

# The Coming Day.

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FEBRUARY, 1893.

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## A PRAYER.

[Thought out one dark night in January, 1893.]

In this darkness, Life of my life, I turn to Thee. Utter loneliness of soul would this be for me if I could not find Thee here. Before me is the impenetrable veil : behind me, a life that has been full of interest and anxiety : and around me, the world that I have learnt to love so well.

O, how I have loved it ! its seas and skies, its brooks and rivers, its forests and meadows, its inspiring breezes and far-reaching hills, its glorious clouds and sunny gleams, its music and art and the wondrous human voice, its lonely solitudes and mighty cities, its calls to arms when the weak were smitten and the unjust were strong, its hard demands but vast rewards in the struggle for existence, its brave women and gracious men, and the angel faces of children—and my work.

But now I feel the drift and movement of the mighty deep, and the sweep of its tremendous tide. All seems doomed to change. Everywhere there is unrest, questioning, vanishing. Everywhere advance, but advance which brings fresh unrest and questioning and vanishing. Everywhere rest seems but a fond illusion, and joy only a passing dream. My God, what does it mean ?

What can it mean but this : that we are on a journey—that this is not the end, the haven and the home ? Help me to believe it, so that, while I am grateful for this dear world, I may stretch forth hands of welcome, through this darkness, to the wondrous light beyond, and know that all is well. Help me to understand that this dark veil is in myself, that it is only the film over my own earth-bound eyes, and that if I were emancipated from this prison-house of the flesh, I should see that all this which I have loved so here was but the faint reflection of realities which always, always were beyond. Help me to know that whenever I pass beyond this darkness I shall see the light of the true and abiding City of God, that the ended service will be re-begun, that the broken links will be re-united, and that I shall hear again the voices which will be the music of Heaven to me.

## THE CHRISTMAS MYTH.

( SPOKEN AT CROYDON ).

It has never been my custom to do anything but accept the delightful associations and memories of Advent time; and to fall in with Christmas customs, Christmas traditions, and the Christmas spirit, both for their own sake and because one might almost say that custom has founded what history might not warrant. But I have for many years been conscious that the time would come when we should have to be historical, whatever might come of it: and it is plain that, in the end, history will not justify the tradition which associates the birth of Christ with any particular time. There is, on the other hand, a great deal which points to the conclusion that solar phenomena, and myths connected with the solar phenomena, have more to do with the traditional date than anything else. The very suspicious connection between the date fixed for the birth of "the Sun of Righteousness" and the birthday or recovery of the sun after the winter solstice is itself very suggestive. It is a charming allegory or symbol—that the advent of the "Light of the World," as Jesus has been called, should be coincident with the restoration of the sun after its winter decline: but allegory or symbol is all we can make of it.

In the Pagan world, in the early days of Christianity, many festivals were kept; but none were so important and so beloved as those that were kept at the end of December. One of these was the Sigillaria, or Infants' Festival, kept at the end of the Saturnalia—a festival of enormous importance which occurred at the time when we now keep Christmas. The eager Church, anxious to make way amongst the pagan population, adopted many of its ways, and notably its holidays and festivals. It was so with this. The pagan Sigillaria, or children's festival, became the Christian Christmas—the true festival of the children. At the Sigillaria, the little pagan children were presented with images. At our Christmas the little Christian children get dolls. It is a mere case of transference. So with our decoration by means of evergreens. The Romans did it before we did, and some of the Christian councils condemned it as too heathenish. So with our Christmas tree, which takes us back to ancient tree worship, or to a very ancient pagan legend concerning the mother of Adonis, who was changed into a tree, and, in that state, brought forth her son. So with our Christmas candles, which carry us back to the ancient sun and fire worship, in this case symbolising the return of the blessed sun. So our Christmas-day, our Christmas tree, our Christmas candles, and our Christmas dolls are all direct survivals of the old pagan ideas or feasts, which the clever priests transferred. As Neander says:—"There was also a festival still

more analogous to that of Christmas, namely, that of the shortest day, the winter solstice; the birthday of the new sun, about to return once more towards the earth. Christ, the sun of the spiritual world, was in this case compared with that of the material world. As, in the material world, it is after the darkness has reached its highest point that the end of its dominion is already near, and the light begins to acquire fresh power; so, too, in the spiritual world, after the darkness had reached its greatest height, Christ, the spiritual sun, must appear to make an end of the kingdom of darkness. Many allusions of this kind are to be found in the discourses of the Church Fathers. *The celebration of the Nativity was transferred to the 25th of December for the purpose of drawing away the Christians from all participation in the heathen festivals, and also for the purpose of gradually drawing over the pagans themselves from their idolatrous customs to the Christian celebration.*"

A clever writer puts it well:—"It was the policy of the papal Church, after its Bishops had embraced Christianity, to retain many of the pagan festivals under other and Christian names, in order to conciliate those who remained pagans, and in order also to swell the number of nominal adherents to Christianity. Pope Gregory I. (A.D. 590) decided that the pagans should be met half-way, hoping thus to bring them into the Romish Church. Mosheim, an orthodox historian of that Church, says, "It is difficult to determine whether the heathens were most christianised, or Christians most heathenised." Christianity, I fear, was in many instances, then as now, nothing but a name; and because of the lukewarmness or indifference of its post-apostolic supporters, the system of religion which now goes by that title differs considerably from the simple morality taught by its Founder. Towards the close of the sixth century, unanimity may be said to have been attained in the celebration of December 25th as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ—and not till then!" About 300 years after Christ, Christmas keeping began!

But there was something else which the highly organised Church of the fourth century did. It not only adopted pagan festivals and turned a Saturnalia into a Christmas, without the slightest reference to history and dates: it did more. It took up several of the old pagan doctrines, symbols, and myths; and, amongst them, one which has had an enormous influence upon the fate of Christendom. It not only invented the 25th of December as the date of the birth of Christ, in order to transfer to that birth all the interest associated with the festival of the children and the festival of the sun; but it transferred to that event the symbol of the Virgin and Child. Persons who are unacquainted with the facts will find it difficult at first to believe that the virgin, lady, or madonna and child are far, very far, older than Christianity. The Jesuit missionaries were amazed when they found the "blessed virgin" in China, in Japan, and Thibet. The ancient Greeks had her—so had the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the very Aztecs of Mexico. Ancient pictures and monuments exist which clearly shew that the virgin and child were trans-

ferred into the Christian cult as the festival was transferred into the Christian year. The Egyptian Christian priests must have known the symbol well, in the shape of Isis and Horus, a perfect virgin and child, Isis being the divine mother of the god Horus.

The New Testament has both views—that Jesus was the child of a virgin-mother, and that Joseph was his father. But it is very interesting to note that most serious and significant changes have been made in the official Revised Version of the Old Testament.

Luke ii., 33, has a suggestive alteration. The old version speaks of Joseph and Mary, in relation to Jesus, as "Joseph and his mother," a palpable endorsement of the legend that Jesus had no father but only a mother. Joseph is simply called "Joseph," while Mary is called "his mother." But in the Revised Version the plain truth is told, and Joseph and Mary are called "his father and his mother." Nor is this an isolated case. Farther on (ii., 43) the old version has again, "Joseph and his mother," again excluding fatherhood; but the new version says "of his parents." One of the revisers, himself a decidedly orthodox man, admits that the old Greek was tampered with in the interests of the doctrine of the miraculous conception.

Oddly enough, the main body of Christians have committed themselves to the pagan myth of the virgin birth, and mainly on the authority of the Old Testament, a fact which is enough to make the old Unitarian Hebrews haunt every Christian Church. The passages mainly relied upon are in the prophecies of Isaiah, and form perhaps one of the most striking instances existing of a great delusion, the wonderful thing being that the means for exploding the delusion lie on the very surface. The passages are the well-known verses:—"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

The facts are now well-known, but a writer in *The Jewish World* points out these facts from the important standpoint of the Jews themselves, and I prefer to quote him rather than make any fresh statement of my own. He says:—"Immediately preceding the close of the reign of Jotham, it appears that Pekah, the King of the ten tribes of Israel, and Rezin, the King of Syria, threatened hostilities against the Kingdom of Judah (II. Kings, xv., 36, 38). Ahaz succeeded Jotham early in the year 742 B.C., and upon his assuming the reins of government, both Rezin and Pekah "came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz but could not overcome him" (II. Kings, xvi., 5). The Prophet Isaiah agrees with the historian of the Book of Kings, that Rezin and Pekah would not succeed in their war against Judah. Evidently neither

Ahaz nor the population of Jerusalem had any faith in this prediction of Isaiah who therefore requests Ahaz to ask a sign from Jehovah. This Ahaz refused to do, and declared "that he would not ask, neither would he tempt Jehovah." In these circumstances Isaiah proclaimed to Ahaz that Jehovah Himself would give him a sign, which was as follows:—"Behold the virgin is with child (in 742 B.C.) and beareth a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Curds and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken." The two confederated kings were Rezin and Pekah, who, at this time, threatened hostilities, or were engaged in a sanguinary war against Ahaz and the integrity of his dominion. Moreover, early in the year 742 B.C., Ahaz was married to the virgin Queen Abijah, who, in conformity with natural laws, gave birth to the heir apparent to the throne before the close of that year, and undoubtedly Queen Abijah is the virgin and Hezekiah the child to whom Isaiah, before its birth, gave the allegorical designation of Immanuel. Immanuel signifies "God is with us," and in conformity with the allegory inherent in the name Immanuel, it was the expectation of Isaiah that Jehovah, the God of Israel, would not permit the allied kings of Syria and Israel to succeed in their hostile war against the kingdom of Judah.

The Prophet Isaiah was, no doubt, a frequent visitor to the palace at Jerusalem. The sign, therefore, which he gave to Ahaz, "Behold the virgin (or, as the word may properly mean, a young woman or wife) is with child," &c., is not a prophecy in any true sense whatever, but an historical narrative of a social event which took place in the royal household. The event was, perhaps, one of great political significance, because the child born of the queen was the heir-apparent to the throne, upon whose intellectual ability and moral character so largely depended the social and political well-being of the nation.

In the seventh chapter of Isaiah, the Prophet announced to Ahaz the impending birth of a son, to whom, *a priori*, he gave the allegorical designation of Immanuel, and this son I have already identified as Hezekiah, King of Judah. In the ninth chapter he announces the actual birth of the child in the grandiloquent language of an Oriental sage, which, perhaps, is appropriately employed in the proclamation of the birth of an Eastern King: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God (or mighty hero), Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever." This declaration is involved in no exegetical difficulty, and it is plain that the narrative is not

a prediction of a future, but the proclamation of an antecedent event—the birth of the heir-apparent to the throne in the palace at Jerusalem. The Prophet, writing in the year 742 B.C., declares emphatically that “Unto us—the Kingdom of Judah—a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government (of the nation) shall be upon his shoulder.” Then, in verse seven, he adds, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth (742 B.C.) even for ever.” The “for ever” of Isaiah is a mere rhetorical flourish of the school of the prophets, which receives its explanation in the recorded death of Hezekiah in 697 B.C. In the announcement of the conception of the virgin, who can be identified with Queen Abijah, Isaiah bestowed upon the child the allegorical name of Immanuel, which signifies “God is with us.” Is he not also referred to in chapter 8, verse 8? and in like manner when proclaiming, *a posteriori*, the actual birth of a son, he continues to employ similar allegorical figures of speech, and, with exultation, calls the child, “Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” But these figures of speech do not blind us to the fact that this child was to sit upon the throne of David from the year 742 B.C., and is none other than Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, King of Judah.”

So, says the *Jewish World*:—“It is evident that the author of the Gospel of St. Matthew has constructed this legendary narrative of the birth of Christ merely upon a misinterpretation of Isaiah vii., 10, 16.”

That is the conclusion of this remorseless Hebrew; and he certainly does show the danger of laying stress upon the legendary matter of the New Testament. The writer of the Gospel evidently was careless about his quotation from Isaiah, or very ignorant and illogical in construing it, for it is plain that the prophet was talking or writing about events in his own day, hundreds of years before Christ.

What then? The teachings of Jesus will remain: his bright and pure example will remain: his self-denying, brave, and conquering spirit will remain; but the absurdity of his supernatural birth, the bewildering puzzle of his deity, and most of the things the priests have invented for him will disappear, and not a day too soon: and when they have gone, Christianity will be the brighter and the more winsome, as the most reasonable, consoling, and elevating religion the world has ever known.

## THE CAUSES OF PESSIMISM.

### NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

ONE of the signs of the times is, that what is called "Pessimism" is, or is supposed to be, on the increase. It hardly matters whether it really is so, or is only supposed to be so. Some hurl condemnations at it. Let us try to understand it. But there are two kinds of Pessimism—cynical and pitiful—represented by, say, Mephistopheles and J. S. Mill.

It is curious that Pessimism has kept pace with the growth of means of comfort, and the advance of discovery. Why should we despair as we advance? But there is a subtle connection:—"He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrows," said the old sage. Knowledge opens the eyes and dispels illusions. An acute Russian thinker has lately reminded us that the old French Revolution was the final crash provoked by endless misery and wrong, and yet the leaders of that movement were optimists. "Alike, teachers, orators, and the multitude were convinced that they had mastered the problem of social existence, and were prepared to so alter the conditions of life as to insure perfect harmony and order. A few weeks, a few months, and the bright ideals would be realised. A new philosophy and a new economy were given to the world, which, obediently practised, would for ever eradicate evil and give France and the world liberty, equality, and fraternity. People possessed of such childlike confidence and implicit faith could not be unhappy even in the days—ever memorable—of terror."

But we have eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Then, further, an increase of luxury or of aids to comfort tends to increase the average observation of life's unfavourable conditions. The great philosophical pessimists have nearly all been men who had particularly comfortable studies. The same cause increases, not only observation, but acute feeling, suggesting a wrong standard for others. Then, in the other direction, this increase of luxury, or of aids to comfort, lengthens the outlook of possibility. Hence unrest, longing, discontent.

Contrast our standards of need or desire with the old simple life; with its limited outlooks and means of comfort: how free and content it was! The earlier generation did not notice or feel much that irritates us, and did not look far ahead.

The larger scale, too, has of itself something to do with the fate of the man of to-day, "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Industries,

speculations, risks, and responsibilities : all are enormously increased. Hence great strain, acute competition, and keen regard for self, all this leading to turning business into a campaign. Men must race, compete, finance, and mistrust. A break-down anywhere means so much. Contrast the old guilds with our exchanges. We have exchanged fellowships for fights. Contrast our rush with the old, quiet, steady-going pace. We do not back up one another ; we build on one another and help in self-defence. All this is provocative of restlessness and destructive of quiet joy, and calculated to make men feel that things are "going to the devil."

But there are reasons that relate more to human beings themselves. There is one cause of Pessimism which is really in itself a touching reason for hope. I mean the genuine increase in the average emotional and sympathetic instincts. We feel ; we respond ; we cry out against wrong. It is because we are really improving, and yet, oddly enough, it seems to make us look worse ; just as some men get impatient and angry, only because the sight of things going wrong hurts them. Their irritation is the measure of their sensitive sympathy, as yet not under right control. Never was so much done for people. We sympathise in all directions : with strikers, rebels, and even criminals. Even this wretched morbid Ibsenism, with its sickly and dangerous treatment of the cause of woman, has its root in sympathy.

Another cause of Pessimism from the side of personal advance is the higher and more serious view of mankind which now prevails. Upon the question, "What is it to be a human being?" many things turn. Take only the value set upon human life. How we protect by law the very lowest ! How eager we are in our interference even with parents ! What a sign of the times is the success of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ! Strange is it to see how that advance—that good—should nourish Pessimism. But it does. Why ? Now the awful contrasts come in ; now we see the ghastly difference between the ideal and the real. In Religion, the sorrowful pathetic problem is the misery of the world ; and 'tis that which makes agnostics.

But there is a sorrowful cause ; a decline of religious faith : and yet this decline of faith is only the result of decline of confidence in the old grounds of faith. It is only a passing cloud : and it is itself a sign of genuine faith. But, in the meantime, the alleviating old consolations and quietings are gone, and the world is restless.

Is there a remedy ? Yes, but not new. It is the old old remedy — Religion— but transformed. "Religion" now must be Trust, and Love, and Hope. After all the world's wanderings in speculation and controversy, it will some day be surprised to find that in the simplicities lay the deepest truths ; not in the

heavens above, not in the depths below, but "in thy mouth, and in thy heart;" and all in this—the spirit's reliance upon God and love's hope of immortality, and, above all and within all, Trust and Love.

The Pessimism of the Nineteenth Century which has so largely grown out of sympathy will be cured by it. Love, groping in the dark, breeds pain and doubt, and fear. Love in the light and mature, will bring us peace and joy; will give us inspiring ideals, reveal the good in man, and bring it forth, conquer selfishness, revive faith, and brighten hope: ay! turn "the winter of our discontent" into sunny-hearted joy in God and man.

Dr. Momerie said that Pessimism is a disease which must be cured. I say it is an Angel not yet understood.

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## NOTES ON BIBLE CRITICISM.

### THE FATE OF JUDAS.

By A. D. TYSSSEN.

THE *Coming Day* for May, 1892, contained an article on the pedigree of Jesus, in the course of which the observation was made that two hands could be traced as having been employed in the composition of the first gospel. It will be convenient to call the latter of these two writers, the recensor of the book, and the earlier writer, the original compiler of it, the latter expression being used to denote that this writer, too, had earlier materials with which to work.

A perusal of the article on the pedigree of Jesus will also show that we attributed strong Jewish predilections to the original compiler of the book, and pointed out that he referred to the Old Testament to aid him in his work. On the other hand we found that the recensor of the book did not refer to the Old Testament to verify his comment upon the pedigree, and we mentioned that we should find good reason for regarding the birth stories as having been introduced by him.

Before proceeding to examine the birth stories, it may be well to point out some other passages in which the hand of the recensor can be traced.

One such passage is found in the beginning of the 27th chapter, where a story of the fate of Judas Iscariot is introduced in the middle of the accusation of Jesus before Pilate. It will be well to print in parallel columns, the corresponding passages in the first and second gospels relating to the accusation of Jesus before Pilate. They are as follows:—

## MATTHEW XXVII.

1. When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

2. And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.

11. . . . . And the governor asked him, saying, art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

12. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

13. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14. And he answered him to never a word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

15. Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people, a prisoner, whom they would.

The close resemblance of these two narratives makes it quite clear that either the writer of one of these had the other before him, or the writers of both had recourse to some common source. But observe how the narrative is broken in the first gospel. Verses 3 to 10 are abruptly inserted in the middle of it, and then, at the beginning of verse 11, some words are introduced to bring us back to the scene before Pilate. The story thus inserted is as follows:—

## MATTHEW XXVII.

3. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4. Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that.

5. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6. And the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, It is not lawful for to put them in the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in.

8. Wherefore that field was called, the field of blood, unto this day.

9. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom the children of Israel did value,

10. And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

11. And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, &c.

Now be it observed that the mode in which the story of Judas is introduced into the account of the accusation of Jesus before Pilate, indicates the work neither of an author nor of a compiler, but of a recensor, who was touching up an already existing manuscript. An author or compiler would have finished the account of the accusation before Pilate before beginning the story of Judas. Such a series of events as are narrated in this story of Judas could not have happened in the short space of time during which Jesus was in the presence of

## MARK XV.

1. And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, and bound Jesus and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

2. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering, said unto him, Thou sayest it.

3. And the chief priests accused him of many things, but he answered nothing.

4. And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they witness against thee.

5. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

6. Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

Pilate. Moreover the story is introduced at the wrong place. The expression, "When he saw that he was condemned," implies that Pilate had confirmed the sentence of death upon Jesus before the first act in this story about Judas.

The sudden introduction, of the story of Judas at this point may be explicable on the supposition that verse 2, of Matt. xxvii., came at the end of a page, a skin of parchment, and that the interval between it and the next succeeding sentence offered the most convenient spot for inserting an extra skin.

Let us now examine the story of Judas more carefully, and see if it exhibits any of the characteristics of the recensor which have been previously noted. We observed that he did not refer to the Old Testament in commenting on the pedigree. What has he done in the present case, where he cites prophecy from Jeremiah?

If we look into a reference Bible we shall find no reference in the margin to any of the writings of Jeremiah, and, indeed, there is no passage in any of these writings at all resembling the quotation here given. We find, however, a reference to Zechariah xi., 12, 13, which is the only passage in the Old Testament which has any similitude to the quotation. In Zechariah the prophet has been telling us in an emblematic way that he took two staves, and called one beauty and the other bands, and he then proceeds:—

#### ZECHARIAH XI.

10. And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.

11. And it was broken in that day; and so the poor of the flock that waited on me knew that it was the word of the Lord.

12. And I said unto them, if ye think good, give me my price; and if not forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

13. And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was priced at of them! And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

14. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

Here we see at once that the writer of the passage from the New Testament above set out did not turn to the Old Testament to verify his quotation, but he must have trusted to his memory, and his memory erred both as to the words of the quotation and the name of the book from which it was taken.

Next we may observe that there is one point in which the text in the Old Testament agrees with the story, although that point does not appear in the quotation of the text, and that point is that Judas cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and Zechariah says that he cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. This identity indicates that the story had come to the writer through the medium of some person who had noticed these words in the Old Testament, and gave a narrative agreeable to them.

Thirdly, we should notice that the principal circumstance introduced into the quotation by the writer in the New Testament is the field, when he turns the potter into the potter's field, and we are led to enquire whence he derived this idea. We shall find the solution of this if we turn to Acts i., 18, 19, where we find a different account of the fate of Judas in the following words :—

18. Now, this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity ; and, falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem : insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, *Aceldama*, that is to say, the field of blood.

Putting all these considerations together, the passage which we are considering is adequately explained if we imagine that the recensor of the first gospel had heard one story of the fate of Judas like that in the Acts connecting his death with a place called "the field of blood," and another story framed to suit the text in Zechariah, representing him as casting down the money in the Temple, and then trusting to his memory he jumbled together these two accounts, and partly adapted his story to his quotation, and partly adapted his quotation to his story, and so produced the narrative which we find in Matt. xxvii., 3—20.

We may here observe that this story of Judas and the comment on the pedigree in Matt. i., 17, have another common characteristic, namely, that of attaching importance to coincidence of numbers.

If anyone, after reading these remarks, wishes to be informed whether the passage in the Acts can be regarded as giving an authentic account of the death of Judas, we can only say that we have not space enough to give a proper answer to that question now. We may mention, however, that a Christian writer named Decumenius records that Papias states that the body of Judas swelled so that he could not pass where a waggon was easily passing, and was crushed by the waggon. Papias appears to have lived in the first half of the second century of the Christian era.

Of course, the explanation which has been given above, of the story of the fate of Judas, in the first gospel, implies that the mention of thirty pieces of silver as the price paid to Judas for his treachery is borrowed from the passage in Zechariah, and further investigation will confirm this view. This sum is only mentioned in the first gospel, the second and third gospels merely say that the chief priests promised to give Judas money, (Mark xiv., 11, Luke xxii., 5.) This is all that the disciples of Jesus could know of the matter, unless they had communication on the subject with Judas or his employers. Placing side by side the passages in the first and second gospels in which the bargain is mentioned, we find them in the authorised version rendered as follows :—

## MATTHEW XXVI

14. Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

15. And said unto them, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

## MARK XIV.

10. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests to betray him unto them.

11. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

The third gospel also says (Luke xxii., 5,) that the chief priests "were glad and covenanted to give him money." But, when we turn to the Greek text, we find that the word translated "covenanted," in the authorised version, is represented by two different words in the first and third gospels. The word in the third gospel clearly has this meaning, but that in the first gospel more properly means allotted or weighed out. It is the very word which occurs in the Septuagint translation of Zechariah xi., 12, where we read in the authorised version, "So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." Here then we catch another echo of the text in Zechariah, although this portion of it is not quoted in the first gospel. This strongly confirms the theory of the origin of the story of Judas, which has been given above, and gives firmer ground for the suggestion that the writer, whom we call the recensor, had received his information really from some teacher, who had referred to the Old Testament. The statement that the chief priests paid Judas beforehand is not very likely to be correct, but the writer apparently intended this, as he mentions no other payment, and describes Judas as being in possession of the money. If anyone should ask whether the expression, "thirty pieces of silver," had a definite meaning at Jerusalem at this time, we may mention that we find a similar expression in Acts xix., 19, as a measure of value at Ephesus, and we find the expression, "that woman, having ten pieces of silver," in Luke xv., 8, but other descriptions of sums of money in the gospels are expressed in denarii, translated pence; minæ, translated pounds; and talents.

If any of our readers are not satisfied that we have made out a case of an invention of facts in the New Testament to suit a text in the Old, we will promise to give further instances of this process in a future number if we have time and space to continue these articles.

## LIGHT ON THE PATH.

MISPRINT.—Will every reader be good enough to correct the small mistake on page 1? "1862" should of course be 1892.

THE NEW BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.—We have been overwhelmed with congratulations upon the appearance of this book. If it is as widely used in the future as it is greatly praised in the present, it will surpass all our expectations and hopes. We will send to any address a copy of the book or of the musical responses for one shilling each, *post free*.

OUR FATHER'S CHURCH.—Members, friends and inquirers are invited to a meeting on Sunday, February 12th, 1893, at the Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer-street (near Oxford Circus), at seven o'clock. John Page Hopps will speak on the following subject: Things we are sure of in these upbreking days; and will read "John Calvin's dream of Jesus." Meetings will also be held on Friday, February 17th, at the Spiritual Hall, 86, High-street, Marylebone, at eight o'clock. Subject of address: The humanising of God; and how God becomes man. On Wednesday, February 22nd, at Mansford-street Chapel, Bethnal Green, at eight o'clock. Subject of address: When they saw Jesus, "then were the disciples glad."

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.—A friend writes to ask what was meant in the note on "Vampire, London," by the sin against the Holy Ghost. There is only one Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost or Spirit of Nature or God in all holy or beautiful things, from a skylark's song to a saint's soul; and the sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of destroying or dragging down these beautiful things. There is something wicked in shooting a lark and eating it, or wearing the heavenly songster in your hat; and it is precisely the kind of sin that can never be forgiven—or, as we should say, remedied.

HAYDN WILLIAMS' NEW YEAR'S CARD.—"The age of Chivalry is never past so long as there is a wrong left unredressed on earth, or a man or woman left to say 'I will redress that wrong, or spend my life in the attempt.'"—*From the Life of Professor Forbes*.  
"I HAVE nothing especial to offer any one, except especial sorrow and trouble, if they wish to try to do especial good."—*Charles Kingsley*.

"SURELY as long as there's a devil or devils in the universe, or even an ass or asses, one will have to turn out to the *reveille* now and then, wherever one is, and satisfy one's *θυμος*, ('rage or pluck') which Plato averreth to be the root of all virtue."—*Ibid*.

## EMERSON DAY BY DAY.

*"Not from a vain or shallow thought  
His awful Jove young Phidias brought,  
Never from lips of cunning fell  
The thrilling Delphic oracle;  
Out from the heart of nature rolled,  
The burdens of the Bible old;  
The litanies of nations came,  
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,*

*Up from the burning core below—  
The canticles of love and woe;  
The hand that rounded Peter's dome,  
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,  
Wrought in a sad sincerity;  
Himself from God he could not free,  
He builded better than he knew."*—

THE PROBLEM.

1.—THE lesson of life is practically to generalise; to believe what the years and centuries say against the hours; to resist the usurpation of particulars; to penetrate to their catholic sense.—*Montaigne*.

2.—ONLY that good profits which we can taste with all doors open, and which serves all men.—*Napoleon*.

3.—THOUGHTS came into our minds by avenues which we never left open, and thoughts go out of our minds through avenues which we never voluntarily opened. Character teaches over our head.—*The Oversoul*.

4.—GOD will not make Himself manifest to cowards.—*The Oversoul*.

5.—THE ancients are only venerable to us because distance has destroyed what was trivial, as the sun and stars affect us only grandly because we cannot reach to their smoke and their surfaces, and say, Is that all?—*Criticism on Past and Present*.

6.—OUR life is an apprenticeship to the truth; that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on midnight, and under every deep, a lower deep opens.—*Circles*.

7.—THE way to speak and to write what shall not go out of fashion is to speak and write sincerely.—*Spiritual Laws*.

8.—WHAT we do not call education is more precious than that which we call so. We form no guess at the time of receiving a thought, of its comparative value.—*Spiritual Laws*.

9.—WHAT a man does, that he has. What has he to do with hope or fear? In himself is his might. Let him regard no good as solid but that which is in his nature, and which must grow out of him as long as he exists.—*Spiritual Laws*.

10.—THE walls of rude minds scrawled all over with facts, with thoughts. They shall one day bring a lantern and read the inscriptions.—*Intellect*.

11.—THE sweet of nature is love; yet if I have a friend I am tormented by my imperfections.—*Circles*.

12.—THE universe is the externisation of the soul.—*The Poet*.

13.—LIFE is a series of surprises, and would not be worth taking or keeping if it were not.

God delights to isolate us every day and hide from us the past and the future.—*Experience*.

14.—BETTER be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo. The condition which high friendship demands is ability to do without it.—*Friendship*.

15.—IT is a main lesson of wisdom to know your own from another's.—*Experience*.

16.—THE spirit of the world, the great, calm presence of the Creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium or of wine. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in a clean and chaste body.—*The Poet*.

17.—THE language of a ruder age has given to common law the maxim that every man's house is his castle; the progress of truth will make every house a shrine.—*Domestic Life*.

18.—WRITE in on your heart that every day is the best day in the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he know that every day is Doomsday.—*Works and Days*.

19.—THE highest heaven of wisdom is alike near from every point, and thou must find it, if at all, by methods native to thyself alone.—*Works and Days*.

20.—SELF-TRUST is the first secret of success, the belief that if you are here the authorities of the universe put you here, and for cause.—*Success*.

21.—IF thought is form, sentiment is colour.—*Success*.

22.—THE world is enlarged for us, not by new objects, but by finding more affinities and potencies in those we have.—*Success*.

23.—AS caloric is to matter, so is love to mind; so it enlarges and so it empowers it.—*Success*.

24.—WE boast our emancipation from many superstitions, but if we have broken any idols it is through a transfer of the idolatry.—*Character*.

25.—NATURE never rhymes her children, nor makes two men alike.—*Character*.

26.—A DIVINE person is the prophecy of the mind; a friend is the hope of the heart.—*Character*.

27.—MORAL qualities rule the world, but at short distances the senses are despotic.—*Manners*.

28.—WITHOUT the rich heart wealth is an ugly beggar.—*Manners*.

## A PAGE IN PRAISE OF LOVE.

## DEAR MOTHER!

Dear face, weathered and withered for *me*!  
 But more lovely than ever to *me*.  
 Always a smile for me; always a word of  
 cheer.  
 If 'twas forgotten once, now 'tis remembered,  
 dear.  
 Always, thy light gleamed, winsome, above me:  
 Always, though thoughtless, I knew mother  
 loved me.  
 Making the sad nights like days,  
 Brightening my dreariest days.  
 Dear face! Dear mother!

Dear hands, wrinkled and worn so for *me*!  
 Always working and busy for *me*.  
 Before I could know who cuddled and fed me,  
 Right on to the days when I knew mother led  
 me;

Mending and making, yet ready for play,  
 My servants and lovers by night and by day,  
 Soothing and strong for me,  
 Patient so long for me,  
 Dear hands! Dear mother!  
 Dear eyes, dim and darkened for *me*!  
 Watching, waiting, and weeping for *me*;  
 The first stars I saw in my sky,  
 In the heaven of thy face always by:  
 Always my own, all for me,  
 Wonderful constancy!  
 Dear eyes! dear mother!  
 Dear love, tried and tested for *me*,  
 Ever buoyant and sunny for *me*,  
 Awake when mine slept,  
 Alert when I wept.  
 My shield when, unmindful, I grieved thee:  
 My haven! I always believed thee.  
 Dear love! dear mother!

J. P. H.

## THE FINDING OF THE CAVE.

When Autumn, whose flush'd cheek and  
 fervid eye  
 Betray her poet-soul, went, muse-like, forth,  
 And with her golden finger glorified  
 Each leaf to meet decay, I, wandering, found—  
 With transport found,—within a forest lone,  
 A cave which some forgotten architect  
 Had sought to make a temple, and which  
 nature  
 Herself now consecrated, for a vine  
 Of wildest beauty clasp'd the altar round,  
 And of her clusters made an offering.

A statue, well-nigh featureless through time,  
 Lay on the floor, so that no eye might tell  
 What deity some human heart had lov'd,  
 Trusted and reverenced in this solitude.  
 Yet what remain'd show'd beauty had not  
 been  
 Unclass'd among those vanish'd attributes.

Over this prostrate god, one pale sad rose  
 Hung weepingly—the only worshiper  
 That would not leave a deity dethroned;  
 But, faithful to the fallen one, she still  
 Offer'd her pitying incense, in the stead  
 Of that which died with priest and devotee.

O, how I lov'd her for such constancy!—  
 For each embrace which her consoling arms  
 Gave the forsaken god! Here would I lie,  
 While Cynthia on the humbled idol smiled  
 And gave him back his lost divinity,  
 Musing on all the myriad creeds of man,  
 Till, through the clouds of each, the spirit-  
 faces  
 Of hope, love, mercy, peer'd forth smilingly.  
 'Tis solitude befriends great thoughts; society  
 the small.

T. B.