

The Coming Day.

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GOD'S SAINTS.

[SPOKEN BEFORE THE YORKSHIRE UNION OF UNITARIAN CHURCHES.]

“Beloved of God—called to be saints.”—*Romans*, i, 7.

THE word “saint” is a somewhat notable Bible-word. In the Old Testament Psalms and in the New Testament Epistles it sometimes seems to be the key which unlocks the inmost door. Everything seems to turn upon the enfolding and safeguarding of certain persons who are called “the saints.” Fortunately, the meaning of the word in both Testaments is clear. The central thought of it is the setting apart for special or purer uses: so that the saint is simply a person separated from the common throng, and appropriated by some higher person or power. On the higher plane, the saint was one who reached the loftiest grades of righteousness, and stood firm for moral and spiritual ideals.

Alas! the word has been almost hopelessly spoilt for us. It has been so associated with asceticism on the one hand, and with conceit or hypocrisy on the other, that we hesitate to use it at all, or reserve it for occasions when we desire to indicate, not so much the goodness that belongs to another, as the reverence that is our own.

The mediæval saints, the saints we conventionally admire in poetry, in churchly romances, in painted windows and in the National Gallery, were, as a rule, unfortunate bearers of the name, and misleading exemplars of the thing. Their saintliness was, too often, won by sheer cowardice, or, at the other extreme, by useless and sometimes hideous self-sacrifice. The world was bad, and they ran away from it. Men were lovers of pleasure, and they poured scorn on the body by making it miserable and unclean. The days were evil, and they spent them in squalid revolt against the very light of the sun. It is true, that of the best of them we might say that they were heroic in self-denial: but, of the worst of them, one hardly knows what to say, unless we say with Douglas Jerrold that it was difficult to tell where the dirt ended and the saint began. And yet, between these two extremes, let us willingly admit that there were many whose flight from the world only told how passionately they longed to escape from its confusions, its clamours, and its sins.

If we go farther back, and confine ourselves to the New Testament, a very tender and instructive meaning is discernible in this word “saint.” The early Christians literally were separated from the common throng. They were tremendous nonconformists. Their leader and master had been murdered by a coalition of priests and populace; and, by his teaching, they were called both to a reformed faith and to

a new life. They were in the world but not of it. They lived in a kingdom within a kingdom : and so much so, that the rulers had to take note of them, and, in due time, to coerce and even kill them. Moreover, if true to their faith and standard, they really were superior to the surrounding world in all that pertained to righteousness : and so might, not wrongly, be called "saints."

So long as we keep to that pure and simple explanation of the word and the thing, we are on safe ground ; and, in the end, we may arrive at the truth which really does await us,—that the time may come when the suggestion of isolation or separation shall drop away, because the proportions shall be reversed or the duty be changed. The mediæval saints, for the most part, fled from the world. What if we reverse that, and say that the modern saint must aim at the possession of the world ? The New Testament saint was cut off from the world. What if we can alter that, and make the world feel that those who are cut off are the sinners, not the saints ? This would only be the realisation of the glorious dream of the ancient prophets, one of whom, concerning the days of the new covenant, said ; "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying 'Know the Lord' ; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" : and another said ; "And it shall come to pass that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions ; and upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" : and others of these prophets and seers declared that even inanimate things might, in a way, belong to the communion of saints ; even the "merchandise" and the "hire" ; and "in that day," said one, "shall there be upon the bells of the horses Holiness unto the Lord" ; —"yea every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be Holiness unto the Lord of hosts." That is the religion we are coming to, in the day when every one will understand that the homely breadbasket is sacred, and that the humble breakfast-table, prepared by the dear mother's hands, is sacramental, with depths of sanctity and meaning in it the priest and his altar can never know :—the best of all "early services" being those which send men well-fed to work, and children, well cared for, to school. The saintliness, then, which we have to set forth now, is a bright homely grace. It is possible for all, it is simply the condition of being in a righteous and loving frame of mind. The "beloved of God, called to be saints," to whom Paul wrote, were homely saints, and, when Paul and the first apostles departed, the early Christians, for a long time, maintained their simplicity. The first Churches were little havens of rest for the poor, the lonely, the widow, the orphan, the oppressed,—every one more like a club than a cathedral, and nearer a Social Union than a sacerdotal Establishment.

"I see in this world two heaps of human happiness and misery," said John Newton ; "now, if I can take but the smallest bit from one heap, and add it to the other, I carry a point. If, as I go home, a child has dropped a half-penny, and if by giving it another I can wipe away its tears, I feel that I have done something. I should be glad, indeed, to do greater things ; but I will not neglect this." There is the saintliness for which the world waits. Carry that out everywhere, and the kingdom of God would come. "What is love ?" asked Dorothy Tennant of one of

her girl pupils. "It's going errands," replied the little woman—in fine training for a saint. It was only on a higher artistic plane that Wordsworth said;

"The primal duties shine aloft—like stars :"—

that is, they are clear and luminous to all.

When Mr. Gladstone, some time ago, encouraged the artisans of England to look higher than the terms of their contract, and to strive for excellence in work for its own sake, he only meant to picture the ideal workman; but, in reality, he was describing the ideal saint. "Apart from the agreement with the employer," he said, "each man should have a contract with himself, always and in all things to do the best he can." I call that the very essence of saintliness.

The mediæval saint of the poem and the romance, of the painted glass window and the National Gallery, was a picturesque person with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, and his successor is he who separates this and that now from the common earth, and calls it holy thing or holy ground. Am I a barbarian or a better Christian because I really prefer the homely labourer with his plough, or the collier with his pick, his safety-lamp, and his tin can—who works for his little home, earns his living and pays his way, endures hardship like a man, stands up like a hero to his everlasting round of toil, sticks to his comrades, suffers for his union, and votes straight? There stands a man who never suspects it, but who is known, by the angels, as the 19th century saint. Doubtless, in the days of the conventional saint of the Church, the world also had its unreckoned saints of the streets, whose homely fidelities and brave endurance built up defences against the brute side of man, and led on to the higher civilisations;—yea! because of whose patience and simple goodness we are as far on the road as we are to-day.

So then, our calling is to preach the gospel of Humanity: and our business is to freshen the life of the so-called "secular" world, and to pour a strengthening and cleansing spiritual tide into the material interests that always occupy the largest and most urgent half of man's existence,—and to do this by helping to develop a higher type of man and woman, and so to stop selfishness, to conquer greed, to check brutality, and to make pride ashamed before the face of the human brotherhood more and more disclosed. That is the Gospel for to-day:—that is the true missionary work for the pioneers who know their calling. And we, if we could disengage ourselves from textual, ecclesiastical, and doctrinal conventionalities, might see that we specially have a vocation here. The priest stands there with his magic, his professional saintliness, his vocation separating him from other men,—he himself claiming to be the supernatural channel of the grace of God. What is all that to us? A warning, not an example; a survival; the memorial of a stage we need to definitely leave behind. The true priesthood now belongs to the world, not only to the Church. This is the note that needs to be sounded now,—the note of a simple, serviceable, dominant Humanity;—the note that shall ring out, strong and clear, above the artificial pipings of conventional priests. The religion of Humanity—that is what is at the door—making all work a means of grace, and every honest labourer's standing-place holy ground:—the Religion of the workshop, of the price list, of the asylum and the hospital, the workhouse and the honourable haven for the

aged poor :—the Religion which, like some mighty tide that fills and floods every generous bay and tiny creek and cave, will determine the laws of labour for children, and for women and men,—will sweep away the sweaters, turn masters into God's ministers, and find the true Church militant in the army of toilers who carry on the business and do the rough work of the world. Do you not see how this, believed and acted up to, would make all things new? It would regenerate the world, and transform, convert, and inspire Religion itself: and that this is no dream is demonstrable; for, under our very eyes, it is becoming true. There was a time when a great Pope wrote the doom of heretics with a pen dipped in wine which had been transformed—so they said—into the blood of Christ, their God. There was a time when the Church held up the cross before the eyes of the victim it burnt the heavenly Father's name. See how far we have got beyond the possibility of that! And what has done it? The very thing which I would now push on to its last and great fulfilment.

But, if we do push on to that, we must be prepared for some strange results; for the angels have their saints in unexpected places, and they come in strange disguises. We shall find them in attics, and not only by altars; in offices, and not only in vestries; in club rooms, and not only in cathedrals; on hurries, pleading for railway men and omnibus drivers, and not only in pulpits, preaching about Egypt and Mesopotamia. Saints? The best have never been catalogued; the truest have never been recognised till they were dead,—and they were seldom, if ever, asked into the Universities or the House of Lords. Saints? Look at that restless radical—at that denounced democrat—at that unmanageable rebel—at that exasperated reformer—at that intrepid woman, teaching the match girls how to stand together,—at that eccentric minister resisting the lord of the manor who tried to steal a bit of playground from the poor. These, as likely as not, are our working saints. No haloes round their heads; only, perhaps, a cheap straw hat, and as unlike the conventional saint as Jesus Christ was when he was here;—a noble army, dear to God though despised by men.

And now, that sentence leads right up to the precious name here given to these saints;—"beloved of God." It is a human emotion or state of mind transferred to the divine, and, rationally understood, only means that which best represents the heavenly ideal. So one might say that a rich, full, juicy ear of corn is "beloved of God," that a happy songful skylark, alert and strong to soar and sing, is "beloved of God,"—even as was said of Jesus, the ideal man,—“This is my beloved son; hear ye him”: just as He might say; “This is my beloved skylark; hear ye it.”

And now, what has this to do with our mission? What? Why, everything! To this, said Paul, are ye "called." We need not surrender one syllable of our old Unitarian testimony, but we should now remove the ground of appeal from the Bible to the human soul,—from the divinity school to the streets; and the main object should be, not to demonstrate a doctrine, but to interpret life. That is specially our vocation; for every doctrine we teach has its deep roots in the facts of life and the needs of the world. The Fatherhood of God; the Brotherhood of Jesus; the creation of man by slow development and not by sudden magic; the salvation of man by his emancipation from brute survivals; the two lives, here and hereafter,

considered as an orderly advance from lower to higher stages—are all vitally related to everything in life,—to motherhood and fatherhood, to the home, the workshop, the legislature, the Church, the theatre, the newspaper, work and wages, the State regulation of wealth and the supervision of poverty. There is not a crevice of life which will not be breathed into by the holy spirit of this new faith: for the Holy Spirit is not sent forth to indite Greek pronouns and Hebrew verbs, but to work out the higher creation of the race. I do not say that we are to discuss in our churches the actual application of the great ruling principles which are to be the salvation of human society. Our churches are for the lifting up of divine ideals, not for the discussion of burning questions of special policy. I agree with those who say that the teacher of Religion should, as far as possible, keep out of the actual struggle over details, though, in some cases, not entirely. His vocation is that of an assertor of principles, a teacher of righteousness, an elevator of the world's motives, temper, spirit, a caller of men to the true saintly disposition that would make them want to be just, and lead the hard-hearted and the hard-fisted to do right. All I say is that it is our business to make the daily life of the world one of the supreme objects of our interests and concern. Here, for instance, is a glimpse of what I mean, taken from the lowlands of civilisation;—the christianising of San Francisco by an uncanonised saint, Wm. Taylor, the backwoods evangelist. The story tells us how this man, “coming to the place when it was simply a hell of gamblers and blacklegs, with no recognition in it of God or goodness, commenced amid sneers and threats, and at the imminent peril of his life, to preach in the open air; how he wrought on singlehanded, until at length a conscience began to emerge in that community, a conscience which expressed itself finally in a vote of the citizens that religion should be recognised in the city, and churches built.” And what is true of San Francisco may be true of London, of Liverpool, of the “Black Country,” of Manchester, of Leeds. And what is true of “a hell of gamblers and blacklegs” may be true of a hell of sweaters and slaves;—may be true of the unbearable contrast between the very rich and the very poor,—between the idlers and the overworked—between the few who live upon the many and the many who are practically the bondsmen of the few. Our Religion is going to have to do with all that—to make saintliness turn upon righteous decisions in relation to all that. Do you doubt it? Do you think that a sharp line must still be drawn between the church and the world? If so, then go back to the rudiments of Christianity, set forth in the great “Lord’s Prayer,” and mark well what is written there;—“Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, *on earth* as it is done in Heaven”: and then go, you Unitarians—free, as you say you are—go and help make your brother’s dream come true.

WHO WAS JEHOVAH ?

[READ BY J. PAGE HOPPS BEFORE THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, IN THE BANQUETING HALL, ST. JAMES’ HALL.]

If the question “Who was Jehovah?” failed to shock people, that would only be so because they would regard it as so entirely superfluous or unmeaning. The matter-of-course reply would be; “Jehovah was and is the one true and living God

who revealed himself to the Jewish nation, and, through it, to the world." I might as well say at once that I regard that as the most extraordinary and the most self-evident delusion that ever took possession of the queer compound we call the imagination of man. It is the standing mystery of Christendom: it is a colossal monument of human credulity: it shews that mankind can be got to believe or to imagine anything.

Not long ago, Dr. Momerie, in his blunt Address on "The corruption of the Church," noticed the phrase "The God of the Bible," and hit it full in the face by saying; "Which God? There are so many of them." He was right. In the Bible, words and actions are attributed to God which belong to absolutely opposite moral and spiritual spheres. In one place you have a God merciful and just: in another, a God savage and arbitrary. Here, He is benevolent: there brutal. From one point of view, you may say; "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want": from another, all you can say is; "The Lord will have His revengeful way, I have no chance." What are we to do? It is difficult to say; but it is easy to say what we cannot do;—we cannot say that the Jehovah of the Bible is one being.

There are two explanations:—either that the name "Jehovah" was a symbol, standing for an ideal Deity, reflecting, from time to time, the thoughts and feelings of His worshipers, or that the name was applied to a number of unseen beings of varying grades who, at different times, got control of the Hebrew mediums, also of varying grades—with results everywhere discoverable in the Bible.

In the first case, Moses and Joshua and David did no more than Mr. Spurgeon, Canon Farrar, and Dr. Martineau are doing; for all these idealised or idealise the Infinite One, and always according to the measure of the man—and always an imperfect ideal, never the absolutely real—always more and more perceived as men pass out of their darkness into God's marvellous light.

In the second case, the name "Jehovah" indicated a real being or beings who were neither higher nor better than their communications which must be taken on their merits, good or bad, wise or foolish, sensible or insane. For my own part, I think the truth lies in this direction, and hold that the humblest spiritualist, who knows what spirit-intercourse means and involves, is nearer to the solution of the problem than the profoundest scholar whose eyes are held by the delusion that Jehovah means the one Almighty God. The one has the key: the other does not see the door—or know where to look for it. Continually, we have "the spirit" or "the angel of the Lord" mentioned, in connection with manifestations and appearances more or less familiar to all spiritualists. If one spirit or angel, why not many? If the good and wise, why not the bad and foolish? Remember the Book of Job, with Satan lounging about the corridors of heaven, mingling with "the sons of God," and departing only to test and worry the sons of men. Was he not equal to some of the things attributed to Jehovah?—and to the use of His name?

But every one here probably knows by experience how puzzling are the contradictory results of spirit-comunion. At one time, all beautiful and good: at another time, all ugly and detestable; and the same name used:—just like the records concerning Jehovah. Who has not discovered that Shakspeare can talk like

a third-rate local preacher, that Milton can indulge in the dialect of Bethnal Green, and that some one calling himself your father can let you in for a heartless fraud ?—not a bit more disorderly than the difference between the 21st chapter of the 2nd Book of Samuel and the 23rd Psalm ;—Jehovah, in the one case, being a blood-thirsty demon, and, in the other case, a being worthy to be adored as “Our Father in Heaven.”

The suspicion that the Jehovah of the Old Testament was either a band of spirits of varying grades or a masterful spirit who took possession of this wandering tribe of fugitive slaves, and assumed the name “Jehovah,” is borne out by the fact that he is continually represented as vindictively jealous. He cannot bear rivals. He is always warning his adorers against “other Gods.” Nothing makes him so angry as to be neglected. Take only one instance. It is in the Book of Deuteronomy (Chap. 13.)

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder ; and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them ; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams : for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death : because he hath spoken to turn *you* away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers, *namely* of the gods of the people which *are* round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth, thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him ; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die.”

Honestly now, can you, ought you to accept that as spoken by the one Almighty God, the Father of Jesus, and our own ? Is it not infinitely more likely to have been the insidious, jealous, malignant suggestion of some spirit of evil ?

Consider one other very instructive instance of grave inconsistency. The Old Testament abounds with denunciations of human sacrifices, and yet the Hebrews were continually adopting the practice, and in the name of Jehovah, or mixed up with Jehovah-worship. The Book of Ezekiel (xxiii, 39) tells how the people came into the temple fresh from the offering up of their children to their idols ; and Jeremiah (xix, 4) tells how the “blood of innocents” had been offered in the temple itself : and, probing the matter further, we find that some “Jehovah” seems to have favoured it. Ezekiel seems puzzled over this, for he makes Jehovah say (xx, 25-6) “I gave them statutes that were not good . . . and I polluted them in their offerings, by making to pass through the fire all that were born, that I might make them desolate.” But, in the Book of Leviticus, we actually have direct proof that some one calling himself “Jehovah” did really demand human sacrifice. It is there stated (xxvii, 28-9) that every devoted thing, devoted to Jehovah, whether of man or beast, shall surely be put to death. Colenso makes the pregnant remark that Jeremiah’s frequent repudiation of human sacrifices in Jehovah’s name,

“shows plainly that the people must have pleaded some authority for the practice, emanating (as they declared) from Jehovah himself.” The story about Abraham’s readiness to take his only son Isaac, for the purpose of offering him up by fire, shews where these people were. Who was it, do you really think, that called Abraham to do that wicked deed? If into your room there came even the loveliest spirit-form, radiant with what seemed the light of heaven, ordering you to take your little son and go and burn him up on Primrose Hill: yea, though that being said “I am Jesus Christ,” would you not say, “Get thee behind me, Satan”? But Abraham took it as a matter of course, got ready his wood and his fire, and, when he came to the place, made Isaac carry the wood for his own burning, and calmly said to his servants, “Abide ye here . . . I and the lad will go yonder and worship.” “But God interfered to stop it, after all,” it is said. Yes, but the question is; What made Abraham so ready to go and do it? It did not seem to him anything either very wicked or very strange.

There is, however, a case where the horrid offering was carried out—and as a compact with Jehovah himself. Jephthah, when “the spirit of Jehovah came upon him,” made a compact with Jehovah that if he would give him a victory in a battle he would offer up, as a burnt offering, whatever first came from his house to meet him on his return: and he kept his word; and offered up to his dreadful deity his beloved child. What made this prominent Hebrew enter into such a horrible compact with Jehovah—when “the spirit of Jehovah came upon him,” too—if the offering up of human life was not accredited as possible in Jehovah-worship? Probably some “spirit” did “come upon him,” and it may have called itself “Jehovah,” but the homeliest modern English spiritualist would have seen through the ghastly fraud. It seems perfectly evident that there were several Jehovah’s or so-called Gods, some of whom denounced and some of whom conveyed the impression that they desired or might command the offering up of human sacrifices. In plain English; there were bad spirits and good.

I will only mention one other curious glimpse of confusion,—a well-known one but very suggestive. In the 2nd Book of Samuel (xxiv, 1-4) it is said that “the Lord’s anger was kindled against Israel, and he moved David” to take a census: but in the 1st Book of the Chronicles (xxi, 1-4) we read that “Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David” to take the census: and every feature in the story shews that the same transaction is referred to. The devout orthodox explanation is that God permitted Satan to do it, somewhat in the way that He permitted Satan to go and torture Job: but the truth lies on the surface:—some spirit prompted the deed; and whether it was called “Jehovah” or “Satan” depended upon the point of view: the unfortunate thing being that, as a rule, these people did not discriminate, but put down everything to their God which came from the spirit-world in His name,—a folly which, unhappily, Christendom has consented to take over and endorse.

Who, then, was Jehovah? The ancestors of the Hebrews knew nothing of the name. We read in the Book of Exodus (vi, 3) that when Jehovah revealed himself to Moses he said, “I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of El Shaddai, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them.” That is clear enough. “Jehovah” is introduced as a new God or a new name—and the

— tradition is that the new comer came through Moses ; though this record has the appearance of trying to make out that the innovation was not really an innovation as the setting up of a new God, but only as the promulgation of a new name. The tradition may be wrong in putting the introduction of the name as early as the time of Moses, but, for my purpose, this is immaterial. The point of importance is that "Jehovah" is admittedly a new name : and a curious fact is that by many lines we are led to Canaan as its home ; and to one particular tribe as the channel through which the name and the cult found their way to the Hebrews. This tribe was known as the Kenites, a people inhabiting the peninsula of Sinai, with whom, at a very early period, the Hebrews were closely connected. Jethro, called "a priest of Midian," one of whose daughters Moses married, was really a Kenite prince or chief, and his clan seems to have given considerable help to the Hebrews. Of the memorable visit of Moses and his friends to his father-in-law, Jethro, Dean Stanley writes ; "He (*i.e.* Jethro) is the first friend, the first counsellor, the first guide, that they have met since they cut themselves off from the wisdom of Egypt ; and they hang upon his lips like children." " ' When he was to depart to his own land and to his own kindred, Moses prayed him not to leave them.' In the trackless desert, he, with his Bedouin instincts and his knowledge of the wilderness, would know 'how they were to camp, and would be to them instead of eyes.' The alliance so formed was never broken. In subsequent ages, when Israel had long since become a settled and civilised people, in their own land, a stranger's eye would have at once discerned little groups of settlers here and there retaining their Arabian customs, yet one with the masters of the soil"—"the children of the Kenite" says Stanley, "dwelling among the people." In the 1st Book of Samuel (xv.) there is a very enlightening illustration of the close feeling of friendship between these Kenites and the Hebrews. Saul had resolved to attack the Amalekites amongst whom the Kenites were : so he sent a message to them ; "Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them : for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites," and were saved.

Colenso was on the same track, though farther afield, when he shewed the Phœnician origin of "Jehovah." He quotes the conservative Ewald who connects the word with Moses, or, rather, with the descendants of Moses "on the mother's side," *i.e.* on the side of the Kenite, and who says that, for some centuries after Moses, the word was "not very much used in common speech"—all of which points to the gradual adoption by the Hebrews of this Canaanitish deity. The language of the Phœnicians was practically the same as that of the Hebrews ; and it is certain that when the Hebrews came into contact with them they freely mixed with them and adopted many of their religious practices ; assimilating, as Colenso points out, their own practice to that of their heathen neighbours, serving their gods and adopting their forms of worship. Amongst these gods, the great sun-god stood preeminent. His great name has been "expressed both by heathen and Christian writers by the very same Greek letters (*I. A. Ω.*) by which they express also the mysterious Hebrew name" now called "Jehovah," which, however, is really a clumsy rendering of the Old Testament word ; the word *Yahveh* or *Jahveh* being nearer to the original. But the important point is that the name of the great

sun-god, the object of adoration in Canaan, was practically the very name which in time came to be recognised among the Hebrews. A Secretary of the Society of Biblical Archæology, speaking of some of the Assyrian inscriptions on the ancient monuments, once said, frankly ; “The incommunicable name of the Great Jehovah Himself has been found as the name of a Syrian deity of extreme antiquity, probably not in its spiritual character far remote from the God of the Hebrews”: but he did not seem to see the tremendous meaning of the discovery. “The whole body of proof, which we have had before us,” says Coleenso, “seems to us to tend conclusively to this, that the Hebrews, after their settlement in Canaan, coming in contact with the ancient religion of the land, and adopting readily, as the Scripture tells us they did, the worship of the people ‘round about them,’ became by degrees acquainted with the Great Name of the Phœnician Deity, and that from this source has been derived their own mysterious name for the Deity.”

How then is it that we find the name “Jehovah” in the very beginning of the Bible? Most of you know the explanation. In the so-called Books of Moses we have at least two strata of records—the one written by a person who states, as we have seen, that the name was revealed to Moses, and who therefore never uses it in his story till Moses does,—the word “Elohim” (gods) appearing in his part of the story till then: the other written by a person who wanted to produce the impression that Jehovah was known from the first, and who therefore introduces the name into the story from the beginning. Precisely in the same way, the prophets, when they attain to purer views, assume that Jehovah was a pure and righteous God from the first.

Now we can face the question ;—How then comes it to pass that we find in the Bible stern denunciations of the heathen practices of these very people who supplied the cult of Jehovah-worship? The answer is obvious. The worship of Jehovah, like the worship of Baal or Moloch, began low down, gross and anthropomorphic in the extreme, but, as time went on, the reformers and prophets emerged from the general corruption, and preached a purer faith. The result we know :—a people raised with difficulty to that purer faith, and always ready to sink back into the old idolatry of Jehovah-worship in its first crude forms :—a process not unknown even in England, and still going on :—the God of John Calvin and the God of Canon Farrar being as far apart as the God of Samuel and the God of Malachi, whose prophecy, standing alone, shews clearly what the prophet had to do against the priest.

The adoption of the Canaanitish God by the Hebrews was in harmony with the very ancient belief in territorial deities. When Jephthah challenges the king of the Ammonites to answer him, he pits Jehovah his God against Chemosh the God of the Ammonites, and talks about each God giving land—as though they were territorial deities, patronising the peoples they champion. Hence we find the servants of the king of Syria, after being beaten by the Israelites, hitting upon this explanation and device ;—“Their gods *are* gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they”: and we actually find Naaman, when he had resolved to worship Jehovah, as his God, asking for two mules, burden of earth on which to put his altar when he got away to Syria ;—just a bit of the territory, to link him with the territorial God! When Solomon built the temple, he said to Jehovah; “I have built a house of

habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever." So, in the Book of Ezekiel, we find Jerusalem is called, by Jehovah, (or, rather, by the prophet speaking in his name) "the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I shall dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever,"—a very comfortable provincial Deity! and, in the Book of Daniel, we read that when Daniel, in exile, prayed, "he opened a window that looked towards Jerusalem." Again, when the king of As-ryia carried away the children of Israel from Palestine, and colonised the country with people from Babylon and other distant places, we are told that Jehovah sent lions among them because they did not worship Him; and that they had to send for some exiled Hebrew priests to teach them "the ways of the God of the land" (2 Kings, xvii, 25-8): the inference being that Jehovah was a jealous territorial deity, the champion of the Jews. So, again, when Artaxerxes sent Ezra to Jerusalem to restore it, he gave him many precious things, and amongst them certain vessels, which, said he, (vii, 19) "are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, to be laid before the God of Jerusalem." But proof positive as to change of Gods lies before us at the very spot where we might expect to find it. In the concluding chapter of the Book of Joshua, where we find the story of the great crisis, the settlement of the Hebrews in the land of Canaan, we come upon the deliberate choice of a God—almost the voting for Him: and it plainly describes the great change. The aged Joshua is speaking;—

"Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods; for Jehovah our God, he brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: and Jehovah drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve Jehovah for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake Jehovah and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua; Nay, but we will serve Jehovah."

It is true that the people here antedate their connection with Jehovah, and identify Him with the God or Gods who, under other names, had led their fathers, but all this is clearly the ripening in Joshua's mind of what had passed in the mind of Moses. The record states that Moses, for the first time, came upon this new God or new name: and now here is his successor openly giving in his adhesion to the new cult, and prevailing on the people to give up the old Gods and to accept the new God with the new territory. Here it is plain that they were not monotheists. They believed in other Gods—in Gods old and new—and they now deliberately "put away the Gods" which their fathers had, and took for their God this new "Jehovah." But they were never true to Him for long. "Worshipping other Gods" was their favourite pastime. It probably simply meant holding intercourse or spirit-communion with many active and ambitious competing godlings. This is probably the key to the whole history of the Jews on this side of it.

But, whatever Jehovah is, He is always the champion or disciplinarian of this fighting tribe. Their enemies are His. When Moses had to fight Amalek, he built an altar to Jehovah, and called it "Jehovah, my banner," "for, he said, Jehovah

hath sworn ; Jehovah will have war against Amalek from generation to generation." (Exodus xvii, 16) Moses had no other idea than this—that this fighting God was his. He would have been perfectly ready to admit that Amalek had its God and champion, too.

There is a good deal of light to be found in such stories as that contained in the 2nd Book of The Chronicles (xxviii, 22-5) ; "In the time of his distress Ahaz trespassed against Jehovah, for he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him : and he said, Because the gods of the king of Syria help them, *therefore* will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers."

Here we get it all :—territorial gods, who help and smite ; and worship offered, to secure the one and buy off the other ;—putting up one's adoration to the highest bidder—going over to the God who helps. Hence the jealousy and anger of Jehovah, everywhere discoverable, for the Hebrews were very apt scholars in the school of backsliding. We find, then, that as the nation grew in importance, and as Jehovah-worship became more and more identified with it, it became what one has bluntly called "a pitiful rivalry between Jehovah and other local Deities" ;—*i.e.*—between various real or supposed spirits and their mediums. Thus we find the existence of "other gods" assumed ; and all that is said is that the Hebrews must be true to their choice—to, in fact, their great local spirit. Thus we read (Deuteronomy vi, 14-15) "Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you : (for the Lord thy God *is* a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth," and the threat is made that if they do go after these other gods, or spirits, they shall be cursed ; (Deuteronomy xxviii, 16-20),—"Cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the field. Cursed *shall be* thy basket and thy store. Cursed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed *shall* thou *be* when thou comest in, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed."

Persons who shrink from this tracking home of Jehovah to ancient Spiritualism would be helped if they would open their eyes to the fact that the Old Testament is practically one long record of the phenomena of spirit-communication. We are constantly coming across "the angel of the Lord." The ark, upon which so much seemed to turn, was a portable séance-room in or from which the spirit-manifestations and oracles were given. Moses, when he received the revelation of the mystic name, saw the glowing spirit-light in the bush. In fact, he was a powerful medium for spirit-manifestations, as we see all through. David, when hard-pressed by Saul, consulted Abiathar the priest who brought his magic ephod, and held a séance for the purpose of asking "Jehovah" whether David would be captured. "An angel of the Lord" appears to the people at Bochim to reproach them for not throwing down

the rival altars of the inhabitants of that land. Another "angel of the Lord" appears to the wife of Manoah, to promise her a son. In a time of sore distress, the children of Israel came and sat before the ark, and "enquire of Jehovah" about a battle, and receive a response to go and fight, with a promise of help. "In the year that king Uzziah died," Isaiah said he saw "Jehovah sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his trailing robes filled the temple." But there is no end to it. This "Jehovah" is evidently a powerful spirit, or a number of spirits, in close affinity for some reasons with these Hebrews, but with varying results—of wisdom and folly, good and evil, purity and obscenity,—just as it is in London and Boston and Paris to day.

(To be concluded).

THE BRITISH PHILISTINE'S ORATORIO.

It appears that the shining glory of the great Handel festival at the Crystal Palace was still "The immortal Oratorio of *The Messiah*". Of course, we are aware that to speak a word against the Oratorio will be regarded, by the average Briton, as a kind of sin against the Holy Ghost, but we must risk it, freely admitting, however, as we always freely admit, in venturing to point out the grave defects even of the Bible, that it contains things, beyond all telling, delightful and divine. In their way, surely "Comfort ye", "O thou that tellest", "He shall feed", "He was despised", will never die—perhaps will never be surpassed. But the deep defect of the Oratorio is that it entirely gives in to the Jewish Jingo's idea of the Messiah. It is essentially a fighting Oratorio, and the British Philistine loves it. He is roused even to roaring over "Why do the nations so furiously rage?" and "Thou shalt break them—and dash them in pieces". He never reflects that this is no more appropriate to his Messiah than "The Bay of Biscay" or "Rule Britannia", but he delights in it.

For the same reason, but with an added touch of splendour and something which it pleases him to call "Religion", he glories in "Unto us a child is born". It is strident, mighty, masterful. It defies contradiction, rolls you out of the road, and knocks you on the head with the Philistine's gorgeous delusion.

Being what he is, the British Philistine is enormously impressed with spectacle. He is like a big child. It is the pomp and circumstance that impress him most. If the House of Lords is abolished it will be because the young lordlings have failed to keep up the grand manner, and have made us think of opera hats, not coronets. The baccarat business hurt the Prince of Wales, not so much because he gambled, as because he carried his counters in his bag. If he had carried them in state, with cream coloured horses, wigs and liveries, the British Philistine would have been awed, and the Philistine newspapers (which, while they howled at the Prince, went on publishing their blackguard sporting news) would have sent special correspondents to give graphic details of the fashionable "function". The High Church people understand it, and by spectacle, pomp and parade, they are capturing even radical shopkeepers. So with this "Unto us a child is born". The British Philistine hesitates not to attribute it all to Jesus Christ. He does not know that in the Bible the passage refers to a gorgeous Eastern monarch for whom the poet predicts a reign of

splendour and power. He does not even see the gross incongruity of calling Christ "The Everlasting Father": it goes along with the rest on the mighty flood of sound, and the orthodox Philistinian breast swells with gaudy pride.

So with the chorus, "Lift up your heads". "The King of glory" is, of course, the Messiah. It does not matter that he is called "strong and mighty in battle". It has a noble Philistinian sound, and serves admirably well to introduce that truly Messianic idea of dashing somebody in pieces like a potter's vessel, or that fine outburst of biblical barbarism about the heavenly Lord laughing His enemies to scorn and having them in derision.

We have said little about the music of this notable Oratorio, though we have freely admitted its frequent grandeur or beauty, but may we be forgiven for saying that it is also frequently somewhat blatant and barbaric? Occasionally, too, it is anything but appropriate. Take, for instance, the great favourite with the Philistines, "All we like sheep have gone astray". As usually sung, clamorous, crude and peremptory, it sounds far more like "Call the sweep: it's cleaning day"; and it reminds one of nothing so much as giants in a hurry, calling up the sluggards, everybody being late for the work, and a dozen sweeps wanted right off in consequence.

Some day, perhaps, under the influence of Gounod, the British Philistine will moderate his "noble rage", and, while still finding delight in the imperishable beauties of *The Messiah*, will consent to let much that is in it drift away.

A SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF BELIEF IN A FUTURE LIFE.

V.

The limitations of the senses.

(CONTINUED.)

FOR illustrations of the fact that our senses are in every case excessively limited in their range, we only need to search in any direction. The very fact that one of our necessary arts is the art of arming all our senses in order to detect or bring within serviceable range so many objects is itself suggestive: but it is now a well-known fact that multitudes of so-called sounds and objects of sight, and tangible objects, utterly elude us, simply because our senses are not fine enough to be receptive or explanatory as to them.

As to sound, for instance. This is a phenomenon which is produced in us by a rhythmical and sufficiently rapid agitation of matter. This is the whole of it so far as the external *cause* of sound is concerned. But it is well known that there are material vibrations that the ear cannot catch or translate. This has been shown experimentally by means of the sensitive flame which can be made to dance and sing to sounds, or, rather, to waves of air so exquisite that our poor dull sense cannot perceive them. Thus it is literally true that if a sensitive flame had consciousness it would hear what we cannot hear, and surpass us as much in relation to the sense of hearing as some of the lower animals surpass us in the wonderful sense of smell. Professor Barrett, who discovered and has conducted some remarkable experiments

with sensitive flames, used a "Galton whistle," an instrument which emitted sounds of an increasing pitch at will. He tells us that the flame was agitated in proportion to the high pitch of the whistle, and that when the sound had nearly reached the upper limit of audibility of his left ear, and had gone quite beyond the limit of his right ear, the flame was still more violently agitated. Then he says—"Raising the pitch still higher, until I quite ceased to hear any sound, and until several friends could likewise detect no sound, even when close to the whistle, I was astonished to observe the profound effect produced upon the flame. At every inaudible puff of the whistle the flame fell fully 16 inches, and burst forth into its characteristic roar, at the same time losing its luminosity; and, when viewed in a moving mirror, presenting a multitude of ragged images, with torn sides and flickering tongues, indicating a state of rapid, complex, and vigorous vibration."

Mr. Huxley, referring to the exceedingly limited range of our senses, has also said that if we had ears tuned for it, we might hear, amid what we call the silence of the forest, the surging life, like the roar of a great city. The mystery of what we call "sound" is in itself a wonderful and utterly incomprehensible thing. Mr. Tyndall justly remarks that "the human mind cannot fathom" "how it is that the motion of the nervous matter" in the ear or brain can excite "consciousness of sound": for there is nothing corresponding to sound in what produces it: and, though a whole park of artillery were discharged, the only result would be a disturbance of the atmosphere, and not sounds at all, unless an ear and a mind were present to catch the waves of motion and translate them into sound.

A clever writer lately drew our attention to the fact that the microphone

"proves the presence about us of innumerable waves of sound, so slight as to be inaudible to us. It reveals to the ear a new world, as the microscope has opened a new world to the eye. This revelation is another proof of the fact, so important to psychological science, that our senses are constructed to perceive only an infinitesimal portion of the sights and sounds about us; that the invisible and inaudible world by which we are surrounded, and of whose very existence we have no knowledge, is infinitely more populous of forms, of sounds, of life, than the world which our senses reveal to us: therefore, that it is mere folly and presumption to pass an *a priori* judgment, and to pronounce of anything that it cannot be. Still more presumptuous is it to assert that molecular matter, which alone is perceptible by the senses, is all that exists in this world, remembering that those senses cannot perceive a thousandth part of that which we know to be, and that if our eyes had been microscopes and our ears microphones we should be actually seeing millions of things in that which is now solitude, and hearing millions of sounds in that which now is silence."

It is easy, then, to conceive of a Universe of sound under entirely different conditions: and, to this, modern Science bears witness, in revealing the fact that we occupy and comprehend but a small space in the vast sphere of things flooded by and tremulous with ethereal and atmospheric conditions wherein the possibilities of sound are illimitable. Mr. Tyndall has abundantly shown that the sound-waves are strictly amenable to law with mathematical and geometrical truth and beauty; and some recent experiments have shown us, he says, that "were our organs sharp enough to see the motions of the air through which an agreeable voice is passing we might see stamped upon that air the conditions of motion on which the sweetness of the voice depends." Or, as an ingenious poet has put it;

"Ah, could I see the motions of the air
Through which the dulcet warblings of a flute
Are welling, or a lover's liquid lute

Distil melodious cadences;— if there
 I watched the musical conditions fair
 And lovely as when leaves and petals shoot
 In order, and obey the vital root,
 And the great Florist in His works declare,—
 Then I should know how beauty and sweet sound
 Rest on a common basis and embrace
 As sisters—how vibrations in a round
 Of choral dance their stated figures trace—
 How sights and strains harmonious intersphere,
 And music runs her geometric race.”*

As the result of a number of very ingenious experiments, we have now some most beautiful diagrams showing the forms described in the air by different chords or cadences, almost tempting one to think that the *sight* of the lovely lines would be as delightful as the hearing of the melodious sounds; and, as the rational mind abhors the idea of waste or of a mindless sphere of beauty and harmony, it is in itself a thought of harmony, that this unseen Universe of exquisite vibration does convey delight to beings adapted to receive and comprehend it. It is a beautiful discovery, that “the physical basis of harmony” is “a symmetric sequence of compound movements, presenting to the ear,” as, if we could see them, they would present to the eye, “an astonishing variety of beautiful convolutions of form.” Harmony for the ear would, if we could see the flow of it in the air, be harmony for the eye. What, if in that Unseen Universe, Thought and Love, without the intervention of pen or tongue, convey their own full flood of meaning to brain and soul!

(To be continued).

NOTES ON BOOKS.

“Modern Christianity and modern Spiritualism judged by the teachings of Jesus Christ; and an examination of the principle Articles of the Church of England bearing upon the subject.” By Arcanus. London: J. Burns. A very thoughtful but unconventional book, whose aims are indicated by the title of it and by the following motto adopted by the author; “If no man will speak unpopular truth, then the first step can never be taken in spiritual progress.”

“The Lord’s Supper: its form, meaning and purpose, according to the Apostle Paul.” London: E. Stock. The anonymous writer of this thoughtful little

work is by no means a militant heretic: if anything, he is perhaps a little too much held by survivals, but he must be an independent reader and a keen thinker. His examination of Paul’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper is genuinely interesting, apart from any interest that may be taken in the subject: and we are inclined to think that the Communion service (as we prefer to call it) was never more reasonably, luminously, and delightfully explained. “Advanced” men who have lost interest in it should read this bright book. They might feel their hearts go out towards a symbol which was meant to be and which might be a beautiful and touching testimony of brotherly unity, love, and devotion.

* J. C. Earle.