

The Coming Day.

SEPTEMBER, 1892.

OUR FATHER'S CHURCH.

THE DREAM OF JESUS.

(SPOKEN AT CROYDON).

"I PRAY THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE."—*John xvii., 21.*

NEXT to the Sermon on the Mount, the most precious thing in the Gospels is the wonderful prayer in which these words occur. It came from a full heart, and grew out of a perfect trust. It is as simple as the talk of a thoughtful child, and yet it is as profound and far-reaching as yesterday, to-day and for-ever.

Behind the inspired dreamer, that night, lay his too short life, now soon to be closed; and, before him, loomed the hill of death, the mocking crowd, the awful cross. These few bewildered men, who only knew they loved him, would be scattered, smitten with grief and fear. And yet what a stupendous confidence!—what a mighty faith!—what a restful, childlike, God-grasping prayer! "Father, the hour is come. I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do: and now I come to Thee." And, after that, every word breathes tenderest pathos, and thoughtful consideration, not for himself but for these poor troubled and bewildered disciples who would have to be left behind. At that tremendous hour, he thinks not of himself, he only prays for this little band of brothers—that they might be comforted, that they might be confident, that they might be one.

Fellow believers! through these he stretches out his hands to us—includes us in his generous prayer; for he saw beyond that dark day of his betrayal and looked forward to happier days,—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word.”

Climbing, then, this hill of the Lord to-day, let us look at the prospect before us—in the light of this large-hearted prayer.

Alas! on the whole, a depressing prospect. Christendom rent in every direction with controversy: a Christian Church broken into apparently hopeless fragments: the question never absent; “Is this the great leader’s dream?” and the answer seems so far away. Worst of all, the cleavages seem fundamental, turning upon the question—“Who then are his disciples?” And yet, strange to say, he himself left the plainest answer to that question. He said that they who hear the word of God and do it are, to him, as mother and sister and brother. He said that the pure in heart would see God. He said, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I have com-

manded you." His only condemnations were reserved for the hypocritical and the neglectful, and his only reproach was "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" He said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy:" "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God:" "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called children of God:" "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." What we submit to Christendom, then, is this—that Jesus Christ declared the "merciful" should find mercy; that he promised to "the pure in heart" that they should see God; that he included among the children of God "the peacemakers"; that he expressly made mutual "love" the test of discipleship to himself; and hence, that his ideal was, religious unity on the basis of mercifulness, purity of heart, the promotion of peace, and mutual love. To some that may seem a poor account of the terms of Christian communion: but what would have happened if Christendom had all along adhered to it, and been loyal to it? The history of the past eighteen hundred years would have been unstained by some of its foulest chapters: "religious wars," bigotries, persecutions and excommunications would have been unknown; and by this time we should be praying, with some hope of its fulfilment, the dear old prayer;—"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

Alas! the Master's ideal was too high for poor humanity. The evil spirit that leads men to exclude and condemn found its way into the assemblies of the early Christians: it made a home for itself at Rome: it tabernacled at Wittenberg, and pitched its tent at Geneva, and sat with the divines at Westminster, and to-day, after all these years of Christianity, one of our most difficult undertakings is to make way against the solid opposition of Churches that would turn the grace of God and the mercy of heaven into the heritage of a few: and now, when we talk of Christian unity, it is like the telling of an idle dream.

Clearly, then, the one thing needful is a resolute effort to escape from that real heresy—the putting of dogma in the first place, and the enforcement of ritual and ceremonial and sacrament as vital to salvation. We must insist upon the distinction between opinion and spirit,—between views that we hold and desires that hold us; and we must come to see—as Mr. Gladstone once said—that "they who bear the blessed likeness of Christ are most truly and surely his." We shall all have to learn, or those who come after us will learn, that, set up as we may our religious establishments, we cannot appropriate the true church of Christ;—that is altogether beyond the reach of our poor hands and instruments, that is altogether independent of creeds and organisations and priests,—and one need not know anything of these in order to belong to it. No temple roof may echo his confession of faith, no priest may ever touch his unconsecrated brow, no rite may ever mark his entrance into the kingdom of God; he may be only an obscure lover of the right, ay! a lonely heretic because a seeker after the truth; but he may be dear to Jesus, a citizen of the heavenly kingdom, an angel in disguise.

"The dream of Jesus"! See how sectarianism has spoilt it. Here, a speculative opinion is set up as a test, and there a ceremony is contrived as a condition. Here, we are told that only certain authorised officials have a right to set forth the word of life;—as though it mattered who carried the cup when the thirsty longed to drink:

—and there good men are shut out from joining in useful work because of the Trinity ; just as though you could not teach honest arithmetic without worrying about three in one, or help the sick unless you held some scholastic dogma about the atoning sacrifice !

See how this weakens Christendom. Split up into sects, and, in many cases, jealous and envious sects, half our time is wasted and half our strength is squandered in differences amongst ourselves : and the world suffers for it. But if we could collect and mass our scattered forces ; if we could put our speculative differences in their proper place, as objects of personal interest, and not as tests of fellowship ; if we could see that Religion is one thing and Theology another ; if then we could go on our true "Holy war" against the forces of evil, who could tell what conquests might await us, or what new life would go forth to bless a grateful world ? What if, in only one little village, all Christ's disciples were of one heart and mind in this—the common love of good ;—if all sectarian aims and every taint of the sectarian temper could be foregone ; if, in one confederation of sympathy, all who had given themselves to him would then give themselves as he did "for the life of the world," to emancipate it from the stifling force of evil ;—that little village would be as a "city set upon a hill." Its light would be too bright to be hidden, and the sweet contagion of so christly an example would be too powerful to be resisted. Righteousness would break forth as the light, and justice would shine as the noon-day : and we might yet hope to hear the "great voices," saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

But our best dreams—even the dream of Jesus—can only come slowly true. I said just now that the prospect is a dreary one ; but it has its sunny side. The scene is not what it was in past years. We see a lifting of the mist—an inshining of the upper radiance. The old barriers are, in many cases, only formally and officially there ; and old bigotries are gathering about them at least the grace of being ashamed. If you listen, you may hear the songs of the morning, displacing the moanings of the night. Men and women are digging the graves of the old controversies, and antiquated causes of dissension are being removed from the holy of holies of things vital, and put quietly into ecclesiastical cabinets of curiosities. Where excommunicating austerity frowned, surprised recognition often significantly smiles. It does not seem as clear as it once did that he who does not believe will be damned. The old hard phrases and definitions are being clothed with new meanings—often amusing enough as palpable evasions, but none the less affording striking evidence of the change that has come over "the spirit of our dream." We know that in every "orthodox" college in England, and in the great universities, there are serious searchings of heart. The young men know that the old premisses and conclusions are unsound—that the cruel anathemas of the past were based, not upon the thoughts of God, but upon the bigotries of man, and that the ideal Church of Christ will have no anathemas at all.

What then is our duty,—the duty of all rational seekers after God ? It is an obvious but somewhat difficult one. The time has not yet come for ending our protest and ceasing our warfare, and we must still say, with Jesus, "We come, not

to send peace but a sword." There is the difficulty—that we who testify to unity and demand it must fight: and so it may be asked of us—the outside militant heretics—what we can have to do with Jesus Christ's or any other ideal of religious unity. But it is inevitable that wherever there are rational seekers after God there must be a part of the true "Church militant." They may make some people happy, but they are apt to make others miserable: they preach a gospel of charity and freedom, but at present they often provoke agitation, opposition, disunion. What can such Christians have to do with religious unity?

The same question might have been asked of the Master himself, with even keener significance. The Scribes and Pharisees, and good people who were not Scribes and Pharisees, were probably content enough till he appeared. Who was he, a poor carpenter, with his handful of questionable followers,—fishermen, tax-gatherers, and the like,—who was he, to challenge the venerable orthodoxy of Israel, and to even seem to correct Moses and supplant the Temple? So they harassed him while he lived; and speedily hurried him to the cross. And yet this Jesus the divider was really Jesus the harmoniser, whose heavenly ideal is, even now, not yet realised. May we not, with all humility, say that it is so with us? We are at the earlier stage of our career, even as Jesus was, when the Jews misunderstood and killed him. We are only dividers as Jesus was a divider, when he said to the Jews:—"You are not the only children of God. God is a spirit, and his worshipers are they who worship Him in spirit and in truth." In like manner, we are bearing testimony to truths that divide men only because they come into conflict with traditional beliefs and methods that have already broken up, and that now persistently break up, the Brotherhood. Our teachings will cease to divide men when men cease to condemn. Yes, only in the sense that Jesus said it, we say—"I came not to send peace but a sword."

So then, we must aim at unity, not by making light of convictions and bartering away the truth, nor by saying "It does not matter", nor by paying compliments all round. On the contrary, we must aim at it by heart-searching faithfulness to convictions, by being willing to face the consequences of them, and by very resolute efforts to make an end of the old repelling dogmas which only killed charity and divided friends: and that can only be by the clear perception of the dominant truth that, above all dogmas and beyond all speculative opinions, the great practical side of Christianity is supreme,—that love for God is superior to any doctrine about Him, and that obedience to Him, and not any "thus thinking" about the Trinity, is the one essential thing.

We shall perhaps realise this better if we make the effort to imagine how it will all look from the other side. Can we imagine our poor sectarian distinctions and barriers and denunciations in what we call "heaven"? Indeed, if we indulge the hope that in the life to come we shall remember what we thought here, it is worth while asking ourselves how we shall regard some of the ideas that now seem to have such sway. If the angels can be amused (and I hope they are, and know not what there is to prevent them) it must surely amuse them to think of the old quarrels about words and creeds, and especially of the old imagining that heaven would be peopled only from these favoured churches on earth. But perhaps they are too sorry for us to be amused; and think of us as we think of men who are condemned to work for

life in the mines, and who come at last to judge of all things by the light of their own poor lamps.

How it must astonish a real Calvinist—I mean a human being with all the spiritual limitations of Calvinism—to find himself surrounded in the heavenly world (when he gets there) by men and women whose portion he believed would be the outer darkness! I like to picture to myself the meeting between Cyril and Hypatia; or the meeting between Servetus and Calvin; or the meeting between John Wesley and Theodore Parker. I suppose they all have to make the best of it when they find that the great God is not a partisan,—that the Creator of us all loves us all,—that the Father is not as partial as some men believed Him to be. But of this we may be sure, that if any of the children do not fall in with the heavenly Father's way, He will not send any of their brothers or sisters away, to please them. So John Calvin will have to make it up with Servetus, or go on wandering in the dark until he does. But, indeed, it is our joy to believe there will be no difficulty in this, but that the tides of divine charity will so quickly flow into all hearts that half the bliss of heaven will consist in reconciling the enmities of earth.

Why cannot we begin that new life now? Only one thing is wanted;—that we shall let the Father speak within us all,—that we shall cease to force ourselves to believe what our baffled and hard pressed brothers said centuries ago,—that we should do as Jesus did,—listen for the voice within, and dream his heavenly dream.

Our course, then, is perfectly plain. In the Church, we must keep open house for all;—no tests, no reserved right to exclude, no hesitation as to the recognition of every one's right to his own opinion; the first place being kept for the supreme and vital things—love to God and love to man. In season and out of season, we must try to make people think; we must try to make people restless, anxious, and, if necessary, uncomfortable and ashamed. We must “hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature,” to show charity her own feature, bigotry her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.

What though we be but few in so large a world? we are not too few for faith and hope: and they tell us it was a lonely man on Patmos who heard “the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders;” and who saw the “great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne,” while “every created thing which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them,” joined in the mighty psalm of praise, and blessing, and honour, and glory, for ever. And if he, the lonely dreamer, could see and hear those things, surely we, who are not lonely, may: and we may be sure that the ideals of man are the promises of God.

If we could only see it, we might have the consolation of knowing that we are the John the Baptists of Christendom, crying “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” Ay! and he will come; he is coming; not, indeed, as some say, in person, a second time, to judge the world, as before he died for it; but in the new life of the world he is coming—to shame us out of our discords, to make us tired of our self-assertion, and to make us all willing in the day of his power. So will Jesus be our King: and we must hasten to make clear and plain his glorious way.

THIRTY-NINE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

(RE-ISSUE.)

- 1.—(ARTICLE I.)—Have words any definite meaning? If so, how, without vexatious contradiction, can it be said that God is “one,” and yet that He is composed of “three persons”?
- 2.—(ARTICLE II.)—Have ideas any definite intention? If so, how, without hopeless confusion, can it be said of any one that he was “begotten” “from everlasting”?
- 3.—(ARTICLE II.)—Does God love to make men miserable, or is He enamoured of penalty, that He could only be “reconciled to us” by the offering up of “a sacrifice”? If not, how does suffering, crucifixion, dying, and burial “reconcile” God to man?
- 4.—(ARTICLE III.)—What is “hell,” and how did Christ go “down” into it?
- 5.—(ARTICLE III.)—If “hell” is the place of punishment, and Christ was able to triumph over it by going “down” into it and returning from it, is it not just possible that he, as the seeker and saver of that which is lost, may be able to win a further victory over it by rescuing others from its power?
- 6.—(ARTICLE III.)—If he *cannot* do this, is he the Almighty Saviour? If he *will* not, is he the All-merciful Redeemer?
- 7.—(ARTICLE IV.)—How can a body “with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man’s nature” go “into heaven”? In other words, how can “corruption inherit incorruption”?
- 8.—(ARTICLE V.)—If “the Holy Ghost” is a “Person,” proceeding from the Father and the Son, what is the use of words if we are not to conclude that He is a separate God?
- 9.—(ARTICLE VI.)—Are the “Songs of Solomon,” a collection of curious Hebrew amatory odes, a part of “Holy Scripture” “of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church”? If so, what do they authorise?
- 10.—(ARTICLE VII.)—Is the God of the Book of Joshua the same being as the God of the Gospel according to John? and where, in the Old Testament, is “everlasting life offered to Mankind by Christ”?
- 11.—(ARTICLE VIII.)—Where in “holy Scripture” are good men damned to “perish everlastingly” for not believing in a form of words that are not to be found in “holy Scripture”?

- 12.—(ARTICLE IX.)—How can that “deserve God’s wrath and damnation” which is what it is by no fault of its own?
- 13.—(ARTICLE X.)—If a man “cannot turn and prepare himself” to repentance and faith, why does “holy Scripture” call upon him to “turn”? and why do we blame the unbelieving, or seek to persuade the halting?
- 14.—(ARTICLE XI.)—Is God a lover of moral ingenuities and spiritual fictions, that He “accounts” men “righteous” “only for the merit” of another?
- 15.—(ARTICLE XIII.)—Is God oblivious of moral distinctions, outside of the circle of theological arrangements, that “works done before the grace of Christ,” &c., are really “not pleasant to God”? and is it possible that good deeds “have the nature of sin” if done before theological faith in Christ?
- 16.—(ARTICLE XVI.)—What is there in baptism to make it in any sense a reception of “The Holy Ghost”?
- 17.—(ARTICLE XVII.)—Is God partial, cruel, and “a respecter of persons,” that He should “choose” certain men “out of mankind” “to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation,” leaving the rest to the inevitable “curse and damnation”?
- 18.—(ARTICLE XVII.)—Is the thought, that their less fortunate brethren are left to be “thrust” by “the Devil” into “desperation,” a part of that “consideration” which is “full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort” to the chosen ones?
- 19.—(ARTICLE XVII.)—Is it to be wondered at that, to those who are not chosen—the “curious and carnal persons”—this having “continually before their eyes the sentence of God’s predestination” should appear “a most dangerous downfall”? or are these to be greatly blamed if “the Devil,” taking advantage of this, “doth thrust them either into desperation or into wretchedness of most unclean living”?
- 20.—(ARTICLE XVIII.)—Is it true that “in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him”? (Acts x. 35.) If so, how can it be said that they are “to be had accursed” who hold that men may be “saved” apart from a knowledge of Christ or a peculiar faith in him? If, moreover, they are to be “accursed” who hold this, and if this is not true, what will a righteous God do with men who never heard of Christ, or who could never honestly see the superlative value of “salvation” by faith in him?
- 21.—(ARTICLES XIX., XX.)—If “the visible Church of Christ” is “a congregation of faithful men,” and if the Church “hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith,” how is it that this authority has been taken away from the “congregation” and given over to Courts, to the Legislature of the land, or to ecclesiastical persons who are “lords over God’s heritage.”?

- 22.—(ARTICLE XX.)—What is the good of telling “a congregation of faithful men” that it may expound Scripture, but that it must so expound it as that its exposition of “one place of Scripture” shall not “be repugnant to another”? Or is it really the duty of faithful men to explain away difficulties, to hold their tongues concerning contradictions, and to shut their eyes to facts?
- 23.—(ARTICLE XX.)—If, beside “holy writ,” the Church has no right “to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation,” why does it “enforce,” as necessary for salvation, the unscriptural and ridiculous jumble of contradictory nonsense called *The Athanasian Creed*?
- 24.—(ARTICLE XXIII.)—Who gave any man or any Church the right to declare who should or who should not hear the Master’s call to “preach the Gospel to every creature”? Is it an impiety, or only an impertinence, to say that God’s prophets require a Church’s credentials?
- 25.—(ARTICLE XXV.)—Does God “work invisibly in us” any more by the Church’s sacraments than by other “means of grace”? and is the love of God and His fellowship with the soul dependent upon such things at all?
- 26.—(ARTICLE XXVI.)—How can it be said of the “evil men” who minister in the Church, that they are there “in Christ’s name,” and that they “do minister by his commission and authority”? or is it true that love and worth and truth, if standing alone, give no qualification to speak for Christ, but that “wickedness,” if “chosen and called” “by men who have public authority,” has an unquestionable “commission and authority” to do so?
- 27.—(ARTICLE XXVII.)—How can a few drops of water from the hand of a mortal man confer “Regeneration or new Birth,” with all the blessings of “forgiveness” and “adoption to be sons of God”? and is it possible that a merciful God makes His Fatherly mercy to depend upon people thinking well enough of the priest to go to him with their little child?
- 28.—(ARTICLE XXVIII.)—Why use words concerning the Sacrament of “the Lord’s Supper” which can only lead to what is rightly deprecated as “many superstitions”?
- 29.—(ARTICLE XXXI.)—Who received “satisfaction” from “the offering of Christ” “upon the Cross”? God?
- 30.—(ARTICLE XXXI.)—What was that “satisfaction”?—Suffering? sorrow? death?
- 31.—(ARTICLE XXXI.)—What did that “offering” satisfy?—God’s wrath, or His determination to exact penalty?
- 32.—(ARTICLE XXXI.)—How did that “offering” secure our “redemption,” as a transaction initiated and completed apart from man, and without reference to any previous change in him?
- 33.—(ARTICLE XXXI.)—How can all this be in harmony with the perfect Justice, Wisdom, Righteousness, and Benevolence of a Holy God?

- 34.-- (ARTICLE XXXIII.)—Who gave any Church the right to brand a man with its curse or excommunication, so that he should “be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful as a Heathen and Publican”; and thus be made a reproach and a by-word amongst his neighbours?
- 35.—(ARTICLE XXXIII.)—Is this a part of that Heavenly Gospel which came to bring “peace on earth and good-will towards men”?
36. - (ARTICLE XXXIV.)—Who gave any Church the right to “openly rebuke” a man who, “through his private judgment,” should think well to depart from “the traditions and ceremonies of the Church”?
- 37.—(ARTICLE XXXIV.)—How long shall we keep on record the absurd statement that “the Magistrate” has anything to do with “the common order of the Church;” and that men who follow their own judgments in these matters “hurt” his “authority”?
38. — (ARTICLE XXXVI.)—If “the Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons” contains nothing “that of itself is superstitious,” what does this mean: “O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us”? Is there no “superstition” in this Christian rendering of a Pagan speculation? Or this: “From the crafts and assaults of the Devil, from thy wrath, and from everlasting Damnation, Good Lord, deliver us”? Is there no “superstition” in fearing “the crafts and assaults of the Devil,” in deprecating “the wrath of God,” in being terrified about “everlasting Damnation”? Or this: “From lightning and tempest, from plague, pestilence, and famine, &c., Good Lord, deliver us”? Is there no “superstition” in praying against natural phenomena and events which, in some cases, are due to acts of men? Or this: “Take thou authority to read the Gospel in the Church of God, &c.”? Is there no superstition in fancying that a man needs “authority” for *that*? Or this: “Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained”? Is there no “superstition” in the assertion that any such tremendous powers could be “committed” to a man by the “imposition” of *any* human “hands;” or that, in *any* sense, the priest has power to “forgive” sins? In truth, is not *all* this “superstition” of a most abject and pernicious kind?
- 39.—Finally; is not this and every other attempt to fix for all time what men shall believe and teach, a deliberate bid for stagnation, indolence, insipidity, insincerity, or cant.

PROFESSOR JOWETT AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

It was Sunday. Professor Jowett was announced for the evening service at Westminster Abbey. Three quarters of an hour before the stated time, a crowd stood about the doors : many of them Americans, evidently ;—dear lovers of old England, who seem to say, "Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof."

As we stood there waiting, there passed by a man, erect, grave, strong, with a reformer's head. It was Canon Farrar passing from Dean's yard to his delightful church next door, dear old St. Margaret's. We resisted the temptation to follow, and waited for the opening of the Abbey doors.

Presently we were allowed to gently surge in, and, in a very few minutes, the mighty nave was full. The thrilling democracy of it was most suggestive. A few seats near the pulpit were reserved. All the rest were free and open to all comers. A glorious congregation, and a glorious place!—the very centre of England, one might say, and the home of the symbols of her noblest life.

Looking a little around, one saw that the congregation was, to a large extent, a congregation of women ; certainly two to one, so far as we could see. It seemed to be so at Dr. Momerie's first "Oration." Is this also a sign of the times ? Many of them were evidently devout churchwomen : others probably belonged to that large and interesting class of human beings—the rising race of women who want to know.

The "devotional service," as Nonconformists call it, must be put into the category of indescribable things, which only a Westminster Abbey and the heritages of hundreds of years could produce. And yet, for all its beauty, we were only conscious of what seemed its utter unreality. Such affected flutings of dainty intoning ! such lovely artifices of "linked sweetness, long drawn out" ! Who could believe that the silvery cadences, confessing to be "miserable sinners," could be anything but quivering moonshine ? No visible or invisible "sackcloth and ashes" were here, but only fine cambric and daintily embroidered silk, and musical confessions of sin and pretty pleas for mercy which only seemed to say—"O Lord, do but see how beautifully we can put it on !" But it was very delicious, and no one need wonder that multitudes take for religious emotions what are only musical and esthetic thrills.

Then came Professor Jowett. A radiant, gentle, spotless, gray old man. One could compare him to nothing so readily as a cherub who had lost his way, and, having been content to tarry here, had grown gray with time, though a cherub still.

The pulpit was cruelly high, and the preacher was painfully low. Now and then half of a sentence was swung out with a will, but, for the most part, it was a lost discourse. We heard quite enough, however, to convince us that it was a discourse which we never expected to find in Westminster Abbey. It was simply a mild cherubic commendation of dear John Wesley ; but all done so simply, and with so little that called for thought, that one could scarcely help contrasting the mighty audience with the almost trivial address—a kind of glorified penny lecture. It was

carefully read—and often read to the pulpit cushion, not to us. The light was bad and, occasionally, the beautiful serene old angel could not see. It did not matter: he simply stopped till he could, and deliberately held up his paper to the candles, until he found his place and made out the hazy sentence, and then went serenely on.

It was charming to find John Wesley in possession, and to hear the preacher say that he, John Bunyan, and Richard Baxter, Nonconformists all, “whose praise was *not* in all the churches,” had done as much as, or more than, any for the religious life of England: and, cried the preacher,—for once heard by all,—“let us not cut ourselves off” from such men,—a rather startling reversing of the usual State Church clerical cry.

What a pity Professor Jowett could not keep at it for three months, with such delicious milk for babes! In time, he might tell his hearers something about Priestley and Channing, Theodore Parker and James Martineau—penny lectures that might be worth their weight in finest gold.

THE WRITINGS OF JOHN FISKE.*

THE age urgently needs a new order of thinkers in relation to Religion. We are in the very midst of a theological, philosophical, and scientific revolution. The subtle discoveries of Darwin, and the equally subtle speculations of Herbert Spencer; the sturdy assaults of Huxley, and the fine reasonings of James Martineau, have turned most of the old notions of the Universe and God into heathen imaginings or childish dreams. Bishops may dress and Convocation may vote; churchmen may sing and dissenters may preach; divines may expound and tracts may drivel: but the end has come, though the show goes on. There is not a subject, from the creation of man to the providence of God, which is not absolutely revolutionised.

The new order of thinkers is coming; and they will bring to Religion a new world of light and thought. They will understand the divine revelation involved in the supreme fact of evolution, and will be familiar with the new Bible of Natural Law; they will hear God speak by the mouth of his servant Agnosticism, and will make the denials of the modern world to praise Him. They will light their lamps at Darwin's and Spencer's torches, and go into the inner temple to bless the name of the Lord.

Amongst them, we see, in the van, an American named John Fiske, whose chief writings we recite below, and now name, for special consideration, “*The Unseen World and other Essays*,” “*The Destiny of Man*,” and “*The Idea of God*.” These books are evidently written by a man who is in intensest sympathy with modern Science and modern Philosophy—who may, indeed, be almost called the intellectual child of Darwin and Spencer,—and yet they shew the world how it can preserve its faith—ay, enlarge and uplift its faith—in God and the Unseen.

* “*Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*,” 2 vols. “*Darwinism, and other Essays*,” “*Myths and Myth-makers*,” “*The Unseen World, and other Essays*,” “*Excursions of an Evolutionist*,” “*The Destiny of Man*,” “*The Idea of God as affected by Modern Knowledge*.” Boston (U.S.): Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

We do not propose to discuss or analyse these books. Our object is only to increase the number of readers of them. If some find in them a religious atmosphere too rare, it might be well to remember that this may be no argument against the atmosphere: it may, indeed, only suggest that the breather has dwelt too much on the lowlands and in their impure air. In time, the pure fine air of the higher regions of thought will be delicious; and the world will wonder at its old gross appetite for giant mechanic deities, supernatural revelations and incarnations, bloody sacrifices and burning hells.

"GOD SAVE IRELAND."

TWO LETTERS.

I.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have always given you credit for fairness to your opponents, but fear your Gladstonian proclivities have demoralised you.

The above remarks arise from a passage in your last *Coming Day*, in which you speak of Mr. Balfour as being down, and should not, therefore, be hit. I look at him in a very different way, and consider that, instead of being down, he never stood higher in the opinion of all thinking men who are not blinded by their party zeal. Mr. Balfour may, as probably he has, made some mistakes in his government of Ireland, but the fact remains, and it cannot be disputed, that whilst he found that country six years ago in a state of turmoil and agitation, he has left it quiet and almost free from crime, and, I believe, were it not for the agitators and the priests would be perfectly content. This opinion is endorsed by the majority of the constituencies in Great Britain, who have shewn they are prepared to support the present Government in the remedial measures they had proposed.

What Mr. Gladstone proposes to do we are not to know for six months. Many things may happen before then. He may even change his opinion of his Irish supporters, and use the same expressions towards them as he did in 1885, when he urged the English and Scotch electors to return him to power by such a majority that he might be independent of Mr. Parnell and those who were seeking to dismember the Empire.

I fear we have trouble before us. * * *

II.

MY DEAR SIR,—I occasionally receive such letters as yours, and usually quietly put them into a big basket by the side of my desk, with one slight sigh of pity for the people who write them. I make, for once, an exception in your case.

Your view of Mr. Balfour is different from mine, and you tell me that your view is held by "all thinking men who are not blinded by their party zeal." Don't you think that is rather "a large order"? Supposing I said to you,—*"My view of Home Rule is held by all thinking men who are not blinded by a spirit of British masterfulness,"* what would you think? But the one sweeping statement would be just as polite and just as true as the other; and, now I am in for it, I will say that my imaginary statement would have much more to back it than your actual one. Excuse me if I see, in your imperious putting down (as a prejudiced fool or zealot) everybody who differs from you, an indication of the spirit which has made England's government of Ireland entirely a failure, and is making England's opposition to Home Rule almost a crime.

Opinions, of course, differ about Mr. Balfour, and I fully recognise that many agree with you who are neither "demoralised" by "proclivities" nor "blinded" by "party zeal;" but I venture to think you are mistaken. The truth seems to me to be neither with your friends who call him

"the brave Balfour," nor with Mr. O'Brien's friends who call him "the bloody Balfour." He is far more like Belinda Balfour than either,—Belinda with a touch of Becky Sharp.

In common with many others, you attribute the improved state of Ireland to Mr. Balfour's management. That seems to me to be a mistake. I have taken the trouble to study this subject for myself, and in Ireland, and I have come to the conclusion that the amount of crime, say, six years ago, was grossly and purposely exaggerated, and that the improvement which has taken place is due to the Plan of Campaign, to the enforced moderation of landlords, to the action of the land courts (once denounced by Mr. Balfour's friends as "robbery") and chiefly to the loving hope and trust which have grown up in Ireland towards us since the Liberals took up the Irish cause, and showed such abundant sympathy.

You say that your opinion concerning the present improvement in Ireland is "endorsed by the majority of the constituencies in Great Britain:" but it would be very much more to the point if it were endorsed by Ireland. How is it that Ireland is practically just as resolute as ever to have nothing to do with Mr. Balfour or anybody he recommends?

Your quotation of Mr. Gladstone's appeal in 1885 is, in my opinion, quite incorrect, but it does not matter. Your description of him shews that you do not believe in him, and are not willing to think well of him.

By the way, your reference to my being "demoralised" by my "Gladstonian proclivities" is about as accurate as it is delicate. I am not a "Gladstonian." I am a Liberal. If I was ever anything as to a man, I was a follower of John Bright: and it was his teachings that made me a public advocate of Home Rule twenty years ago.

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AGAINST SUPERSTITION AND UNBELIEF.

BY KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

In trying to escape the horrors of superstition one should take great care not to dash against the rock of scepticism, where grim doubt and death make shipwreck of unguarded humanity, and men and women daily perish in numbers. Between the Scylla and Charybdis of superstition and infidelity, who can lead our frail bark securely into the haven of the New Dispensation? None but the Divine Captain! Let us take note of the dangers on our way, and watch and pray that we may be saved from both these evils.

S is superstition; U is unbelief; N is the New Dispensation. Beware of S and U, and pass on safely to N.

S. God speaks to me.

U. God never speaks to man.

N. God has spoken at sundry times and does still speak to men.

S. Behold the fire in the bush.

U. Divinity nowhere.

N. Fire of Divine presence everywhere.

S. The vedas are the only scriptures.

U. No scripture written by God.

N. He writes the truths of all scriptures.

S. God have I seen.

U. None can see the unseen or know the unknowable.

N. Though Incomprehensible, Him every devotee can see with the spiritual eye.

S. Only my religion is true, all the rest is false.

U. There is no true religion.

N. Every religion is saving so far as it inculcates truth and purity.

S. Mahomet alone is the apostle appointed by God to save mankind.

U. There is no apostle, no prophet.

N. All saints, reformers and martyrs, and the leaders of all great religions are Heaven-sent apostles.

S. Christ is the way.

U. Christ was an imposter.

N. True sonship, such as Christ taught and exemplified, is the way.

S. Only this river is holy.

U. No water is holy.

N. All water is sacred when it reveals God.

S. Take me, exclude the rest.

U. Exclude all.

N. Include all.

LIGHT ON THE PATH.

OUR FATHER'S CHURCH.—Meetings of members and inquirers will be held on Sunday, September 25th, at The Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer Street (near Oxford Circus). In the morning at eleven: in the evening at seven. Mr. J. Page Hopps will speak on **WHY SHOULD WE WORSHIP TOGETHER?** and **THE MUSIC IN ALL THE CREEDS.** All seats free. Voluntary offerings will be taken at the doors towards expenses. Circulars announcing the meetings are being prepared. Mr. Page Hopps will be glad to hear from friends (in and near London) who are willing to receive a supply for distribution.

CROYDON.—On Sunday, October 2nd, Mr. Page Hopps will conduct the worship of the congregation at The Free Christian Church for the first time, as its minister. Services at eleven and seven. The Church is in Wellesley Road, at its junction with Station Road, close to West Croydon Station and near to East Croydon Station.

PROGRESS.—*The Christian World* is doing well. It lately printed the following, in a leader on Baptists and the Bible, criticising the chairman of the Baptist Union, who does not seem to know what is happening:—"Would Mr. Roberts, in studying the statement that the sun moves round the earth, or that it stayed its course in the heavens for a number of hours on a given occasion, feel it necessary to rid his mind of all the findings of science on these matters? He would be compelled to take the findings into account in assigning to such statements their place in his mental system. Nor can we pass without challenge his position about the competency of 'the spiritual man' as a judge in Biblical criticism. Spiritual experience and attainment are powerful in their own sphere, but only there. Fervency in prayer will not solve a problem in the calculus, nor will it secure for us certainty as to the date of the composition of the Priest's Code. We can hardly congratulate Mr. Roberts on the illustration he gives of the operation of his criterion. He declares that the spiritual sense of the spiritual man is sufficient of itself to pronounce upon the theory of the finding of Deuteronomy in the time of Josiah—which, by the way, we are much astonished to learn that Mr. Roberts heard of apparently for the first time in *The Expositor* of February last. The

spiritual sense, we are told, rejects this theory on moral grounds. Will the spiritual sense, then, explain to us what the law was which Hilkiah found in the temple, and how, on the supposition that it was as old as Moses, it came to pass that it should have been entirely unknown to the king, the court, the priests, and the people? It is singular, too, that the spiritual sense which rejects this theory on moral grounds, has all along been content to accept the Psalms as from David, though he was known to be a liar, an adulterer, and a murderer, and to have regarded Abraham as the father of the faithful, though convicted of actions which would have procured his ostracism not only from a Baptist Union, but from all civilised Western society."

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.—At last, what we call "the religious world" is fairly aroused about the Bible. In the Established Church and in every nonconformist Body the question of Biblical Inspiration and Infallibility is up for judgment: and everywhere the strong modern men take the rationalistic view. At the present rate of movement, the old irrational doctrine will disappear in less than ten years, and the successors of the men who have damned us for our heresies concerning "The word of God" will endorse those heresies, and condescend to half recognise us as fellow christians! Nothing is more certain than that the advanced rational view of the Bible will soon be the average view taken everywhere by the men worth reckoning. We observe that a sturdy defender of the faith, one Henry Varley, has given "a complete answer" to our objection that believers in the entire inspiration and infallibility of the Bible make God directly responsible for the murder of innocent children. Of the words, "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones," he says;—"The point in dispute is, Were the words quoted inspired by God? I maintain that they were." But here is his 'complete answer';—"We are often reminded of the inhumanity of the Book of Joshua and the barbarity of the commands to slay little children. I believe it is a complete answer to remember that wherever such commands were given it was in connection with, and as a result of, the ripe iniquity of the national life of the fathers to which the children belonged. Their death under such circumstances, though terrible

in itself, was eternal gain. Lost in earth's wickedness, they were folded in His gracious arms who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me.' In their experience, also, death was indeed great gain." Mr. Varley and the like of him must be desperate indeed, when they can cant in this ghastly way about murder of the rankest kind.

ON TAKING CARE OF ONE'S SELF.—*Unity* wisely says, "The wisecracs are still busy in the application of their little rules to the ills that spring from an age of continual hurry, and afflict the multitude of over worked people on every side. Again we are reminded that the great Beecher succumbed to over-work, that a life of incessant labour and responsibility killed Horace Greeley, that work and worry combined carried off such men as Sumner, Clay, and Webster. And yet what stores of rich inspiration, of actual and lasting good accomplished, would have been lost to the world if these men had passed their lives in that careful minute attention to themselves which might have insured a few more years of physical existence, but must inevitably have robbed life of half its joy and all its grander motives for being. It is so much more to live than simply to be alive; to match the heart beats to the living thought and genius of the age than to the minute hand of the doctor's watch; to keep the blood flowing in the direction of the strong mental currents of the day, careless if they sometimes run faster than the medical books prescribe. It is not half so important to know how men like Sumner and Greeley died, as how and why they lived. Dying is inevitable, with the great or small; but a full, earnest, and noble life always remains man's choice. Health is very much like happiness, and is apt to fly him who seeks it too persistently."

COLONEL INGERSOLL says that "heresy is what the coffin says to the cradle." That seems wrong. We should say that heresy is what the cradle says to the coffin.

WHOSE SPEECH!—Is it too late to refer to the curious production, called "The Queen's Speech"? Possibly not, as it is, and is probably likely to be, the funniest bit of writing of the season. It is, in some respects, better than the best things in "Walker, London." But who wrote it? Whatever gifts Her Majesty may have in the direction of literature, flattery itself could hardly credit her with the faculty of humour so deliciously suggested in

this "Speech." The truth probably is that it is Lord Salisbury's; and yet even he never revealed such dainty wit, such delicate satire, such bland flavours of assumed conceit.

It almost wants translating into the language of common life; and yet it seems a hopeless task to decant this precious wine. Something like this might do, however,—as a first attempt:—"My Lords and Gentlemen. You have been called together, but really there was no need for it. Previous to the dissolution, everything was completed. There was no measure that was not carried through to its final stage. The very last stroke of the pen was accomplished: the very last bit of tape was tied: and ministers had nothing more to do. So you need not meet at present,—at all events, not until some business shall accumulate; and, when you do meet, it is to be hoped that you will carefully tread in the footsteps of the great and good men who have just gone before you, and that you will, if possible, add your humble contribution to those useful and beneficent measures of social and domestic improvement which were so judiciously brought into the sphere of the possible by those greatly successful statesmen who, since last Session, have joined the noble army of martyrs."

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND THE CROFTERS.—Mr. Chamberlain's grimly frank announcement that as the Scotch crofters have voted against his men he declines to do anything more for them, registers the low-water mark of political cynicism. There were days when politicians advocated causes for the sake of justice and right; and we hope those days are not over yet. How far is Mr. Chamberlain's sardonic shoving away of his clients a sign of the times? or is it only Mr. Chamberlain who careses or hits just as it suits his own personal turn? This is the secret of Mr. Chamberlain's fall. The Liberal party for once, and at a critical time, did not respond to his mandate, and, in an hour of indignation, and loss of self-possession, he was foolish enough to imagine that he could create a new Liberal party that would be loyal to him. He miscalculated, and fell; but still can accept only the ruling place, with "my followers," and my "third party." It was not a happy angel who said,—

"What matter where, if I be still the same,

And what I should be."

"Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven."

The quotation is a trifle strong, but the spirit of it, we are afraid, is perfectly applicable, and we are sorry for it.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

"Never forget: or little notes and maxims on morals, manners, and perceiving." By Matilda Sharpe. London: Griffith, Farran & Co. A pretty-looking little book, filled with wisdom; but more likely to be profitable in the hands of a teacher, we should think, than in the hands of the unguided pupil. An unusually quaint and thoughtful child might read it; but the average child of to-day would find it a little prim and monotonous. For all that, it is a mine of goodness and good sense.

"Harry Goodchild's Day-dream."—By L. Pinhorn Wood. London: G. Stoneman. A childish but rather pretty story about two children who were gifted with wings to enable them to fly for once to the moon.

"Zine's wishes," &c. Two fairy tales. By Frances Alrec. London: G. Stoneman. Pleasant, fanciful and stirring tales with a right motive.

"THE CARPENTER'S SON."

BY C. C. FRASER-TYTLER (MRS. EDWARD LIDDELL.)

"Is n't this Joseph's son?"—ay, it is he;
Joseph the carpenter—same trade as me—
I thought as I'd find it—I knew it was here—
But my sight's getting queer.

I don't know right where, as his shed must ha' stood—
But often, as I've been a-planing my wood,
I've took off my hat, just with thinking of he
At the same work as me.

He war'n't that set up that he couldn't stoop down
And work in the country for folks in the town;
And I'll warrant he felt a bit pride, like I've done,
At a good job begun.

The parson he knows that I'll not make too free,
But on Sunday I feels as pleased as can be,
When I wears my clean smock, and sits in a pew,
And has thoughts not a few.

I think of as how not the parson hissens,
As is teacher and father and shepherd o' men,
Not he knows as much of the Lord in that shed,
Where he earned his own bread.

And when I goes home to my missus, says she,
"Are ye wanting your key?"
For she knows my queer ways, and my love for the shed
(We've been forty years wed).

So, I comes right away by mysen, with the book,
And I turns the old pages and has a good look
For the text as I've found, as tells me as he
Were the same trade as me.

Why don't I mark it? Ah, many says so,
But I'd think I'd as lief with your leave let it go;
It do seem that nice when I fall on it sudden—
Unexpected, ye know!