

The Coming Day.

JANUARY, 1892.

THE BIBLE AND WOMANKIND.

[SPOKEN IN LEICESTER BY J. PAGE HOPPS.]

AN attempt which I have lately made to give wider publicity to The Ideal of "Our Father's Church"—has brought to me a large number of intensely interesting communications,—most of them very strongly appreciative, but a few critical and hesitating. One of these last raises a somewhat novel point. The question is put to me why I endorse and help the one-sided view of God involved in the word "Father": and further inquiry has revealed the curious fact that a great many thoughtful people feel the difficulty indicated. Theodore Parker felt it, and frequently, both in sermon and prayer, spoke of God as Father and Mother. The ancient pagans had their woman-gods, and the Roman Catholic Church, wise in its generation, promoted the mother of Jesus, and made her an object of adoration—Queen of Heaven and mother of the Jesus-god.

It does not appear to me, however, that the use of the solitary designation "Father" is necessarily one-sided. The word does not necessarily refer to the masculine at all when used of God. It is only a symbol. If we intended to be literal and all-inclusive, we should have to say, not only "He" and "She" but "It"; for surely we should need something to designate that side of God which enfolds and includes the starry worlds and all their unconscious glories as well as conscious mankind and womankind. No: we must not be bound down to literalness; that would at once land us in anthropomorphism—or the making of God only a kind of magnified man—or woman and man. As my printed Ideal says; "The Fatherhood of God is an earthly symbol of a heavenly reality. By these words, '*Fatherhood of God*,' we mean that the mysterious Almighty Power which produces all things is mindful and merciful; and that, in the end, when all our speculations and dark imaginings are out-grown, the trust of the human spirit in the might and mercifulness of that Power will survive, as the beginning and the end of true Religion. The truest thing we can say of God is that 'in Him we live, and move, and have our being,' and that, therefore, in a very profound sense, He is 'Our Father.' He is fully revealed in no book, no creed, no church, but is ever The Ideal, the best in all things everywhere, the ceaseless Creator, the inmost uplifting Life of all things."

And yet there is an element of truth in the reproach that the masculine does too strongly dominate us,—that it dominates both the Old Testament and the New—and that, outside of the Catholic Church, it has too strongly dominated in Christendom to this very day. A keen American writer, William Denton, who has taken up the cause of those who criticise the Bible as what one woman called a

"he-book," draws attention to the fact that of the sixty-six books which make up the Bible, not one is by a woman. "If," he asks, "if God inspired the Bible, why did he not inspire women to write some part of it?" If He became incarnate, why only in a "beloved son"? Over and over again, He is set forth as "a man of war": where, asks William Denton, where is the "divine woman of peace"? Even the "Holy Ghost," the Comforter, is He. "Three male gods," he says, "or one male god in three male persons. This is unnatural, contrary to the dual principle exemplified in almost every department of nature." This same writer also draws attention to the fact that the masculine dominates all the Bible references to Heaven. "Three angels appeared to Abraham and subsequently to Lot; they were three males, for Abraham mistook them for men; and so did the inhabitants of Sodom. The angel that wrestled with Jacob is called a man; and the angel that appeared to Manoah and his wife was 'a man of God.' The angel that announced to Zechariah the birth of John, was a male, and so was the angel who was sent from God with a message to the mother of Jesus; the angel that rolled the stone away from the sepulchre is styled a 'he,' and the two that appeared to the women in the sepulchre are called by another Gospel writer 'two men in shining garments.' The four and twenty angelic elders, that the revelator saw standing before the throne, were men, and so were the hundred and forty-four thousand who stood next to them. I know of no single instance in the Bible, where the sex of an angel is indicated, that the angel is not a male."

The Bible masculine-bias is seen in the story of the creation of woman. She is made at second-hand; not independently, but only out of a portion of the man. She is evidently "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh," and is plainly intended to be only a dependent creature, owned by the man. The patriarchs are, of course, all men. "Where are the matriarchs?" asks William Denton.

But all this is on the surface. A much more serious matter is the treatment of women by the masculine master and owner pictured in the Bible. The greatest of the favourites of Jehovah, Abraham, tells his wife to pass herself off, in Egypt, as his sister; and she does it, though almost to her undoing, and Peter expressly praised her, by name, for her "obedience" to Abraham, her "lord."

The shocking story of Abraham's treatment of his servant, Hagar, it is hardly possible to tell in decent language. Sarah is childless, and substitutes her maid (not a word about Hagar's consent). Then Ishmael is born; but, later on, Sarah has a son; and the poor Hagar is turned adrift. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away; and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went and sat down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept." And it was Jehovah who counselled Abraham to do this!

The story about Lot is absolutely untellable; but it all turns on this favorite of Jehovah offering to buy off a rabble by giving up to them his two daughters in the

streets that, as Lot put it, "you may do to them as is good in your eyes—only unto these men do nothing";—the villain! and yet this is the man chosen by Jehovah for special protection! and even James the apostle calls him "righteous Lot."

On the reverse side, when women are mentioned, it is nearly always in a sinister way. It is Eve who brought all misery into the world. It was she who plucked the forbidden fruit. "It was not I," said Adam, "Eve gave unto me; and I did eat." It is Lot's wife who gets turned into a pillar of salt. The turning of one's daughters into the street is permissible to a man, but pardonable curiosity is fatal in a woman! It is a woman who tempts Jacob to lie to his father and cheat his brother. It is a woman who tempts a hunted soldier into her tent, and who drives a tent peg into his head when he is asleep.

The writer, to whom I have already referred, draws special attention to the degradation of women all through these records of Jehovah-worship. A woman, after child-birth, was ceremonially and religiously "unclean" for seven days if the child was a male; but for fourteen days if a female. ("Guilty of being a mother,"—says William Denton, "and doubly guilty if she gave to the world only a girl!")

In relation to property, the provisions of the Old Testament concerning widows were ingeniously cruel. If a man died having a son or sons, his property went to them only. If he died having no child, all went to his brother. If he died having no child and no brothers, all went to his cousin. In the 27th Chapter of the Book of Numbers, there is a curious case of protest by some advocates of "woman's rights." "Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and had no sons: why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father. And Moses brought their cause before Jehovah. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them." A very notable event in the history of the world—perhaps the first meeting of a "Woman's rights" Association!—and they actually converted Jehovah! A great encouragement!

Concerning marriage, I prefer to quote William Denton's uncompromising words;—According to the ordinances ordained by Jehovah, "the man sold his daughters for marriage; he could give them as pledges or even sell them as slaves. The Jewish soldier could lead off a captive woman, willing or unwilling, married or unmarried; she was his slave, and her consent was no more considered necessary than that of a sheep is by a butcher. If he became dissatisfied with her he could let her go, but could not sell her. See Deut. 21: 10-14.

The law for Israelitish matrons was not much better than that for captives taken in war. Deut. 24: 1. "When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give in her hand, and send her out of his house."

'But, Moses, my husband is unclean; he is a gluttonous man, an adulterer and a drunkard; I do not wish to live with him any longer.'

What says Moses? He shakes his head. 'You must bear with him as well as you can, for the Lord has no message of deliverance for you.'

Even the New Testament inherits the masculine one-sidedness of the Old. Again and again, by Paul and others, woman is treated and spoken of as a necessary evil. The 144,000 special saints who are in the highest heaven are described as never having had anything to do with women. Paul bluntly says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." Paul also said;—"Now I praise you brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head." Now for the reason! "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."

How few who read these words really reflect upon them! They affirm that woman stands to man as man stands to Christ,—nay that she is to the man what man is to God Himself. They also affirm the odious theory that the woman is not created for herself but for the man,—a theory which is responsible for ages of stupid repression and specially bitter misery. Then, to clinch all, Paul says to the young minister, Timothy, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." To the Corinthians, he also said, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home."

There is something singularly mean in all this. The woman is to go with bowed head and silent tongue because poor Eve was responsible for the fall of man. "The woman being deceived was in the transgression," says Paul: in other words, it was her fault; now let her hold her tongue: and if she wants to know anything, let her go home and ask her husband, and give in.

Poor Paul! William Denton suspects that he had his troubles. He says, "I think I see evidences in Paul's epistles that the women in the Christian churches did not willingly submit to be mere ciphers. They wanted an opportunity to speak in the church, to teach, to vote and exercise those gifts, which were common to them and man." 'Some young widows in the church,' says William Denton, 'seem to have particularly offended him. I suppose they knew the men better than their sisters,

and were less ready to bow down at the word of command ; these he denounces vehemently.' 'Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith, and withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle, but tattlers and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.' Perhaps they *were* a little tiresome, but surely the good apostle need not have gone so perilously near swearing at them."

It is a fact that Christendom did inherit the old Jewish masculine one-sidedness. Even to our own day, the most wicked laws relating to the property and earnings of women stood their ground even in England ; and the laws relating to the custody of children have been cruel beyond all expression as against the wife and mother.

Survivals of the old masculine one-sidedness exist in full force to-day :—in our almost entire exclusion of women from the ministry of religion ; in our opposition to putting them on an equality with men in relation to the vote ; in the compulsion necessary before men will allow a woman to serve where she is so much wanted—on School-Boards and on Boards of Guardians. Not long ago, men doctors rose up in riot in Edinburgh against the attempt to teach women who wished to qualify as doctors, and our great English Universities cheat women out of the fruits of their degrees :—all of which we do not regard as barbaric only because we are so fast held by the old Hebrew masculine one-sidedness.

And now, what is the upshot of all this ? Merely another raid on Jehovah-worship and the Bible ? No, but this ;—one more consoling glimpse of the blessed law of onwardness. I rejoice in this modern uprising of womankind—this longing for responsibility, justice, power, just as I should rejoice in the emergence of any God-created thing. Let us not resist and resent, but praise the great Creator if woman, ceasing to be a chattel or a toy, asks for her share in the nation's public life, and offers her help in the divine effort to work out England's salvation. Then shall we understand that the Ideal God is not represented by man and Fatherhood alone, but by woman and Motherhood, and by all nature's forces and effects ; since, in that Ideal Life which we call God, we and all things "live and move and have our being," a harmony, not a discord ;—not a chaos, but a created and creative whole.

AN IDEAL FAITH FOR THE COMING DAY.

THERE are two classes of persons who will object to the phrase "An ideal faith for the Coming Day : " and those two classes of persons include the only two logical classes of "believers" outside of the sphere occupied by Theists and Unitarians, viz., Roman Catholics and consistent "orthodox Protestants." There is really no alternative. For modern "liberal orthodoxy" there is no logical resting-place. Roman Catholicism asks ; How can there be a faith for the Coming Day that shall be different from the faith of the past ? Is not the infallible truth revealed ? and the consistent Protestant asks the same question ; and refers us to the Bible. Alas ! a hundred conflicting sects refer us to the Bible : and no wonder, for the Bible grossly contradicts itself or is hopelessly confused. Precious as it is, the last claim we can make for it is that it is consistent.

But, both Catholics and Protestants refer us to what they call "The faith once delivered to the saints"—a delightful phrase—that will not bear the slightest scrutiny. Some of the old priests and monks who hammered out those old creeds were anything but saints. But, in any case, whether they were saints or sinners, we are bound to ask the question, and to ask it with all reverence—Why should they be entitled to interpret for all time the truth of God? Still further; which faith delivered to the saints are we to be bound by for ever? for there are several faiths which claim to have been originally delivered to the saints.

Under these circumstances what is a plain and honest man to do? Amidst all this clatter of the creeds, all these puzzles of the sects, and these conflicting claims of Christians, old and new, there is only one thing an honest man can do, and that is to follow the example of Bible characters, of the old saints, psalmists, and prophets, by going to God for himself, and asking Him to lead into the way that is good.

In order to make the way clear, four propositions may be advanced :

1. It is a mere assumption to say that any one age or any one people has received a supernatural and final revelation of the truth.
2. The gift of such a revelation would have been an injury to mankind.
3. As a matter of fact, no faith exists that deserves to rank as a perfect and final one.
4. To form our own faith, with such help as we can get from all sources, past and present, is one of our gravest duties and most sacred rights.

[I.] It is a mere assumption to say that any one age or any one people has ever received a supernatural and final revelation of the truth. The Roman Catholic Church, as just noted, makes that assumption, and is quite consistent, because it tells us that all we have to do is to hear the Church which, by God, has been appointed the guardian of such a faith; and that, therefore, we ought to bow our knees, shut our eyes, and believe even against reason and conscience: in fact, that the more we put down the reason the more complete and commendable will be our faith: and, for this, continuity is pleaded; but, alas, even though hand joins hand, from the Pope of to-day right on to St. Peter, we see no guarantee anywhere that will ensure a heaven-sent message or even a common earth-spun truth.

Orthodox Protestantism also makes the assumption, and then at once proceeds to make it absurd by its ceaseless divisions and mutual contradictions. But, assuredly, the Protestant's Bible fails to endorse the claim made on its behalf:—it even suggests the contrary. The great inspired souls of the Bible were examples of a method of search for God, and in accepting an old faith, given once for all, orthodox teachers positively subverted and reversed the very thing they tried to teach. What those old Bible characters seemed to say was this—Seek God, go to Him, trust in Him, and He will reveal Himself. They all bear witness to a living God who waits to reveal Himself to living men.

Coming down to the New Testament, we find Jesus saying; "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your

Father, who is in Heaven, give good things unto them that ask Him!" That is as true for London as ever it was for Jerusalem—as true for us and our children as it was for Jesus and his disciples. The Apostle James said, "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." And if James were here he would tell us the same thing, and would say that it is as true for us as it was for the men and women to whom he spoke. So that from the Bible itself it seems as clear as light that it is a mere assumption that any one age or any one people ever did receive such a thing as a supernatural and final revelation of the truth.

[II.] The gift of such a revelation would have been an injury to mankind. The most precious possession a man has, the very thing which developed him, and made him a real human being, is the love of and the search for truth. Part of the possession of the truth came with the search for it. Truth is not like a £5 note; which could be given to a man to put in his pocket. He must seek it and get it for himself. With a receptive mind, a yielding will, a loving heart, and a reverent spirit, a man must assimilate the truth for which he hungered and thirsted.

Huxley, in a curious and disagreeable mood, once protested he would have preferred being a correct machine rather than a responsible being—a correct clock or chronometer, wound up once for all and warranted to go correctly. He never could have really meant it. It was one of his grim jests, although he seemed to speak in earnest. Surely it were better to be a stumbling and blundering man doing his little best rather than the most perfect machine. God is creating men and women, not chronometers and machines: therefore a perfect revelation would have been an injury to us, because the most precious thing we have from God is this hunger for the truth.

[III.] As a matter of fact, no faith exists that deserves to rank as a perfect and final one. Every faith that has been formulated has grave defects—defects which are discovered as civilisation develops, as ages roll on, as science makes men wiser, and as intercourse one with another breaks down misapprehensions.

There is not a single creed in Christendom that has not passed, and that is not passing, through the process of crumbling down, a crumbling down of those portions which are survivals of the hard and bitter relations that once existed between sovereign rulers and their miserable subjects. We know now the history of those creeds. They were formed in accordance with the thoughts and experiences of the times that produced them: and such evil thoughts as the great Judge crushing His "lost" creatures in an eternal Hell would never have been hammered out except in the wretched times when the poor serfs were accustomed to the cruelties of their despotic rulers. In those days they had the earthly subject crushed by the earthly ruler, and so it was easy to believe in the poor wretch, first trembling and afterwards crushed, beneath the hands of an angry God.

[IV.] To form our own faith, with such help as we can get from all sources, past and present, is one of our greatest duties and most sacred rights. Fidelity to God is fidelity to self—fidelity to the inner light—to the average or highest reason, conscience, love, and civilisation of Humanity; and the real infidelity is discoverable in the slighting of these guiding lights.

Proceeding from these four propositions we may go on now to mark out the outlines of the ideal faith of the Coming Day. And, to do this, we need not stir from the great root-ideas of our own day; for the thoughts that centre round the three great familiar words, God, Man, Salvation, are the very thoughts that will guide us to a true conception of the ideal faith.

That faith will still have for its basis the immense, the vital, the fruitful idea of God. Some say that Science will lead us away from God. This is true, and not true. It is true, because Science is leading and will more and more lead us from the old imperfect pictures of God—from the dwarfed and inadequate gods—and will more and more compel us to contrast Him with the magnitudes of the Universe. It is only a passing seeming that Science is antagonistic to Theism; for a vaster Universe will need and will, in time, present to us, a vaster God: and Science, by giving us a vaster conception of the universe, will destroy our dwarfed conceptions of Deity, and leave a vaster, grander, and more glorious God to watch over the vaster, grander, and more glorious universe which it reveals. This is a point which needs to be carefully considered.

Rational believers are often charged with rebelling against God. It is not true. What is true is that we are rebelling against the mediæval pictures of God. It is our reverence and love for God, and it is the beauty of our ideal conception of a greater Deity, which compel us to reject these pictures. The rejection of the old ideas of God is not rebellion against God Himself, but against the god-makers. As a shrewd and witty man once said, "The Old Book declares that the Lord said, 'Let us make man in our own image,' and man has returned the compliment by making God in his image." We object to that; and we think true faith demands that objection. In fact, all the objections or negations of rational believers are based on distinct affirmations. We deny the Trinity, for instance, not because we rebel against God, but for the reverse reason—because we are so completely enamoured of the idea of one great good Creator of all things, the infinite Father of us all, that we have no room for any other God. It is our reverence for the Almighty God, the maker of all things, that leads us to deny the Trinity as something entirely unnecessary and entirely misleading, which only sets men by the ears and makes men quarrel, without doing any real good to anybody. We deny salvation through the blood of Christ; we deny salvation through the imputation to sinners of the righteousness of Christ, not because we are rebels, but because we so thoroughly believe in the justice of God, and the sanctity of moral law in relation to the Deity as well as in relation to Humanity. We say it is unjust and heathenish to talk about the salvation of man through the blood of Christ, or the blood of God. Why?—because of the purity of our conception of God's justice. Because of the sweetness, completeness, grandeur, and righteousness of the greater God we deny these things; and our negations are based on glorious affirmations. We deny the doctrine of eternal punishment in Hell. Our conception of God's justice, righteousness, pity and love, compel us to deny it; and, again, our negation proceeds from our affirmation. Our heresy is the exact measure of our reverence. We occupy the middle ground between those who say, "God is unknowable," and those who say, "God has perfectly revealed himself," and we say that neither of these extremes is proved. God is not unknowable, and He is not perfectly revealed. He is absolutely unknowable in

Himself, but, when we think of the harmony, order, unity, and wonderfulness of the Universe, we are compelled, by an intellectual necessity, to infer Him, and then we say, "God is great," we cannot know everything about Him; He is not perfectly revealed to such creatures as we are, but He is spiritually discernible and we can arrive at some idea of His character. We naturally advance in our knowledge of God, as we naturally advance in our knowledge of all things, through experience and the development of our faculties. It is the Bible itself which asks; "Canst thou by searching find out God?—canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" and it is the Bible which supplies us with evidence that we cannot, for it shows us every sign of change and advance in the conception of God even in what is called His "word"! In the Book of Numbers we read this; "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done unto him. And the Lord said unto Moses, 'The man shall be surely put to death. All the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.' And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died, as the Lord commanded Moses." They want us to believe that! We cannot and we will not. We will not, because we believe in God, and not because we rebel against Him. Because we believe in God, in His greatness, His righteousness, His justice and goodness, we are not going to believe that wretched record just as it stands; though we can readily believe that something of the kind happened, and that some fiery bigot thought God approved.

In the Book of Deuteronomy we read this; "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 them, 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. Thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people."

What are we to say to that? Can we wonder where the Roman Catholics and the Protestants got their mechanism of brutal persecution in the old days?

We turn to the Book of Psalms and read this; "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works:"—what! over the man who picked up sticks on a Sunday?—over the man who tried to persuade his friend, or his brother, or his wife to worship in a way that seemed better to him than the old one! Contrasting the two statements, what are we to do?

Some who read these words will think we are pulling the Bible to pieces. Not so. We are not pulling anything to pieces: we are trying to put things together. We are seeking the truth, and we only say that we find contradictory statements in the Bible which, properly understood, are equally precious. "What?" it may be

asked, "equally precious?" Yes: but not so precious as the truth of God. Certainly not. But very precious as showing us what a long way we have got on the road of human civilisation and true religion.

Then we turn to the New Testament, and find Jesus saying; "When ye pray, say; Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come," and John saying: "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." People who say that the Bible is the infallible Word of God should look into this. The Bible contradicts itself about its supposed Author!

The fact is, there is as much progress in the Bible, in relation to religion, as in the uninspired and fallible world outside. That is a fine saying of Hosea's; "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Yes, we must "follow on" to know: and, if we do, modern civilisation and modern science will add splendid conceptions of law and order, and justice and mercy, to the old conceptions of God.

(To be concluded next month.)

AN HOUR WITH OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

BY J. TINKLER.

It has been said of the sixteenth century that it was a spendthrift of scientific and literary genius. "Bacon had discovered the impenetrability of matter chewing on his coral whilst the maker of Romeo was stretching forth his baby-fingers for the moon wherewith to play. Any severe increase in the rate of infant mortality might have robbed us at once of Galileo and Kepler, of Cervantes and Spenser, of Montaigne and Bacon, of Raleigh and Shakespeare. An attack of immortality in a family might have been looked for then as scarlet fever would be now."

If the maker of this remark had not himself been a New Englander, he might, with a large show of justice, have extended the statement to the New England States of this nineteenth century. They may not have produced such a discoverer as Galileo, because such large things can only be discovered at infrequent intervals. They may not have created a Hamlet (Hamlet only needed creating once), but setting aside our one William—poet and philosopher alike—not for an age but for all time, we venture to think that no one generation, in our own or any other country, but has been surpassed by the New England of the latter half of this nineteenth century.

That we should only seek for Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes a forward and a not inconspicuous pedestal in the temple of fame, is not that there is not much in him to deserve more—it is rather that there are some of his own generation to whom we are bound to give pre-eminence. There are certainly many symptoms of incurability in his attack of the complaint to which we have referred. His own words on Emerson are so true of himself: "an iconoclast without a hammer who took down

the idols of the people from their pedestals so tenderly that it seemed like an act of worship."

The works by which Dr. Holmes is most widely known are the trio, "The Autocrat, Professor, and Poet at the Breakfast Table"; but it would be hard to define what it is in these that creates their charm. It is rather the mingling of striking similes and quaint humour, of pithy parables and pungent philosophy, and of character-sketching, than in any one of these elements considered separately. The spirit of the poet is manifested almost as much in the prose as in the verse, in the deep insight into life no less than in the devout aspirations of "Windclouds and Stardrifts," or of the hymns, "Lord of all being, throned afar," and "O Love Divine that stooped to share."

In the outer framework of the books (plot it can hardly be called) it is difficult to say whether pathos or humour is the more predominant. In fact, they really blend. The Autocrat and the Schoolmistress resolve very tenderly to tread the long path of life together. When they met at breakfast their plates were respectively adorned with red currants and a red rose, white currants and a white rose, whilst under broad leaves on the rest of the plates were solemn piles of black huckle-berries—mourning fruit. The Courtship of the Young Girl and the Marylander is preluded by the story of Little Boston, whilst, in the latter part, the aspirations of the Astronomer and Scheherazade to form a double star in the firmament of life are relieved by the simple ambition of the Scarabee, who aspired not to be a Coleopterist, and the popgun of that boy which has lost to the world "the one central fact in the order of things which solves all questions." Here we should like to remark as a sort of parenthesis to the main review that what the popgun nipped in the bud on the lips of the Old Master has been given by the author in his less-known work, "Mechanism in Thought and Morals."

Honest Izaak Walton said of his pike, "This dish of meat is too good for any but anglers or very honest men." This story is good only for philosophers and very small children—

"I once inhaled a pretty full dose of ether, with the determination to put on record, at the earliest moment of regaining consciousness, the thought that I should find uppermost in my mind. The mighty music of the triumphal march into nothingness reverberated through my brain, and filled me with a sense of infinite possibilities, which made me an archangel for the moment. The veil of eternity was lifted. The one great truth which underlies all human experience, and is the key to all the mysteries that philosophy has sought in vain to dissolve, flashed upon me in a sudden revelation. Henceforth all was clear: a few words had lifted my intelligence to the level of the knowledge of the cherubim. As my natural condition returned I remembered my resolution; and staggering to my desk I wrote, in ill-shaped struggling characters, the all-embracing truth still glimmering in my consciousness. The words were these (children may smile; the wise will ponder): A strong smell of turpentine prevails throughout!"

It is hinted to philosophers that the moral of this story bears on two points: first, the value of our self-estimate sleeping—possibly, also waking; secondly, the significance of general formulæ when looked at in certain exalted mental conditions.

Returning to the Breakfast Table. It is difficult to discriminate between what are merely similes and what may be called parables. We will venture to give a few rather by way of sample than of exhaustion.

“One-story intellects, two-story intellects, three-story intellects with skylights. All fact-collectors who have no aim beyond their facts are one-story men. Two-story men compare, reason, generalise, using the labours of the fact collectors as well as their own. Three-story men idealise, imagine, predict; their best illumination comes from above, through the skylight. There are minds with large ground-floors that can store an infinite amount of knowledge; some librarians, for instance, who know enough of books to help other people, without being able to make much other use of their knowledge, have intellects of this class. Your great working lawyer has two spacious stories; his mind is clear because his mental floors are large, and he has room to arrange his thoughts so that he can get at them—facts below, principles above, and all in ordered series. Poets are often narrow below, incapable of clear statement, and with small power of consecutive reasoning, but full of light, if some times rather bare of furniture in the attics.”

THE REAL JOHN.

“It is not easy at the best for two persons talking together to make the most of each other’s thoughts—there are so many of them. (The company looked as if they wanted an explanation.) When John and Thomas, for instance, are talking together it is natural enough that among the six there should be more or less confusion and misapprehension.”

(The landlady turned pale. The severe looking person made an allusion to Falstaff’s nine men in buckram. The old gentleman slid the carving-knife to one side, as it were, carelessly).

“I think I can make it plain to Benjamin Franklin here that there are at least six personalities distinctly to be recognised as taking part in that dialogue between John and Thomas.

Three Johns.	{	1st—The real John—known only to his Maker.
		2nd—John’s ideal John—never the real one, and often very unlike him.
		3rd—Thomas’s ideal John—never the real John, nor John’s John, but often very unlike either.
Three Thomases.	{	The real Thomas.
		Thomas’s ideal Thomas.
		John’s ideal Thomas.

Only one of the three Johns is taxed—only one can be weighed on a platform-balance—but the other two are just as important in the conversation.

Let us suppose the real John to be old, dull, and ill-looking. But as the Higher Powers have not conferred on men the gift of seeing themselves in the true light, John very possibly conceives himself to be youthful, witty, and fascinating, *and*

talks from the point of view of this ideal. Thomas, again, believes him to be an artful rogue, we will say; therefore he *is*, so far as Thomas's attitude in the conversation is concerned, an artful rogue, though really simple and stupid. The same conditions apply to the three Thomases."

It follows that until a man can be found who knows himself as his Maker knows him, or who sees himself as others see him, there must be at least six persons engaged in every conversation between two. Of these, the least important, philosophically speaking, is the one that we have called the real person. No wonder two disputants often get angry, when there are six of them talking and listening all at the same time."

Hear also the parable of the salt-fish: "I find that there is a very prevalent opinion among the dwellers on the shores of Sir Isaac Newton's 'Ocean of Truth,' that salt-fish which have been taken from it a good while ago, split open, cured and dried, are the only proper and allowable food for reasonable people. I maintain, on the other hand, that there are a number of live fish still swimming in it, and that every one of us has a right to see if he cannot catch some of them. Sometimes I please myself with the idea that I have landed an actual living fish, small, perhaps, but with rosy gills and silvery scales. Then I find the consumers of nothing but the salted and dried article insist that it is poisonous, simply because it is alive, and cry out to people not to touch it."

This is a subject on which the doctor waxes warm and eloquent, and his comparison of creeds, theological and medical, is exceedingly apt.

"Whoso offers me any article of belief for my signature implies that I am competent to form an opinion upon it; and if my positive testimony in its favour is of any value, then my negative testimony against it is also of value."

"A French physiologist confined some tadpoles under water in the dark. Removed from the natural stimulus of light, they did not develop legs and arms at the proper period of their growth, and so become frogs. They swelled and spread into gigantic tadpoles. I have seen a hundred colossal human tadpoles—nay, I am afraid we Protestants should look on a considerable portion of the Holy Father's 139,000,000 as spiritual *larvæ*, sculling about in the dark by the aid of their caudal extremities, instead of standing on their legs, and breathing by gills—instead of taking the free air of heaven into the lungs made to receive it. Of course *we* never try to keep young souls in the tadpole state, for fear they should get a pair or two of legs by-and-by, and jump out of the pool where they have been bred and fed—Never! never! Never!"

"Some men may find their wisdom on their knees,
Some prone and grovelling in the dust like slaves;
Let the meek glow-worm glisten in the dew;
I ask to lift my taper to the sky
As they who hold their lamps above their heads.
Trusting the larger currents up aloft,

My life shall be a challenge, not a truce!

This is my homage to the mightier powers,
 To ask my boldest question, undismayed
 By muttered threats that some hysteric sense
 Of wrong or insult will convulse the throne
 Where wisdom reigns supreme ; and, if I err,
 They all must err who have to feel their way
 As bats that fly at noon ; for what are we
 But creatures of the night, dragged forth by day,
 Who needs must stumble, and with stammering steps
 Spell out their paths in syllables of pain ! ”

And again, in another place : “ Some of us do recognise a Broad Church and a Narrow Church, however. The Narrow Church may be seen in the ships’ boats of humanity, in the long boat, in the jolly boat, in the captain’s gig, lying off the poor old vessel, thanking God that *they* are safe, and reckoning how soon the hulk containing the mass of their fellow-creatures will go down. The *Broad* Church is on board, working hard at the pumps, and very slow to believe that the ship will be swallowed up with so many poor people in it, fastened down under the hatches ever since it floated.”

We hardly expected we could have much more from the master’s pen, and yet here we have another volume with a companion title, “ Over the Teacups.” We should hardly accord to it the unlimited admiration we have given to its predecessors. As Dr. Holmes himself says, “ Teacups are not coffee-cups. They do not hold so much. Their pallid infusion is but a feeble stimulant compared with the black decoction served at the morning board. You cannot expect the afternoon to reproduce *all* the exhilaration of the morning.” But there are more than a few good and helpful thoughts in this volume. Here are one or two that possess more than a passing meaning :—“ No. 7 had expressed his desire to govern the planet for a week, but, failing that possibility, undertakes to write the history of *two* worlds—this and the next—so compactly that it may be committed to memory in less time than the first answer in the catechism. It is written in a moment and without a letter ; here it is :

!

?”

That is the symbol and this is the interpretation : “ Two worlds, the higher and the lower, separated by the thinnest of partitions. The lower world is that of questions ; the upper world is that of answers. Endless doubt and unrest here below ; wondering, admiring, adoring certainty above.”

The Dictator retorts with a similar parable. Two words, each of two letters, will serve to distinguish the two great classes of humankind. We omit the intervening conversation, but one unsuccessful guess was near the truth in giving the two words as “ Oh ” and “ Ah ” ; “ Oh ” signifying the eternal striving after an ideal which belongs to one kind of nature ; “ Ah ” the satisfaction of the other kind which rests at ease in what it has attained. The true answer was this—that the two words are “ If ” and “ As. But every one may be left to work it out for himself.”

THE NEW SPIRIT AMONGST UNITARIANS.

"THE Labour Church," at Manchester, under the guidance of Mr. Trevor, seems to be making way, and at a rapid rate. Those who object to the name are not hypercritical. Anything which tends to confirm the miserable exclusiveness of churches, or to a separation of classes, is bad. Besides, we believe that the so-called working-classes everywhere can be got together and held, for religious delight and fellowship, without anything of the kind. But we shrink from criticism. Mr. Trevor is gathering about him many hundreds of the toilers, for something that means sympathy, aspiration, comradeship, hope: and that can only be an unmixed good. If the Churches are made ashamed, and shaken out of their conventional routine, so much the better.

Mr. Trevor, in one of his circulars, says of the Labour Church meetings, "these are not merely popular services." The phrase "popular service" is not a nice one, but the meaning is understood. The gatherings indicated might be appropriately called "religious and social meetings for the people": and the end aimed at should be the gathering together of struggling people for worship, heartening, instruction, the sense of sympathy, and the joy of hope. This, in our opinion, is high-water mark, and the adding of institutions, committees, and what is called "practical work" could not improve it. It is a delusion that "nothing comes of it" because nothing is crystallised into an institution. These struggling people—carters, house-keepers, joiners, bricklayers, dressmakers, shoemakers, boilermakers, weavers, greengrocers and bakers, are buyers or sellers, fathers or mothers, brothers or sisters, comrades or sweethearts. They belong to clubs or trade unions: they are tempted and harassed: each one has a life to live, each one influences the lives of others. If then, their religious and social gatherings do for them what worship, heartening, instruction, the sense of sympathy, and the joy of hope, ought to do, all is done that man can do; and, though only the angels may be able to record results, we should be grateful and content; and those who set store upon visible co-operative results, embodied in institutions, need not undervalue the efforts of those who aim only at helping their struggling fellow-creature to put sunshine and courage into their lives, and are satisfied if they can contribute to the common stock and promote the general good.

LIGHT ON THE PATH.

OUR FATHER'S CHURCH. Already, from the "Scattered Strangers," many letters of an intensely interesting character have been received, all abundantly confirming the reality of "the need" indicated in THE IDEAL, and shewing that, in very many cases, those who are havenless are really the sensitive and sincere, not the hardened and the shifty. Once more, the mighty voice is saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." Multitudes are resisting that call, but

other multitudes need no longer resist, seeing that they have already departed from their country, their kindred, and their father's house: and now, all they need is to find the land which The Father will shew them. That defines the need of the age. "Shew us The Father" is once more the conscious or unconscious cry of the wanderers. What a delightful thing it will be if the cure for Agnosticism, after all, is, not a deeper Philosophy nor a more brilliant Science, but the perception of the simple but profound truth, which has always been the con-

quering force of Christianity, that the Mighty Power which meets and holds and masters us on every hand is indeed "Our Father"!

We have sent, to every known reader of *The Coming Day*, a copy of THE IDEAL, but there are several hundreds whose names and addresses are unknown to us. We are anxious to send THE IDEAL to every one, and ask the favour of a post card from any who have not received it. Two copies will be sent to any part of the world, post free.

GOOD MUSIC AND BAD WORDS. Mozart's glorious *Requiem Mass* supplies another example of the pernicious influence of mediæval theology over our great musicians. Here is the old picture of an aroused and angry God, coming to judgment on His day of wrath. The dead arise from their graves: the unsaved tremble; and even the saved are only saved with difficulty. Before the "King tremendous," the quailing tremblers call on the pitiful Jesus to shield them. The "accursed" are confounded, "surrounded with avenging flames." The saved, thinking only of themselves, cry and plead for a way of escape: and then, when they are safe, they bless and praise the awful Judge. Of course there is a sunny side, with loveliest touches of devout feeling and gentle trust, but the whole thing turns upon the physical resurrection, the day of burning, the thundering Judge, the shrieking victims and the fortunate saved—a huge piece of religious barbarism.

THE DEPARTURE FROM "THIS MUDDY VESTURE OF DECAY."—In the *Life of Louisa M. Alcott* the following passage occurs; "My dear Beth died at three this morning, after two years of

patient pain. Last week she put her work away, saying the needle was 'too heavy,' and having given us her few possessions, made ready for the parting in her own simple, quiet way. For two days she suffered much, begging for ether, though its effect was gone. Tuesday she lay in Father's arms, and called us round her, smiling contentedly as she said, 'All here!' I think she bid us good-by then, as she held our hands and kissed us tenderly. Saturday she slept, and at midnight became unconscious, quietly breathing her life away till three; then, with one last look of the beautiful eyes, she was gone. A curious thing happened, and I will tell it here, for Dr. G. said it was a fact. A few moments after the last breath came, as Mother and I sat silently watching the shadow fall on the dear little face, I saw a light mist rise from the body, and float up and vanish in the air. Mother's eyes followed mine, and when I said, 'What did you see?' she described the same light mist."

RETURNING HOME. Many of our readers are interested in the return of the Rev. Brooke Herford to England, after a very long period of service in Boston, U.S. It is the most natural thing in the world that he should want to end in Old England, and, of all places in the world, near London, in its most charming suburb. He will have all that mortal man need want, from the point of view of Dr. Watts' hymn, "There is a land of pure delight,"—an interesting home, a beautiful Church, a cultured congregation, a delightful work, and probably the largest stipend paid to any Unitarian Minister in religion. We all heartily congratulate him, and wish him success and "length of days."

NOTES ON BOOKS.

"Religion and life. Eight Essays, and an Essay on modern Religious developments." By various writers. Edited by R. Bartram: London: British and Foreign Unitarian Association. The bare announcement that these Essays are written by nine of the bright men of the Unitarian Church is sufficient to guarantee keen thinking and vigorous writing. The book cannot possibly be anything but useful. The book is a timely one, and is both good and cheap.

"God in Christ: the Christian revelation. An attempt to state old truths in the new light." By the Rev. W. L. Walker. Glasgow: R. L. Holmes. This Discourse is far above the

average of penny sermons, published by the way. It has in it a great reconciling thought. Firmly grasping the vital truth of Christ's manhood, it yet shews how God—that Infinite Power which works everywhere under various forms—manifested Himself in this supreme man. Mr. Walker's potent "rod and staff" are the scientific methods and doctrines of our day, keenly applied to his great theme. The result is exactly what he has aimed at—a luminous statement of an old truth in a new light. Some may think he once or twice goes perilously near to the old superstition, but his firm hand and fine insight entirely save him. The sermon ought to have a London publisher.