

The Coming Day.

JULY, 1891.

MR. GLADSTONE'S SPECIMEN "MESSIANIC" PSALMS.

MR. GLADSTONE'S Paper on *The Psalms* is one of a somewhat curious series of Bible studies, first printed in *Good Words*, and now published in a volume. It must be read in the light of his general view of the place and authority of the Bible, inasmuch as that general view determines his special view as to the value of the Psalms, and as to the evidential value of the so-called "Messianic" Psalms.

In all these Papers, we, of course, find Mr. Gladstone's prominent characteristics;—absolute sincerity; acute intellectual subtilty; and devout spiritual sensibility. But we find another characteristic which is very seldom absent from his utterances when Theology and Biblical criticism are concerned,—a characteristic which can be best indicated by recalling the curious fact that it was Mr. Gladstone who used the old-world illustration as to it taking so many men to make a pin, long after the time when pins were made, from first to last by a machine, and not by hand at all. So, in relation to Theology and Biblical criticism, Mr. Gladstone seems always to be devoutly talking in his sleep, of days gone by.

His general view of the Bible hovers between miracle and natural law: but, on the whole, he inclines to miracle, for he definitely speaks of "the Almighty, in His mercy, making a special addition by revelation to what He has already given to us of knowledge in Nature and in Providence." That general view of the whole, as we have said, determines his special view of each part.

Of the wonderful place the Book of Psalms has taken in the world, he says; It is "removed by such a breadth of space from all other facts of human experience in the same province as to constitute in itself a strong presumption that the cause also is one lying beyond the range of ordinary human action, and may most reasonably be set down as consisting in that speciality of Divine suggestion and guidance, which we term revelation."

We have tried to think that the phrase "specialty of Divine suggestion and guidance" referred to some particular degree of Divine suggestion and guidance:—"the revelation" being only a high degree of it: but, alas! in the conclusion, we find the depressing and disappointing statement,—that the Book of Psalms is "at a level indefinitely higher than has been reached by the unassisted faculties of man." But are we ever quite "unassisted"? Is it, after all, only a figure of speech that in Him we all "live, and move, and have our being"?

But, much as we may admire and love many of the Psalms, it is surely going too far to say that they so far surpass all other productions that special supernatural

intervention must be assumed in order to account for them. The Psalms that have fascinated millions, and that have fascinated Mr. Gladstone, come to us now with a borrowed music, borne on the airs from heaven of the pathetic past: and Mr. Gladstone, of all living men, is perhaps most likely to be charmed with that music, keenly sensitive as he is to every cadence of the inner voice: and we are convinced that this fascination, added to the preconceived and not yet abandoned traditions of his early days, will account for his strange old-world conclusions in regard to what are called the "Messianic" Psalms.

The great misfortune is that Mr. Gladstone's general view of the Psalms carries with it the serious penalty of want of discrimination. How can you discriminate when you say that 150 old poems came by special supernatural inspiration from the Almighty? Thus he says of the Psalms, without any discrimination; "who will deny that they habitually abound in humility, in penitential abasement, in the strong faith which is the evidence of things not seen, in fervour, self-mistrust, filial confidence towards God? These and all kindred qualities they develop in what for want of a better word I will term their innerness. Their tones come from the inmost heart, and, not with familiarity, yet with a wonderful nearness, they seem to seek the response, if the phrase may be used without irreverence, from the inner heart of God Himself. All this is severed by an immeasurable distance from the language, ideas, and mental habits of pagan antiquity." This is true;—but what of the blood-thirsty Psalms? Mr. Gladstone admits the difficulty. But he says; "I would remind my readers that they relate not to the main body of the question respecting the Psalms, but to a portion of it, which is limited and exceptional." "We cannot refuse to admit sufficient evidence of an origin more than human for the Psalms on the ground that we see only through a glass darkly." But, alas! we see only too clearly? This, for instance, is only too clear;—"The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea: that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same."

Mr. Gladstone, however, deprecating these citations, says that "everywhere the Psalmist speaks in the name of God, on behalf of His word and will." But we are afraid this is no argument in favour of his supernatural authority. The bloodiest persecutor who ever murdered a theological opponent who differed from him spoke in the name of God. Mr. Gladstone, we regret to say, adds; "To pronounce verdicts upon these terrible denunciations may be impious; and is surely at the least unreasonable." But surely the impiety is all in the other direction. We who make a stand for the goodness and justice of God, and refuse to admit the truth of these odious imputations in relation to Him, should, at all events, be spared the charge of being "impious," and I do not see how we can be charged with being "unreasonable."

But, to return to the special object of this study of Mr. Gladstone's Paper. It is fortunate for us that he opens a very wide door at the outset, by saying;—"I embrace, in what I think a substantial sense, one of the great canons of modern criticism, which teaches us that the Scriptures are to be treated like any other book in the trial of their title." That will completely justify us in taking the so-called

"Messianic" Psalms *in loco*, and testing them as they stand, without any help from theories, however magnificent, propounded by men, however renowned. It is a simple matter of fact that we have to try. All that is necessary is that the Jury should know how to read.

Here, then, is what Mr. Gladstone claims for the "Messianic" Psalms;—"These are the songs which show, by the adaptation of their language to Him (the Messiah) and to His office, either that their composers had a prevision of His coming, or that such prevision was conveyed into their strain by the higher influence which prompted it. It is not necessary here to debate their number. Suffice it to specify Psalms ii., xxi., xxii., xlv., lxxii., cx." Here are six cases. (Surely the strongest, as Mr. Gladstone cites them.) Now apply his own "canon" as above stated, that the Bible is "to be treated like any other book,"—that is to say, it is to be read, and judged by what it really says.

"To the law and to the testimony," then. What do these Six Psalms really say?*

We take Mr. Gladstone's specimens in order.

I. Ps. ii. :—This is the Psalm beginning with "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" and in which occur the words; "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee," and also the words; "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

It is believed that the Psalm from which these words are taken was written 1000 years before Christ, and it would certainly require very decisive evidence to induce us to read it as applying to Christ. But the evidence is all the other way. The Psalm from beginning to end is a purely personal one, and descriptive of what is going on at the time. The writer glances at the kings of the earth setting themselves and taking counsel together against the Hebrew monarch, perhaps himself; and then he cries out exultingly; "I will declare the decree," as though he had read the book of fate. And what is the decree?—Simply that God has chosen the monarch as His son. That this is so is plain from the very next verse, in which God tells this son to ask for a wide extending dominion, and promises that he shall "break" the Gentiles or heathen "with a rod of iron," and "dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." How absurd to apply that to *Christ*,—the poor, peaceful, unwarlike, and uninfluential teacher! And yet it is a part of the description of the reign of the person here addressed as God's son. The Psalm ends with a significant piece of counsel to the kings of the earth, to be wise and come to terms with this son of God, lest they anger him and be crushed. The Psalm from first to last is

* The greater part of what follows is taken from a work by the Editor of *The Coming Day*, on "The alleged prophecies concerning Jesus Christ in the Old Testament."

descriptive of a *king* before the poet's eyes, for whom he predicts, in the glowing language of the East, all the power and dominion and glory a warrior-king could desire;—not a scrap of it agreeing with the life of *Christ*: and only excessive anxiety or prepossession could make it applicable to him.

2. Ps. xxi. Here it is. "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head. He asked life of thee, *and* thou gavest *it* him, *even* length of days for ever and ever. His glory *is* great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance. For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved. Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, *which* they are not able to *perform*. Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, *when* thou shalt make ready *thine* arrows upon thy strings against the face of them. Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: *so* will we sing and praise thy power."

Is there anything to say?

3. Ps. xxii. This is the Psalm in which occur the curious references to an execution, including the passage; "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture"—a passage quoted in Matthew as referring to Jesus. (But a quotation in a Gospel,—even when coupled with an assertion—by no means proves a prediction.) All we can do is to turn to the place and see whether it really is a prediction of a future event, and whether, if so, the prediction answers to the alleged fulfilment. My affirmation is that the whole Psalm from which this verse is taken is a purely *personal* outpouring of woe. Christ, in his death-agony, appropriates the opening words of the 1st verse of the Psalm "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" but the next verse shows how inapplicable the Psalm is to him; for it proceeds to speak of long-continued but unanswered prayer, day and night, and assuredly Christ knew nothing of this. A little further on, we find the same person contrasting himself with his ancestors, to his own disparagement. "They cried unto Thee, and were delivered," he says, "but I am a worm and no man;" and that likewise is not applicable to him. In fact, it is only a little scrap, severed from its place in the Psalm and read apart from the connection, that can be at all applied to Christ. In the Psalm, the cry about parting his garments and casting lots upon his vesture is followed by the cry "O my strength, haste Thee to help me; deliver my soul from the sword, my darling (or my life) from the power of the dog, save me from the lion's mouth, for Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns." Here there is hope for the person spoken of, but there was none for Christ; the psalmist fears the "sword," but Christ's terror was the cross, and his death-blows came from the nails. Besides, this miserable being looks forward to

praising God in the "congregation" with his "brethren," and, in general, to a happy deliverance from his ill users: not one word of which applies to the crucified one. The question for us is whether we have any right to cut out two or three lines from the Psalm, and make them apply to Christ, although they form part of an extended description the greater part of which is utterly inapplicable. Those two or three lines may and do bear a striking resemblance to two or three lines in the record of Christ's crucifixion, but many things must be taken into account;—the bias of the evangelists and of the translators, for instance, who dearly loved a prophecy and reveled in a fulfilment: but there is nothing so exceptional in the piercing of hands and feet and the dividing of the garments of a victim as to make a reference to Christ *necessary*. But such a reference is not admissable when many other portions of the description do not apply to him at all.

4. Ps. xlv. In this Psalm occur the words; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." But the person here addressed is evidently a very different person from Christ. He is called upon to gird his sword upon his thigh, and it is said that his 'arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies.' His garments are said to 'smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces.'" "King's daughters," it says, are among his "honourable women," and upon his right hand sits "the queen in gold of Ophir:" and in the very midst of this picture of the person addressed, occurs the passage "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Dr. Davidson says that the proper translation here is "Thy *God's* throne, *i.e.*, thy throne given and protected by God, is for ever and ever:" but, even retaining the phrase "Thy throne, O God," we can quite well understand it as meaning, Thy throne, O mighty *hero*; for so it is often used in the Old Testament, and the verses before and after shew plainly that a glorious earthly king is meant.

5. Ps. lxxii. This is the splendid Psalm beginning; "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son." It is a glorious description of a patriot's ideal king. He is a ruler over vast domains, stretching from sea to sea; he sits in judgment over the oppressed; he breaks in pieces the oppressor; he is so powerful that he compels other rulers to keep the peace; and the kings who might have conspired to drag him down combine to bring him costly gifts. The picture is perfectly consistent and clear; but it is a picture which excludes Christ; and the phrases relied upon can only be applied to Christ by isolating them from their connection or spiritualising the whole. It is really no more a prophecy of Christ than Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress is a prophecy of the career of Mr. Gladstone:—not so much!

6. Ps. cx. This begins with the verse; "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." In the 1st verse, ("The Lord said unto my lord,") there are, in the original, two words for "lord" which unfortunately are merged in the translation. The one word for "lord" means *Jehovah*; the other word for "lord" means any dignitary. The verse is evidently addressed to the king by the poet, who calls the king "my lord" and says—"Jehovah has said to my lord—"Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine

enemies thy footstool." Matthew Arnold renders the words, "The Eternal said unto my lord the king," and adds, that it is "a simple promise of victory to a prince of God's chosen people." But at the very beginning the passage is inapplicable to Christ. The picture is that of a king putting down his enemies and trampling them under his feet. It is painted by a courtly poet who, after the manner of his tribe, is only too ready with his brilliant tones. The nature of the Psalm, as a battle lyric, and its utter inapplicableness to Jesus, will be seen the moment it is read through. Note especially the brutal reference to the dead bodies:—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the place with the dead bodies, he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head." There is the clang of battle all through. The king ("my lord") is to sit at the right hand of his almighty warrior-God, who will send out His rod to smite his enemies; his soldiers shall be all willing, and give themselves as a fresh and beautiful free-will offering, to fight his battles, and the end shall be the universal destruction of his foes. Any application of that Psalm to Jesus can only be violent, arbitrary, or poetical. Some of the phrases are, on any hypothesis, difficult to explain; but the drift of the whole is clear; and the drift is all *away* from Christ.

We have only one concluding suggestion. It is this, that Mr. Gladstone reveals his strong Messianic bias in the fundamental theory he lays down respecting the Mosaic law, of which he says that it was promulgated for the purpose of "preserving in vitality and freshness, within that precinct, the fundamental conceptions of the Divine unity and righteousness, and of the duty and sinfulness of man. These all-important propositions were the necessary pre-conditions of any plan for the restoration of peace in a disordered world." Then, bringing this plan of salvation on to its culmination in the Messianic predictions in the Psalms, he says; "The great and cardinal facts of the lapse of man from righteousness, and of the need and promise of a Redeemer, were thus embodied in the perpetual public worship of the Temple, and were systematically forced, so to speak, upon the attention of the people." Here is the secret of the finding of Messianic Psalms. In reading the Bible, people generally find what they want: and Mr. Gladstone, even with all his superb faculty of original observation, is no exception to the rule.

We prefer the verdict of "The Jewish World." "There *is* Messianism in the Psalms as there is in the Prophets, but it is not the Christian ideal of God made man to redeem by his death his own creation, but rather that man shall become like unto God by fulfilling His Law."

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

IV.

To the "young soldiers" at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, the Lecture on War was delivered—a lecture which has the appearance of a sheer contradiction: but that, on the whole, is because the subject itself is complicated with a contradiction. It is easy enough to demonstrate the barbarity and ghastly folly of war: but, at the same time, it is difficult to escape from the conclusion that it is a dreadful necessity; and that, somehow, in connection with war, very great advantages have been won, and, strange to say, very fine human characteristics have been called out. So as Mr. Ruskin is a very sensitive, very imaginative, and very emotional writer, he is apt to see both these facts vividly, to feel them both keenly, and to dwell upon them both in terms that must seem to clash.

Thus, for instance, he strongly insists that "war is the foundation of all the arts," and is therefore "the foundation of all the high virtues and faculties of man." He admits that the discovery of this is "very strange," and "very dreadful," but he holds that it is a fact. In his careful studies on this subject, he says he found that "the common notion that peace and the virtues of civil life flourished together" was "wholly untenable." "Peace and the *vices* of civil life only flourish together. We talk of peace and learning, and of peace and plenty, and of peace and civilisation; but I found that those were not the words which the Muse of History coupled together: that, on her lips, the words were—peace and sensuality—peace and selfishness—peace and death. I found, in brief, that all great nations learned their truth of word, and strength of thought, in war; that they were nourished in war, and wasted by peace; taught by war, and deceived by peace; trained by war, and betrayed by peace;—in a word, that they were born in war, and expired in peace. Yet now note carefully, in the second place, it is not *all* war of which this can be said—nor all dragon's teeth, which, sown, will start up into men."

That is a precious and pregnant qualifying statement, with far-reaching applications: and we shall presently see that there is very little war now-a-days which shews any sign of coming up to his ideal of that which has been "the foundation of all the high virtues and faculties of men";—very much the reverse. Ruskin admits that the nobleness goes out of war when men are only selfish or self-assertive in it. Here, once more, we come across his profound suggestion that the popularity and prevalence of war is very much due to the fact that it is the world's great exciting "game." "From the earliest incipient civilisation until now, the population of the earth divides itself, when you look at it widely, into two races; one of workers, and the other of players—one tilling the ground, manufacturing, building, and otherwise providing for the necessities of life: the other part proudly idle, and continually therefore needing recreation, in which they use the productive and laborious orders partly as their cattle, and partly as their puppets or pieces in the

game of death." Then farewell to the true glory of it: then the playing of that ghastly game "with a multitude of human pawns" is all that its denouncers say it is. But Ruskin holds that the great counts of evil alleged against war hold only against modern war. He says; "If you have to take away masses of men from all industrial employment,—to feed them by the labour of others,—to provide them with destructive machines, varied daily in national rivalry of inventive cost; if you have to ravage the country which you attack,—to destroy for a score of future years, its roads, its woods, its cities and its harbours;—and if, finally, having brought masses of men, counted by hundreds of thousands, face to face, you tear those masses to pieces with jagged shot, and leave the living creatures, countless beyond all help of surgery, to starve and parch through days of torture, down into clots of clay—what book of accounts shall record the cost of your work;—What book of judgment sentence the guilt of it? That, I say, is *modern* war,—scientific war,—chemical and mechanic war,—how much worse than the savage's poisoned arrow!"

If the reply is, that this is the only kind of war now possible, to that the only answer can be; perhaps so: but in saying that you pronounce a solemn verdict against war. And that verdict cannot be evaded; for the wars of the modern world have mainly been the wars of kings and nobles; and only by force, or habit, or cajolery, have the people been dragged into them; and all for what?—to add to territory, to weaken a rival, to damage a dynasty, to revenge a real or supposed insult, or merely to play an exciting and enthralling game. And England is by no means guiltless in this matter: far from it. "I tell you broadly and boldly," says Ruskin, "that within these last ten years, we English have, as a knightly nation, lost our spurs: we have fought where we should not have fought, for gain; and we have been passive where we should not have been passive, for fear." Yes; in his opinion there may be base peace as well as base war. "I tell you," he says, "that the principle of non-intervention, as now preached among us, is as selfish and cruel as the worst frenzy of conquest, and differs from it only by being, not only malignant, but dastardly." It may be so: and we may perhaps be able to admit it and act upon it when it is no longer necessary to denounce war because it has so much—or so entirely—fallen into the hands of gamblers or thieves.

We may find in Ruskin's reference to the ignominy of non-intervention, the clue to his opinion as to the possible nobleness of war. But he sorrowfully admits that the great misery of war has always been the callousness of the regal promoters of it, and their apparent disregard of justice and the poor. So much is this the case, and so much has this been accepted as natural, that "the word loyalty, which means faithfulness to law, is used as if it were only the duty of a people to be loyal to their king, and not the duty of a king to be infinitely more loyal to his people. How comes it to pass that a captain will die with his passengers, and lean over the gunwale to give the parting boat its course; but that a king will not usually die with, much less *for*, his passengers—thinks it rather incumbent on his passengers, in any number, to die for *him*? Think, I beseech you, of the wonder of this. The sea captain, not captain by divine right, but only by company's appointment;—not a man of royal descent, but only a plebeian who can steer;—not with the eyes of the world upon him, but with feeble chance, depending on one poor boat, of his name being ever heard above the wash of the fatal waves; not with the cause of a nation resting on his act, but

helpless to save so much as a child from among the lost crowd with whom he resolves to be lost,—yet goes down quietly to his grave, rather than break his faith to these few emigrants. But your captain by divine right,—your captain with the hues of a hundred shields of kings upon his breast,—your captain whose every deed, brave or base, will be illuminated or branded for ever before unescapable eyes of men,—your captain whose every thought and act are beneficent or fatal, from sunrise to setting, blessing as the sunshine or shadowing as the night,—this captain, as you find him in history, for the most part thinks only how he may tax his passengers, and sit at most ease in his state cabin!"

This is a frightful indictment against wars and the makers of them; and goes to the root of the matter in quite an unexpected way, after laying down the startling doctrine that war is "the foundation of all the arts," and of all "the high virtues," too!

But Ruskin, in this matter, is very honest and thorough. He is speaking to the young soldiers of England, and he tells them straight that if they understood it, theirs is a vocation that might have goodness and greatness in it, and that might be made the subject of a solemn vow. But he also tells them that, for the most part, their sense of duty is strangely and strongly mixed with "peacocky motives," (a happy, artistic touch, beautifully discriminating!): and then he faces them with this sound doctrine; "If you cared to do your duty to your country in a prosaic and unsentimental way, depend upon it there is now truer duty to be done in raising harvests than in burning them; more in building houses than in shelling them—more in winning money by your own work, wherewith to help men, than in other people's work, taxing for money wherewith to slay men;—more duty, finally, in honest and unselfish living than in honest and unselfish dying, though that seems to your boys' eyes the bravest."

Ruskin's ideal of the soldier who need not be ashamed is here not so much described as indicated. He ought to be the defender of his country, and the defender of the right wherever the right admits of his presence. He ought not to be Exeter Hall's policeman, and "the beades of England's Little Bethels." He ought not to stand at a shop-door to protect shop-boys who are cheating inside: or, in plain English, and to drop metaphor, he ought not to fight only for a nation of shady shopkeepers, and to protect the till. The soldier's vocation, he says, is rather to die, if need be, "for the guardianship of her domestic virtue, of her righteous laws, and of her any-way challenged or endangered honour. A state without virtue, without laws, and without honour, he is bound *not* to defend; nay, bound to redress by his own right hand that which he sees to be base in her."

This last is dangerous doctrine. It practically or even bluntly says that the ideal army would not be bound to obey all orders, but would hold it to be its duty to judge of what was virtuous, lawful, and honourable, and act accordingly,—nay, that it ought to hit out against anything it believed to be nationally base:—a doctrine that simply implies a military despotism. But, unfortunately, military despotisms have not encouraged us to look to them for safeguarding virtue, law, and honour, and for redressing that which, in the nation, is base. But one of Ruskin's peculiarities is

that he always does picture the possibility of heaven-sent rulers, admirable knights and angelic defenders of the right; while the poor old world persists in presenting to us Napoleons the great and little, Bismarcks, Lord Wolsley's and Dukes of Cambridge, to say nothing of Sultans and Czars.

But it is useful and good to see that Ruskin's perilous doctrine has its origin in a superb ideal,—that thoughtful and noble-hearted men should undertake the serious business of war, and be, in reality, the righteous sword of the nation, to protect it, and even to purify it.

The Lecture concludes with a stirring and touching appeal to women, to use their influence for peace. He holds that if the faces of women were resolutely set against war it would shrivel. He goes further, and lays at their door the poverty and misery as well as the "rage of battle throughout Europe." He tells them they have not really set their hearts against it; and then, in the vein of John Knox, dismisses them with burning ears; "You women of England are all now shrieking with one voice,—you and your clergymen together,—because you hear of your Bibles being attacked. If you choose to obey your Bibles, you will never care who attacks them. It is just because you never fulfil a single downright precept of the Book, that you are so careful for its credit: and just because you don't care to obey its whole words, that you are so particular about the letters of them. The Bible tells you to dress plainly,—and you are mad for finery; the Bible tells you to have pity on the poor,—and you crush them under your carriage wheels; the Bible tells you to do judgment and justice,—and you do not know, nor care to know, so much as what the Bible word 'justice' means. Do but learn so much of God's truth as that comes to; know what He means when He tells you to be just; and teach your sons that their bravery is but a fool's boast, and their deeds but a firebrand's tossing, unless they are indeed Just men, and Perfect in the fear of God:—and you will soon have no more war, unless it be indeed such as is willed by Him, of whom, though Prince of Peace, it is also written, 'In Righteousness He doth judge, and make war.'"

THE "NATIONAL" CHURCH: ITS POSITION AND DESTINY.

THOUGHT, in these latter days of the nineteenth century, seems to flash like lightning. Even Theology, which is the slowest of all sciences, is throbbing with accelerated life. In the theological world how rapid has been the evolution of thought! In how short a time has Oxford seen men play out their parts:—how quickly "Essays and Reviews" followed the "Tracts for the Times"! The Anglican Church, first convulsed by Tract 90; then in the throes of agony over "Essays and Reviews"; now accepts the teaching of both. Time is said to work wonders, in the nineteenth century. I think it may be said to be almost magical in the quickness of its working.

I think any one who had been absent ten or fifteen years from England, would, on visiting her Churches now, be astonished, and exclaim that the English Church had nourished in her bosom Romanism to its full growth. It seems to be the

outcome of the Tractarian movement ; for the logical outcome of that movement, the first outward sign of which was the wearing of the surplice while preaching, is truly Romanism. We have her "Mass"; we have her ecclesiastic garments; we have the Sacrament of Penance taught, and Confession and Penance practised. There has even been introduced lately the Benediction Service, which is based upon the Roman teaching of the Mass; and we are having side chapels and Lady chapels in our churches. The only thing we won't have is the authority of the Pope, because we like our own way! The Anglican priest is a lawless individual ecclesiastically, but while Anglo-Catholics are one with Rome practically, there is this—and I should think it an uncomfortable difference, if not a disturbing difficulty—that (at least I have yet to learn where it may be found) they have no *teaching authority*. Those who believe in dogma as "infallible truth" can hardly dispense with its authoritative source.

The Evangelicals seem to be passing away. Their special truths, so much needed when they first came forth to awaken men from their spiritual slumber, are by no means now confined to them, and therefore, having done their work, it may be that they are no longer wanted. There remains now only the third party in the Church to consider. Robertson's sermons, in their beauty and originality, mark an era in the Church of England, and came as a revelation of new truths. Of all theological writers, he has brought most prominently forward the humanity of Christ. He was afraid that the Son of Man was too often lost in the Son of God. His real belief in our Saviour's humanity he held, while still adhering to the dogma of the Trinity, as set forth in the Athanasian Creed. His doctrine of the "Vicarious Sacrifice" was one of the new truths he proclaimed. Are there none now whose characteristic teaching has ever been that it was not the Father's vengeance that Christ appeased? F. D. Maurice's teaching of "Humanity Risen with Christ" was a new truth when he first promulgated it, a new truth in the Church of England, but it was difficult to grasp from his point of view. One felt dimly groping in twilight. It seems to me we, in the Church of England, when we heard, admired, and accepted the teaching of the Broad Church, little knew from whence it came, or whither it tended. When, from the point of view of the Unitarians, one looks at the same doctrine, "Humanity Risen in Christ," we seem in broad daylight and to be dealing with facts. It is a fact that humanity has risen with Christ, and what a rest it is to the mind to deal with facts, and how delightful to feel their harmony!

Robertson's early death leaves for ever unsolved the question whether he, with Mr. Haweis and Dr. Momerie, would have remained in the Church of England, or, with Mr. Stopford Brooke, would have left it. And here one word of entreaty: why not widen the portals of the Church of England and make her truly national? Can we refuse, are we justified in refusing, as sons those among whom we find the cardinal virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity? Dr. Momerie speaks of himself as "a true son of the Church, a troublesome son perhaps, but always a son." Why, then, are others to be "unwilling exiles"?

If, in spite of creeds, certain teachings are allowed that are by no means contained therein, but opposed thereto, why insist upon the acceptance of creeds which keep men, whose honesty, whose very virtues, make "unwilling exiles," out

of the Church whose brightest ornaments they would be? Their consciences require the portals to be widened theoretically. Practically, I believe the difference to be nil, or very nearly so, between some within and others outside the Church's pale. Oh, make her truly national! Make her buildings as they ought to be, national. As Englishmen and Englishwomen, we all of us have a right to those noble and venerable buildings of the past—we have all a right to a place in the National Church. Why should the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral be granted for the use of the French Huguenots, and the Cathedral itself be denied to all but the ministers of the Church of England?

I would not disestablish, but establish more. Let the ministers of all denominations share the national endowments. Let every Englishman and Englishwoman have their share in the beautiful churches in England. The souls of the Orthodox are shrinking with horror at the proposal of congregations, orthodox and unorthodox, assembling in the National Churches of England. This is an alarmed state of mind, arising solely from the imagination dominated by a dream. What is the present state of things? The extreme Ritualist teaches doctrine far more widely opposed to that of the Evangelicals than that of the Broad Church is to the Unitarians, and yet the same Church holds the two. As a fact, we have three different religions in the Church of England, therefore widely-opposed views can be no reason for being bidden to stand aloof. Let us not, then, disestablish, but establish more. Let us not take away money that has been set apart for religious purposes and apply it to secular ones; that would be a great wrong and a great calamity. Let us bear in mind the parable of the tares and wheat, and see in England the field of the parable. "What we want here on earth is spiritual vision." No plucking up of tares will give, no growing up of tares will take from us, this divine power which comes from above.

There seems a growing wish for unity, and it is impossible, it seems to me, to maintain the Church of England if she is to be made the bed of Procrustes. The existence of the Church is at stake. Why not, then, frankly accept what, to a great extent, is tacitly permitted; and open, avowedly open, the Church's doors to all who are followers of Jesus Christ, leaving each to his own glimpse of truth, and joining hands in practical work, prizing conduct more than creed, and character above all? Then would sectarianism cease, uniformity of opinion would give place to variety in unity, and we might realize something, for which we pray in our Liturgy, of the bond of peace, the unity of spirit, and the righteousness of life.

SARNIA.

A SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF BELIEF IN A FUTURE LIFE.

V.

The limitations of the senses.

(CONTINUED.)

SIR W. R. GROVE, in his *Correlation of Physical Forces*, distinctly shews that "in very many of the forms which matter assumes it is porous, and pervaded by more volatile essences, *which may differ as much in kind as matter does.*" It is indeed a

well-known fact that one thing can be pervaded and flooded by another. In every such case the same thing happens:—the coarser element acts as a sponge, and is filled and flooded by the less dense, as when a piece of metal is filled with the magnetic current or flooded with rays of heat. On this subject, Grove, in the great work just quoted, expressly says, “Wherever light, heat, &c., exist, ordinary matter exists, though it may be so attenuated that we cannot recognize it by the test of gravitation. . . . To the expansibility of matter no limit can be assigned.” And again;—“Probably man will never know the ultimate structure of matter or the minutæ of molecular action; indeed, it is scarcely conceivable that the mind can ever attain to this knowledge.”

It is of the greatest possible importance, then, to get a firm grasp of the fact that there are many grades of Matter. It is a gross popular error that Matter is something solid that you can see, and feel, and kick the foot against. Matter indeed is that, but it is many things besides, and extends, to begin with, all the way from granite to gas,—then to odours, and to Mr. Crooke’s “radiant matter”—and no one knows whither. Huxley says that “Astronomy demonstrates that what we call the peaceful heavens above us is but space, filled by an infinitely subtile matter whose particles are seething and surging, like the waves of an angry sea.” And yet that “subtile matter” is so rare and delicate that the rarest known gas is as mud in comparison with it. Sir Humphrey Davy, who saw a long way into this splendid field of research, wrote of an “ethereal matter which can never be evident to the senses, and may bear the same relations to heat, light, and electricity that these refined forms or modes of existence of matter may bear to the gases:” that is to say there are forms of Matter which are as much more subtile than hydrogen as hydrogen is more subtile than water. Sir John Herschel, in one place, actually speaks of the atoms of a solid substance as so far apart that a ray of light or heat penetrating it may be compared to a bird threading its way through the mazes of a forest. Our range of vision leaves us unable to see that; but it is a literal fact that the difference between a gas and a so-called solid substance is only the difference of atoms more or less close together linked by some central unseen Force. We might follow this great fact very much farther, and in succeeding lectures we shall follow it a little way, for the sake of illustrating, in a simple and unquestionable manner, the limited range of the senses, and the existence of Matter in forms of the greatest conceivable variety. For the present, however, I conclude with the caution with which I began, and one suggestion which grows out of it. Let us accustom ourselves to feel the extreme limitations of all our faculties, just as we must feel our littleness when we contemplate the mighty worlds of space. Science, by teaching us the relative littleness of our planet, by proving to us that we are only one among many brethren, has enlarged the area of Life, and immeasurably multiplied the possibilities of existence. It has made it almost necessary to believe that other worlds are inhabited, and it suggests that worlds, in many respects very unlike our own, have inhabitants also unlike ourselves, adapted to their world as we have been adapted to our world through the working out, during countless ages, of the laws of development and the survival of the fittest. It is perfectly conceivable that the working out of these natural laws may in other planets have developed races of creatures with organs of respiration, digestion, and assimilation which are practically spiritual or ethereal

It is only a question of environment. What has been done here on this globe has been done in harmony with natural law, adapting Life to the world in which it is found : and it is in the highest degree scientific to infer that the same process has gone on elsewhere ; in every case resulting in the evolution of Life adapted to each particular globe. If that be so, the way is more than half constructed by which we may pass on to the realisation of the splendid truth that even now the spirit part of man is developing powers that will enable it to survive the dissolution of the merely physical organism, and quite naturally pass away, to exist in an inner unseen Universe adapted to it.

We are carried here to a thought which, though belonging rather to the region of Religion than Science, may nevertheless be mentioned in pressing home the facts we have been considering ; that our enlarged view of the Universe has made it almost essential to infer that we are not and cannot be the only intelligent creatures in it. Our powers are so poor, our range so limited, our time here so short, that we are dwarfed into absolute insignificance before the glories and mysteries of the countless worlds around us, and of the unseen Universe where the abiding things and the mightiest forces are found. A learned professor, standing before the wonderful and lovely but little world that he could see, lately asked whether it was possible that man's knowledge is the greatest knowledge, and man's life the highest life. With million-fold emphasis must we say this as we think of the limitless worlds that are visible and the boundless ocean of Force that is *not* visible. It is monstrous to suppose that we, poor puny creatures, are the only intelligences who can contemplate, and study, and wonder, and adore. It is infinitely more reasonable to conclude that we are now living, as one has said, "in the murky suburbs of creation," and that we have yet to be fully born into the true world of intellect and soul.

(To be continued).

VOLUNTARY *VERSUS* NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

THE proprietors of the so-called "Voluntary Schools" are more than concerned at the present phase of the control of Education by the State :—they are alarmed ; and their alarm is amusingly manifest in their excited but ingenuous confession of the truth. The advocates of a really national system of education have always said that Church schools were kept up, to a considerable extent, not for the sake of education, but for the sake of the Church. At a late meeting of The Central Council of the Diocesan Conference, held in London, Canon Elwyn said that in his own parish of Ramsgate education was entirely in the hands of the Church with the exception of the Roman Catholics and a single Dissenting school. One of the Church schools, he said, "is entirely under the management of the parson and a few devoted laymen who take an interest in it : " and Archdeacon Smith, who followed him, frankly confessed that "the teaching of Religion is the very reason for the existence of Church schools." When we remember what these clerical gentlemen mean by "Religion," we can by no means accept their ideal, though we are grateful for their frank admission.

Canon Stowell advised the Conference to "stick to the Voluntary Schools

like grim death," while Dr. Ward said they would "die hard and make the country pay." Who ever doubted that? Archdeacon Emery ventured to say that in the Church schools the conscience clause is thoroughly carried out. That remark only shews how little these people know what a conscience clause should be: but what they do know is that no teacher but one who professes to be a churchman or woman has a chance of being employed; that everything which can be done is done to make withdrawal of children from "religious teaching" odious and ugly; that church doctrines and sacraments are prominently kept before the scholars, and that, in many cases, clergymen directly take in hand the so-called "religious" manipulation of the schools. It is high time to make an end of it. What the country needs is a truly national system of education free from the "baser matter" of ecclesiastical after-thoughts. Under such a system, children could be taught to know and admire all the moral and social graces—all the humanities, indeed:—and that is as far as any one should try to go in any "common school."

"OPEN COURT" PUBLICATIONS.

"THE OPEN COURT" Publishing Company, Chicago (and London; Watts & Co., Fleet Street), in addition to its weekly and quarterly magazines, "The Open Court" and "The Monist," is issuing a spirited series of books on advanced scientific subjects, bearing chiefly upon mental science, with distinct reference to current speculations on God and Immortality. A book by Dr. Paul Carus, for instance, on "The Soul of Man" is quite up to date from one point of view. Its secondary title, "An investigation of the facts of Physiological and experimental Psychology" well describes its aim. Its 152 diagrams and illustrations are beautifully presented, and its tone is uniformly philosophical. If the writer too firmly dismisses personality, as we understand personality, in relation to Immortality and God, we can allow for his purely scientific bias, and go on with our splendid hope. In Dr. Carus's pamphlet, "The Idea of God," we find an advance upon the cold stare of the ordinary agnostic, but he still halts. Feeling about for a name to describe his view, and to differentiate it from Theism, Pantheism, and Atheism, he fixed on "Entheism" as denoting "the conception of a monistic God, who is immanent, not transcendent, who is in many respects different from nature and yet pervades all nature." Men like Dr. Carus seem to be spiriting away our fundamental trusts: but they are really refining them. What they are doing is not final: but it is necessary.

Other noteworthy books are "Comparative Philology, Psychology, and Old Testament History," by Professors H. Oldenberg, J. Jastrow, and C. H. Cornill: "The Psychology of Attention," by Professor T. H. Ribot, A translation from the French; and "Lectures on The Science of Thought," by Max Müller.

LIGHT ON THE PATH.

THE AGED POOR.—The Tower Hamlets Pension Committee (28, Commercial Street, E.), is showing one way out of darkest London. For fourteen years, in the three parishes, St. George's-in-the-East, Whitechapel, and Stepney, it has

dealt with cases of poverty amongst the "deserving poor" who, being past work, "seem by their character and circumstances to be worthy of assistance outside the workhouse." Here surely is a mark of a rising civilisation, and, all the more so, because the expenses of management are borne by the Committee, and because the appointed visitors are "generally ladies, whose weekly visits are looked for as the bright spots in the lives of their aged friends, quite independent of the material help they bring." A perusal of the Committee's Papers shows that it is working carefully and most intelligently, tempering helpfulness with experience, and charity with sense. The following paragraphs from the Committee's circular are interesting:—"There is cordial co-operation between those administering Poor Law Relief, the Charity Organization Society, and the Committee, insuring the advantage of thorough enquiry, conducted by experienced experts. The Committee can thus with confidence declare that the money they dispense does actually pass to those only whose age, character, and habits entitle them to respect and consideration. Neither years, sickness, nor poverty alone, are accepted as qualifications for assistance; it is essential that applicants should at personal interviews satisfy the Committee (who have no agents) that they had made some provision for old age, though it be exhausted, that their relations and friends or old employers have, according to their means, contributed help, however slender this may be, and that their homes or rooms are decent and clean. The Committee scrupulously decline making any attempt by gifts of money or clothing to mitigate the consequences of vice, intemperance, and idleness; the misery induced by such failings being sufficiently provided for under the strict administration of public funds, accom-

panied by the salutary deterrent discipline and restraint required by the authority of the law. The bestowal of casual bounty in such instances only aggravates and widens the distress in proportion to the freedom with which it is given; but the Committee earnestly hope that their effort to relieve adequately and systematically the very poor, whose self-respect and self-denial have saved them from this degradation, though not from the sad trials of real want, will be helped by some of those whom this statement may reach." On these lines, every part of London and every town in England might well go and do likewise.

WOMAN'S RELEASE.—Fools may laugh, and the ignorant may stare, but they may depend upon it that God is writing in our sky no more significant sign of the times than the movement for the release of women:—release from one-sided legislation, political injustice, professional masterfulness, and masculine prudery in religion. Woman is on the march. The days are coming when she will be widely accepted as politician, physician, banker, minister, just as she is already artist, postmistress, shopkeeper, farmer. The Suffrage Societies have done much; but other and more general movements will do more. A "Woman's Progressive Society," now well at work, has the right tone about it. Its objects are:—1. To abolish the political outlawry of women, by working for any measure in favour of granting them the parliamentary vote. [The Society will work only for those parliamentary candidates who pledge themselves to vote for Women's Suffrage.] 2. To put down sex bias and class prejudice. 3. To improve the economic position of women. The Hon. Secretaries are Mrs. Sibthorp, 75, Ronald's Road, London, N., and Mrs. Grenfell, 55, West Cromwell Road, London, S.W.