convulsion
 Will be born the infinite goodness—God.'

This is a superb poetic rendering of Paul's great saying, that the whole creation has been groaning and travailing together, with birth-pangs, until now:—the man born from the brute, and the god sighing and struggling to become revealed in and through the man.

The book is unequal—like a mountain torrent, and it violates all kinds of smooth rules: but one notable merit it certainly possesses—that it belongs to the present day, and shews in a brilliant way that poets need not go back into the past for grand subjects and splendid thoughts.

WHAT IS IT TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

A LETTER TO A CHILD.

DEAR CHILD,—This country, as you know, is called "A Christian country": that is to say, Christianity is here received and believed-in by the large majority of the people. But, when we look into it, we find that people do not mean the same thing by "Christianity." There are Catholics and Protestants, Church people and Dissenters, Trinitarians and Unitarians. Some make much of doctrines: some insist upon rites and ceremonies: some think everything depends upon the right Church and priest.

There are multitudes who find it very difficult to decide where so many good people differ: and yet it is necessary that every one should come to some conclusion on such an important matter.

It would make me very happy if I could help you to find an answer to this question; "What is it to be a Christian?" Some of the best and wisest people who have ever lived have given answers to this question: but the question is still being asked, and answers are still being given. It may, perhaps be found out, some day, that there is only one answer. If so, we may depend upon it that that one answer will be an extremely simple one. The answer will become perfect and final, not as we add to, but as we take from most of the answers that have been given.

Jesus himself was extremely simple. The Lord's Prayer, the Parables, the Sermon on the Mount, are models of simplicity. It is a pity that his followers ever went beyond them. They really contain all he had to say; and from them any

one can easily find out what he taught concerning God, and man, and the way to the higher life. In these precious records we learn the greatest of all truths—that God is our Heavenly Father, that He pities and loves and helps us, that He is seeking His lost sheep, and will find them, not to punish them but to take them home rejoicingly. In them we learn the one sure path of safety and blessedness—the way of brave and happy surrender to the life of love, the law of righteousness, and the will of God.

If, then, we are to stand by what Jesus said, we can only come to the conclusion that a Christian is one who tries to be like Jesus Christ, though it may only be in a very imperfect way. Jesus called to him the labourers and the heaven-laden: he took little children in his arms, and said that “of such is the Kingdom of Heaven”: he blest the pure in heart, and promised that they should “see God”: he blest the peacemakers, and said they were the children of God: he taught that love was the one thing needful, and that doing the will of God was the surest way to the heavenly kingdom. What more do we need?

All the rest has been added by over-busy invention and over-eager zeal. Jesus himself is not responsible for doctrines that first perplex and then condemn: *he* never enjoined rites and ceremonies that shut out more than they include: no; but he called all the tried, the bewildered, and the sorrowful, and only said: “Come unto me, and I will give you rest.”

A Christian, then, is not a believer in right doctrines; he is one who is controlled by a right spirit. He may belong to any church or to no church at all; but, if he is impelled by the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ, he is one of his disciples. He may even hesitate to call himself a Christian; but that will not matter; for, as Mr. Gladstone once so wisely and beautifully said, “they who bear the blessed likeness of Christ are most truly and surely his.”

Your friend,

AN OLD TEACHER.

A NEW BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

O HOLY Father! Friend unseen!
 Since on Thine arm Thou bidd'st us lean,
 Help us throughout life's changeful scene,
 By faith to cling to Thee.

Though far from home, wayworn, opprest,
 Here we have found a place of rest;
 As exiles still, yet not unblest,
 While we can cling to Thee.

Oft when we seem to tread alone
 Some barren waste, with thorns o'ergrown,
 Thy voice of love, in gentlest tone,
 Whispers, “Still cling to me.”

Though faith and hope may long be tried,
 We ask not, need not, aught beside:
 So safe, so calm, so satisfied,
 The souls that cling to Thee.

They fear not life's rough storms to brave,
 Since Thou art near, and strong to save,
 Nor shudder e'en at death's dark wave,
 Because they cling to Thee.—*Amen.*

By the Minister (all standing.)

THIS is the hour of prayer; let it be also
 a time for praise: then will the blessing

of the Most High descend upon us with refreshing and purifying power. Let us think of the great and blessed God, as our heavenly Father, and in spirit and in truth let us worship Him. Putting away all irreverence, and every unworthy fear, let us draw nigh to Him with a true heart, and in a spirit of devout obedience. May the tumult and the stress of life be as something afar off: and may we bring an offering of trust and love: so shall we obtain mercy, and find grace to help, in time of need.

(*All kneeling or seated.*)

Minister—Infinite Spirit: we thank Thee for every revelation of Thyself. The heavens and the earth are Thine, with all the beauty and wonder of them. Thou, O God, art creator and upholder of all things.

People—O Lord, our God, Thou art very great, and Thy goodness endureth for ever.

Minister—We adore Thee, King eternal, immortal, invisible; King of kings, and Lord of lords. All the earth shall worship Thee, the Father everlasting.

People—Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.

Minister—For all Thy good gifts to us; for food and clothing; for summer and winter, day and night; for the heavens above us; for the earth, our dwelling-place, full of all useful and beautiful things; for this life, and its lessons, its discipline, and its mercies; and for the blessed hope of a life to come;

People—We bless and praise Thee, Heavenly Father.

Minister—For Jesus Christ, and for all great and good teachers of ancient and modern times; for every lesson of wis-

dom and goodness which through them Thou hast taught us; for the light of knowledge growing ever brighter; for the glorious gospel of human brotherhood and divine fatherhood; and for the hope of brighter days to come;

People—We bless and praise Thee, Heavenly Father.

Minister—Evermore give unto us the joy of Thy salvation, and the peace that passeth understanding. In the time of adversity, sorrow, and pain, in the evening of life, and in the hour of death, be Thou our sustainer, our comforter, our joy, and never-failing hope.

People—We rest on Thee, our Heavenly Father.

Minister—Unto Thee, the one and only God, be glory, honour, and praise;

People—Now and evermore, world without end. *Amen.*

By the Minister.

O MERCIFUL God, our strength and helper at all times, grant that in the time of prosperity we may not forget Thee, but with our whole hearts cleave unto Thee; and that in the time of adversity we may not fall into impatience or despair, but always with a constant faith look unto Thee, our heavenly Father, trusting in Thy never-failing goodness and mercy. *Amen.*

O LORD, set us where Thou wilt, and deal with us in all things as Thou wilt. We are Thy servants, and desire not to live unto ourselves, but unto Thee: help us to do so more perfectly and worthily. Above all things to be desired, grant that we may have our hearts at rest in Thee. Let Thy loving-kindness be our portion, Thy spirit our guide, and Thy law the rule of our conduct in all things. *Amen.*

By Minister and People.

OUR Father who art in heaven ; hallowed be Thy name ; Thy kingdom come ; Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven ; give us this day our daily bread ; and forgive us our trespasses ; as we forgive them that trespass against us ; and lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil ; for Thine is the kingdom ; the power and the glory ; for ever and ever. *Amen.*

By the Minister.

THE loving kindness and tender mercy of God, our Father, will be ever with us all. *Amen.*

CHANT.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy | lov- · -ing | -kindness : || according unto the multitude of Thy tender MERCIES | blot - out | my · trans- | -gressions.

Wash me through-LY from | mine · in- | -iquity, || AND | cleanse · me | from · my | sin :

For I acknowledge | my · trans- | -gressions : || AND my | sin · is | ever · be- | -fore me.

Behold, Thou desirest TRUTH in the | in · ward | parts : || and in the hidden part THOU shalt | make · me to | know · — | wisdom.

Create in me a CLEAN | heart, · O | God ; || AND re- | -new a - right | spirit · with- | -in me.

Cast me NOT a- | -way from · Thy | presence ; || and take NOT Thy | ho- · -ly | spi- · -rit | from me.

Restore unto me the JOY of | Thy · sal- | -vation ; || and up-HOLD | me · with | Thy · free | spirit ;

Then will I TEACH trans- | -gressors · Thy | ways ; || and sinners shall BE con- | -ver- · -ted | un- · -to | Thee.

For Thou desirest not SACRIFICE ; else | would · I | give it : || THOU de- | -lightest · not | in · burnt | offering.

The sacrifices of God ARE a | bro- · -ken | spirit : || a broken and a contrite HEART, O | God · Thou | wilt not · des- | -pise.

Now unto him that is a-BLE to | keep us · from | falling, || and to present us faultless before the presence of His GLO-ry | with · ex- | -ceed- · -ing | joy,

To Him be glory and majes-ty, do- | -minion and | power, || BOTH | now and | ever · A- | -men.

LIGHT ON THE PATH.

LANDLORDS AND LEECHES.—How is the London County Council progressing with its exasperating proposal to buy out the Bethnal Green landlords? There are sixty-nine of them, and, between them, they will get something like a quarter of a million for their slums if the proposal is carried out. The monstrous price agreed upon is twenty-four years' pur-

chase. In all probability, justice would be done to these mud-loving and blood-sucking leeches if they were sent about their business with half the sum named. The London County Council may feel as deeply as any one that it is being bled, and may very reluctantly be choosing the least of two evils ; but has it sufficiently considered this,—that it is putting a

premium on neglect, filth, and greed? It is buying out the sixty-nine mud leeches because they and their mud are a nuisance. The inference is obvious:—make yourself a nuisance, and you will be bought out at twenty-four years' purchase. What a lesson for London landlords! Has it also sufficiently considered this;—that if it stood firm, and rallied to its side the people who, as tenants, have suffered, and the ratepayers who will suffer, they could raise the wind in a very different sense,—and blow these traders on foulness into a region some-

where "between the devil and the deep sea"?

MODERN SPIRITUALISM.—A very notable committee is being called together in Boston (U.S.), "for the scientific investigation of modern Spiritualism." The Committee is being called by such men as Revs. R. Heber Newton, Minot J. Savage, and Edward Everett Hale. The equivalents here for the "signers of the call" would be Stopford Brooke, Mark Wilks, Canon Farrar, Octavia Hill, Dr. Sadler, The Editor of *The Spectator* and Dr. Allon.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

"A new England girlhood: outlined from memory." By Lucy Larcom. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. A capital book for girls of the intellectual order; and a good and interesting one for anybody. Lucy Larcom was one of the notable Lowell girls, and an early inspirer of the serious literary movement which made the mill girls of Lowell and their magazines famous. She ran her frames and her poetry together, and drank in Hemans, Landon, Herbert, Cowper, Byron, Jean Paul, Herder, Talfourd, Dickens, and every book she could lay her hands on: and was a mill hand all the time. Afterwards she became a school teacher in an out-of-the-way part of the West. Then she blossomed out into literature, in the pleasant paths of acceptable poetry, and made a name. Her story is told with delightful simplicity, and gives many quaint and pretty glimpses of American life and character half a century ago.

"Evolution: the work of a great intelligence." By W. A. London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co. An imaginary

correspondence between a young medical student, Tom, and his cousin Lily, on most abstruse lines:—and she appears to understand him. It is more than we can do; though we are willing to confess that we ought to be ashamed of our nescience, as so many clever fellows are talking and writing in Tom's way—though not half as learnedly. We ought to say, however, that in his opening and closing letters, referring to Lily, he is at once delightfully clear and clearly delightful.

"The Contemporary Pulpit." Second Series.—Vol. IV. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co. A curious Happy Family of Sermons, by men as far apart as "The Most Rev. the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, D.D." and J. Page Hopps, or "The Rev. Canon Knox Little, M.A." and Mark Wilks. It is a good idea, and we are willing to believe that the work, both of purloining and reproduction, is on the whole, fairly well done, but we have been able to test that work in one case, and we find distinct traces of bad grammar and slipshod English which do

not appear in the printed original from which the Sermon, without the author's consent was—let us say—*borrowed*.

“The Struggle for Immortality.” By Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. London: Sampson Low & Co. A book all soul and wings, and written in a style to match. The writer is, in the truest sense of the word, a spiritualist; and she makes rare sport of the poor scientific philistine who has been somewhat pompously stupid and stupidly conceited of late, just because he has found out a little more about “the muddy vesture.” Miss Phelps asks him to be truly scientific all round, to be “hospitable to a hallucination or to a spectre”—to be “if necessary, just to an apparition as well as generous to a molecule”—to “use the eyes of his soul as well as the lens of his microscope.” The book is original, strong, and full of interest for people who are alive and thinking.

We have received from Mr. J. Burns, Southampton Row, London, specimens of a kind of literature which puzzles some and wins only the passing contempt of others.—(1) “*Researches in the phenomena of Spiritualism*”: by William Crookes, F.R.S.: a well-known book giving, in a deliberate manner, the experiences of a practiced and patient observer. It is much easier to waive the hand and cry “Nonsense” than to spend two years in honest effort to know. Mr. Crookes chose the more difficult course, and his very interesting book tells his story. (2) “*From over the tomb*” and “*From soul to soul*”: by a lady. These small and charmingly printed volumes belong to a species over which the regulation critics can only be silent or despair. They are so ingenuous, so intensely good, so irreproachable, that the theory of imposture is as impertinent as it is morally absurd. The profession is that

they are written from the other side, through the lady who seems to be responsible for them. They tell us nothing new, but are, intellectually and spiritually, as sweet and sane as anything could be. (3) “*A chaplet of amaranth: being brief thoughts on this life and the next.*” Another dainty volume filled with minute germs of thought,—placid, simple, pure, and in excellent taste. (4) “*The next world.*” A severe strain upon the ordinary Briton. This book contains fifty-six “communications from eminent historians, authors, legislators, &c., now in spirit-life. Through Mrs. S. G. Horn.” We hardly dare mention the names; but will only say that the table of Contents, with communicators’ names and subjects, is all alive with audacity and originality. We frankly confess that we have no opinion on the subject, except this—that the compilers and editors of these queer books are honest. Heaven only knows who or where they come from originally. We cannot give specimens; but these few words from an Emerson communication fairly represent the teachings of the body;—“The next world is not a commercial world. It is a world of ideas.” That will bear thinking about.

“The story of Theophilus Lindsey and his friends.” By Frances E. Cooke. London: The Sunday School Association, Essex Hall. Another of Miss Cooke’s most interesting little books. It would not be correct to say that these books are class books or children’s books only. They might be of great use in the hands of a wise teacher, and many young people might be won to read and enjoy them; but they might also enlighten and delight many who are no longer young. This latest book is a bright, instructive and touching chapter in the history of the development of free, honest and scholarly thought in England.