

The Coming Day.

JUNE, 1894.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THREE SUNDAY EVENING ADDRESSES AT THE PUBLIC HALL, CROYDON.

CAN MAN HELP GOD?

OUR two previous meditations have tended to establish one main fact—the intense nearness of God to man. That, indeed, is the deepest truth in relation to religion. Man himself is a manifestation of God: so much so that in asking the question, “Can God help man?” we found it resolving itself into the question, “Can any one help man?” God helps man through man, ay! through the man himself, seeing that “it is God who worketh in us to will and to work.”

That at once suggests the answer to the question, “Can man help God?” Man is an instrument of God. God uses him in the progressive creation of the world; as Paul finely said, “Yield yourselves unto God, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto Him.” It is man’s privilege and divine mission to be a co-worker with God, and there is no exception wherever what is done helps on and shares the needed work of the world. The miner, the sailor, the weaver, the smith, the farmer, the printer, the shoemaker, the baker, the schoolmaster, the poet, the washerwoman, the artist, the newspaper people (when they try to put on record the truth), the good homely mother, washing and mending and cooking and keeping her little home together, are all helping God, and God could not do without them. They are His arms and hands and feet and brain.

There is nothing supernatural or even mysterious in this when we once perceive that God is the glorious hidden possibility in all things. In one sense, indeed, we may think of man as the liberator of God if He is the hidden possibility in all things. The gardener who works at the soil and brings it round to soft fertility, and liberates its strange magnetic forces or its equally strange magnetic receptivities, is liberating God. The florist who leads forth the subtle forces of briar and bloom, and persuades them on from grade to grade of beauty and fragrance, is liberating God. The pine apple in its first stage was so acrid that its juice bit the skin of lip and tongue, but man, helping God, has made of it the finest flavour in the world. The evolving of the

Marshal Neil or Gloire de Dijon is as truly a liberation of God as the action of Abraham Lincoln was the liberation of the slave. So with electricity and the marvellous resources of the deep earth; so, on another plane, with the great moral and æsthetic forces—the sense of the beautiful, the sense of justice, the emotion of brotherhood, through which at last the great prayer, “Thy kingdom come,” will be answered by man himself as well as by God. Thus God helps man by filling His world with possibilities, and man helps God by studying them, liberating, directing, and using them.

God wants His children to be happy and His gardens to be sweet. Help Him. God wants to have justice done, to make wise freedom the happy law of human life. Help Him. God wants to see His England civilised and prosperous, a blessing to all her sons and daughters, and an example to the world. Help Him. God wants to make a man of you, to make a woman of you, to put down the survivals of the brute and to evolve the hidden possibilities of the human and the divine. Help Him. Learn a lesson from a man who is called “an infidel,” but a man whose infidelity, I think, only measures his revolt against barbaric creeds. Some one tells this story of him: “Ingersoll is the kindest-hearted man I ever saw. Riding all day with him between Omaha and Chicago, I saw a little incident that will illustrate this. On the train was a pale, sickly-looking woman with a fretful baby. The woman was in shabby mourning, and was almost worn out with the crying and worrying of her little one. The passengers were very much annoyed, and kept looking around and frowning at the woman, who was evidently doing her best to quiet the child. Finally Mr. Ingersoll, who had been reading, noticed it. Getting up, he stepped across to the woman and took the babe, telling her to take a little rest, and he would take care of the child. The little one stopped crying at once, played with his watch and chain awhile, and finally nestled its little head down on his arm and went to sleep. The tired mother also dropped to sleep, and the colonel cared for the baby for upwards of a hundred miles before the mother awakened and relieved him.” There was an instance of “an infidel” helping God.

I like to follow these lines of thought into the life beyond, for there is great help for us as to that when we find out what is true on this side concerning God and man. Can God help man there? Can man help God there? Why not? Let us get rid of the odious barbarism that this is our one chance, our only “day of grace.” Let us make no terms with the odious lie that God helps no more when this poor world is left, and that His children help no more, however much they found their heaven in helping here. They talk of the “bottomless pit” for the lost. There are no lost, and there is no such pit. Anyhow, millions have already gone, and there are other millions going, who will never rest until they do “get to the bottom of it.” Do you want to “go to heaven”? You can never be sure you will, unless you are ready to go to hell, unless you can stand up and say, “Here am I, send me!”

FREEDOM IN THE FREE CHURCHES.

ARE UNITARIANS FREE?

THE phrase, "the free churches," is making way, though it is at present used rather vaguely, and with not a little competition for the right to it. Thus the Congregationalists and Baptists, and perhaps some others, unite in a conference for concerted action, and sound their trumpet summoning "the free churches," leaving the Unitarians out, which is manifestly or even grotesquely unfair. And in their turn the Unitarians are a little apt to speak of their group as "the free churches."

What do they all mean? The "orthodox" Nonconformists only mean that they are free from state control, that they can do as they please. The Unitarians add the suggestion that they are free from the entanglements and superstitions of the old creeds, and are in better marching order for advance.

It is all very well until you get close. Then the freedom is apt to slowly disappear. For instance, the Congregationalists and Baptists, if they are free from convocation, have their unions, with expressed and implied obligations to well defined creeds, and most of their chapels, we believe, have close trusts, violation of which might any day drift preachers or people into the courts of law. Besides which, committees and deacons notoriously play the part of the privy council, and play it excellently well.

Turning to the Unitarians, we find greater freedom from associative control, though there has lately been an odd exhibition of longing for the yoke; but the freedom which is so constantly claimed is naturally tempered by circumstances which specially affect Unitarians. In reality, there is less flexibility and less of the spirit of adventure and enterprise among Unitarians than among Congregationalists and Baptists, and when we add to this the absence of strong converting motives, the higher average of cultivated respectability, and a certain love of quietude and mild conservatism, it is easy to understand the at first somewhat surprising fact that Unitarian freedom rather means freedom from a surplus of belief than the freedom of flexibility and openness to change.

It is, in a sense, true that the Unitarians are a kind of John the Baptist preparing the way. But what a John the Baptist! As a rule, he is to be found on the bench of magistrates, or he is "an employer of labour," perhaps the president of the Philosophical Society, and, in any case, gives excellent dinners. He is fatally sane and painfully prudent. "There is no speculation in those

eyes." Occasionally he has faint longings for what he calls "church life," or wondering thoughts about "the masses," and then he reads a paper at a conference, or smiles upon a mothers' meeting, or engages a domestic missionary, or puts his choir into surplices. In his heart he loves all men, and shews it by subscribing a guinea. If his minister attracts an audience of toilers on Sunday evenings, he is quite willing that his pew shall be at their service, and hopes that may promote the brotherhood of man—but he is never there. He is glad to hear that there is a social union for the promotion of "a friendly feeling in the congregation," and he fervently trusts this may be useful to the young people and to strangers. To this end he assents to the use of the room, and even waives the question of gas and coals—but he is at his club, or stays at home. And he is absolutely kind and charitable and sincere and free.

Unitarians have a most honourable record, and have probably useful work to do still, though the Established Church and even the "orthodox" Nonconformists are rapidly absorbing everything that is good in the Unitarian testimony. But it is becoming more and more amusing to hear the special boast of Unitarians that they are superlatively free. That has not been the experience of close observers. Human nature is human nature wherever one finds it, and Unitarian human nature is human, in spite of its professions of perfect freedom. Let any Unitarian minister preach the duty and blessedness of praying to "the saints" or the worship of the Virgin Mary, or the invocation of Jesus Christ. He would find that Unitarian freedom means freedom from belief, not freedom to believe in unwonted directions. The real truth is that, in the Unitarian denomination, the margin for "eccentricity" or unusual movement of mind, is less than elsewhere, and, especially, that the margin for vigorous and radical action is smaller there than elsewhere. Nowhere would a nineteenth century John the Baptist be less at home: nowhere would resolute independence produce more friction: nowhere would political activity (on the wrong side!) be more exposed to penalties: nowhere are "dearly beloved brethren" more ready to stay away from church on the 14th, and the 21st, if, on the 7th, the poor preacher had not pleased them.

It is true that its freedom seems exceptionally broad in relation to doctrine, but that is mainly because it has cleared out and freed itself from so much. It does not at all follow that there is any special freedom to bring back anything or to add. Its freedom, in fact, is not so much margin for movement as emancipation from the need to move at all. It is free from "orthodoxy" just as "orthodoxy" is free from Romanism, but it is very doubtful whether it is as free to absorb Joseph Parker as Congregationalism is to absorb, say, Joseph Wood. In short, its freedom is more change of base than change of sphere.

Take a minor but instructive illustration. It is well known that Congregationalists and Baptists have numerous hymn books; experiments in that direction being even welcomed: but it is notorious that amongst Unitarians a small revolution is required to secure any change; and it is equally notorious that an old "service book" is made to cling like a limpet to a Unitarian pulpit when once it gets in. Nowhere would a proposal to try something else be made more difficult. Unitarians freer than other people? Fiddlesticks! They have only exchanged the gallon measure for the quart.

It was an official Unitarian who met a slight suggestion with an icy stare and the remark, "It is certain that no alteration could be made here;" though at the time the congregation was slowly dying out. It was a leading Unitarian who said he would never vote for a minister who believed in spiritualism. It was a famous Unitarian who lately said he would walk out of the chapel if the minister read a lesson from any other book than the Bible. It was a widely known Unitarian trustee who, the night before the opening of a new church, went in and, with his penknife, cut out a pretty cross that had been worked into a pulpit decoration. It was a famous Unitarian minister who declared that he would not recognise as a Christian minister any one who disbelieved the miracles. It was an eminent Unitarian who boycotted his minister, for whom he professed the very highest personal regard, and withdrew his subscription from the congregational fund, because the minister, who never took politics into the pulpit, took his place with fellow citizens in advocating Home Rule. It was an equally eminent Unitarian who threatened to withdraw his subscription if a certain well-known advanced and most devoted Unitarian minister were appointed as missionary to the poor. It was an ardent Unitarian who said that if the terms of membership of the Unitarian Association were lowered from a guinea a year he would erase from his will the legacy he had intended to leave it.

But what is the use of going on? Human nature, as we have said, is human nature everywhere; and Unitarian human nature is no exception to the rule; and these things would not have been said but for the curious claim made by Unitarians that they are so divinely free. They are not; they are hampered with traditions, bound all round with conventionalisms, half smothered with minute respectabilities, and here and there positively green with conservatism. They are, in many respects, the salt of the earth, genial, gracious, cultured, full of pretty charities, and nice to live with, but they are not specially free: and if this bit of plain speaking should help to make it easier for any poor minister, or promote the emancipation of any rich "layman," the writer will be rewarded for what have literally been his pains.

MR. GLADSTONE AND THE GENESIS CREATION STORY.

Concluded from page 74.

WE now come to the fourth day. Verses 14-19, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night. . . . And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night ; He made the stars also."

Thus this the first of Professor Dana's organic triad is occupied, as before mentioned, entirely by the inorganic—this creation of sun, moon, and stars. We have dealt partly with the question of the sun already, but there is a further view to be taken. Mr. Gladstone endeavours to account for the extraordinary discrepancy of there being already light during all the previous periods, as we must now call them, by supposing that the light created on the first day, though due to the sun (yet unborn in the narrative) was a diffused light, owing to the initial proximity, on the nebular theory, of the cast-off earth and its caster-off, the sun. Light would under such circumstances be diffused, and it would be ages before the sun shrank sufficiently away from us, by its contraction, as to be a visible, nucleated object in the sky. Hence, he argues, it might be fairly said to be a sensibly fresh creation, and was thus so given four days after. Putting aside the fact that such nucleated visibility would be insensibly attained, scores of thousands of years making no appreciable variation of visibility, and that therefore there would be no distinctive period under which it could be exactly placed, we may admit that light at "the beginning" would be diffused. Certainly, but the narrator begins not with light at all, diffused or other, but with darkness, which, he says (verse 1), "was upon the face of the deep." There cannot both be the diffused light—which, by the way, must have been of the most brilliant character—claimed rightly for the purpose of argument, and also darkness. If the Mosaist is correct in commencing with darkness, then the nebular theory may take a back seat, or, rather, be driven quite out of court. What with this explanation and the chapter explanation, the Mosaist evidently gives much trouble to his supporters.

Then again, the moon is created at the same time as the sun, a fact utterly at variance with scientific theory. On the nebular theory, we have first the sun, then, as regards ourselves, the earth, and finally, later—probably ages and

ages after—his little grandson the moon. We now come to by far the most striking misconception of the whole narrative. The vast universe, of which our sun is but as a single grain of sand on the world's shores, is relegated to the merest superficial mention. The stars, the wonder of God's creation, were created only on the fourth day or period out of the six, just prior to the advent of animal life! If there be one thing more than another in the contemplation of nature that gives to man a sense of utter helplessness of mind, it is the incalculable vastness of space and time presented by the corner, as it has been termed, of the universe admissible to our telescopes, with its 100,000,000 suns, popularly called stars. Though there are but a few thousand which can be seen with the naked eye, as many as 20,000,000 can be seen through the most powerful telescopes, while Sir Robert Ball, the Irish Astronomer Royal, has lately disseminated the knowledge that that infinitely more subtle eye, a super-sensitive photographic dry plate, substituted for the eye at the end of the telescope, shows us that what were before blank spaces, even to Lord Rosse's telescope, are literally studded with stars, presumably so inconceivably distant that their light may have taken hundreds of thousands of years travelling from them to the earth, light nevertheless travelling rapidly enough to go eight times round the world at each swing of a clock pendulum. "He made the stars also." Thus the Mosaist, in a mere perfunctory after sentence, dismisses the entire host, representative of creative magnificence, evidently, to his mind, a mere decorative addendum for the gaze of the inhabitants of our comparative atom of a world! Nothing, not even the greatest discrepancies previously mentioned, so stamps the narrative as being primitively human in its conception as this childish mistake.

We now come to the organic creation on the fifth day. Mr. Gladstone here flatters himself that at any rate he has discovered conformity with recent science. But it is plain there are erroneous assumptions and significant omissions in this organic account. It is assumed in it that there were, first, water population; then, either concurrently or next in order, birds; then mammals, then man, and, as we have seen, vegetation was, days before, given anterior to all. But fossil discovery points to no such distinct classification of order. There is shown on the contrary a constant overlapping of the kingdoms, a more or less concurrent development of them. Vegetation in its simplest character (perfectly incapable, from its perishable nature, of being fossilised) was, most likely, as early as anything organic, perhaps concurrent with the water-invertebrates, while the reptile population, about which the Mosaist is silent, became later on, and concurrently with a higher order of fishes, the most prominent inhabitants of the earth. Mr. Gladstone says the reason why reptiles are not mentioned is because "they fill no place at all in the view and in the concerns of primitive man." Then why was the Mosaist so particular to describe the darkness in "the beginning"? This had no possible concern either for primitive man, nor had the supposed fact that "the earth was

without form and void," except it be as matter for legitimate wonder and for man's contemplation that he was born into freedom from such disqualifications. But if so, what is more wonderful than the thought that at one time the whole earth must have been in reptilian possession. These large amphibians must have been monarchs of all they surveyed, and probably the earth has never had greater examples of power than these creatures, which roamed the earth through millions of years. Yet this organic account is innocent of them! Palæontology indicates that winged reptiles, too, were the ancestors of birds, another important reason why reptiles should have been mentioned in any account that professed to give, to use Mr. Gladstone's phrase, "the orderly development of creation."

Then again, where is the geological warrant for delaying the advent of "creeping things" till after the creation of cattle? Mr. Gladstone cannot play fast and loose with his arguments. Previously he has been very particular about the exact priority of order in which the Mosaic names objects of creation in the same verse. He says, in reply to contradictionists who assert as a mistake the Mosaic's creating fishes and birds contemporaneously, that "it is a gratuitous assumption that the Mosaic intends to assign to them the same date as fishes; he places them on the same day, but . . . he sets them after fishes." In this verse on the fifth day he also sets "creeping things" after "cattle," and Mr. Gladstone must be held to the tenour of his argument. Yet that creeping things were subsequent to cattle must be the reverse of true.

Writing as to a previous article of Mr. Gladstone on the subject of the Mosaic account of creation, Professor Huxley, late President of the Royal Society, and without doubt *facile princeps* as a palæontologist, said, "If I know anything at all about the results attained by the natural science of our time, it is a demonstrated conclusion and established fact that the fourfold order given by Mr. Gladstone is not that in which the evidence at our disposal tends to show that the water, air, and land populations of the globe have made their appearance."

It is further to be remembered that, besides reptiles, the marsupials are also omitted: an omission to be dealt with hereafter.

On the sixth day man is created—in other words, last. Broadly speaking, this is correct; strictly speaking, there is no such thing as last, or a sixth day. On the seventh day we are confronted with that strangest and most unparalleled of assumptions that the omnipotent Creator finished His work and rested; and so satisfied is He represented to have been with resting on this seventh day that He especially sanctified it. How intensely human all this is in conception,

pinning down the Inconceivable One to the experience of ourselves! Rest after work is perforce the lot of humanity; it is therefore the lot of the Almighty! Without entering into a metaphysical discussion as to the innate necessity and happiness to mankind of conceiving the personality of God, it goes without saying that the anthropomorphism of the Deity of the Pentateuch brings with it a train of narrative that cannot commend itself to the conceptions of a non-miraculous age.

Mr. Gladstone says that this declaration that God rested on the seventh day "is in no conflict with any scientific record." If this remark means anything at all it means that evolution is at an end. Thanks to the "original impress"—Dr. Temple's expression—all creation has been evolution, and nothing more, nothing less, is recorded, and now we are invited to believe it has ended, for, since man was created on the sixth day, God has rested. It must be confessed that this remark of Mr. Gladstone openly proclaims his mental attitude on the great scientific question of the day. If the endowment of potentiality accorded by the Creator in the shape of those forces and principles to which we give names without understanding—*e.g.*, the forces of gravity and magnetism (are they more the same than we think?), and the principles of life and reproduction—is the endowment by which evolution is impelled and carried out, then God has not rested on the seventh day. Should the eye be made to range over the geological and palæontological record of the past ages, and then be transferred in glance to that of historic time, or even to what is called prehistoric, then there appears to the superficial observer an arrest of record. But there was no such arrest to Mr. Darwin's eye, and in his works will be found ample evidence of creation, in the only true sense of creation, going on in our own time. Wherever there is change, either of (reputed) degeneration or progression, there creation proceeds. The organism, whether animal or vegetable, is ever suiting itself to its environment. When the fauna and flora of our time is discussed in the remote future as a stratified record, it will exhibit without doubt its proportionate measure of evolutionary change; in fact, in the marked manner that sufficient time alone can give. Read creative process by the light of this Mosaic account as a succession of events "sharply broken up into parts," to use Mr. Gladstone's phrase, and a termination is a logical sequence; but read it by the light of modern scientific knowledge dispassionately viewed, and a termination is, *a priori*, illogical. If God is in His unvarying natural laws, then He has never rested so long as the energy that has made, and still makes, for them, is not brought to an end.

Having reviewed *seriatim* the process of creation as described by the Mosaic, let us examine a point constantly attempted to be made by Mr. Gladstone. He takes much pains to show that the discrepancies between the record of this narrative and the record of science are due to the object the narrator has in his mind. He says that man, for whom at that early time this record was written,

was "childish and sinless," and that it was necessary to convey to him in a lesson "his proper place in creation in relation to its several orders, &c.," that it would be "necessary to use the simplest phrases, that the primitive man might receive a conception," that—contrary to what we now know to be the prolonged and overlapping evolution of all the orders—it would be necessary "for the vital efficiency of this lesson that it should be sharply broken up into parts"; be made "to move before the eye in a series of scenes"; and that "with this aim in view, words of figure, though literally untrue, might carry more truth than words of fact."

Now it seems to many of us that this superabundance of explanation is beside the mark, and that a perfectly simple solution of the Mosaicist's attitude is ready to hand to the unbiassed reader, the cause of the "literally untrue" being self-evident. Critically and reasonably looked at, all this simplicity of language, this confusion, this inversion of order, these omissions, fall naturally into line if the narrative be taken to reflect the ideas of the age whence it emanated. Let us endeavour to place ourselves in the position of a thinker of that time, *i.e.*, the time in which the book of Genesis was written, who philosophised as to the how and when of things created. To begin with, and dealing with the organic, such a person would put man last, because he was aware that man was dependent on the cattle for his subsistence. He would say nothing of the marsupials, though they preceded mammals, because he had never seen or heard of one: they existing then as now in Australia only. He would leave out the reptiles, because, though they dominated for ages the earth's continents, they were but most insignificantly represented at the time. And if the belief of Thales, the earliest Greek philosopher, that water was the origin of all things was a product of prior time, there would be "the expected" in finding fishes accorded an early place in creation. Finally, as to vegetation—and putting aside for the moment the absurdity of its position in the narrative—he would observe that man, cattle, and birds (and it might be added, fishes) were dependent upon it, and he would place it first in organic creation. The organic account therefore given, with its incongruities, is quite naturally inspired—certainly not divinely. In the inorganic region of speculation, the same person would, from natural experience, be inclined to believe that light was sprung out of darkness. Hence we should have a "beginning" of darkness, though we know the earth was born in light. He would be sure, like the ancients, to exaggerate the importance of the earth's position in the universe, believing its, to him, immense arena to be the centre of importance, for whose benefit the sun, moon and stars were created (an unprejudiced reader, picking up the Bible for the first time, would so read the Mosaic narrative). He would, too, like the ancients, give the language of solidity to the sky. He would utterly confuse the issues as to light, having no conception that day and night were dependent on our diurnal rotation. Having no notion of the millions upon millions of years involved in the future revela-

tions of geology, he would make the one powerful God he believed in create in separate orders and divisions the "broken parts" of Mr. Gladstone, and, as an evidence of creative rapidity, he would not be unlikely to assign these divisions as the work of a single day. And finally, as a piece of anthropomorphism, he would imagine the Creator to require and take rest after such stupendous efforts: and all this is precisely what we find.

The errors in the narrative being utterly inconsistent with divine inspiration, we are thrown back to see if nature, as primitively viewed, be not an all-sufficient fountain of inspiration. To many of us the globe seems to fit the hand sufficiently perfectly, and the sketch of an early thinker's mind given above will seem a fairly natural one, and not merely made to fit by the narrative itself being made the model. If so considered, the errors in it, unveiled by the spirit of inquiry of later times, sit naturally and, to use a geological phrase, conformably in their place, and so considered, too, the danger is averted of constantly, and with shifting pertinacity, attempting to refine away these errors on purpose that the direct authority of God, as a seal of its absolute or even relative truth, may not be withdrawn from it.

It is not for us who are contradictionists to decide how far Mr. Gladstone is justified in using his great talents in straining the limits of ingenious advocacy in order to reconcile what seems to us outside the pale of reconciliation; he has his own view of our inability to see the picture from his subjective standpoint, no doubt. The growing advancement of opinion of a reading public is indisputable, and the intelligent must judge for themselves whether a timely concession to reason, guided by science, is not more safe in the end than the staving off the hour, till contempt is apt to set in, bringing about an undue swing of the mental and spiritual pendulum in the direction of militant unbelief.

THE FIGHT FOR THE SCHOOLS.

A CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD.

AN OBJECT-LESSON.—If the zealous gentlemen, who are so anxious to get their particular religious opinions taught in the Board Schools, were living in New York, they would "hear of something to their advantage;"—they might even be cured of their orthodox zeal. They would find the public schools of New York in the hands of a Roman Catholic majority. The committees on buildings, finance, books, teachers, trustees, are now all controlled by Roman Catholics. No teacher will be engaged who is not acceptable to Catholics. No book will

be allowed that is not endorsed by them. This is charming, and the most rabid raider of the Thames Embankment will be able to draw the inference. It is a most useful object-lesson, and it is really as instructive as it is amusing to imagine what would be the state of mind of Mr. Riley and his friends if they lived in New York. For the life of us we cannot choose between the two gangs. If the public schools in London can properly be appropriated by orthodox Protestants for the teaching of their dogmas, why should not the public schools of New York (or of London) be captured by the Catholics for a like purpose? But precisely the same question might be asked with reference to "The Compromise" and its theology and water.

ROWDY RELIGION. — The proceedings of the London School Board have been highly instructive. But what is it in "Religion" (so-called) which causes the discussion of it to end in "scenes" and "altercations"? We commend the question to people who still think that this thing they call "Religion" (Heaven forgive us!) is a proper subject for public schools and public boards.

We are bound to say that the well-meaning interpositions of all kinds of protesters have not helped to clear the air. In fact, to tell the plain truth, the clerical raiders have had the best of the argument all through: and they always will have the best of the argument while their opponents begin with the fatal admission that "Religion" and the Bible (as the *Book of Religion*) should be taught in the public schools. The moment they say that, Mr. Riley or Mr. Coxhead has them on the gridiron with the questions, "What Religion?" "If the Christian Religion, what is your definition of it?" "If we define it, must we not tell the teachers to teach that?" "If we tell them to teach that, is it not necessary to see that they are able and willing?" It is no remedy to say that the Bible might be put into each teacher's hands with the vague instruction, "Teach that, but don't be doctrinal or denominational." That is simply to turn the teacher into a preacher on his own account, and to give him the run of his own little theological scheme or no scheme, a very absurd and slipshod arrangement.

It is useless to say that the "Progressives" only adopt the "Compromise" as a temporary *status quo* until the only right principle can be set forth and adopted, for their manifesto actually declares that one of their objects is "the maintenance of the compromise." We do not at all see how "maintenance" as an object can mean temporary acceptance.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, FINSBURY.

ACCORDING to Mr. S. Fletcher Williams, South Place Chapel, Finsbury, is illustrating, for the benefit of "the orthodox," the truth of their declaration that, if you once begin to drift, you drift and drift to the icebergs. He says: "South Place has passed through a variety of phases. It has never been tied to a creed. It has never been in the bonds of a sect. Its varying complexion of thought is indicated in the names which, at various times, the society has either adopted or received: "Philadelphians," "Universalists," "Society of Religious Dissenters," "South Place Unitarian Society," "The South Place Society," "The Free Religious Society," "The South Place Ethical Society." These changes of name imply that the society has never been tethered to any particular type of thought. It has "stood" for flux and flow. William Johnson Fox was a Unitarian, decidedly. So were those who built the chapel for him. So were many of his supporters. But the society abandoned Unitarianism long ago. It may be said now to have abandoned religion. Recognition of God is gone. Prayer is gone, worship, in any proper sense of the word, is gone. Theism is gone. Not a vestige of any form of religious thought is left. Secularism, pure and simple, is dominant. "Free thought" it is termed. But it is thought not really free. I mean that true freedom insures freedom for thought in every direction. The

"free thought" of South Place is freedom to run in the direction of agnosticism, but not of Christianity, of non-theism, but not of theism. Like the churches around it, it has its bonds. It is in the bondage of a non-religious radicalism, with no liberty of movement towards any form of orthodox belief or of Unitarian faith. Mr. Conway, indeed, illustrates liberalism of thought by indulging in shots at Unitarians and Unitarianism. It is harmless and trumpery pea-shooting, but it serves to show that the claim of absolute freedom does not mean freedom for Unitarianism at South Place. Yet, as the *Christian Life* points out, the South Place Society meets in a chapel built by the liberality of Unitarians, and built by them for the purposes thus expressed in the trust: "as a place for the public religious worship of one God, even the Father, and for instruction in the Christian religion." That these purposes are not now fulfilled Mr. Conway himself would be the first frankly to admit.

According to another writer, in *Light*, Mr. Conway is now engaged in vehemently denying a future life, and putting belief in immortality in the pillory as an old-world delusion. If that statement about the trust is true, the position of the present holders of South Place Chapel is by no means an enviable one.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD. — Mr. Page Hopps, being asked to join the Council formed "for the purpose of assisting in the return of Progressive candidates at the School Board Election in November next," sent the following reply:—

To Dr. CLIFFORD and Mr. MANN.

DEAR SIRS,—I deeply regret that I cannot join you; and as deeply regret that you do not appear to me to be "Progressive." Your old "Compromise" is bad from centre to circumference—based on no principle and slipshod in the extreme. Admitting that "Religion" ought to be taught in the Schools, and yet declining to define it, secure it, or

test it, you are really responsible for the present raid—and the Schools will always be open to such raids while the "Compromise" lasts. I think you need to be forced into consistency, and I prefer to be left free to help in that process.—Heartily yours,

J. PAGE HOPPS.

DR. PARKER. —Everything associated with Dr. Parker, of the City Temple, seems doomed to exaggeration. The report of his first Birmingham mission meeting in the Town Hall says that there were over 10,000 people present. The Hall seats 2,400 persons. We once counted the seats ourselves.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

"Does man live after death? or immortality in the light of ancient thought and modern facts." By Rev. Minot J. Savage. Manchester: "The Two Worlds" Publishing Co. (One penny). This most enlightening pamphlet is a reprint of an address by one of the strongest and most influential of American Unitarian ministers. It is really on the subject of spirit-communication, and, to a considerable extent, is a record of Mr. Savage's personal experiences; and very remarkable experiences they are. In a very frank way he tells us how he came to look into the subject, and how he followed it up. "I will tell you what led me to investigate it. Something like eighteen years ago, soon after I had gone to Boston, one of my parishioners came to me. She had recently lost her father, and she said: 'I have been to see a medium, and certain wonderful things have been told me, and now I have come to you for advice. Shall I go again? Shall I pursue this matter any further? Is it safe? Is it wise? What is your opinion about it?' I was obliged to confess to her as an honest man: 'I have no advice to give; I have nothing in the world on this subject but prejudices. I am prejudiced against it. . . . I began to think, as I said to myself, here are thousands of people in America and Europe who have either discovered the most magnificent truth of the world, or have been misled by the most lamentable delusion—either one or the other. And in either case, I said, I as a minister, standing in personal relations to a parish, they looking to me for advice, I ought to know if possible which it is, and be fit to give them advice, else I am not fit to be their minister. I began studying with that purpose. I have never pursued these investigations from personal curiosity. I have friends, I hope, in that other life; I never allowed myself to investigate merely for the purpose of trying to get into communication with the dearest friend I have. I have studied it as I would study any other great problem, merely to find out its bearing on the nature of man, if possible, and whether it had anything to say concerning man's future destiny.

I have pursued in this investigation the most rigid, exact, scientific method. I have first tried to be absolutely sure of my fact, and then, as I believe I ought to have done, I have tried to explain it by the nearest method. I have tried to explain every fact I have discovered without crossing any supposed border line, or thinking I had anything to do with any other world. I have tried to explain it right here in this world just as far as possible, and I have allowed myself to be driven to facing the border and looking over only when there seemed no other rational, conceivable way with which to explain my fact." What came of his investigations is here well set forth.

"Lay religion. Being some outspoken letters to a lady on the present religious situation." By Richard Harte. London: E. W. Allen. In one sense, a tremendously strong book; unconventional, fearless, well informed, but indiscriminating and merciless. If anybody wants an audaciously honest little book on the present situation, to read, just as one would listen to the talk of a daring and knowing man across the table, here it is; but it would shock or hurt many.

"The invisible playmate." A story of the unseen, with appendices. By William Canton. London: Isbister & Co. A most pathetic, exquisite and entertaining book: all three: pathetic as to the story, exquisite for the delicious style of it, and entertaining in a very high degree, when we reach the glorious nonsense-verses, entitled "Rhymes about a little woman." O! for more of them! Surely, never did dotting father ever indulge in more heavenly extravagances over a little baby girl! The music of the lines might make Rudyard Kipling curious and Louis Stevenson happy. We dare not begin to tell the story, it could hardly bear to be compressed; the end of it is very wonderful. A dying child, in its bed, holds in its arms the form of another child, who, at the age of six weeks, had died a few years before, and the father sees it.

HAWTHORNE BUDS.

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY JOHN TINKLER.

His work will remain; it is too original and exquisite to pass away; among the men of imagination he will always have his niche.—HENRY JAMES.

1.—MAN'S finest workmanship, the closer you observe it, the more imperfections it shows, whereas what may look coarse and rough in Nature's workmanship will show an infinitely minute perfection the closer you look into it. —*Notebook*.

2.—MAY it not be possible to have too profound a sense of the marvellous contrivance and adaptation of this material world to require or believe in anything spiritual? —*Septimius*.

3.—THE greatest obstacle to being heroic is the doubt whether one may not be going to prove one's self a fool; the truest heroism is to resist the doubt, and the profoundest wisdom, to know when it ought to be resisted, and when to be obeyed. —*The Blithedale Romance*.

4.—A PICTURE, however admirable the painter's art, requires of the spectator a surrender of himself in due proportion with the miracle that has been wrought. —*Transformation*.

5.—LET the canvas glow as it may, you must look with the eye of faith, or its highest excellence escapes you. There is always the necessity of helping out the painter's art with your own resources of sensibility and imagination. —*Transformation*.

6.—Strength is incomprehensible by weakness, and therefore the more terrible. —*The House of the Seven Gables*.

7.—How strange and mysterious is our love of sleep! Fond as we are of life, we are yet content to spend a third of its little space in what, so far as relates to our own conscious-

ness, is a daily or nightly annihilation. We congratulate ourselves when we have slept soundly, as if it were a matter of rejoicing that thus much of time has been snatched from the sum total of our existence—that we are several steps nearer to our graves without perceiving how we arrived thither, or gaining either knowledge or enjoyment on the way. —*Notes*.

8.—No sagacious man will long retain his sagacity, if he live exclusively among reformers and progressive people, without periodically returning into the settled system of things, to correct himself by a new observation from that old standpoint. —*Blithedale Romance*.

9.—IF we pray at a saint's shrine we shall give utterance to earthly wishes, but if we pray face to face with the Deity, we shall feel it impious to petition for aught that is narrow and selfish. —*Transformation*.

10.—God gave the whole world to man, and, if he is left alone with it, it will make a clod of him at last; but, to remedy that, God gave man a grave, and it redeems all while it seems to destroy all, and makes an immortal spirit of him in the end. —*Septimius*.

11.—A MAN cannot always decide for himself whether his own heart is cold or warm. —*Blithedale Romance*.

12.—BEES are sometimes drowned (or suffocated) in the honey which they collect. So some writers are lost in their collected learning. —*Notebook*.

13.—THE universe is waiting to respond to the highest word that the best child of time and immortality can utter. —*P.'s Correspondence*.

14.—IN writing a romance, a man is always, or always ought to be, careering on the utmost verge of a precipitous absurdity, and the skill lies in coming as close as possible without actually tumbling over.—*Letter to Fields*.

15.—WHAT we need for our happiness is often close at hand, if we knew but how to seek for it.—*Notebook*.

16.—THE weakness and defects, the bad passions, the mean tendencies, and the moral diseases which lead to crime are handed down from one generation to another by a far surer process of transmission than human law has been able to establish, in respect to the riches and honors which it seeks to entail upon posterity.—*The House of the Seven Gables*.

17.—INSINCERITY in a man's own heart must make all his enjoyments, all that concerns him, unreal, so that his whole life must seem like a merely dramatic representation.—*Notebook*.

18.—THINK what a worn and ugly thing one of these fresh little blades of grass would seem if it were not to fade and wither in its time, after being green in its time.—*Septimius*

19.—GOD knows best; but I wish He had so ordered it that our mortal bodies, when we have done with them, might vanish out of sight and sense like bubbles.—*Italian Notebook*.

20.—THERE are many things in the religious customs of these people that seem good, many things, at least, that might be both good and beautiful if the soul of goodness and the sense of beauty were as much alive in the Italians now as they must have been when those customs were first imagined and adopted. But, instead of blossoms on the shrub, or freshly gathered, with the dewdrops on their leaves, their worship now-a-days is best symbolised by the artificial flower.—*Transformation*.

21.—IS Sin, like Sorrow, merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we should otherwise have attained?—*Transformation*.

22.—GOD does not want our work, but only our willingness to work.—*Septimius*.

23.—IT takes down the solitary pride of man, beyond most other things, to find the impracticability of flinging aside affections that have grown irksome.—*Blithedale Romance*.

24.—AT the last day man's only inexorable judge will be himself, and the punishment of his sins will be the perception of them.—*Italian Notebook*.

25.—IT is a strange thing in human life that the greatest errors, both of men and women, often spring from their sweetest and most generous qualities.—*Notes on Visit to Washington*.

26.—WHEN the ethereal portion of a man of genius is obscured, the earthly part assumes an influence the more uncontrollable because the character is now thrown off the balance to which Providence had so nicely adjusted it, and which, in coarser natures, is adjusted by some other method.—*The Artist of the Beautiful*.

27.—Happiness never comes but incidentally.—*Blithedale Romance*.

28.—IT is my opinion that a man's soul may be buried and perish under a dung-heap, or in a furrow of the field, just as well as under a pile of money.—*Notebook at Brook Farm*.

29.—NOTHING is surer than that if we suffer ourselves to be drawn into too close proximity with people, if we over-estimate the degree of our proper tendency towards them, or theirs towards us, a reaction is sure to follow.—*Septimius*.

30.—Man is no longer a naked animal; his clothes are as natural to him as his skin, and sculptors have no more right to undress him than to flay him.—*Italian Notebook*.