

# The Coming Day.

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MAY, 1895.

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## CONCERNING CHILDREN.

SPOKEN AT CROYDON.

THE exquisite old story of Christ blessing the little children—surely one of the very loveliest in the Gospels!—has yet to do a great work in the Christian Church and the world. In regard to it, we need to make a very strong effort to see and feel the simple reality of it. The imaginary God has dimmed it. The dear elder brother will help us to feel and comprehend it. The priest has spoilt it, and true humanitarianism will restore it. There is in the National Gallery a picture by Rembrandt, which, for fine unconventionality, depicts the scene. Jesus is there as a simple, plain man; the mothers are just such as you might see in any Dutch town, and the children, with their little slates and half-eaten apples, are immeasurably truer than the dainty impossibilities or improbabilities of the sentimentalists. The deifiers of Jesus have a great deal to answer for, but we shall redress the wrong they have done, by bringing to the light the reality of this gracious brother-man.

The blessing of the children certainly suggests a great deal as to the serious way in which children should be taken into account, especially when we remember the words, 'for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' What did he mean? They are often very naughty, and nearly always give a great deal of trouble, and they are very ignorant. How, then, are they specially presentable as belonging to the kingdom of heaven? There are several answers to that question, but here is one. Children, in the main characteristics of simplicity, innocence, and receptivity, are really nearer to the heavenly kingdom than the majority of us. Every child—or nearly every child—wants to be good. What we call its naughtiness is almost always pure experimenting and speculation, just what its father is engaged in, in the city, every day of the week. Often its naughtiness is really very often only the natural revolt of an unsophisticated nature against the conscious or unconscious selfishness or tyranny of a sophisticated one. I do not think we who are parents know how often we are merely self-assertive when we think we are exercising proper control, and how often the little rebel is in the right. At any rate, in their simplicity, their affectionateness, and their sense of dependence, they are indeed God's gracious reminders of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

And now as to this blessing of the children: and first as to this symbolical act of putting his hands upon them in blessing them. Its meaning is, the contact of sympathy. It seems to say, Touch only to bless. This may be so in very homely matters. All the touching of a child by a good mother is touching only to bless. Is there not a kind of religiousness in the mere washing of a child? Is it not as religious as anything in the Communion service when a mother says to her little one, 'Now, dear, you are sweet and clean'? What a heavenly phrase, 'sweet and clean'! How the angels must smile to hear it! Surely a good bath on Saturday in the humblest attic is at least as good as a christening on a Sunday in the cathedral! For once I agree with the late Charles Spurgeon, 'I have no faith in the woman who talks of grace and glory abroad, and uses no soap at home.' And that goes all along the line, and includes brothers and sisters as well as parents. O that of all elder brothers and sisters it could be true; Touch only to bless! Think of the thousands of schools on this God's world. What an addition to the world's happiness there would be if the elder ones would act in the spirit of that fine hymn we sometimes sing:—

Come, children, let us go!  
Our Father is our guide;  
And, though our way be bright or dark,  
He's ever at our side.

Our spirits He will cheer  
With sunshine of His love,  
He guards us, and we need not fear,  
With such a Friend above.

Come, children, let us go!  
Nor by the way fall out;  
But help each other brotherly,—  
God guards us round about.

The strong be quick to raise  
The weaker, if they fall:  
In love, and peace, and quiet, go!  
God's blessing keep us all!

But the blessing of the children has still higher suggestions. In a sense we can all accept, Jesus reveals the heart of God. His blessing of the children, then, suggests the blessing of God. But so does all blessing of children to which love impels, for that love-impelling movement is from God. God, then, loves the children, not because they have been baptised, but because they are children. That children are made children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven by baptism is the Church's falsehood. Jesus said the very opposite.

And may we not say, that, in like manner, children love God?—or, at any rate, it is most easy to induce them to do it. But here, again, the too frequent teaching of the Church is all wrong. Listen to this, from a book which bears the proud title of 'The New Church Hymn Book,' now in use in the Established Church:—

Little children, born in sin,  
Feel a thousand ills within;  
Soon, like daring rebels, prove  
How they hate the God of love.

How can children thus depraved  
From their sinful state be saved?  
How can pity stoop so low  
Them to save from endless woe?

Jesus is the Saviour's name ;  
Down from heaven in love He came;  
He redeemed our sinful race,  
Suffering in the sinner's place.

What a costly sacrifice,  
While upon the cross He dies !

While He bore our sins away,  
On the great atoning day !

Shall we then refuse to be  
Wholly given up to Thee ?  
Let us be completely thine,  
Purchased by Thy blood divine.

Can you imagine anything more horrible? Little children are 'born in sin,' are 'daring rebels' who 'hate the God of love'! How wickedly unnatural and untrue! And so wicked and 'depraved' are they that it will be a wonder if God's pity will 'stoop so low' as to save them! Is not this the real 'infidelity'? This dreadful hymn is headed, 'By nature the children of wrath,' and probably the writer of it would be shocked if we told him he point blank contradicted the man he calls his God. But he does it.

Another thought suggested by this blessing of the children is that they must all be safe in the hands of God, beyond the veil. Whatever may happen to me or to you, whatever doubts there may be concerning you or me, the children are safe, for 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' One of the strangest things in Christendom is the old, miserable consignment of children to perdition. The old Calvinists seemed almost to revel in it, and it was a fact that one of their trusted divines declared there were 'children in hell a span long.' Those were the very words, and they used to be by no means uncommon.

Even your State Church service of baptism has, at the end of it, the odious suggestion. It tells us that 'children which are baptised . . . are undoubtedly saved.' Why 'which are baptised'? The wicked inference is that children who are not baptised will not be or may not be saved. And it is notorious that for generations, up to this very hour, consistent Church clergymen have refused to bury unbaptised children with the appointed service, or to bury them in consecrated ground at all. And they were and are consistent because, in that wicked service of baptism, it is plainly asserted that in baptism the child is saved from the misery of its sinful birth and brought into the Church, that it is thereby saved from God's 'wrath,' receiving the 'remission of its sins,' and that by baptism it is made 'regenerate'; and, in the Catechism, the learning of which is made as compulsory as anything of the kind can be, the very first thing the young person is made to say is that in baptism it was 'made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,' all of which is as untrue as anything could be, and clean contrary to the blessing of the children by Jesus.

It is a sheer priestly invention that the priest is at all needed in this matter of the salvation of a single child. Every child is a child of God in the sense in which any child is His. There can be no difference if God is just and

pitiful and good, and if He obeys His own ever-blessed laws, by which we learn to be, in our poor measure, just and pitiful and good.

For my own part, I cleave to the delightful faith that Longfellow expressed in the well-known words :—

She is not dead,—the child of our affection,—  
But gone unto that school  
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,  
And Christ himself doth rule.

Nor does that reference to the rule of Christ confuse me. If those with whom I differ as to his deity are right, my point is helped, not hurt. For if, as God, he blest the children on earth, and made no distinction, and said that of such is the kingdom of heaven, he will not contradict himself in heaven, and send one little child away.

Or, if I am right, and he was and is a brother-man, then I have only to think of his beautiful and loving spirit ruling amongst the myriads of his followers, in order to find all the hope for the children which I need - teachers, brothers, sisters, saviours innumerable, waiting to receive them, to put their hands upon them and bless them.

And so I am not ashamed to say that Wordsworth's " We are seven " is not hackneyed yet for me. You remember it, of course. The simple child persisted there were seven of them : two were at Conway, two at sea, two in the churchyard, and she with her mother.

' How many are you, then, said I,  
If they two are in heaven ? '  
Quick was the little maid's reply,—  
' O master ! we are seven.'

' But they are dead : those two are dead :  
' Their spirits are in heaven ! '  
' Twas throwing words away ; for still  
The little maid would have her will,  
And said, ' Nay, we are seven.'

And I vote for the little, persistent child, except that I do not think there were two in the churchyard.

Does it not occur to you that in this child's tender faith we have the very characteristic which won the heart of Jesus ? It so entirely answered to his own. How he would have loved the child of one of our ministers who, when he went beyond the veil, was so held fast that his absence seemed to make no difference, except in loss of joy. This child, a girl of seven, sat down and wrote to him as though he could see and read it,—and who shall brand that as impossible ? And this is what she wrote :—

My dear Papa,—You are very happy now, are you not ? But still, I and all the others are very sorry indeed. We are all glad that you look down on us. I hope I shall see you again, my very dear papa, and we all do, as well as myself. We all send our very best love to you. I have not asked the others, but I am quite sure they do, because they are all so very sorry. Your loving daughter,—EVELYN.

Now bring all this home to the 'children of a larger growth.' Are we so different from the children whom Jesus blest that no inference avails for us? Did he not teach us to pray 'Our Father, who art in heaven'? Did he not say, in bidding his brothers farewell, 'I go unto my Father and your Father'? and did he not always speak of us all as the spiritual children of the heavenly King? Yes, the essence of all true religion is the heavenly Fatherhood, and I think we need the constant teaching of it. That was an enlightening little story told of Edward Everett Hale. A man came to him and said, 'When I come into your church I want you to tell me God loves me. I know it, and I have often heard it, but I keep on coming to hear you say it again.' O, my God! let that be true for me, to the very end!

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### GOUNOD'S 'REDEMPTION.'

ON Good Friday many thousands of serious-minded persons in London spent some hours of the day in religious contemplation and worship. May we not reckon among them the immense and intensely interested audience at the Queen's Hall, which sympathetically 'assisted' at the rendering of Gounod's great work, 'The Redemption'? And, in truth, in so far as religion is devout emotion, stimulated by imagination and guided by thought, and if we consider the subject-matter of the oratorio, the word 'religious' must not only be granted, but must be granted in a very profound sense. Was there any preacher in London on Good Friday who could have made us more keenly realise and more deeply feel the solemn thoughts, the passionate fervours, and the practical applications of the mighty events which Gounod's great work describes? As a matter of fact, the hushed attention, almost entirely unbroken by applause (a welcome change!), suggested, and occasionally in an almost startling way, that we were joining in worship or devout contemplation, and not listening to a performance.

Having listened so lately, in the same hall, to Bach's 'Passion Music,' on the same theme, one inevitably attempts some mental and emotional comparison, and, as Bach has come amongst us to stay, that comparison will become increasingly inevitable and interesting. We are inclined to think that the keys to both works will be found in the national and ecclesiastical standpoints of the two great composers. Bach's version of 'the Passion' is solid, simple and very realistic, the counterpart of a Passion play; Gounod's is dramatic, and strongly determined by his French modern Catholicism.

The rendering on Good Friday of this deeply interesting work was of unusual excellence. Mr. Carter, who conducted with brilliant vivacity, must have been delighted with it. The chorus did its important share of the work with remarkable intelligence, as if keenly appreciating the sentiment as well as

the music—a rare mercy! But we are not writing for the distribution of honours or we should have to specially mention the splendidly balanced band and the really notable contributions of Mr. Iver McKay, Mr. Bispham, and Mr. Andrew Black.

It is the fashion to rail at the 'March to Calvary' as blatant and bizarre. We would single it out for special praise. Bach would not have written it, because he would have thought of the central figure, and he would have bemoaned him; but Gounod had to write it because his rich dramatic instinct made him see and hear what must happen on the road; and in this march he makes us hear and see the babbling throng, the jostling, brutal amusement seekers, the barbaric bigots. When it was all over, and 'Forth the royal banners go' had brought the tremendous scene to a close, a keen observer whispered to us, 'We have been on the road to Calvary.' That was just it. If any one would perfectly understand it, he must pass on to Part II., and to the lovely accompaniment to the recitative, 'Now when the Sabbath was past.' The one is blatant and bizarre: the other is spiritual and angelic, and Gounod, who meant everything he wrote, meant that contrast.

Surely the unspeakably noble chorus, 'Unfold, ye portals everlasting,' was never more rapturously given. What a pity it did not end the work! It is a very lofty and a fitting climax, and ends just right. Part III., with the exception of a precious soprano solo and chorus, is little more than a theological tract, and the finish is an almost painful anti-climax after 'Unfold, ye portals everlasting.' But Gounod entirely meant it, and in it he meant to preach. We revere the master, but in this case we regret his decision. But great masters and small women must be allowed a margin. Gounod must be allowed his theology, and the little lady who sat opposite to us must, we suppose, be allowed to wear two entire birds on her bonnet,—birds with up-pointed wings which not only hid a portion of the orchestra almost to the roof, but kept suggesting to us the unanswerable question, 'Why should a woman think it a beautiful or womanly thing to have beautiful birds killed to decorate her bonnet?' And why should Gounod dismiss us with his tract?

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## THE RESURRECTION.

IN the Easter number of *Light* appeared a review of a widely advertised book of sermons on the Resurrection, by the late C. H. Spurgeon. The following quotation will interest our readers:—

'The publishers of the late Mr. Spurgeon's sermons are taking advantage of Easter to extensively advertise a volume of his on the Resurrection. Knowing that the teachings of Mr. Spurgeon on the subject are very widely

welcomed, we have procured the book, expecting that it would give us a vitally interesting subject for the season. We have not been disappointed.

‘Here, for instance, in almost the first page, we have this fantastical description of the grotesque reconstruction of the scattered and transformed body, on some future ‘resurrection morn’ :—“The philosopher says, ‘How is it possible that God shall hunt out every particle of the human frame?’ He can do it: He has but to speak the word, and every single atom, though it may have travelled thousands of leagues, though it may have been blown as dust across the desert, and anon have fallen upon the bosom of the sea, and then have descended into the depths thereof to be cast up on a desolate shore, sucked up by plants, fed on again by beasts, or passed into the fabric of another man—I say that individual atom shall find its fellows; and the whole company of particles, at the trump of the Archangel, shall travel to their appointed place, and the body, the very body which was laid in the ground, shall rise again.”

‘It may be that Mr. Spurgeon belongs to “a day that is dead,” and that few would talk such curious nonsense now. We should be glad to believe that. It would be indeed good tidings of great joy,—unless, indeed,—which is only too probable,—the gliding away from the old foolishness of believing has resulted in no believing at all. But it is not so. Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons are still immensely in evidence, and he only put into plain and honest English the real meaning of “the resurrection of the body.” It is either what he said it was, or it is moonshine.

‘Take another quotation :—“All who have lived and died shall certainly rise again. All! Compute then the numberless number! Count ye now the countless! How many lived before the deluge? It has been believed, and I think accurately, that the inhabitants of this world were more numerous at the time of the deluge than they probably are now, owing to the enormous length of human life; men’s numbers were not so terribly thinned by death as they are now. Think, if you will, from the times of the deluge onward, of all Adam’s progeny. From Tarshish to Sinim men covered the lands. Nineveh, Babylon, Chaldea, Persia, Greece, Rome, these were vast empires of men. The Parthians, Scythians, and Tartar hordes, who shall reckon up? As for those northern swarms of Goths and Huns and Vandals, these were continually streaming as from a teeming hive, in the Middle Ages, and Frank and Saxon and Celt multiplied in their measure. Yet these nations were but types of a numerous band of nations even more multitudinous. Think of Ethiopia and the whole continent of Africa; remember India and Japan, and the land of the setting sun; in all lands great tribes of men have come and gone to rest in their sepulchres. What millions upon millions must lie buried in China and Burmah! What innumerable hosts are slumbering in the land of the pyramids and the mummy pits! Every one, both great and small, embalmed of old in

Egypt, who shall compute the number? Hear ye then and believe—out of all who have ever lived of woman born, not one shall be left in the tomb; all, all shall rise."

'Then mark what follows: "As for the ungodly there is a resurrection to damnation, by which their bodies and souls shall come manifestly under the condemnation of God; to use our Saviour's word, shall be *damned*. Oh, what a resurrection! and yet we cannot escape from it if we neglect the great salvation. If we could lay us down and sleep, and never wake again, oh, what a blessing it were for an ungodly man! if that grave could be the last of him, and like a dog he should never start again from slumber, what a blessing! But it is a blessing that is not yours, and never can be. Your souls must live, and your body must live. O fear him, I pray you, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear him."

'The first notion is fantastical: the second is, in the highest degree, odiously cruel. If those old Babylonians, "Tartar hordes," Vandals, and all the rest of them, after fighting out their little "ungodly" day, are to be raised only to be "damned," we venture the humane suggestion that it would be far better to leave their scattered atoms where they are. There are not a dozen dockers who would vote for their reconstruction on such terms and for such a purpose, and it is really shocking to attribute to God the determination to do it. "Let bygones be bygones" is a very elementary form of mercy, and we have a right to assume that our Heavenly Father will be equal to it.

'But there is a puzzle at the heart of this matter which we can never satisfactorily get at, and we are sorry that Mr. Spurgeon is not here in the flesh to receive the statement of our difficulty, though he probably is now fully awake to it. If these old bodies, dissolved, dispersed, transformed, turned into fishes, vultures, wheat, or apple trees, these thousands of years, are to be reconstructed as they were, in order that their owners may be saved or "damned," where are their owners now, and what have they been doing during these thousands of years? Do the people who believe in the resurrection of the body really believe in the immortality of the soul? If so, why bother about these old bodies? If the immortal souls of the "Tartar hordes" and the Vandals have been in hell all these centuries, why bring them out to put them into "damned" bodies? Or, if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have been in heaven all this while, why worry them by renewing their acquaintance with the "muddy vesture of decay," however sublimated and filtered?

'Of course these are shocking questions. But they are rational, straightforward, and inevitable: and, in one form or another, they must be answered, unless, indeed, sheer obstinacy carry the day, and rule out all questioning and answering as profane.'



## 'A FOUNTAIN FILLED WITH BLOOD.'

'SALADIN,' in the *Agnostic Journal*, has what many would regard as an altogether too dreadful tirade against ecclesiastical religion in England, and, in truth, it is anything but pleasant reading. In our judgment, the badness of it lies in its confounding of Christianity with ecclesiastical religion. Nineteenths of the horrors he justly gibbets were outrages upon Christianity, though committed in the founder's name. Here is a specimen. Saladin says that York had, till down into the second decade of this century, a regular anniversary of holy cruelty. St. Luke's day was, in York, known as 'Whip-Dog Day,' and, says Saladin,

On this day it was the custom for the devout to whip, kick, stone, and generally maltreat all dogs that came within their reach.

This was for Jesus' sake. In pre-Reformation times, in one of the city churches, mass was being said, when the priest inadvertently dropped the 'pax' after consecration, when it was at once devoured by a dog which had strayed into the sacred edifice. The dog was speedily killed, and his offence was visited upon all his kind in future years down to the third and fourth, yea, down possibly to the twentieth or thirtieth generation, for it was not till 1819 that the dogs of York had immunity from the dire retribution of their ancient ancestor having eaten the pax. John Smith, the man, eats the pax, and is thereby blessed; Rover, the dog, eats it, and he is thereby cursed, even down the long line of his yet unhelped posterity.

Will Josephine Butler, Frances Power Cobbe, and other well-meaning persons, who cannot preach kindness without cant, tell me, through these long ages, how many dogs, as St. Luke's Day, October 18th, came round, had their legs broken for Christ's sake, and how many dashed through Bootham Bar with tinkles tied to their tails tearing along like Jehu—and all for Jesus—all because a hocus-

pocused bit of this Jesus had been gobbled by Rover the dog, instead of having been nibbled by Smith the manikin?

I can hold no parley with a 'religion' based upon the cruel murdering of a god; I should reject a creed that should involve even the murdering of a dog. A faith founded upon blood, crucifixion, and cruelty is not from heaven—it is from hell. Our creed, with its horrid 'fountain filled with blood,' has demoralised and brutalised us, till our very pastime is murder, and our 'sports' involve some creature's wounds and agony.

There sits the gentlest maiden in all the church; and even she wears on her bonnet a broken wing from which 'chemicals' have with difficulty cleansed the stain of blood.

O where shall I find a faith that is not associated with nails hammered through agonised hands, with hot, red drops of pain raining down from a thorn-pierced brow? And where shall I find worshippers whose 'sport' is not the torture of some helpless creature, or whose adornment is not the broken wing which some poor bird fluttered over its defenceless young, left to perish of cold and hunger, in order that that dainty little hat might be 'lovely' enough to appear in the house of prayer?

The real question is whether there is anything in the Gospels to suggest that Jesus would have condoned the conduct of the blackguardly Christians at York, or approved of that hat in his church.

## FROM ETHICS TO RELIGION.\*

WE have read this pamphlet with quite unusual interest and pleasure, and we say this as by no means disciples of Socialism or advocates of the Labour Church. In truth, many forms of Socialism entirely repel us, and the Labour Church seems to us to commit the very offence for which we have long blamed 'the classes,' in setting up one more socially sectional thing. And this pamphlet is written in defence of both Socialism and the Labour Church.

Mr. Trevor comes the nearest of any man we know to being the seer of Socialism in the true sense of that word, seer. He sees the deeper meaning of Socialism. He can look beyond the rough, crude, ignorant presentations of it. He sees that in Socialism there is something from God which is struggling to come into the life of man. This ugly-looking or sinister-sounding thing is John the Baptist, rudely clothed, roughly fed, and in the wilderness, with his wild cry, 'Repent!' But he is heralding 'the

Christ that is to be.'

Well, then, we ought to want to hear such a man,—to read his message and to find his interpretation, even though we dislike or fear. To read the signs of the times,—to understand what is happening,—to give deeply-stirred souls a chance,—is not this the duty of us all?

Mr. Trevor, apart from his conclusions, gives us, in his premisses, a very profound and winsome view of religion, and shews us how, if we loved it and worked it out, it would lead to an ideal society which would give us a consummated brotherhood in life. But we hardly understand his finish, or, rather, we hardly see the truth of it. He seems to us to harden at the end, and to smite just the wrong thing at the wrong moment; but even that we must not mind. He is a militant pioneer as well as a seer. We will only add that we have here a very beautiful and altogether sane bit of writing—bright and keen and strong.

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## QUESTION AND ANSWER.

### I.

You had a curious expression in the last number (March) about 'blasé Unitarians': at least, it read most peculiarly to me, and I cannot say that the conjunction of the two words sounded a happy one.

As one who has had to fight his way to Unitarianism, and who values it beyond price, the question occurs to me: What is blasé Unitarianism, or who are blasé Unitarians? Would you mind putting a few words of explanation in the next number, so that the wayfaring man may understand the term, and what it conveys. J.C.

### II.

It never occurred to me that any one could

miss the meaning. My dictionary defines 'blasé' as 'surfeited, palled, used up,' and I think that is the condition of many Unitarians,—lacking freshness, enterprise, spirituality, keen activity and bright hope. Why, dozens of the Unitarian chapels are not churches at all, but churchyards—dull and dead. But I was merciful, and only said 'rather blasé.'

But you must bear in mind the connection and context, concerning which I might add that the usual antipathy of Unitarians to spiritualism results, in my opinion, from a rather washed-out faith in the unseen. Many Unitarians are very poor believers in things they cannot see—and sell. J. P. H.

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\* From Ethics to Religion. By John Trevor. London Office of the *Labour Prophet*, Fleet Street. One penny

## BEAUTIFUL EUROPE.\*

We have received two volumes of this remarkable series—those on The Bernese Oberland, and Spiez and the Kanderthal; the remainder of the series including The Burgenstock (Lucerne), Glarus and the lake of Walenstadt, Thun and the lake of Thun, The Gruyère, Montreux, Zermatt and the valleys of Visp, Valais and Chamounix, The Black Forest Railway. The Vosges mountains, The Bergstrasse from Jugenheim to Auerbach, Florence, From the Danube to the Adriatic, The Transylvania Highland.

But it is almost absurd to begin to name these charming books. There are nearly one hundred of them, every one of them taking up some glorious bit of this beautiful world.

The workmanship is simply delightful. The letterpress descriptions of routes and scenery is brief, business-like, free from gush and very simple. The illustrations are, for the most part, delicious works of

art, tender and poetic but very faithful; and they abound. Here, for instance, is the little book on Spiez with 32 beautiful illustrations and a map; and 'Through the Bernese Oberland,' with 76 and a map, the price of one being a shilling, and, of the other, two shillings, a price that seems almost nominal for such charming productions. Those who wish to select between places here described will find abundant material for choice; those who are going on any chosen route or to any particular place will here find good guidance; those who have been will find faithful reminders of delightful scenery; those who must stay at home will get a really good idea of what these lovely parts of the world are like; and those who only wish to possess pleasant books could not do better than try a few of these. We believe Messrs. C. Smith and Son will send a complete catalogue to any address.

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

**GOD SAVE THE QUEEN, AND PETTY LARCENY.**—The organist at the Cathedral of Berne writes to say that the piece he played (see the *Coming Day* for March, page 40) was the Swiss National Anthem. We confess our ignorance. We did not know that our hackneyed 'God save the Queen' was stolen from Switzerland. We are sorry for Switzerland, and we regret our error. But we quite as strongly think that when a noble composition has been played, it should be left alone, and should not be run in'o another thing altogether—especially a threadbare popular tune.

**HEAD GEAR.**—The Legislature of Missouri has under consideration a Bill to prohibit a woman from wearing hats in theatres which may obstruct the view of persons sitting behind the wearers. This is not a legislative piece of humour, but a Bill introduced in all

seriousness, and not at all unlikely to be enacted into a law, with a penalty for its violation.'

So says a journal that ought to know. It is going a trifle farther than we would like to go, but only because we do not think the plan the most effective. A man with a scythe would be best,—a nice, solid, quiet man, who would go round and do his mowing deftly and calmly just before the commencement of the performance. But why don't these women listen to reason? especially when they consider (if they do consider!) that most men only quietly laugh at their absurd elevations.

**UNDER A PENALTY OF FORTY SHILLINGS.**—We copy the following from a fairly reliable paper:—'Few travellers—not one in a thousand—suspect there is anything behind the legend which greets them in an ordinary railway carriage: 'The penalty for smoking

\* "Illustrated Europe." Zurich, Orell Fussli; and London: C. Smith & Son, Charing Cross.

in a carriage other than that marked "smoking" is forty shillings.' That it has anything to do with the depreciation of the company's rolling-stock never enters their heads.

A smoking-carriage, however, only lasts about half as long as an ordinary vehicle, and, once well broken into its mission, it is completely spoilt for all other purposes—it can never be rid of its smell.

'Literally speaking,' remarked a well-known car-builder recently, 'a railway carriage smokes. The fumes of the tobacco are absorbed into the timbers, penetrate into the mortices, and grow into a kind of gas that eats its way into the structure. On the Northern Railway in France a few weeks ago twelve "smokers" were taken to pieces at the shops. The fumes that oozed forth from every crevice would have sickened an English workman; only the French are accustomed to a kind of tobacco that has not been inaptly compared to half burnt linen rags flavoured with glue and a-sæfœtida.

'The timber of a smoking carriage—if it is ever used again—can only be employed in building another "smoker." But the best oak rolling stock only lasts about a quarter the time that soft pine would last if stationary—and the tenons of "smoker" timbers rot in about half that length of time.'

What about the smoker's throat and stomach?

"MERRIE ENGLAND."—An expert on Poor Law statistics writes to us: 'One in every eight deaths in London takes place in a work-house or other Poor Law institution, and if we add the lunatic asylum and the hospital, the average is 1 in 5 at least. In the United Kingdom 1 in 5 persons over 65 is a pauper.'

CREMATION.—There is an impression abroad that even where no difficulty exists on the part of friends, cremation involves much trouble and delay. This is entirely a mistake; but it is well to attend to a very simple matter which, during one's life, would obviate every difficulty. The Secretary of the Cremation Society, 8, New Cavendish Street, London, will send to any one a form in duplicate, expressing approval of cremation.

All that is necessary is that these should be signed, and that one should be sent to the Secretary, and one placed in the charge of an executor or responsible member of the family. There need, then, be no difficulty whatever. In many cases the cost need not be more than the cost of a conventional 'funeral.' The Secretary will send, for sixpence, post free, to any address, a copy of the last 'Transactions' of the Society, a very informing number. We are glad to see that the crematorium at Woking is being better used. The numbers cremated for 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894 were 54, 99, 104, 101, 125.

We thoroughly agree with 'The Realm' about the cutting up of Sunday. In days gone by, when Sunday was much more oppressive than it is now, we advocated brighter elements, and still think that the opening of public libraries, museums, and art galleries ought to be everywhere granted; but we are rather drifting. Here, however, is what 'The Realm' says:—'On the whole, we hold that the English Sunday, as at present observed, should be left alone. Attendance at Divine service is at least a reputable practice, and the social pressure which formerly drove people into their pews has largely ceased to operate. If perverted sanctimoniousness prefers Wagner concerts and discourses on Assyriology, by all means let it attend them; but it must not proselytise. Otherwise the curate, trying though he can be, will appear a social benefactor when compared with Monday-made-Sunday-Popular-Concert-evangelists, and we shall have to reconsider our position towards the Sunday Philharmonic and the like. . . . The free Sundays movement may end by reproducing weekday worries in more exasperating because more unexpected forms.'

It is said that Mr. Fletcher has resigned the editorship of *The Daily Chronicle* because he will not be responsible for a paper which publishes betting news. If this is true, and we hope it is, Mr. Fletcher's splendid act of surrender may well be borne in mind when we moan over the selfishness and rapacity of the age.

## NOTES ON BOOKS.

"A concise History of Religion." By F. J. Gould. Two vols. London: Watts and Co. An agnostic's survey of a field which he can only occupy as curiosity-hunter, critic and expositor, with a maximum of superiority and a minimum of sympathy. But we are glad to say that Mr. Gould keeps his clear white light well in hand: and, so far from fretting at an agnostic doing this work, we think there is an advantage in having such a view of the field as an unemotional agnostic can give.

Mr. Gould covers an enormous amount of ground. His first volume, of about 140 small pages only, deals with the religions of the world, outside of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, 'preceded by an analysis exhibiting the chief phases of primitive worship, and the main lines of religious development.' The second, a somewhat larger volume, contains a history of Judaism and Jewish sacred literature, with a chapter on the religious environment of early Christianity. Another volume will deal with the gospels and other literature of the opening period of the Christian era.

Mr. Gould, if he has done nothing else, has gathered together an extremely interesting collection of extracts from noticeable writers. But he has done more. He has woven these into a very readable history of a kind but seldom attempted. At once acute and careful, rationalistic and responsive, a plodding compiler and an almost brilliant writer, he is well worth reading. The work contains some excellent indexes and lists of books.

'The Labour Annual, 1895. A record of the social movements of the day.' Edited by Joseph Edwards. Second edition. London: Clarion Office, Fleet Street. A somewhat notable publication 'Dedicated, in the name of the weary and oppressed of every land, to all who are working towards a new organisation of society, of which useful labour shall be the truest foundation, and in which the people's service shall be the highest reward.' It is a militantly Socialistic publication, abounding in biographies and portraits of Socialist leaders, and information of all kinds in relation to the contemplated revolution. Anyone who wants to know what

these people are at could not do better than invest a shilling in this annual. For our own part, while entirely sympathising with their spirit and desire, we think their practical policy in its entirety is pernicious and ignorant nonsense. But very great reforms are wanted, and individualism and capital need a check; so perhaps, by asking for the diversion of the Thames, we may at least gain the unstopping of a drain.

'Elementary lessons in Electricity and Magnetism.' By Silvanus P. Thompson. New edition. London: Macmillan and Co. This new edition of a well-known work, published fourteen years ago, has been largely re-written, so short a time having served to make almost all things new. The word 'elementary' in the title is a trifle too modest. Happy is the expert who really knows all that is in these 600 small pages! The work is generously illustrated, and its value is greatly increased by a very ample index, extending to twenty pages. In so vast a field, and in so brief a notice, we cannot begin to even point out the good things in it. It is by a veritable master in Israel, and its merits may be taken for granted.

'The birth of Islam. A dramatic poem showing the triumph of faith over infidelity, worldliness and bigotry.' By Amherst D. Tyssen, D.C.L. London: T. Fisher Unwin. A somewhat original subject, with an interesting reading of Mohammed and his motives. On the whole, the style has dignity and rather nice taste, but what are we to say of such lines as these?

'Come, come, young man, you don't palaver me.'

'To make our sages swear to speak what's right.'

'And when they saw me gone, they laughed, ha, ha!'

'But soft, I hear a footstep,—who comes here?'

The concluding pages, telling of Mohammed's wise magnanimity and forgiveness of enemies, are really impressive. We only hope they are historically true. The book is

deliciously though simply bound. By the way, why should a publisher mutilate his review copies by defacing the title-page with a perforated stamp? A review is surely worth a decent copy of a book. Simply as a protest, we shall not, in future, notice any book so degraded.

'The four Gospels as historical records.' London: Williams and Norgate. A very serious and very thorough book. If we were not so used to earthquakes, we should expect this shock to produce an immense sensation. The writer's hand is veiled, but there is a strong man behind it. In a concentrated preface he says: 'I have had no other object in the present work than the ascertainment of fact. Nothing wholesome can be obtained from that which is not true.' In the spirit of that sober remark he has worked. He adds, 'The traditionary beliefs of English-speaking men depend largely, if not wholly, on statements which are not true, but which are held to be beyond doubt or question,' and in the spirit of that caustic criticism he has argued.

The book is admirably arranged, with masterly order and a patient keenness that is very impressive. The writer works his way through the records step by step, and, in con-

nection with the 'external evidence for the Gospels,' deals largely with the Acts of the Apostles and the writings of the fathers. A special chapter, of considerable length, is given to the fourth Gospel. Other strong chapters are on the genealogies, the nativity, the relation of Jesus with John the Baptist, the discourses of Jesus, the miracles, and the resurrection and after appearances of Jesus. Through all these topics, and many others, this writer marches with almost terrible treasures of lucidity, audacity and strength. We do not always agree, but we very seldom miss the sensation of grip.

The volume has a notably fine table of contents and an excellent index.

'Animals' rights considered in relation to social progress.' By Henry S. Salt. With an Essay on 'Vivisection in America.' By A. Leffingwell, M.D. New York and London: Macmillan and Co. A good spirited fighting book on such subjects as 'The principle of animals' rights,' 'Sport, or amateur butchery,' 'Murderous millinery,' and 'Experimental torture.' Not exactly pleasant reading, but necessary, burninglly necessary, and done by a good and wise-hearted man.

## MESSAGES FROM OUR FORERUNNERS.

SALVATION AND THEOLOGY. — The one great curse of the religion of this and almost all countries, is that deadly superstition that God will be angry with you, and damn you if you go wrong about Eternal Sonship or the procession of the Eternal Spirit. Then, my dear brother, if your God will damn you for that, I will not bow down to worship Him. 'Oh,' you say, 'great is Jehovah.' Good; and I say, 'Who is Jehovah?' You say, 'He is the God of love, perfect love, complete love;' and because His children have drawn a map wrongly and made a mistake about the unknown, He will damn you? He has made their eternal life depend upon the accuracy of their map, and He has called upon them to make maps of darkness and to take soundings of the infinite, and they have not leads to go down deep enough, and

because their maps are wrong you say, He will damn you. God will be no more angry with me because I have made a mistake about His essence than I am angry with a little child because he does not understand the procession of the Equinox, and I am sure that God will smile with love upon the errors His little children make about the things that are too deep for us.—*George Dawson.*

NOTHING is too late  
Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.  
Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles  
Wrote his grand *Œdipus*, and Simonides  
Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,  
When each had numbered more than four-  
score years;  
And Theophrastus at four score and ten

Had but begun his characters of men.  
Chaucer, at Woolstock, with the nightin-  
gales,

At sixty wrote his Canterbury Tales;  
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,  
Completed Faust when eighty years were  
past.

These are indeed exceptions, but they show  
How far the Gulf stream of our life may flow  
Into the Arctic regions of our lives,  
When little else than life itself survives.—

*Longfellow.*

THE PREACHER. — Whenever the pulpit is  
usurped by a formalist, then is the worshiper  
defrauded and disconsolate. We shrink as  
soon as the prayers begin which do not  
uplift, but smite and offend us. We are fain  
to wrap our cloaks about us, and secure, as  
best we can, a solitude that hears not. I  
once heard a preacher who sorely tempted  
me to say, I would go to church no more.  
Men go, thought I, where they are wont to  
go; else had no soul entered the temple in the  
afternoon. A snow-storm was falling around

us. The snowstorm was real; the preacher  
merely spectral; and the eye felt the sad  
contrast in looking at him, and then out of  
the window behind him, into the beautiful  
meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain.  
He had no one word intimating that he had  
laughed or wept, was married or in love, had  
been commended, or cheated, or chagrined.  
If he had ever lived and acted, we were none  
the wiser for it. The capital secret of his  
profession, namely, to convert life into truth,  
he had not learned. Not one fact in all his  
experience had he yet imported into his  
doctrine. This man had ploughed, and  
planted, and talked, and bought, and sold; he  
had read books; he had eaten and drunken;  
his head aches; his heart throbs; he smiles  
and suffers; yet was there not a surmise,  
a hint, in all the discourse, that he had ever  
lived at all. Not a line did he draw out of  
real history. The true preacher can always  
be known by this, that he deals out to the  
people his life—life passed through the fire  
of thought — *Emerson.*

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LOWELL LINES.

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- 1.—FAITH made whole with deed  
Breathes its awakening breath  
Into the lifeless creed.  
*Harvard Ode.*
- 2.—ALL that hath been majestic  
In life or death, since time began,  
Is native in the simple heart of all,  
The angel heart of man.  
*Incident in a railroad car.*
- 3.—FOLKS never understand the folks they  
hate.  
*Biglow Papers.*
- 4.—WITHOUT long struggle none did e'er  
attain  
The downward look from Quiet's blissful sea:  
*To Pulfrey.*
- 5.—THO' earth swing wide from God's intent,  
And tho' no man nor nation  
Will move with full consent  
In heavenly gravitation,  
Yet by one Sun is every orbit bent  
*New Year's Eve, 1850.*
- 6.—MOST men make the voyage of life as if  
they carried sealed orders which they were

- not to open till they were fairly in mid-ocean.  
*Essay on Dante.*
- 7.—WORK of one kind or another is the only  
tonic for mind or character.  
*Letters.*
  - 8.—LET fraud and wrong and baseness shiver,  
For still between them and the sky  
The falcon Truth hangs poised for ever,  
And marks them with his vengeful eye.  
*The Falcon.*
  - 9.—THE narrowest provincialism is that of  
self.  
*Essay on Thoreau.*
  - 10.—LONGING was but granted unto thee  
That, when all beauty thou couldst feel and  
know it,  
That beauty in its highest thou shouldst be.  
*Ode.*
  - 11.—MEN follow duty, never overtake;  
Duty nor lifts her veil nor looks behind.  
*The Parting of the Ways.*
  - 12.—AH! let us hope that to our praise  
Good God not only reckons  
The moments when we tread His ways,

But when the spirit beckons,—  
That some slight good is also wrought  
Beyond self-satisfaction,  
When we are simply good in thought,  
Howe'er we fail in action. *Longing.*

13.—THERE is a patriotism of the soul whose  
claim absolves us from our other and terrene  
fealty. *Biglow Papers.*

14.—WHILE swings the sea, while mists the  
mountains shroud,  
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of  
cloud,  
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit.  
*Bibliolatres.*

15.—HAPPIER to chase a flying goal  
Than to sit counting laurelled gains,  
To guess the Soul within the soul,  
Than to be lord of what remains.  
*The Miner.*

16.—THE gist of the matter is, not where a  
man starts from, but where he comes out.  
*A great public character.*

17.—It is not till our earthen vessels are  
broken that we find and truly possess the  
treasure that was laid up in them.  
*Biglow Papers.*

18.—EVIL's triumphs are her endless loss,  
And sovereign beauty wins the soul at last.  
*On the death of Channing.*

19.—A MAN does not receive the statements  
that 'two and two make four' and that 'the  
pure in heart shall see God' on the same  
terms. The one can be proved to him with  
four grains of corn; he can never arrive at a  
belief in the other till he realise it in the  
intimate persuasion of his whole being.  
*Essay on Dante.*

20.—To HAVE greatly dreamed, precludes low  
ends. *Columbus.*

21.—THE heart grows richer that its lot is  
poor,  
God blesses want with larger sympathies.  
*Legend of Brittany.*

22.—TRUE freedom is to share  
All the chains our brothers wear,  
And, with heart and hand, to be  
Earnest to make others free.  
*Stanzas on Freedom.*

23.—WEEP not for bygone things,  
They are not lost. *To Perdita, singing.*

24.—'TIS the soul only that is national,  
And he who pays true loyalty to that  
Alone can claim the wreath of patriotism.  
*L'Envoi.*

25.—THERE is nothing deeper in life than life  
itself. *Essay on Chaucer.*

26.—HE that hath found an altar to the  
unknown God in his heart, and in a spirit of  
love and wonder offereth up acceptable offer-  
ings thereupon in the temple of Nature, doth  
not he walk with God? *Letters.*

27.— BEAUTY underlies  
For evermore each form of use.  
*Beaver Brook.*

28.—WE do not know how cheap the seeds of  
happiness are, or we should scatter them  
oftener. *Letters*

29.—WHAT is there that can satisfy  
The endless craving of the soul but love?  
*Rhæcus.*

30.—HIGHER purity is greater strength.  
*Prometheus.*

31.— GOD brings round  
His purposes in ways undreamed by us,  
And makes the wicked but His instruments  
To hasten their own swift and sudden fall.  
*Glance behind the Curtain.*

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## THE BEST TO COME.

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The mightiest poem lives unwrit;  
The noblest bard's unborn;  
The moon and sun have never lit  
Their loveliest night and morn.

The fairest flower of flowers is one  
That never yet has bloomed;  
The brightest gem of gems is that  
Man never yet exhumed.

The sweetest babe is one whose smile  
No mother-love has stirred;  
The most divine of strains is yet  
By mortal ear unheard.

Ay! e'en the perfect thought of God  
Unformed, has yet to be.  
The loveliest, sweetest of them all  
Is hope—or prophecy! T. B.