

# The Coming Day.

FEBRUARY, 1892.

## THEOLOGICAL DEMONISM.

A FEW Sundays ago, I had the pleasure of speaking to about a thousand happy people at Kentish Town on "The real Gospel of Good News." I told them that all life's common relationships and duties are of God; that the human race is not a "fallen" but a rising race; that the ceaseless tendency is onward and upward, everywhere; that this onward and upward tendency will never cease, and that all the struggles and burden-bearings of the race have their blessed uses.

At the doors outside, stood a zealous young man, distributing tracts, one of which I gratefully received. It is entitled, "What is election?" and in it I find these remarkable statements;—"Election to grace here and to glory hereafter, is that right which God claims to himself, as Creator, Judge, and Sovereign Ruler of the Universe to *pick and choose* out of the "guilty world" of Adam's fallen race (Romans iii. 9-21), such poor sinners as seemed good to his godly will and pleasure; and for whose sake he bears with the remainder of the corrupt mass till his good pleasure be accomplished. Always, then, consider men as sinners ordained of God to damnation, and that God appointed none but sinners, and no man but for sin, to everlasting torments (Jude, 4-7), and where is the cruelty of this? It is not the judge or the jury that condemn the criminal; these only, after a fair trial, find him guilty. The doctrine of election is a soul-comforting doctrine to God's children, and but for the carnal state of the natural man, who cannot receive the things of the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 14), would have no tendency in its own nature to distress the mind of any man. Since no doctrine but election can justify, and no other persons but the elect in Christ Jesus are delivered from all charges and all condemnation (Rom. viii., 1, 28-34), therefore, it is a soul-comforting doctrine."

In my hopefulness, I often say that these odious hallucinations are fading away: but here they are again, in full fury, and in all their startling war-paint. The Heavenly Father is once more represented as an oriental despot, picking and choosing, from among his damned children, an elected few, who will find it a "soul-comforting" thought that the despot chose them, and left perhaps father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, child, to eternal damnation. Assuredly, London wants "Our Father."

As if to drive the Kentish Town lesson home, here, on my study table, awaits me another tract, entitled "Specific unbelief; England's greatest sin."\* It is by a Scotch advocate, a barrister-at-law, and of the Inner Temple, too, and it has reached its 250th thousand—evidently "a soul-comforting" publication somewhere!

\* "Specific Unbelief: England's greatest sin." By A. S. Lamb. London: Nisbet & Co.

In this widely-read tract, I find the following statements ;—"For those who have, by God's sovereign mercy, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, been led and enabled to lay their sins on Jesus, and to put their trust for justification in God's sight solely and absolutely in the great work completed on Calvary, the eternal punishment of sin has been actually and fully borne. The believer is justified from all things through the obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ as his Substitute, and so delivered from the guilt of, and eternal punishment due to, his sins." "It is possible for the most vile, abject, worthless, and disobedient of mankind, the outcast of society, the rebel against all authority—Divine and human—to be regarded by that God who is 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' as legally a just man, as one to whose charge *nothing* can be laid, as one who has satisfied every demand of God's most holy law, and, as having done so, is entitled of right to every advantage and reward which may be attached to such obedience. Justification means nothing short of this. It is far more than bare pardon. It is a making, *for all judicial purposes*, before the heavenly tribunal, the unjust just. It is in this regard the putting, so far as eternal consequences are concerned, of one who has broken the whole law into the position of one who has satisfied its every demand." "Justification entitles one who has merited nothing but the eternal punishment due to universal disobedience to occupy the position of him who has yielded an absolute, implicit, and perfect obedience to God's most holy law." "The wearing of the spotless robe of his Redeemer's righteousness, and that alone, ensures deliverance in the first place from the penalties of a broken law." "And so he who accepts God's testimony as true is necessarily shut up to the conclusion that he who is not justified on account of Christ's righteousness is not justified, and that he who refuses to be so justified, *cannot be saved.*"

No wonder these amazing statements excite the derision or the unexpressed contempt of the majority of thoughtful men. Women, to a considerable extent, through sentiment, custom, associations, mild fear, the sense of dependence, and the desire to be safe, still, in a way, accept it all :—as one said to me not long ago, "It is safer to believe too much than too little ;" but surely the cold tonic of a current of unbelief would be better than the unhealthy heat of this calvinistic hot-house !

The way in which all this is put, and the consequences which are made to depend upon it, give it deep-rooted vitality. The appeal is to the instinct of self-preservation, and people do not generally see that real faith in God is best shewn by risking it rather than believe anything that is not plainly true.

The curious thing is that all this odious muddle of ~~bad~~ morality and heathenish divinity is only to a very limited extent justified by the very book which these people declare is the actual Word of God. In the New Testament there are a few passages (vitaly related to old Jewish ritualism) which seem to justify it, but the whole tone, spirit, and drift of the teachings of Jesus, are clean contrary to it. What did he know of the doctrine of "Election" ? or of salvation by shed blood ? or of salvation by the imputation of his righteousness ? All his teachings turned upon the main thought of a loving heavenly Father. A few words occur as a discord—but all else is clear as an August sun.

But, although it is plain that the dark ages are not past, we must not be misled by such symptoms of activity as are indicated by even floods of such

publications as these. They cannot beat back the rippling tide; and the tide is coming in: and, unlike the ocean's tide, it will never ebb. In every church in Christendom,—and the higher we go, the more definitely we may see it,—there is an outgrowing of these crude old atrocities. The creeds stand, but their meaning is exhausted. The old phrases are spoken, but not with the same intention. A genial rationalism, like a sunny June day, is rising over us all: and we shall never return to “the winter of our discontent,” or of our fear.

But we must “help God;” and it would be a sorrowful day for His world if we, who know these things so well, become careless or dull. The contention is not over points of speculation, or over mere opinions and words. In this matter, at all events, thoughts are things. These odious thoughts of God soon become (always have become) tyrant fears for man. They have darkened the sunny world with the shadow of an undermining Hell; they have separated friends; they have turned rulers into persecutors; they have throttled the natural instincts and longings of an advancing humanity; they have taught even mothers to be bigots, and made fathers like the hard God whom they adored; they have put fear, not love, at the heart of Religion; and made belief, not a sunny-hearted joy, but the price of pardon wrung from a discredited and arbitrary Creator; they have given us, not the triumph of the good and the just and the beautiful, as the explanation of all this scene of struggle and suffering, but the collapse of the Creator's plans, and the final misery of millions of His failures.

We cannot believe it—even if our salvation depended upon it. Reverence for God, confidence in man, the recognition of the great all-conquering law of progress everywhere, compel us to carry on our warfare until we faint before the hiding veil, and pass, re-born, into the all-revealing light beyond.

J. P. H.

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## SERMONS OF THE CHURCH MILITANT.

“KEEP SOUND WISDOM AND DISCRETION.”—*Proverbs iii, 21.*

THIS combination of wisdom and discretion may be regarded in two ways,—either as a double description of the same quality or as suggesting a balance of qualities:—“sound wisdom” being set over against “discretion” as, in some sense, a counterbalancing element. It is in this last sense that I shall regard it now. “Discretion” is here commended, but discretion is to be regulated by “sound wisdom”:—this is the instructive thought which it may be useful to study, in connection with the practical affairs of daily life.

What is discretion? Roughly stated, it is the cautious application of knowledge or the cautious following up of desire. As such, it is doubtless a quality or a method of life well deserving of commendation. But, as is the case with all admirable and even virtuous things, there is an ever-present danger of deterioration, corruption, or exaggeration. Hence, discretion may easily degenerate into cowardice, prevarication, neglect of duty, double-dealing, or even positive falsehood; and that which began as

admirable caution may end as detestable deceit. Hence the need of this caution to "keep sound wisdom and discretion."

And now, observe, even with regard to wisdom itself, that what is true of discretion is true also of it. Wisdom may be defined as the knowing faculty or the product of the knowing faculty : and it is easy to see how this may become degraded and misapplied. Thus, just as discretion may become cowardice or deceit, so wisdom may become mere cunning. Hence again the combination—so thoughtful, so full, so suggestive,—“keep sound wisdom and discretion.”

“Sound” wisdom is wisdom in a healthy condition,—wisdom living in the light, wisdom uncorrupted by low self-seekings and narrow aims,—wisdom, all strong and active for and in the service of the truth. Such wisdom as that is, in deed and in truth, “sound” wisdom. It has not degenerated into timid calculation, or cold prudence, or low cunning : it sees the right, and looks it straight in the face : it does not varnish a lie and call it the truth, nor cry “peace” when there is no peace, nor bid conscience wait upon results, nor silence reason in order that authority may determine. Such is the wisdom that is to go with discretion, to preserve it from dishonour, degradation, and shame.

Now perhaps there never was a time when this thought was more needed to guide us in our own actions and in our judgment of one another. The age on one side of it (and, thank God ! only on one side) has become a thoroughly selfish age ; and the most foolish amongst us is thought to be the man who does not make up his mind to get all he can out of life for his own pleasure. Mephistopheles is being promoted, and the mocking and selfish demon is actually becoming a deity. There are tens of thousands in this country who serve him daily,—by their want of faith in guiding principles, by their doctrines of expediency, by their utter selfishness, and by their mocking spirit, in their judging of the motives of others. I prefer the Salvation Army to that, with all its drawbacks : for, in the Salvation Army, there is at all events a reaching out after something earnest and decided : but, in the spirit of the age I refer to, there is a flippancy and, withal, a cautious selfishness which can end in nothing beautiful or good. But, there is a less perfect and more common manifestation of it which takes the amiable and even admirable shape of worldly prudence, or discretion, which is ever tending to the degradations and evil results I shall now proceed to indicate, as shewing the need of the charge before us.

First, then, this excessive discretion may prevent or repress spontaneity and originality. And that is an evil. The charm of character, the advantages of individualism, the bloom of conduct, the spirit and life of action, are all largely dependent upon spontaneity and originality. But if these be repressed, and a timid discretion take the place of healthy activity, what will be the result ? Freedom of thought will be curbed, old customs will linger till they rot, action will ever tend more and more to a dreary level, originality will be lost in common-place, and trickery will take the place of discussion in our councils. It is a melancholy spectacle in the political world, to see the statesman for ever tapping the weather-glass of public opinion, risking nothing, daring nothing, originating nothing, but afflicted with a fatal chill of discretion. It is worse when the minister of religion

(who should teach God's truth, as that truth becomes clear to him) treats the truth will economy, setting a watch over his mind and a seal upon his tongue, and sacrificing the divine calling of a prophet to the human institution of an echo. Better make a thousand mistakes, better offend a thousand hearers, better, as Jesus said his coming would,—bring in division and a sword, than sell the truth, repress individuality, and bid for a dull dead level of cowardly commonplace. Besides, originality and spontaneity are the very life and soul of progress and improvement. Here, then, discretion needs to be saved from base degeneration, by "sound wisdom"—the wisdom that is as far from cunning as the stars are from the mire. That wisdom will inform us (in shaping our life) that it is our duty to give free play to all our faculties,—to let reason control, and conscience guide, and love move us,—and that if we repress these for fear of being singular, or in compliance with custom, or in a nervous desire to keep out of harm, we really are not wise, and basely consent to a repression of the inner self that can never be made up by the safeguards of a possibly admired but a really degraded discretion.

Again. The evil influence of that may not only repress spontaneity and originality, but may take the life and soul from enthusiasm. I need not argue in favour of enthusiasm, as a motive power; but there is much need to argue for it as something to be encouraged and cultivated. We are, I believe, passing through a period of cynicism, which is and will be exceedingly unfavourable to enthusiasm. Loyalty to principle will be called obstinacy, love for a cause will be sneered at as fanaticism, public spirit will be described as love of notoriety, unselfishness will be disbelieved in, and everybody will be basely suspected of serving his own private turn. It is a descent,—a decline of enthusiasm to be watched with alarm. A nation without enthusiasm is on the high road to decay,—it has the dry rot at the foundations. A church without enthusiasm will soon be without faith and hope and charity. Politics without enthusiasm will presently become a conflict of prejudices or a mere clever game of factions. The man of enthusiasm believes in something, attempts something, hopes for something, risks something, and by him, in the long run and on the whole, the work of the world is done. Now discretion is, to him, what the ballast is to the ship or the guide-post to the traveller. But it is a dangerous ally, and is apt to sink where it ought to balance or direct. Hence the need of sound wisdom to save discretion from itself: for real wisdom can justify one's enthusiasm, and countenance even some of its sublime audacities. But the discreet men have, as a rule, been the seemingly wise but the really shallow men. They are discreet because they kill their souls with calculation,—because they wait for the verdict before they form a judgment,—because they never make the mistake of standing alone or of being on the wrong side. But do these men move the world or leave their mark on their time? How can they? They have put out the fire in their souls, they have ceased to dream and have become fatally wide-awake; and their wisdom becomes cunning, and their discretion becomes a marketable commodity. They may succeed in making money and passing an easy life; but, to them, the world is little more than a curiously contrived eating house and dormitory. They have been cured of all their illusions, they no more fret themselves about other people, they have got over their enthusiasms as they have got over their measles, and they have nothing but amused wonder, or quiet pity, or open scorn for the poor

fools who waste their lives and wear their hearts out in what they call the cause of progress. Sound wisdom would save their discretion from such a mournful catastrophe: it would lift up and give greatness to their discretion,—it would teach them that a man's emotional nature is as much a part of himself as his power of calculation—that his feelings, his passions, his affections, his impulses, are all precious elements of his entire being,—to be properly cultured and sweetly used: he would see that it is not wise to repress these, and to let the beautiful enthusiasms of the inner nature be nipped by the frosts of custom and the winds of a chilly prudence: he would feel that discretion and zeal, prudence and love, carefulness and daring, may go together, and that it is not a wise but a supremely foolish thing to laugh at enthusiastic devotion to a cause, and to turn a man into a calculating machine, without fire, without a conscience, and without a conscious soul.

Still further: an exaggerated discretion may and must result in a mournful waste of time and power. Discretion, guided by sound wisdom, will save time and power, by preventing this squandering of both in unprofitable ways: but, left to itself, it becomes too timid to try, and, ultimately, too helpless to believe. What is the result? Generations may come and go while the work of reform creeps on or sleeps. That old story of the 40 years' wandering in the desert has been repeated again and again in the history of mankind. In politics, in religion, in trade itself, men have again and again served their 40 years in the desert, because they had neither the sense nor the soul to enter into the promised land. A discreet conservatism, in favour of the desert, that would make sand fashionable,—a fear of consequences, in the event of exchanging an actual wilderness for a possible land of milk and honey,—are all-sufficient to renew the dreary old 40 years' wandering, involving a waste of time and power positively awful to contemplate. Take the religious, or rather the theological condition of the country at this moment. It is preposterous to say that it is either orthodox or honest: its intellect has drifted away from the old creeds, though its lips repeat the old sentences. What is the fact? A policy of trimming, an attitude of careful calculation, a worldly prudence, a measured and economical discretion, are the characteristics of hundreds of ministers and thousands of laymen. Men who live in one another's company fence and parry on this subject, and only by an accident find out that each man has been afraid of being found out by the other. What would happen if ministers and laymen, without at all changing their opinions or altering their point of view, would simply cease to be merely discreet, and begin to be soundly wise? What would happen if professors in colleges, if teachers in schools, if ministers in pulpits, if laymen in their ordinary intercourse, would make a clean breast of it, and let prudence be under the control of sound wisdom? They would be themselves; they would speak the simple truth; they would think it folly to be mere echoes when they might be men; they would save time and power by entering upon the work of reformation; and both they and their children would be advantaged thereby.

And now (without pursuing this suggestive subject farther) a few words on the emphatic charge to "keep" sound wisdom and discretion. This word seems to imply that the thing is difficult; and so it is. The discretion that is unrestrained by "sound wisdom"—the discretion which usually appropriates that name—seems

to really succeed and does really "pay." It is only in novels that you find virtue uniformly triumphant. In real life, it often does not pay to keep a conscience. A man who starts with a keen resolve to let sound wisdom temper his discretion will not be let off without paying the price. How often do you hear men say—"Yes, it is all right and true enough, but then you know it would not do to say so." What they mean by "would not do" is "would not pay":—i.e., to speak the simple truth would be attended with consequences that would amount to a penalty. What is the result?—an amount of provarication, carelessness, unearnest indecision, and intellectual economy that would appal us if we were as much alarmed at mental and moral disease as we are at physical disease. But, meanwhile, worldly prudence pays, and discretion has a distinct market value. Hence the charge—"keep"—hold fast—sound wisdom and discretion.

The sound wisdom that is needed to regulate discretion is really difficult to attain. Discretion, mere worldly discretion, is, after all, only a common-place and vulgar virtue. Anybody can achieve it. You have only got to repress originality and to give free play to selfishness,—to be careful of your own interests, and unmoved by the needs of others—in a word, you have only to be silent till every one has spoken, and inactive till every one has moved, in order to be discreet. And nothing is easier than that. But, to regulate discretion by wisdom, and to keep that wisdom "sound," alike unweakened, unwounded, and unstained,—this is indeed difficult:—to be discreet and yet brave, to be prudent yet self-reliant, to be cautious yet unselfish,—in short, to be soundly discreet, yet sublimely wise—this is not easy: hence again the charge—"keep"—i.e., seek, find, retain, guard, and cherish "sound wisdom and discretion."

What, then, above all others, is the motive for taking seriously to heart this charge? What but this, even as Jesus said—that a man's life consisteth not in the things that he possesseth. We are here for the supreme purpose of growth of character; and all else, compared with that, is dust and ashes. For a few years, you may use life for the gratification of the senses; but, if you sacrifice your higher nature in the doing of it, you will have made a miserable bargain. A man's life should be like a gallant ship,—not lying like a dead log on a desolate sea, but speeding on her glorious way with her treasures, to her home and haven, far away:—and such a life, thank God! may be accomplished by us all.

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## AN IDEAL FAITH FOR THE COMING DAY.

(Concluded from page 10.)

Our two sources of knowledge are nature and human nature, and from these all religions have sprung. They were not dropped miraculously from Heaven, but all religions, ancient and modern, have grown from the human heart and the human mind—from nature and human nature. Old mother Earth has produced all these creeds, and rightly so, for man is being developed and educated in this way.

If a man wants a sweet, wholesome, and practical religion he had far better go to the good mother than to a theologian, who is only a theologian. Who knows God best in England? The theologian, the divine, the priest, with their musty books, their creeds, their catechisms, their cursing and swearing in the Athanasian creed, or the loving mother who cares for her little child, and keeps its body and its mind sweet and clean, and who sacrifices herself cheerfully with a loving motherly heart for the good of the little child? In one of his books, Oliver Wendell Holmes makes a doctor of medicine say to a doctor of divinity; "You inherit your notions from a set of priests who had no wives and no children, and who let their humanity die out of them. It did not seem much to them to condemn a few thousand millions of people to purgatory or worse, for a mistake of judgment. They did not know what it was to have a child look up in their faces and say 'Father.'"

In so far, then, as we believe in the continued growth and uplifting of human nature, we must believe that the faith of the future will have this great word God at the heart of it,—always the living God of living men.

The ideal faith of the Coming Day will also have much to say concerning Man. First as to the descent of man. Moses did not know the secret: Darwin did. The old anthropology was based on the old ignorance. No one was to blame for that ignorance. The people of the old time knew no better; but the people of the present day do—or might. And what we do know is that Science and the old Theology are hopelessly opposed; and that it is impossible to reconcile them. Then as to "the fall" of man. Moses did not know the secret here, either: but Herbert Spencer does: and what we know now is that we must talk, not about "the fall" of man, but about the rise of man. Man did not begin perfect, and end in a fall: he began low down, and has been working his way up ever since. The gospel of the Coming Day will, therefore, be the gospel of the rise of man. And here, who can resist the fascination of the doctrine of evolution when we look to the unseen as well as to the seen? It is a mighty subject in itself, and can only be mentioned now: but it is all summed up in that amazing spiritual anticipation of the doctrine found in the delightful saying of the first Epistle of John;—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." If anything could teach the endless onwardness of the human race, and the undying hope, that does.

The ideal faith of the Coming Day will also be clear as to that other great word, Salvation. That faith will give clear, certain, and natural ideas about this intensely interesting subject of thought. Hitherto, salvation has been regarded as a kind of mechanism, or legerdemain, or judicial arrangement, available only by favoritism or chance: but salvation, in reality, is mental, moral, social and spiritual emancipation from evil conditions: and, indeed, that is the only salvation worth talking about. It is a present fact here, to be continued and completed hereafter. It is a great process of growth in wisdom and goodness. The ideal faith of the Coming Day will know nothing of salvation by fictions of imputed righteousness, or salvation by the atrocity of vicarious punishment, or salvation by the jugglery of sacramental efficacy, or salvation by giving in to theological opinions. These, and all such things, it will class

with creeping on the knees to a shrine, or the flinging of the body under an idol's car,—all alike unnatural, inhuman, barbaric, degrading. It will recognise as salvation only the emancipation of the mind from ignorance, the uplifting of the life, the freeing of the soul and conscience from base clings to evil, the advance of the whole man to the sweet air and the bright light of the open day.

The faith of the Coming Day will know nothing of salvation by creed, or salvation by sacrament, or salvation by another's sufferings or righteousness. It will never admit that by entering a church a man may find a harbour, to ensure the safety of his soul. It will justify us in holding that salvation is passing "out of darkness into God's marvellous light," and in believing that the world has millions of saviours now.

If these things are so, two great thoughts follow: first, that the facts of nature and the laws of life are the revelations of God, and second, that life everywhere, in all worlds, must be progressive, orderly, and educational.

As to the first of these;

(1) The laws of Nature are the expressions of His plan: there is therefore a Gospel of Science. All God's works are words. This is the true rock of ages. The student of Nature is the inquirer from God,—the teacher sent by Him to teach the Gospel of Science as the unfolding of His purposes and thoughts.

(2) The functions of the mind and body reveal His will: there is therefore a Gospel of Health. This is a part of the true Religion. God speaks in the body's laws; and man, by reverencing and obeying those laws, may render truest worship. This Gospel of Health has its ten commandments as authentic and as imperative as any given on Sinai—or elsewhere. They are these;—

1. Thou shalt rightly use, and not misuse, thy body which the Lord thy God has given thee as the friend, the servant, and the guardian of thy soul.
2. Thou shalt not weaken thyself by any excess.
3. Thou shalt not in any wise be needlessly unclean.
4. Thou shalt not care for thy body to the neglect of thy soul.
5. Thou shalt do no wrong to another with thy body's strength.
6. Thou shalt keep under the cravings of thy body so that they become not tyrants over thee.
7. Thou shalt discern in each function of the body the symbol of some spiritual and eternal use.
8. Thou shalt use thy tongue to interpret truly the thought of thy mind.
9. Thou shalt use thy mind for thought according to right reason and the truth of things.
10. Thou shalt not unduly cling to the earthly tabernacle of the soul, but be ready to calmly lay it down when the time shall come.

What would be the effect of obeying these ten commandments? Who can doubt that it might end in the actual realisation of the seer's dream;—"I saw a new

— heaven and a new earth " ? The place whereon we stand might become holy ground, and the world would understand at last the meaning of the mighty words ; " In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

(3) All the conditions of happiness, freedom, and concord in society at large, are revelations from God as to the education of the world : there is therefore a Gospel of Politics. It will be an essential part of the ideal faith of the Coming Day that the mind and will of God are best manifested in the facts of daily life, and that all human relationships and all ordinary duties of man to man are direct revelations from Him. The law of Society at home should be ; " Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them : " and the international law of social beings should be ; " God hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth." That is the true statesman's chart : the true diplomatist's chart. It may seem impossible, and even absurd to-day : but it will all come true if ever the prayer of Jesus is to be realised : " Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

As to the second of these,—(that Life everywhere, in all worlds, must be progressive, orderly, and educational) : this follows, because, if God is what we have said He is, He must be alike in His goodness in all parts of the universe—all perfect. He could not be inconsistent—one thing here, and another thing there. He could not love His children in one place and hate them in another. He must be the same, all perfect, all just, all powerful to all throughout the universe. If Man is what we have said he is, he must be a being in process of development—not a helpless, bankrupt creature—not a failure, but a being on pilgrimage marching out of the darkness of the past, with a moral and spiritual continuity running right up into the unseen, so that death itself is only one more step—a great one, but a glorious and natural one—in the march of a glorious, wonderful, progressive being. And, finally, if salvation is what we have said it is, it means the natural emancipation of the spirit from ignorance and vice, in an orderly advance on a path appointed by Him whom we know as Justice, Light, and Love.

The tremendous difference between the old thoughts of the future life and the new thoughts of it can be easily measured by taking a case. Here is an old hymn by Dr. Watts—an old favourite hymn which was once almost universally sung throughout the Nonconformist Churches, and believed in ;

" Life is the hour that God hath given  
To escape from hell, and fly to heaven :  
The day of grace, and mortals may  
Secure the blessings of the day.

The living know that they must die,  
But all the dead forgotten lie ;  
Their memory and their sense are gone,  
Alike unknowing and unknown.

Then what my thoughts design to do,  
My hands, with all your might pursue ;  
Since no device nor work is found,  
Nor faith, nor hope, beneath the ground.

There are no acts of pardon past  
 In the cold grave to which we haste :  
 But darkness, death and long despair  
 Reign in eternal silence there."

I do not quote that as a bad specimen of Watts' hymns. He wrote much that was more horrible than that, and he wrote what was believed in, in his day. I only say ; all that is past for us. We have escaped from the land of Egypt and the house of bondage, and we never intend to return. For us remains the sweet Canaan, the true holy land, never yet won, but to be won, the holy land of boundless trust and boundless hope, to which death is but one step onward.

Such, then, is our outlook for the Coming Day. For us it is all sufficient. After-comers may climb higher and go further, and will perhaps in their day do what we are doing now in ours. The blessing of the Lord God of their fathers be upon them ! Let the light shine ; let the glory grow unto the perfect day ! When the perfect light will shine we know not. What that light will reveal we cannot even imagine. What new insight into the uses of this beautiful world, what glimpses of the glories of Heaven will come who can say ? Ours, only to move onward and aspire,—to have faith in the future—to be sure that God hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His universe,—and to cry unceasingly to Him,—

"Nearer to Thee would we venture,  
 Of Thy truth more largely take,  
 Upon life diviner enter,  
 Into day more glorious break ;  
 To the Ages  
 Fair bequests and costly make.  
 By Thy truth, how faintly spoken,  
 By Thy will how slackly done,  
 By each idol still unbroken,  
 By each spirit still unwon,  
 Hear us ! hear us !  
 Our Almighty, help us on !  
 Make our own a nobler story  
 Than was ever writ before :  
 Stay not then ! show forth thy glory  
 In our after-comers more !  
 Everlasting !  
 Fuller grace incessant pour !"

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## PROTESTS OF DESPAIR.

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NOTES OF AN ADDRESS SPOKEN AT LEICESTER.

OCCASIONALLY, we here take note of the signs of the times in regard to the changed conditions of thought and outlook in the religious world :—now seen in some unusually free or rational confession of faith, or in some indignant repudiation of an old ecclesiastical atrocity ; and now in some frightened protest or declaration—a kind of clerical puddling to prevent the strong waters of rational thought from breaking

through. These last are always specially instructive ; as they only shew how far the world has drifted from the protesters and their traditions.

Not very long ago, we considered a somewhat notable protest sent forth by Mr. Spurgeon and a number of good men who desired to fasten down the world to the old dogmas : and, on that occasion, we remarked that the only effect of their protest was to draw attention to the inevitable drift. To-day a much more significant protest claims our attention. It is signed by about forty dignitaries and officials of the Established Church,—Deans, Archdeacons, Prebendaries, Canons, Rectors and Vicars, who unite to once more shew the world how impossible it is to believe what these belated believers maintain. The occasion and cause of their protest are thus stated : 1. "It must be evident to thoughtful persons that there are now current certain impressions that Holy Scripture has been discovered not to be worthy of unquestioning belief ; and the faith of many Christian people is thereby unsettled. 2. These impressions are manifestly a dishonour to God, as discrediting His faithfulness and truth ; and are full of peril to the eternal life of those affected by them, seeing that they undermine all faith in the mystery of Christ, and, indeed, in the supernatural itself." Three statements in this preamble are of the greatest possible interest to us :—

(1) 'The modern rational treatment of the Bible leads to the conclusion that it is not worthy of "unquestioning belief."' But ought anything to be taken with "unquestioning belief" ? Those who think so ought to be logical, and go straight to Rome. But test it. What about the Bible account of the creation of the world and the solar system ; the origin of man ; the universal deluge ; and the standing still of the sun and moon at the command of Joshua—to enable him to destroy his enemies ? We know that these stories are all untrue. The world was not created in the way that Genesis records. The human race did not come into existence as it describes. No such deluge as it portrays ever occurred : and its childish story about the preservation of species is simply quaint romancing. The writer of that story about the sun and moon knew nothing about their magnitudes and place in the universe. To him they were only lamps that his giant fighting God might just as well hold a little longer as not. And what shall we say of the simply awful things attributed to God by many of these writers ? What do these good men mean by the Bible being the object of our "unquestioning belief" ? Have they, after all, a suspicion that if the belief is not "unquestioning" it could not be extracted at all ?

(2) 'The modern rational treatment of the Bible is "a dishonour to God."' It is the very reverse. Must I once more refer you to that shocking record in the Book of Numbers ? "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 to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall surely be 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." Fifty instances of a similar kind could be given. On whose side is the dishonouring of God ? We, who are treated as rebels and

as faithless to God, refuse to believe this of Him because our reverence forbids. But those who cite us to stand at the judgment bar believe the story, and consent to stand by the record that, for gathering sticks upon the Sabbath, it was right to stone a man to death, and that God himself expressly issued the command to do it. On whose side does the dishonour lie? Is it not plain that this modern rational treatment of the Bible is the result of loyalty to God and to ourselves? Right or wrong, we are honestly trying to use the faculties God has given us, and we have given this pledge of our sincerity—that we are willing to risk what these dignitaries call “peril to the eternal life” in the endeavour to be guided by reason, conscience, and human love.

(3) ‘The modern rational treatment of the Bible is undermining faith in Christ and in the supernatural.’ This is partly true: and it is the fault of such good but misguided defenders of Christianity as these. They risk too much on doubtful things. But, in deeper senses, it is not true. Rationalism will give us a truer Christ than the priests and mystery men ever did. And we shall find the so-called “supernatural” of the Church in the higher natural of Science.

Passing on from the preamble to the declaration itself, we find these dignitaries, (who call themselves the messengers and watchmen of the Lord who have received the Holy Ghost) declaring their unfeigned belief in the “actual historical truth in all records of the Bible,” and their willingness to believe in these records, not on account of their credibility but because they are revelations from God, which we have no right to dispute, or criticise, or reason about. They frankly rule reason out, and, without flinching, declare that they fall back on tradition as a final authority on the subject; and they do not seem to see that this cowardly appeal to tradition is only a falling back upon the opinion of one age in order to silence the opinion or the discovery of another, the which practically amounts to an acceptance of crudeness and ignorance for the purpose of silencing and putting down ripe knowledge and understanding.

And this is called honouring God and defending the faith! I will tell you what it is;—it is the real infidelity—unfaithfulness to facts, to knowledge and to the teachings of the Holy Spirit now. These good men who call us rebels, deniers of God, and ruiners of souls,—do they know what they are doing? They are making it more and more difficult to be a Christian, in their official sense of the word: they are making Church-membership either a difficulty or a mockery: they are turning thoughtful men and women into agnostics: they are responsible for much of the unbelief which makes them honestly grieve. They rail at the rational readers of the Bible. It is unjust. We ought not to be railed at as rebels, but sympathised with as pioneers to whom God has given a difficult task. Do they imagine we like to appear as the assailants of a book over which, in childhood, we pored, and wondered, and wept; and which now commands our intensest interest and admiration? Do they imagine we like to leave the “green pastures” and “still waters,” to hunt up and proclaim the existence of slimy pools? It is their fault—it is their fault; just as our revolt would be the fault of any men of science who should insist upon our accepting the astronomical conclusions of the ancients, and drove us thereby to an exposure of the ignorance of those who toiled by a dim light, and for whom we would cherish gratitude and admiration.

But there is another thought which I would most earnestly press upon these good men. They are fond of speaking of "the Word of God": but they do not seem to see that the denial of a living word of God now, to guide us to the truth, is virtually the denial of a word of God at any time. A closed revelation is no revelation. A silenced voice is no voice. A God who has finished is no God. The alternative is a living God or none. As Dr. Martineau once put it;—"The elder voices of the spirit speak articulately, only to him whose ear is ever open to the new. The springs of salvation have an everlasting flow; and it were a weary thing, to sit through the noontide heat by the Father's well, were not the running waters heard beneath." Would to God that these teachers in high places could climb to such heights as are indicated by these fruitful words! But, by high or by low, by men in the temple or by the voice of one crying in the wilderness, God's message to this age will be delivered; for it must needs be that the King should be known by His living subjects, and the Father be recognised by the child.

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### A POSITIVIST HYMN BOOK.

A SMALL book of hymns and anthems, entitled "Service of Man," published at Newton Hall, London, and compiled, we believe, by Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Harrison, is noteworthy. It has the rare merit of being original, and true to a special design. A clear mind, a set purpose, and a wide knowledge must have been concerned in its compilation. But its determined definiteness is its main defect. A glaring case in point is supplied in the use made of George Herbert's beautiful hymn; "Teach me, my God and King," which here appears as; "Teach me, Great World-Mother," a change that almost topples over into broad burlesque. No wonder the editor left out George Herbert's name. S. Johnson's fine hymn is also captured: his "City of God, how broad and far," is turned into, "City of Man! how broad and fair."

But the Book has in it many gems, as suggestive of treasures as they themselves are precious. Hymn 110 is a fine fresh dedication hymn for a young teacher, as 108 is for a little child, or 15, for a church. Hymn 125, for the end of the year, might be added to our "occasional" hymns with great advantage. The following also strike a somewhat new note in practical hymnology, and shew us the way to fresh fields;—67, on Love, "the greatest gift"; 22, on sunrise; and 41, three dainty verses from Longfellow's *Santa Filomena*.

But the dangers incident to venturing into new fields for hymns is manifest. For instance, imagine a congregation singing this opening verse;—

"No monster of iron with gunpowder fed,  
No clangour of steel, no whizzing of lead,  
Make the blood in our arteries tingle;  
But the whirr of the wheel, and the whistle of steam,  
And the bubbling hiss of the seething stream,  
Are the sounds where our sympathies mingle."

We are relieved at finding that this is "from the Dutch." Thank Heaven! We were afraid it was English.

In opening this book we somehow had the happy hope that we might escape from the slipshod rhymes of the conventional hymn; but we have been disappointed. Here is a verse worth gibbeting;

"When our last day of toil is come,  
May we in twilight's gathering gloom  
Hear echoes of a harvest-home."

The writer, we presume, did not intend to refer to a glum gathering, and to the hum of the harvest field.

In a few cases, the author's name is omitted without apparent reason. For instance, it should be well known that the verses beginning, "Spirit who makeest all things new," are by T. H. Gill.

But, taken as a whole, the little book has the merit of originality. If it is "of the earth, earthy," its earth is often very fragrant and very refined.

### LIGHT ON THE PATH.

**OUR FATHER'S CHURCH.** On Sunday evening, January 31st, there will be a gathering of friends and inquirers at The Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer Street (near Regent Circus), London, at a quarter to seven. Mr. Page Hopps will conduct a Religious Service, and set forth the aims and hopes of Our Father's Church.

The question is asked, "How can an 'orthodox' Churchman or Baptist or Congregationalist join Our Father's Church, and yet remain where he is and believe what he believes?" It is admitted that it would be and ought to be difficult for him to do so. The difficulty might be overcome by careful and painstaking thought, but it would not be easy. On the other hand, the majority of Churchmen, Baptists and Congregationalists are not "orthodox." They have been moved on by the blessed time-spirit, to the thoughts set forth by THE IDEAL; and, in their case, Our Father's Church really offers precisely what they need, so that, while, for various reasons, remaining connected with their different organisations, they may "make a good confession" and find the broader spiritual Brotherhood.

**A VITAL POINT.** "The Christian Life," an Evangelical Unitarian paper, lately made the following curious assertion: "From the Nativity, God has been with man in an intimacy of relationship unknown before. From the Nativity, a change has prevailed in the relations between earth and heaven." This appears to us to belong to the very essence of Trinitarianism. The arithmetical side of the Trinity is a matter of no real importance. The vital point lies in another direction. If Jesus Christ altered "the relations between earth and

heaven," and caused God to be with man in a way unknown before, he was more than man: he was—we know not what. The rational Christian may reasonably hold that Jesus greatly helped the human race to comprehend The Father, and to realise the realities of the Unseen; but surely he cannot believe that Jesus actually altered the natural relations between God and man, and earth and heaven. This seems to us to be a test question.

**CREMATION.** We thankfully record the following;—The body of the late Dr. Albert Bernays, Professor of Chemistry at St. Thomas's Hospital, was on Saturday cremated at Woking. The funeral procession left Acre House at 9.15 for St. Jude's Church, where the first part of the service took place, the celebrants being the Rev. Sherward Bernays, and the Rev. J. Ransford, vicar. The chief mourners were Mr. Arthur Bernays and Mr. Young (nephews of the deceased), Mr. Challis, Mr. Frank Silvester, Mr. Crabbe, and the Rev. R. Chadwick. There was a large congregation. After service, the body was taken to Waterloo Station, and thence conveyed by the 10.35 train to Woking, where, on completion of the cremation, the ashes were buried in the cemetery.

This is perfect;—a quiet service away from the final scene; no misery at the grave; a sensible disposal of the body, and no preservation of the unmeaning ashes;—and all so easy to do now. Will it be long before every child of the Day makes provision for such a closing scene? All who wish to do so should write to the Secretary of the Cremation Society, 8, New Cavendish Street, London, W.

## NOTES ON BOOKS.

We have received four publications from Mr. T. Lake Harris' London publisher, Mr. Allen: "The Great Republic," "The New Republic," "Brotherhood of the new life," and "Lyra Triumphalis." In one of them, Mr. Harris starts by saying, "As to what 'the Papers' say of myself or of my friends, it has been our uniform rule to take no notice"; but, before he concludes, he works himself up into a very unsaintly temper, and says, "Men do not bandy words with carrion," and goes on to bandy words, through twenty lines of Billingsgate. The "songs" in "Lyra Triumphalis" are poor inflated things. "The New Republic" has in it, many fine thoughts, finely expressed—and light that is almost lightning.

"Words of Anthems." Compiled and edited by Rev. E. C. Jones, M. A. Bradford: Lobley & Sons. A remarkable collection of 500 Anthem words, with perfect Index, showing composer, publisher, and price of each Anthem; another

Index with alphabetical list of composers and dates; and a reference table, giving in each case, the Bible reference to the words. It should be a rich mine to choir masters, who, without labour, would be able to bring out of this treasure things new and old.

"'Things to come': being Essays towards a fuller apprehension of the Christian idea." London: E. Stock. A series of Essays written by seven friends, on vital subjects. The writers are all alert, broad, sympathetic, sensible, but somewhat inclined to mysticism, in the older sense of that word. Their leanings may be judged from the books they recommend—such as James Hinton's "Life in Nature," Andrew Jukes' "Types in Genesis," Laurence Oliphant's "Scientific Religion," John Pulsford's books, and the works of Jacob Boehme and John Tauler. Spiritual and thoughtful readers will find in these essays much to interest and refresh.

## THE BATTLE OF BELIEFS.

BRETHREN, cease the wild contention ;

Words are only seeds of strife ;

Let us drop the killing letter ;

Grasp the spirit—this is life.

Why should we raise heated cavil ;

Has God made us judge of creed ?

Have we all of revelation ;

Know we only how to read ?

Are there not twelve gates in heaven—

North and south and east and west ?

Shall not they of every doctrine

Enter that eternal rest ?

Every kindred, clime, and colour,

Every creed and tenet, too,

Shall they not be represented

With the dogma taught by you ?

When the Father counts His jewels,

What a blending will be there !—

Whosoever's beauteous diamond,

Flashing light beyond compare,

Blending with the Calvin sapphire,

Roman ruby, Ritual beryl,

Congregational soft opal

Purified in times of peril,

Amethyst of Wesleyan beauty,

Pearl of Presbyterian hue,

Topaz washed in Baptist waters,

Emerald of the Churchman true,

Coral from the Indian Islands,

Chrysolite from Africa's plain,

Chrysolite from China ransomed,

Gems from Greenland's icy chain,

Gems of lustre most exquisite

From Mohammed's darkened mine,

Stones we never knew the name of,

Taken from the Buddhist shrine,

Vishnu pouring out rich treasures,

And Confucius bringing store,

Crystal tear-drops shed to idols,

Rendered precious evermore—

Shall not these form the galaxy

Of that matchless diadem ?

Up, then, brother ! cease thy cavil,

Follow Christ in search of them !

Hear him crying :—" Who will gather

In the harvest-field to-day ! "

See ! the sun is fast declining,

Christian brother, haste, away.

Time will not allow disputings,

Men are calling for thine aid,

Preach the truth which God has given thee,

Preach ! and be not thou afraid.

God is judge ; we are but striving

In the race where others run—

Let us each by earnest wrestling

Gain the prize—a glad " Well done !

*Robt. Jas. Lees.*