

# The Coming Day.

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AUGUST, 1894.

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## HYMNS AND SINGING IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

(SPOKEN AT CROYDON).

IN our study of this subject the words, "public worship," are vital. We are not about to discuss poetry and music merely, but to consider what is helpful in public worship. This is a church, not a concert hall, and we sing, not for the sake of a performance, but for worship, aspiration, thanksgiving, prayer.

That definition at once determines everything. Bearing it in mind, our course is clear. The hymn must conform to its object. It should be as poetic as possible, choice, thoughtful, and in pure taste, but the vital point is its fitness for the purpose. That the little poem is dainty, clever, sweet and wholesome is not to the point. There are thousands of such poems that are not hymns, and that would be out of place in the Church.

A hymn for the Church must not be merely personal, or descriptive, or edifying, or pretty. It must be strong and aspiring and congregational, glowing with thanksgiving and desire. In so far as it is that,—in so far as it voices the longings of seeking souls,—it is a real hymn. If not, hand it over to the compiler of elegant extracts for the drawing-room or the school.

We must, then, distinguish between things that differ. Everything in its place. A book of hymns is a book of sacred songs, expressing the desires and emotions of kindred spirits seeking after the ideal life and God.

In like manner it is necessary to exclude from the category of hymns all merely dramatic pieces, such as the poem in our own book containing the sensational lines,

Go sleep upon the thunder cloud,  
Grasp the forked lightning in thy hand;  
Or search and find whence comes the wind,  
And trace its path o'er sea and land.

Should thy mind shrink from such attempts,  
View the least work of Deity;  
The blades of grass thy skill surpass,  
And thou art baffled by a fly!

Is it possible to beat that for badness,—as a hymn?

Fitness, motive and tone, then, are essential elements in the case, and not only beauty, truth, or vigour. I will go further and say this: that there are poems of the second rank which make first-class hymns,—that to a hymn may be permitted a simplicity, a fervour, and a directness which might be some disparagement to a poem as literature, and that it is far better to have a second-rate poem which is a real hymn than a first-rate poem which lacks a hymn's motive, inspiration and use.

For instance, I find great delight in that cheerful and inspiring opening of one of Dr. Watts' revised hymns,

Stand up and bless the Lord;  
Let young and old rejoice;  
Stand up, and bless the Lord your God,  
With heart, and soul, and voice.

It is not high-class poetry, but it is delightful for its purpose, and immensely better for the purpose of a hymn than Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," or Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark," or Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality," or anything that Swinburne wrote, or any of Shakspeare's Sonnets, wonderful as all these are. Precisely the same thing is true as to sermons and prayers, which can only too easily take the form of an essay or review, petrified, for the uses of sermon or prayer, by literary polish and the excessive restraint of fervour and feeling, as the majority of Unitarians can testify. Indeed, the Unitarians, who claim to be so free, are more bound than most other Christians by conventional canons of taste and literary forms, and by a painful economy of faith in the Unseen, and the result is that they are cultured and exact, measured and restrained, half ashamed of emotion and half afraid to soar, and usually in that condition which the Christian world has agreed to call "cold." I have heard leading Unitarians say of certain hymns, "They are beneath contempt," and yet these very hymns were giving joy and inspiration to millions throughout Christendom. This cultured arrogance threatens to be the death of Unitarianism, not its heresies. We shudder at Mr. Sankey and General Booth, but they could teach us much which we sorely need to learn. We have shelved Dr. Watts, but that mighty singer could do for us what none of the daintier poets of a later day could do; for our book of hymns should be, not a pretty garden where one may take a pleasant walk, but a mountain top where the fine breezes blow, where the great expanses thrill, and where the rapt soul longs for wings.

The greatest hymn is that which can inspire the greatest number, and give voice to the deep longings which belong to us, not as critics and scholars and refined readers, but as human beings, sorrowing and rejoicing, hoping and fearing, sinning and repenting, seeking together the city "whose builder and maker is God." Hence many of the hymns which are regarded as "beneath

contempt" by self-conscious Unitarians may be the very things they need to give them fire and fervour and tears,—pearls of great price for them did they but know it, though hidden in the ooze of Revivalism or the rough shell of the Salvation Army.

In any case, I think it is our duty to find out what it is that touches the hearts of millions in these half-despised, half-pitied camps; what it is that makes it an event in one's life to hear the singing in Mr. Spurgeon's tabernacle, without music and without a choir; what it is that stirs the soul like a trumpet sounding the advance, even in the old conservative Established Church, when the hymns are sung; what is the element of inspiring power in hymns that will hardly bear analysis, and in tunes that entirely conform to no scholarly standards of merit, but that, nevertheless, are somehow able to give the wings of the dove to the weak and the wings of the eagle to the strong; what it is which gives such magic power to hymns like "Onward, Christian soldiers," "Lord, I hear of showers of blessing," "I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord," and "There'll be joy by-and-by." Call them crude, emotional, inexact, anthropomorphic, "beneath contempt" as poetry and music: what then? They somehow stir the "fountains of the great deep" of young and old, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, and touch and sway alike a Gladstone, a Sankey or a Booth, a church congress in a city hall or a mission service under a railway arch. I say we cannot afford to ignore that and stand aloof, or sit in our little conventional garden, partly self-satisfied and partly afraid, for we, of all others, need the fire and fervour, the abandon and the wings, the inspiration and the glow of what Christendom has to give.

But now, especially as to singing. The heretics seem afraid of a hearty burst of song. They stand and look at the choir. They are apt to misunderstand the whole intention of it. They take a wrong standard to their tunes. They want to be clever and scholarly, and they usually succeed in being only involved and thin and dull. They shrink from simplicity or buoyant feeling: it is "childish," it is "beneath contempt." They hardly believe in the saying that we must become little children if we would enter into the kingdom. As one grim satirist said (not of this congregation), "The musical director is starving the lambs in trying to feed half a dozen giraffes in the congregation."

Here again, then, I return to the standard. The singing of the church, or in the church, is an act of worship, not a performance. If it is not an act of worship it is an impertinence, as, for instance indeed, most of the so-called anthems are, having no relation to worship at all. The object of every note of singing in the church should be to voice the congregation's aspiration, longing, thankfulness, love. I fully agree with him who said, "It appears to me that the singing of a hymn ought to serve to place us more sensibly in the presence of God and of eternity. When that is not the effect produced by singing, it would have been better not to have sung."

The test and standard here, then, are the same—appropriateness and utility. What would be right for an entertainment might be quite wrong for worship, and what would be most delightful and edifying for united worship here to-day might be all wrong to-morrow at the Albert Hall, and though the very greatest joy of my life is listening to the best music that London or Bayreuth can give, I am not ashamed to say that the Church has much to learn, even from street preachers, in the breaking down of æsthetic pride, in the melting of our icy formality, in the liberation of suppressed feeling, in penetration to the human beneath the conventional, in firm hold of the unseen things, in surrender to that which loves and longs beyond that which criticises and looks on. In reality, we want a union of the two—fervour and knowledge, force and taste, simplicity and beauty, soul and sense, earth and heaven. Why not? But it cannot be unless we are open to change, unless we are even glad to try experiments, unless we are willing to learn from even people we sometimes half despise.

It was not a wild and unscholarly revivalist, but a musician and a cultivated teacher who said, "Why should not every ladder by which our people can reach heaven be used, though it does not happen to be Jacob's? 'As musicians we may not think Sankey anything much' (this is quoting—with a difference), 'but there is the fact—he is a ladder.' It should be remembered that devotion has many wings, and music is but one of them. The time is above all things enthusiastic, and enthusiasm does not burst from the lips of the people—plain-hearted people—in fugue form. 'Something simple and all in flames, like the 'Marseillaise,' is what is needed. Our hymn book bears on the face of it to have been put together by old men and musicians. Gravity, sedateness, and great ability, but nothing answering to the simple hallelujahs of the children out of whose lips our Lord found perfected praise."

I have but indicated the way in which I think we need to go: not to part with our good taste and thoughtful love of order, but to add courage and glow; not to accept a lower but a different standard; not to think lightly of the poet but to baptise him with the baptism of the spirit, and, above all, to remember that a hymn is a soaring human song, and that the singing of it is an act of longing, praise, and prayer.

## NOTES ON BIBLE CRITICISM.

## THE BIRTH STORIES.

BY A. D. TYSSEN.

IN previous articles we have pointed out that two hands could be traced in the first gospel, and we have suggested that the gospel in its earlier form was used as the lesson book of some congregation, possibly at Antioch in Syria, and that the minister, in reading it, added references to the Old Testament and other stories which he had heard about Jesus, and that after his death these references and stories were added to the gospel by his successor, who trusted to his memory in putting them into writing.

We can proceed now to consider the birth stories in the first gospel, and we shall find good reason for attributing them to the recensor. In the Authorised Version we read as follows (Matt. 1):—

18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21. And she shall bring forth a son, and

thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23. Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.

25. And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

The first point in this narrative to which we would call attention is the expression, "she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." A woman may be found to be with child, but a woman cannot be found to be with child of the Holy Ghost. The conclusion that her condition is not due to the usual natural cause, but to a supernatural cause, is a conclusion which cannot be drawn from anything found about her. Such a conclusion could only be drawn from some supernatural revelation on the subject. The third gospel gives a visit of an angel to Mary to supply this. Even then the evidence would be unsatisfactory unless there were other witnesses of the visit. But the first gospel gives no evidence at all for its statement.

Secondly, a difficulty is caused by the time at which the discovery is said to be made. It appears to be in the interval, usually a very few hours, between the marriage ceremony and the consummation. It is clear that Mary

had been handed over to the care of Joseph before the discovery is made. Joseph does not think of refusing to contract the marriage, but of divorcing his wife. He becomes aware of her condition before he consummates the marriage, and then an angel appears to him in a dream, and gives him a message. This dream of Joseph is the only bit of evidence vouchsafed to us in this gospel as a ground for concluding that the conception was supernatural.

Thirdly, the story involves one of two strange alternatives: either Mary was not herself aware of the condition she was in at the time of her marriage, or else she went through the ceremony of marriage with Joseph without taking care that he should be informed upon the subject. If the birth stories in the third gospel are to be amalgamated with those in the first, it is impossible to resist the last mentioned conclusion, and on the face of the first gospel alone it is by far the most probable alternative, for Mary could hardly have been unaware of her condition if it was discoverable by her husband immediately after she was placed under his care. That a woman, knowing herself to be pregnant, should go through the ceremony of marriage with her intended husband without taking care that he should be first informed upon the subject would be most scandalous conduct. Yet our neighbours attribute this conduct to the mother of Jesus when they contend that the birth stories in the first and third gospels are true. The writer of the story, and all who have believed the story, have overlooked everything in their desire to surround the birth of Jesus with a supernatural halo. They have only thought of conferring honour on him, no matter what dishonour they cast on others. Indeed, the story not only casts dishonour on the mother of Jesus, but on God Himself, inasmuch as it makes Him a party to the transaction. Well did Mohammed say of God, with reference to this story, "Far be it from Him, that which they affirm of Him. He begetteth not, neither is He begotten. He only saith of a thing, 'Be,' and it is."

Fourthly, let us consider whether the story is one which was likely to be invented if it had not actually occurred. Were any similar stories ever invented of other persons? The answer to this question is very simple. Greek mythology teems with such stories. Hercules, Perseus, Helen, and others were said to be sons of Zeus, the king of the gods. The Romans told a similar story of Romulus, the reputed founder of Rome, representing him as being the son of Mars, the god of war, and in historical times similar stories were invented of eminent men, such as Alexander the Great and Plato. In the case of Plato, who was born about 429 B.C., it was said that his mortal father, Ariston, had a dream forbidding him to touch his wife for ten months after their marriage, and his own nephew recorded the story (see Diogenes Laertius iii., 2; Plutarch, *Quæst. Sympos.* viii., A. 14, Leipsic Edition, vol. viii., p. 864; S. Hieronymus, *Lib. i., adv. Jovianum*). Alexander the Great was born in B.C. 356, and was the son of no less a personage than Philip of Macedon. He died at the age of 32, but nevertheless in his lifetime the story

was invented that he was the son of Zeus, and he himself sanctioned the story, his mother, Olympias, being alive at the time.

We see, then, that the story is one altogether unlikely to be true, and altogether likely to be invented. Furthermore, it appears in a form which shows that it was not an original story, but a story grafted on to earlier narratives, in which Jesus was represented as being the regular son of Joseph. We can here refer again to Matt. xiii., 55, where we read that the people of Nazareth said of Jesus, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" and we can also refer to the story of the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem in his twelfth year, which is found in Luke ii., 41-51. We may observe that this story of the visit to Jerusalem is found also in an apocryphal book called the Gospel of Thomas (see Cowper's Apocryphal Gospels, p. 142).

In Luke ii., 41, we read, in the Authorised Version,

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

42. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem: and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

But when we turn to the original Greek manuscripts of this passage, we find that the bulk of them read, "And his parents knew not of it," and this reading the Revised Version has adopted. Here, then, we have a case of a story written about Jesus, speaking regularly of Joseph as his father, and an alteration made in the words of it to render them consistent with the allegation that Joseph was not his father.

A similar alteration has been made in Luke ii., 33, where we read in the Authorised Version, "And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him," but on turning to the Greek we read in the bulk of the manuscripts, "And his father and mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him," and this reading the Revised Version has again adopted. On this subject we may also point to Luke ii., 48, where Mary is made to say to Jesus, "Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

We see, therefore, that the writer of the third gospel has embodied in his narrative some stories which were originally composed by a writer or writers who looked upon Joseph as being the real father of Jesus, and he embodied these stories also in their original forms, but subsequent pens have tampered with them a little in rather a clumsy way.

Turning now again to the story in Matthew i., we come to the 22nd verse,

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23. Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

The first remark to be made upon this passage is that the words, "a virgin," are a mistranslation for "the virgin." The Greek word for virgin is preceded by the definite article in all the manuscripts; so it is in the Septuagint translation of Isaiah vii., 14, from which this quotation is undoubtedly made, and there is also a definite article in the original Hebrew in that passage. The translation is corrected in this respect in the Revised Version.

Secondly, our writer does not give the name of the prophet, and we may therefore justly conclude that he quoted from memory, and did not turn to the Old Testament to look up the name. This agrees with his practice in other passages which we have considered.

Thirdly, the quotation which he gives is not exactly in the words of the Septuagint, but it agrees so closely with the Septuagint that we cannot regard it as an independent translation from the original Hebrew. It quite accords with our supposition that the writer had heard the text from the Septuagint quoted upon this point, and afterwards wrote down from memory an account of what he had heard. We have pointed out echoes of the Septuagint in other passages which we have attributed to the recensor.

Fourthly, the passage in Isaiah, when read with its context, is wholly incapable of bearing the interpretation which is here put upon it. We cannot, however, call this a peculiarity of this writer, for nearly all the writers in the New Testament who quote from the Old Testament seem to think themselves at liberty to pick up isolated texts apart from their contexts and give new meanings to them. This practice is also defended by many of our Christolalous neighbours at the present day, who admit that the quotations from the Old Testament have simple natural meanings in their contexts, quite different from the meaning attributed to them in the New Testament, but say that God designed this, making the writers of the Old Testament frame their accounts of the events in their time in such words as to be adaptable to some other events, which were going to happen centuries later. They thus represent God as being a great writer of conundrums, and, indeed, as writing His conundrums in such a form that they could not possibly be guessed until the answers were told, and, we may add also, in such a form that they could be twisted into predictions of anything that you pleased.

When the 7th chapter of Isaiah is read we see clearly the meaning of the 14th verse. The chapter tells us that the kings of Syria and Israel had formed an alliance against Ahaz, king of Judah, and Isaiah assures Ahaz that their project of dethroning him shall fail. We then read in verse 10, "Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above." There is no doubt as to the meaning of a sign in connection with a prophecy. It is something wonderful to be done at once, as a proof that the prophet is commissioned by God, and that his prediction of more remote events shall be fulfilled. Thus,



in 2 Kings, xx., 8, when Isaiah has prophesied that Hezekiah shall recover, Hezekiah asks for a sign, and we are told that the shadow on a dial went back ten degrees by way of a sign to him. So, in Deuteronomy xiii., 1, we read, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass," &c. Also, in 1 Kings, xiii, we read of the prophet, usually called the disobedient prophet, who predicted the desecration by Josiah of the altar set up by Jeroboam at Bethel, and it is then said, in verse 3, "And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken: behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out." And, two verses later, we read that "the altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar."

We see, then, that in Isaiah vii. 10, 11, when Ahaz is told to ask a sign, it means that he should ask for something to be done at once as a proof that Isaiah's prophecy of the discomfiture of the kings of Syria and Israel should come to pass eventually. We then read in verse 12, "But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." The word "tempt" here evidently means "try" or "test." Ahaz was content to believe Isaiah without receiving any sign. This seems to be a very proper answer for Ahaz to have made to the archbishop of his day, but apparently Isaiah was not satisfied, for we read next,

13. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David: is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

14. Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

15. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

16. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

There is no mistaking the meaning of this. We have already mentioned that the word translated virgin is preceded by a definite article in the original. We may add that there is nothing in the text to show that the virgin is to conceive supernaturally. Indeed, Hebrew scholars tell us that the Hebrew word here employed merely means "woman," just as *virgo* in Latin is sometimes used when speaking of a wife or a widow. Anyhow, the child indicated is to be born at once, and the two kings of Syria and Israel are to be cut off before the child can tell the difference between right and wrong.

We may further ask the very pertinent question, If God designed this as a prophecy of the child of Mary, born 700 or 800 years afterwards, why did He not inspire Mary to give the name Immanuel to her child, instead of letting her give it the common name Jesus? For Jesus was a common name among the Jews in the days of the Herods.

Turning back again to the book of Isaiah, we see good reason for supposing that the woman indicated in chap. vii., v. 14, was the prophet's own wife, for in the next chapter we meet with the name, Maher-shalal-hashbaz, meaning "Speed the spoil," and in verse 3 we read,

And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the Lord to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hashbaz.

4. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the King of Assyria.

Here, then, we see clearly that the prediction made in Isaiah vii., 14, was of something which was to take place at once, and we also read of its fulfilment immediately afterwards.

Under these considerations we see that the birth story in the first gospel quite melts away, and exhibits many of the characteristics of the story of the fate of Judas, which we previously examined. We may further observe that the Jews were accustomed to use the expression, "a son of God," for a good man, and this mode of speech, when translated into Greek, naturally invited the invention of a story of a supernatural conception. In like manner, we read that Jesus thought two of his disciples rather impetuous, and gave them the name of sons of thunder (Mark iii., 17). One of the early Christians, named Joses, distinguished himself by his liberality, and received the name of Barnabas, or son of consolation (Acts iv., 36). Wicked men are spoken of as sons of Belial (1 Kings, xxi., 10). In like manner good men are spoken of as sons of God. In Matthew v., 9, we read, in the Greek, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God." But in the Authorised Version we find it is rendered "for they shall be called the children of God," the fact being that the translators of the Authorised Version tried to reserve the expression, "son of God," for Jesus alone, and sometimes translated the Greek word for sons "children," instead of "sons," when it was applied to other men (*e.g.*, in Luke vi., 35, and Gal. iii., 26). As evidence that the expression, "son of God," in Hebrew is the equivalent of "good man," we may cite the exclamation attributed to the centurion who presided at the crucifixion of Jesus. In the third gospel we read (Luke xxiii., 47) that the centurion said, "Certainly this was a righteous man," but in the first and second gospels we find, in the Greek, that he said (Matthew xxvii., 54, Mark xv., 39), "Truly this (man) was a son of God!" there being no article in the Greek before the word son, and then this remark is mistranslated in the Authorised Version, and turned into "Truly this man was the son of God," as though the Roman centurion held the theory that there existed two divine spirits, one called God and the other the son of God. (So in Luke i., 32, and Matt. iv., 3, a son is translated "the son.") We see what the Roman centurion really said on comparing the first two gospels with the third, namely, that Jesus was a good man, and this, having come to us through the Hebrew language, appears in the first and second gospels in Hebrew phraseology.

Many of the points here touched upon might be further developed, but we feel that we have said enough to show that this birth story is unhistorical, repeated at first orally, and then added to the gospel by the writer whom we have called the recensor.

## THE WORK OF THE NATION'S SCHOOLS.

A LEADER note in *The Daily Chronicle*, on the modern boy, touches a subject which is usually dismissed with a jest; but it demands very serious thought. That boy is presenting to our view just now a curious and rather painful spectacle. The instances of "mischief" cited by *The Chronicle*, such as altering railway signals and placing planks on the line, could be multiplied by the thousand, and its remark that "his vast ingenuity for mischief is regulated by a very imperfect sense of responsibility" is very much to the point, and suggests a most serious defect in modern education.

We are on the eve of a mighty School Board fight in London, and it appears that what we are to fight about is whether we shall or shall not teach three or four metaphysical or theological notions. It would be awful if it were not so supremely silly. Are there, then, no rational educators in London who are prepared to put elementary civilisation into the front place? We hold that it is far more important to create a juvenile public opinion against altering railway signals and putting planks on the line than to teach the precise way of Jesus Christ's coming into the world.

To speak frankly, we would totally exclude from our national Schools everything usually called "religious instruction," as being quite

out of place, and, instead of it, would bring in the most serious teaching concerning life, and get the very greatest men and women in London to give it. For half an hour every day, every available scholar should face some picked man or woman, to listen to direct and outspoken teaching about humanity, honour, truthfulness, honesty, cruelty to animals, the preservation of public property, self-respect, the respecting of the rights of others, gambling, taxation, saving, sick clubs, the proper treatment of fathers and mothers, the meaning of law, the honourableness of doing good work, and the like. We believe that if the attempt were made, the very highest persons in London would come to regard it as an honour to be put on "The Teaching Plan." We should expect the Prime Minister to take his turn, The Lord Chief Justice, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Home Secretary, The Bishop of London, men like Stopford Brooke and women like Mrs. Fawcett. And they would do it, for they would see its supreme importance. That would be something like education in practical morality and religion, compared with which the inane foolishness of pottering with defined dogmas, on the one hand, or leaving worried teachers to produce "unsectarian" religious discourses from the Bible, on the other hand, is indescribable.

## SOUTH PLACE, FINSBURY.

OUR note on page 93 has led Mr. Conway to send us the following protest:

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL.

To the Editor of *The Coming Day*.

In your issue for June appears a tissue of gross and grotesque misrepresentation of the South Place Society and myself. Your statement of my teachings could hardly be more erroneous if written in a South Sea island. Your declaration that I indulge in "shots at Unitarians and Unitarianism," is the reverse of true, though the respect I am accustomed to pay in that direction can hardly avail much against the shots Unitarianism receives from its clique of persecutors of other liberals. Your quotation of the South Place

Trust is mutilated, and your assertion that I would admit its non-fulfilment is false and insulting. Nothing can be further from the truth than the statement: "Mr. Conway is now engaged in vehemently denying a future life, and putting belief in immortality in the pillory as an old world delusion." I have given no discourse on immortality for many years. The doctrine of immortality is left by me an open question, and belief in it never alluded to but with the utmost tenderness. You ascribe this accusation to a writer in the Spiritualist paper, *Light*. Some article may have appeared in that paper which I have not seen, but I suspect your reference is to a letter printed April 21st. It seems to have been written by some one after a first visit to

our chapel, who had heard of what certainly none ever heard, my "often-expressed disbelief in immortality," and pretends to have gathered from my discourse that immortality is "among the phantoms happily vanished or vanishing." I said nothing of the kind, but still, if this be the writer referred to, his statement by no means justifies your travesty of it.

The misrepresentations of which I complain appear the less excusable in consideration of the fact that the detailed history of South Place has lately been written, and also that I have recently published (in the *Free Review*), something like a creed. It appears but fair that those who undertake to take the stand as witnesses against a neighbour, should take some pains to secure information.

MONCURE D. CONWAY.

With this strong protest before us, our duty was plain. What Mr. Conway calls our "statements" and "declarations" were really quotations, and for these we relied upon three persons, — the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams, the editor of the *Christian Life*, and the writer in *Light*. To each of these persons, then, we submitted Mr. Conway's statement. We give their replies.

Mr. Williams says:—

"The statement in my letter to the *Unitarian*, copied into *The Coming Day*, respecting the Trust of South Place is, as therein acknowledged, taken from an article in the *Christian Life*. I have not now the number of the *Christian Life* containing the article by me, but the words relating to the Trust were in quotation marks, and I have no reason to doubt their accuracy. Mr. Conway describes them as 'mutilated.' Does this mean that while they are words of the trust, they are not the whole of its words? At any rate, my authority was the statement in quotation marks in the *Christian Life*. The general description of the service and of the

teaching at South Place gives the conclusions impressed upon my own mind by a perusal of Mr. Conway's published addresses."

The Editor of the *Christian Life* says:—

"I can vouch for the correctness of the article I sent you in the *Christian Life*. I read Mr. Conway's book, and it gave me much pain, and the "shots" at Unitarianism are not a few. But I had heard of this before I read the book on South Place. I think you have not said one word too much. I had not heard what *Light* says. But it is in line with all I had heard."

The article in the *Christian Life* gives the quotation from the Trust Deed exactly as we gave it.

The writer of the article in *Light* (an eminent author), says:—

"The writer of the article in *Light* of April 21st, 1894, entitled 'What South Place Believes,' having read Mr. Conway's letter to the Editor of *The Coming Day*, emphatically affirms the accuracy of that article in every particular, and can only suppose that Mr. Conway's denial is due either to his forgetfulness of what he said, or to his inability to endorse it on seeing it re-stated in plain terms, and divested of circumlocution. For much of what fell from him, especially in the evening's address, was said extemporaneously and colloquially as to an audience, the last attitude to be expected of whom was a critical attitude."

It may save trouble if we say that having fully discharged our duty in regard to this matter, we do not intend to return to it, unless Mr. Conway accepts an invitation which we have given him to send us what he regards as an unmutilated extract from the Trust Deed. In any case, we do not complain of his "shots at Unitarians," and, if his Trust Deed is ignored, he may have excellent reasons for ignoring it.

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

THE NEW BOOK OF HYMNS.—The new book of hymns referred to last month is now in use at the Free Christian Church, Croydon. In reply to several inquiries we are sorry to say that we do not yet see our way to publish a book of tunes; but any congregation adopting it can have the use of two books which contain well-tryed tunes for most of the "peculiar" metres.

WHAT IS A COMPROMISE?—The Provincial Assembly of Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers and Congregations of Lancashire and Cheshire has issued a report of special committee on public questions. Referring to the battle for the Board Schools of London, it rejoices at the opposition to the attempt of the clerical party, and says that "one very encouraging feature of this opposition has been that the leading Nonconformists of all bodies have stood loyally with us for the liberty of Religious Teaching, and against the enforcement of sectarian dogmas, even though they themselves believe in them." "The liberty of Religious Teaching" is a good platform phrase, but does this committee really want "liberty of Religious Teaching" in our National Schools? At a late meeting of the London clergy with lay members, a distinguished Board School teacher said that he and others gave good church teaching in the schools. Others teach good old crusted Calvinism: others—no one knows what: and all under the absurdity called "the Compromise," which is a device for leaving the teachers to decide for themselves what is true and what is adapted to the minds and understandings of children. This "liberty of Religious Teaching" is just as bad as Mr. Riley's little creed—and indeed worse. If we had Mr. Riley's creed we should know the worst of it: as it is, we do not know what is in the medley pie. All we know is that there is confusion, that the teachers teach what doctrines they like, that we are paying a new church rate in disguise, that the Nonconformists, as Dr. Parker admits, are sacrificing their principles, and that the Provincial Assembly seems to be talking in its sleep.

THE BIRTH OF A PRINCE.—We do not want to be disagreeable, but it is not easy to be

entirely agreeable while the air is still stuffy with the incense offered in every direction because a princess has a baby. The matter becomes rather serious, however, when an official State prayer is sent all over England, thanking God for the event: but here is the title, "A form of Prayer and Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the Duchess of York's safe delivery of a Prince." This is really going too far. It is difficult to speak plainly over this matter, but the superstition is so rank that it would be wrong to pass it over. Matthew Arnold bluntly told us how Lord Shaftesbury talked of God as though He were a man in the next street, but the title of this prayer treats Him as a doctor from over the way. It is all very heathenish.

THE LONDON PRESS.—London is apt to be both sensational and silly, and its newspapers do not always help it to improve. The contents bills usually lie, or scream, or are vulgar, or play the fool, and the contents themselves are too apt to pander to the low or hysterical tastes of their readers. One of the papers that ought to be the most thoughtful in London is *The Westminster Gazette*, and yet, while the poor murdered President was lying dead and unburied, and France was in the awful agony of appointing some man to take his post of peril, the *Gazette*, on its leader page, prominently put the news in the form of a low sporting paragraph, headed "The Elysee Stakes:—The Field," following it with the vulgar line in large letters:—"The Elysee Stakes. Tenable for seven years. Value £48,000 a year." Then came the names of thirteen of the picked men of France, as the horses, and then another vulgar reference to some of them as "likely starters" and "the favourite," with the still vulgar sentence, "It is still hoped that M. Casimir-Perier will come in first," and so on.

It is all very bad. We wonder what the fine spirits of France, if they see this coarse fooling, will think of us in this "centre of the civilisation of the world." We know what one said who knows them well,— "The English are hogs." We bring ourselves with difficulty and sorrow to say this—if for no other reason than this—that we have such a lofty standard for *The Westminster Gazette*.

**MURDERED AIR.**—We observe that Swinburne calls it "filthy smoking." It is expressive and almost as strong as the stuff that is burnt, and the dead air that is left. This particular phrase was forced out of him at the Arts Club, where he had tried all over the building in vain to get an unpolluted room to write in.

**COURT NEWS.**—Princess Maud assisted at the fêtes lately given in aid of the British

Home for Incurables. As some of the feminine adorers of Royalty brought their purses and laid them at the Royal feet, and then almost turned somersaults as they tried to walk backwards down the steps leading from the dais, she seemed to immensely enjoy the fun, and laughed, like a proper English girl, at the tomfoolery. The worst incurables are these crazy crawlers before any sprig of Royalty.

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## LIGHT ON THE PATH.

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**"LIGHT."**—We sometimes feel moved to commend to our readers the weekly paper mentioned on our cover, called *Light*. It is in every way a thoughtful, reliable, and well-done paper. Occasionally it admits contributions from very subtle thinkers who do not seem to quite comprehend their own subtleties, or who elevate pious opinions into universal certainties, but, in the main, it is solid, bright, readable, and highly "respectable." It is boycotted by the bookstalls (Smith's), which display *Pick-me-Up* and other indecent or vulgar prints.

**THE FREE CHURCH.**—We are glad to see in *Unity* (Chicago, U.S.), a fine fresh discourse on true church freedom, by Jenkin Lloyd Jones. We thought the Parliament of Religions and the Congress of Liberal Religious Societies would bear fruit, and they have. Mr. Jones and his congregation are planted in a church tied up to Unitarianism, and they have come to feel this a hindrance. They want to live in the open, and frankly say so, and are preparing to go and to pay. We rejoice to hear of it. Wherever it is possible, the sectarian name and position should be left behind.

**GOD'S "INFIDELS."**—The story told of Colonel Ingersoll on page 82 has induced one of our readers to send us the following:—

"The subject of this narrative was a journeyman printer in a small town in one of the midland counties, whose father, an in-

dustrious, steady and thrifty man, carrying on also a small printing business in another part of the country, invested his savings in the purchase of freehold property, principally cottages, in the town and neighbourhood in which he lived. Having neglected to make a will, on his death the greater part of his property, being freehold, came into the possession of his eldest son, the journeyman printer, as his heir at law, leaving his wife and younger children scantily provided for. On finding this to be the case, this truly noble man said that as his father had neglected to make a will he would make one for him, and accordingly made over the income of the property to his mother for her life, and went back to his occupation of a journeyman printer. On his mother's death he returned to his native town once more, and divided the property between his brothers and sisters, and retired, he being a single man, and having few wants, to live comfortably and, it need not be said, happily, for the remainder of his life.

"This pleasing anecdote of this truly just and generous man was related to the writer by one who was well acquainted with him. The writer also knew and highly respected him for his well-known honest and straightforward character; nevertheless, he has heard him spoken of as an infidel, because he belonged to no church or chapel, and was seldom if ever known to attend one or the other, except on the occasion of a charity sermon or a school anniversary."

## NOTES ON BOOKS.

"The revolution of 1905: or the story of the Phalanx," By F. W. Hayes. London: R. Forder. The average British Liberal and manufacturer, if he read this book, would pitch it down with impatience or contempt: but, for all that, it has in it a great deal that he might well ponder. Mr. Hayes is no "visionary" in the ordinary sense of the word. He writes like a modern newspaper man and goes into details. His revolution is a startling one, but he shews exactly how it might be carried through in a perfectly legal and constitutional way—on present lines. We do not say we agree with him, but we do say that we welcome him.

"The book of Enoch the prophet." Translated from an Ethiopic MS. in the Bodleian Library, by the late R. Laurence, LL.D., Archbishop of Cashel. The text now corrected from his latest notes, with an Introduction, by Charles Gill. London: Williams and Norgate. This keenly interesting book has been before the public a few years, but we doubt whether it has received the attention it deserves. Mr. Gill places its value very high indeed. He believes that it will, some day, "reveal the forgotten sources of many Christian dogmas and mysteries." The instances of similarity between passages in this curious book and passages in the New Testament are sufficiently numerous and

sufficiently striking to make some connection between them certain, and, as it is fairly clear that the book was written shortly before the Christian era, we have manifestly a rather pretty problem before us. Mr. Gill bluntly says, "As the contents of (this) marvellous book enter freely into the composition of the New Testament, it follows that if the author was not an inspired prophet who predicted the teaching of Christianity, he was a visionary enthusiast whose illusions were accepted by evangelists and apostles as revelation, alternative conclusions which involve the divine or human origin of Christianity."

But seeing that very few people seem to care for the Revised Version of the Bible, we can hardly expect the unconcerned mass of professing Christians to care for a new book, even though it may possibly be the parent of the New Testament. The scholars and teachers, however, cannot afford to ignore it.

"The comprehensive cash book: plain and concise book-keeping and the income tax made easy. By W. Castledine. London: C. W. Page & Co., Peckham. A really clever and useful work, containing an excellent arrangement for weekly account-keeping for any year, beginning any time, and ample explanations concerning the income tax, with some suggestions of a very practical kind.

## HAWTHORNE BUDS.

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY JOHN TINKLER.

1.—WOULD all who cherish wild wishes but look around them, they would oftenest find their sphere of duty, of prosperity, and happiness within those precincts and in that station where Providence itself has cast their lot.—*The Threefold Destiny*.

2.—SIN, alas! is careful of her bond slaves—they hear her voice, perhaps at the holiest moment, and are constrained to go whither she summons them.—*John Inglesfield's Thanksgiving*.

3.—WHEN souls have loved, there is no falsehood or forgetfulness.—*Graves and Goblins*.

4.—TIME is not immortal, time must die and be buried in the deep grave of eternity.—*Time's Portraiture*.

5.—A MAN'S individual affairs look not so very important when we can climb high enough to get the idea of a complicated neighbourhood.—*Browne's Folly*.

6.—FAITH is the soul's eyesight, and when we possess it the world is never dark nor lonely.—*Biographical Stories*.

7.—OFTEN in a young child's ideas and fancies there is something which it requires the thought of a lifetime to comprehend.—*Grandfather's Chair*.

- 8.—CAN we suppose that our allwise and just Creator would have so ordered the affairs of the world that a wrong act should be the true method of obtaining a right end?—*Biographical Stories*.
- 9.—THE ashes of many perishable things have fallen upon our youthful fire, but beneath them lurk the seeds of inextinguishable flame.—*Dolliver Romance*.
- 10.—PERHAPS, if we could penetrate Nature's secrets, we should find that what we call weeds are more essential to the well-being of the world than the most precious fruit or grain.—*Notebook*.
- 11.—LAUGHTER, when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice.—*Ethan Brand*.
- 12.—GOD has imparted to the human soul a marvellous strength in guarding its secrets, and He keeps at least the deepest and most inward record for His own perusal.—*A Book of Autographs*.
- 13.—NOTHING so much depresses me in my view of mortal affairs as to see high energies wasted, and human life and happiness thrown away for ends that appear oftentimes unwise and still oftener remain unaccomplished.—*The Sister Years*.
- 14.—EVERYBODY can appreciate the advantages of going ahead; it might be well, sometime, to think whether there is not a word or two to be said in favour of standing still or going to sleep.—*Our Old Home*.
- 15.—IN youth, men are apt to write more wisely than they really know or feel, and the remainder of life may be not idly spent in realising and convincing themselves of the wisdom which they uttered long ago.—*The Snow Image*.
- 16.—IF there were to be no death, the beauty of life would be all tame.—*Septimius*.
- 17.—THERE are no new truths, much as we have prided ourselves in finding some.—*Blithedale Romance*.
- 18.—A SOMBRE garment, woven of life's unrealities, has muffled us from our true self, but within it smiles the young man whom we knew.—*Dolliver Romance*.
- 19.—IT often happens that the outcasts of one generation are those who are revered as the wisest and best of men by the next.—*Grandfather's Chair*.
- 20.—ALL philosophy that would abstract mankind from the present is no more than words.—*Old News*.
- 21.—HAPPY they who read the riddle without a weary world-search or a lifetime spent in vain!—*The Threefold Destiny*.
- 22.—THE hall of fantasy . . . with all its dangerous influences, we have reason to thank God that there is such a place of refuge from the gloom and chilliness of actual life . . . It may be said, in truth, that there is but half a life—the meaner and earthlier half—for those who never find their way into the hall.—*The Hall of Fantasy*.
- 23.—A REVOLUTION or anything that interrupts social order, may afford opportunities for the individual display of eminent virtues; but its effects are pernicious to general morality.—*Old News*.
- 24.—A COUNTRY owes much to human beings, whose bodies she has worn out and whose immortal part she has left undeveloped or debased.—*A London Suburb*.
- 25.—CREATION was not finished till the poet came to interpret, and so complete it.—*The Great Stone Face*.
- 26.—THE unpardonable sin . . . the sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims!—*Ethan Brand*.
- 27.—PAIN is but pleasure too strongly emphasised.—*Dolliver Romance*.
- 28.—HAPPINESS, they say, dwells in the mansions of eternity; but we can only lead mortals thither, step by step, with reluctant murmurings.—*The Sister Years*.
- 29.—IN our nature there is a provision, alike marvellous and merciful, that the sufferer should never know the intensity of what he endures by its present torture, but chiefly by the pain that rankles after it.—*The Scarlet Letter*.
- 30.—IT is only one-eyed people who love to advise . . . When a man opens both his eyes he generally sees about as many reasons for acting in any one way as in any other, and quite as many for acting in neither.—*Consular Experiences*.
- 31.—WHO has not been conscious of mysteries within his mind, mysteries of truth and reality, which will not wear the chains of language.—*Graves and Goblins*.