

The Coming Day.

JUNE, 1895.

FORCED INTO DISSENT.

(REVISED.)

THE words Dissent and Dissenter have gathered about them a slight tinge of provincialism, narrowness, combativeness, even vulgarity — most of it undeserved, and the slight remainder not the Dissenter's fault. As a matter of fact, indeed, Dissent has been associated with some of the very finest currents of English history. It has often represented and organised the nation's sturdiest and freshest life ;—indeed the 'salt of the earth' in religion, politics, and ethics. And, though it is the fashion to sneer at 'the nonconformist conscience,' that conscience has been one of the sturdiest and finest elements in our nation's life.

What is a Dissenter? Essentially a human being who is impressed with the value of personality, whose dissent from the State establishment of religion was originally based upon the solid ground of human responsibility. There is indeed only one way of understanding Dissent, and that is by going back to the old distinction between

THE PROPHET AND THE PRIEST ;

the prophet standing for the man himself and his message for all the rights and all the duties and responsibilities of the individual ; the priest, on the other hand, standing for his ritual, his sacramental efficacy, his divinely appointed order, his one only ark of safety, his things external and ceremonial, his incantations and magic. That is the whole secret of the difference, and it indicates what is meant by Dissent or Nonconformity.

We find this distinction in the Old Testament. The prophet there is always the nonconformist, the reformer, the moralist ; the teacher, against the sacerdotalist ; the man, against the priest ; he is the instructor of mobs and the reprover of kings. How did Isaiah regard the priest and all belonging to him? He met him with a direct negative. His words are very familiar and very significant :

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons

and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And, when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.

What a clean sweep the prophet made of all the ritualism, the sacerdotalism, and the ceremonialism of the priests! In like manner we find the prophet Jeremiah had his fling at the ritual and sacrificial system of the priests:

Hear, Oh earth! behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected

it. To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.

And, in a stinging passage, with hot contempt, he cries:

Put your burnt offerings and your sacrifices together, and eat them as meat, saith the Lord; for I did not speak unto your fathers, nor command them concerning sacrifices or burnt offerings. But this I did command them—I

said: Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

Was there ever in this world anything more contemptuous than that? But the prophecies abound with these vivid indications of the sharp distinction between the official and the nonconformist, the prophet and the priest. Take the crowning instance, the immortal declaration of Micah:

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my

firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

There, again, we have the whole secret: the prophet, the teacher, speaking from the mind and the conscience, from the human life and human experience, and speaking for the living God to living men, putting on one side all the sacerdotalism, the ritualism, and sacrificialism of the priest.

We even find the distinction, in a rudimentary form, in the very cradle of Christendom. Paul was

THE FIRST GREAT CHRISTIAN NONCONFORMIST,

and he comes and goes in strange antagonism to the official apostles at Jerusalem. In his epistle to the Galatians there were some curious and

instructive passages respecting his visits to Jerusalem, showing that he was outside the official circle; for, the first time he went there as an apostle, though he was there fifteen days, he only appears to have seen Cephas; the other apostles apparently fighting shy of him—this man ‘born out of due time.’ On the second occasion, we are told that he went up to lay before the apostles his revelation, his gospel, his own individual experience, but that some seemed to come only to spy out his liberty, his nonconformity—his freedom from the ritual of circumcision—but that, notwithstanding this, he gave not place to them, no, not even for an hour, and then he adds the somewhat satirical remark (evidently referring to the official apostles) :

From those who are reputed to be somebody (but whatever they are it makes no difference to me) I received nothing; they imparted nothing to me; but on the contrary.

But they who were reputed to be the pillars gave me the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles!

And so washed their hands of him. A very pretty and instructive glimpse of the first great, sturdy, unclerical nonconformist!

Coming on to the time of the Reformation, we find the old story; history, as usual, repeating itself. At first the cause of difference was not doctrinal. The reformers were men with the true prophetic nonconforming instinct; their nature was as distinctly unlike the priest's as possible. They were repelled, not by the doctrinal heresies of Romanism, but by the corruptions of the church, the pretensions of the priesthood, and the externalism, ceremonialism, and ritualism of the church. Once more it was the individual, responsible man against the priest. Precisely the same thing is true of the Puritan movement, and the essence of Nonconformity is to be found in English Puritanism. Puritanism was characterised by the same sturdy, earnest, and resolute clinging to the real as opposed to the sham and the unreal; it was simply an uprising of the individual mind and conscience against the claims and pretensions of mere authority. Hence, in politics, and precisely for the same reason, the Puritans had to drive away the chaff from the State as well as from the Church, even as they always have to do now. As Macaulay tells us, the Puritans believed in an ever-living, an ever-present God. They knew none of the poor external distinctions so dear to the priests. ‘On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt, for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language,—nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand.’

The two thousand devout and noble-hearted men who gave up their all on St. Bartholomew's Day, in 1662, did so, not for a doctrine, but for a spirit. They sacrificed their churches and almost their very lives because they would not and could not recognise the priestly claim involved in episcopal ordination and the sacerdotalism of the Book of Common Prayer. Once more in

England's history, on that eventful day, the prophets, the nonconformists, the men, speaking out from their humanity, went out to freedom, to personal responsibility, and to the solitude of God. From all this it seems perfectly clear that intelligent Nonconformity—*i.e.*, Nonconformity, based on clear, intelligent, personal conviction—is not, and never has been, based upon mere prejudice, whim, or passion. In the old days it was a very serious matter of conscience, and the men who were responsible for it showed their earnestness in the most impressive of all ways—by suffering for it. In our time, Nonconformity is kept fairly fresh and robust from the fact that as soon as any nonconformist loses conviction, and becomes conventional and amenable to the discipline of fashion and society, he usually goes off to Church. In that way Nonconformity is kept from dry rot. Nonconformity, therefore, as a sober, deliberate, intelligent choice is something to be defended and not apologised for, something to be proud of, and not to be merely endured, like a poor relation. If this were not the case, Nonconformity would be an impertinence, as some persons say it is; it would be a social offence, and almost a crime.

Why then decline to conform to the State church? A full reply would fill a considerable volume, but I will try to at least indicate the nature of the reply. A State church is a church established, maintained, or specially recognised by the State, which selected for it a creed or creeds, imposed upon it a ritual and laws, and exercises judicial functions for its regulation and control in matters of faith and worship. Such a church is a State church, and such a church it is to which we cannot conform. If the State ceased to impose a creed or creeds upon all its religious teachers; if it ceased to restrict all worship to one form of ritual; if it ceased to exercise judicial functions in matters of faith and worship; if, in a word, it put the nation in possession of its church, leaving every congregation free to worship and to be instructed in its own way from time to time, I for one would be willing to consider whether or not to fall in. But falling in really means the restoration of our rights.

In entering upon this inquiry, I am really

COMING TO LOOK AFTER MY PROPERTY,

for, although I am a nonconformist in the sense of being separated from the Establishment, I want very earnestly to ask those who are in possession of the family property when I am to be allowed to have my turn.

In any case, when I talk of falling in, I only give expression to a personal feeling concerning a possibly remote future; but we have now to deal with the church of to-day, and to-day we are nonconformists, and for the old reason. We stand with the ancient prophets, with Paul, the Reformers, and the Puritans. My first reason for not conforming I shall put in the words of a Church League, established to promote disestablishment—a rather comical

enterprise for a society of churchmen—but they have discovered the disadvantages of their position and are trying to escape from their fetters. They complain that ‘the church is powerless to indicate her faith or her form of worship.’ In other words, the Church is bound by the faith and the ritual imposed on her by the State. These churchmen are right, and what they feel as a disadvantage I cite as a reason for Nonconformity. It is a radically bad thing that any authority from without should draw hard and fast lines about the human mind and conscience, and by Act of Parliament declare what is God’s truth. On the very face of it it is preposterous, and it would not be difficult to show that it is also tyrannical, immoral, and irreligious. But this is what the State has done.

A second reason may also be stated in the words used by these excellent restive churchmen :

When all the people of a country are of the same religion, some kind of apology may be urged in favour of an alliance between the Church and the State. . . . But when we have in England such a division of opinion in the matter of Divine Worship as now exists, a State Church is simply a monstrous spectacle of injustice, inconsistency, and anomaly: Injustice—because it represents only a portion of the community; and that, doing so, the other citizens are placed at a disadvantage with respect to their national rights: Inconsistency—because one religion is established in England; another in Scotland,

so different that the clergy and people have no common sympathy; and none whatever in Ireland: Anomaly—because in many grave matters, (as for example in the manner of divorced persons,) the Canon Law is directly at issue with the law of the land. The principles of natural religion teach us that every citizen of a country should have an equal civic right in all the common advantages of the country, and an equal protection from the law. The establishment of the religion of a part of the community contradicts this principle, and is therefore unjust to all other parts of the community.

All this is admirable; and the only wonder is that the sensible churchmen, who see all that so clearly and say it so well, do not march out to freedom.

A third reason definitely raises the question of morality and honour. The Act of Uniformity has become

AN ACT FOR PROMOTING PREVARICATION.

The State has established one form of faith and one mode of worship, but what has happened? Why, in the State church itself to-day we have every form of faith taught, and almost every mode of worship practised. We object to a State church which, by imposing one creed on all its teachers, positively bids for prevarication or open defiance of the law. We know what the High Church party is doing;—openly defying the law and insulting the law-givers. We know what the Broad Church party is doing;—treating the most distinct and solemn statements as formalities, and teaching precisely what they please, in spite of Prayer Book and Bible: and we think that Nonconformity, in such circumstances, is imperatively required of us.

It is notorious that in doctrine and worship the safeguards imposed by the State are of no avail. They are evaded, scorned, ignored, or defied, and I claim respect for our scruples when we declare that we cannot conform to a church whose very Articles of religion are made the occasions of offences against public morality and of defiance of public law.

Out of this grows a fourth reason for Nonconformity—that a State church results in the great wrong of making the nation responsible for utterances that are an outrage upon the minds and hearts of multitudes. We must not lose sight of the fact that a clergyman of the State church is an officer of the State, and that he is put up to speak in the nation's name. If we were not so used to it, the thing would be too monstrous for belief; or certainly too monstrous for endurance. How can we help refuse conformity to a church which presumes to speak for a nation as intellectually active as this, thank God, is, and which has the audacity to excommunicate all who do not believe as they are told?

A fifth reason for Nonconformity is that a State church hinders progress. By imposing a fixed creed, and bringing all the force of custom, authority, and self-interest to maintain it, it is obvious that natural advance must be checked, and wholesome inquiry restrained. The wonder is that we have as much restlessness and revolt as we find in the church. All the motives that usually urge men on, tend there to rigid conservatism and disinclination to disturb anything; and that can only be injurious to the growth of men and women, and unfavourable to the discovery of the truth.

A sixth reason I would fain cite with reservations if I could, but it is difficult so to do in face of what is happening in England. It is painfully clear that a single ritual, fixed by law, tends to spiritual repression and formality, and I lay some emphasis on this, although, owing to the High church party, the ritual of the State church has been, for the time, revived by the artistic aids of robes and music. But robes, and music, and a kind of

SUNDAY ÆSTHETIC THEATRICALISM

will not save endless repetitions from the fate of all formalities; and the time will come when people will find out that the intoning of words over and over again is not devotion, and that musical responses are not prayers. They have turned the church service into a very highly refined, artistic performance, but, speaking for myself, I can only say that this has driven me farther off from it than ever. I deeply feel its unreality, and declare to God that the struggling prayer welling up from the soul of some poor lay preacher seems to me immeasurably more real than the artistically intoned formalities of a surpliced performer, or the State-provided responses that lack the vital element of personal prayer.

(To be concluded next month.)

SPIRITUALISM, THE KEY THAT OPENS ALL DOORS.

Spoken by JOHN PAGE HOPPS at St. Andrew's Hall, London, introductory to a 'General Conference of Spiritualists.'

HAVING, as many of you know, a strong dislike to names and badges of any kind, you may be surprised that I should take for a text a word which seems to be, not only a name and a badge, but something like a brand. But that last word reveals one of the reasons for taking the word 'spiritualism' as a text. The very fact that it is misunderstood is a reason for bringing it to the light, and, as a 'Free Christian,' I feel free to help in the process.

What ought we to mean by the word? I think I shall be safe in saying that if we separate it from all that belongs only to personal opinion—if we get to the kernel of the matter—we shall find that spiritualism implies two things: 1, the belief that the real solution of the problem of life is to be found in a psychical state of being beyond or behind the physical; and 2, the belief that psychical or spiritual beings, under certain conditions and in accordance with certain natural laws, can and do manifest their presence on the physical or material plane. Or, to state it in another way: spiritualism means nothing more than the recognition and application of the truth that the world of sense is surrounded and pervaded by a world of spirit, that the death of the body is the liberation of the spirit, and that communion never ceases between the living on this plane and the more intensely living on that plane. Some may mean more by it, and I dare say it would be easy to show what foolish things some people mean by it; but none of us are bound by other people's notions. We are all seekers after the truth and free, and so, speaking for myself, not as a spiritualist, but as a 'free lance,' I say that spiritualism is the recognition and application of the truth that the world of sense is surrounded and pervaded by a world of spirit, and that communion never ceases between the two.

That definition, if we look well at it, carries with it the curious fact that all Christians are, in a way, spiritualists, just in so far as they are consistent, as believers in the Bible and the elementary bases of the Christian religion. The Bible, from the first page to the last, is saturated with spiritualism, and, between the first fragments and the last, lies a period of something like 1,500 years. During the whole of that time, if the Bible is to be believed, there was, in every conceivable way, communion between the unseen and the seen—between the living and the so-called 'dead.' It is for those who believe that to explain how they can believe in spirit-communion during a period of, say, 1,200 years before, and laugh at it 1,800 years after, Christ. There are many inconsistencies in this world which we cannot explain, and this is one of them.

And now for my proposition that spiritualism is the key which unlocks all doors. Of course that is a proposition which will excite, and quite naturally, a certain amount of wonder. I say 'quite naturally,' for it does seem to be going too far to say that something which has hardly got beyond the stage of persecution is the key to all things. But I deliberately affirm it, and hope to at least indicate how it can be proved.

And first, go back to the hint just given, that the Bible is full of spiritualism. It is not necessary to be a spiritualist in order to see and admit that. Spiritualism is the key to the Bible, whatever view we take of the Bible, and whatever view we take of spiritualism. From beginning to end it is a record of spirit-appearances, spirit-voices, spirit-messages, and spirit-activities. I do not say that in defence of the Bible. I can quite understand a secularist saying that, and citing it as an additional reason for disliking the Bible, but I cannot understand the attempt to escape from the fact that the spiritualism of the Bible is the dominant note in it. It is not a question of your being glad or sorry; it is simply a matter of fact, and the fact speaks for itself. I dare not begin to give you the evidence,—there would be no end to it. For that alone I should want half a dozen Sunday evenings. Besides, we are all familiar with the fact. Almost every one of the sixty-six books in the Bible is a book which is all alive with spiritualism, and needs spiritualism to explain it—every book, from Moses to Ezra, from Job to Isaiah, from Ezekiel to Malachi, from the Evangelists to Paul, and from Peter to John. They are all full of it, and we hold the key, because we show how natural spirit-communication is, and because we show by examples how the old records may be true.

Or turn from the Bible to the reader of it—to the human being himself, and ask the question: 'What is man?' Or offer to him the venerable advice, 'Know thyself!' Where is the answer, and where the secret of the knowledge? That was a keen remark by one who knew: 'One of the highest uses of spiritualism will be, not the revelation of a spirit-world to the man, but the revelation of the man to himself.' It tells us what we are. The prevailing forces of life tend to drag man down,—to make him a beast of burden, a creature of appetites and physical desires and decays. He lives in a hard school, and the schoolmasters often seem as pitiless as they are untiring. What is man? Is he a beast of burden? Is this life of work and worry, of eating and sleeping and slow dying, the whole of it: or is there, behind it and beneath it, something deeper, something which has in it the promise of promotion when the rough, harsh stages are all passed through? Spiritualism gives the answer—the only answer—and if the Christian despisers of spiritualism give that answer too, they have to become spiritualists for the time being. They tell the human beast of burden that he is something better than that,—that he is an immortal spirit, that he will presently put off this 'muddy vesture of decay,' and pass on to the immortal life beyond: and this is pure

spiritualism. It is true that many of them add some unmeaning nonsense about the rising again of the body, but they do not mean it: and they add more unmeaning nonsense about being shut up in hell or heaven for ever, so that the saved and the lost can communicate with us here no more. Apart from that, however, they practically give the message of spiritualism as the hope of the weary. But it is so much better to give that message in its native simplicity, as the declaration of a natural law.

Or turn from the human being to the human life. What a puzzle, what a tragedy for the most part, life is, considered alone! Of what injustice are millions the victims! What remorseless waste strews the earth with the hope blasted that makes the heart broken, as well as with the 'hope deferred that makes the heart sick'!

But lift up the whole of the human life into the light of spiritualism, and then see how it is transformed! Spiritualism is not merely commerce with the so-called 'dead': it is also a method of accounting for that which we call the life of the living. It puts the key, or offers to put the key, into every one's hands. It says: 'You are not a body, you are a spirit, and the spiritual issues of life are the main issues. The whole meaning of life is in the unseen, not the seen—in what you are, not what you have.' It shifts the centre from the body to the soul.

It is also an ideal of life. It tells us what life should mean in every phase of it. Its ramifications are therefore everywhere. It has to do with all life. When rightly understood, it will become less and less creedy and fantastical, and more and more practical. It will supply the key which will unlock every door of the world's ordinary life, in politics, trade, sociology, education; and it is destined to be revolutionary because it will re-create, and destructive only because it will be so wonderfully constructive. It has 'the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.'

It knows no closing of the account, for the experiences of earth are only the commencement of man's great transaction with his God. The earth-life is only a preliminary school-life, or, at best, only a kind of apprenticeship. The true life is all to come. And that life will not be delayed, says the spiritualist. The ending here is the beginning there. Nothing will be lost,—nothing, nothing! Every struggle, every tear, every stumbling, every sin, every parting, will lead on to some great compensation, to some deepening of sympathy, some brightening of understanding, some recovered joy. 'Behold,' says the angel, 'I make all things new!'

And so we are led on to another sphere—that of religion. An enormous field! The conventional Christian says, 'There is only one true religion; all the rest are false,' but you cannot, by that arrogant assumption, get rid of the mighty religions of the world, some of them the nursing mothers of the human

race before Christianity was born. The conventional Christian is driven to deny all 'miracles' but his own, all 'angels' but his own, all signs of the 'supernatural' but his own, all ancient spirits or gods but his own 'Jehovah.' But the spiritualist explains and unites because he can account for and co-relate all religions and all inspirations, and because he brings them all into the normal development of the race from both the earthly and the spiritual planes. He supplies the key in showing that spirit-intercourse is natural, permanent, and universal.

But what is the ideal religion? Here again the spiritualist has the key. He puts the emphasis on the right word—not creed, not ritual, not sacrament, but 'spirit.' Religion, in reality, has no vital connection with either dogma or ceremony. What can speculative notions, or the utterance of a form of words, or the administration of water, or the partaking of bread and wine, have to do with religion? They may, in a way, express or symbolise it, but they cannot possibly be a part of it. The fully developed spiritualist says: 'Religion is vital, personal; dogma is comparatively unimportant; ritual is comparatively sounding brass and a clanging cymbal; sacraments are comparatively the playthings of a child. The spirit, the spirit; that is the vital thing, for religion is that which grows out of the spirit towards the Spirit-God, just as the flower grows out towards the sun. Yes! and it is the flowering or fruiting of the spirit, and is 'love and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost.' Hence religion is universal, not sectarian; human, and not only Christian. It belongs to the race which always lies open to inspirations from the unseen,—some wise, some foolish; some elevating and some depressing. That is the key to all the religions of the world.

Hence, again, religion has no necessary connection with churches and priests at all; and Westminster Abbey no more necessarily enshrines it than the humblest back parlour where two or three meet together to lift up their hearts to the angels and the angels' God.

Religion! Yes; and the churches need nothing so much as a conception of it which would make them ashamed of their sectarianisms and their condemning creeds, a conception of it which would make religion human and not priestly, homely and not churchy, practical and not ceremonial—in a word, a religion, 'not of the letter which killeth, but of the spirit which giveth life.'

And what shall I say of our great teacher of religion, Jesus Christ? Is not his life, from first to last, one for which only spiritualism can account? I do not profess belief in all the so-called 'supernatural' stories of the Gospels, but, allowing for exaggerations, it is evident that Jesus lived the life of a supreme 'medium.' That is the key. He was unceasingly *en rapport* with the spirit-world, and if we admit that, as the key to his life, all is natural and plain. If we do not admit that, the alternative is practically before us in the

two camps of Christendom, in one of which he is adored as a God, and, in the other, puzzled-over as a man. On the one hand, the 'orthodox,' not knowing how to interpret the spirit-phenomena, think he must be the Almighty, and, on the other hand, the Unitarians, unable to admit the so-called 'supernatural,' tear his life into two parts, and, grotesquely hurrying one-half out of sight, coolly present the other half as an object of reverence and belief! Indeed, there are few objects in Christendom more pitiable than the merely critical Christian rationalist who stands before this lock of the so-called 'supernatural' without the key.

That key is in the hands of the spiritualist who sees clearly enough that the man Jesus was a supreme medium, who lived so near to the spirit-world and to the spirit-forces that our 'supernatural' was his natural, as to some others it has been since and may be again, and whose so-called 'resurrection' was only his supreme ability to present himself in a temporarily materialised form to his disciples. All this is, to the spiritualist, perfectly plain, and what he has to offer is a perfectly fitting key.

And, last of all, what of that which we call 'death'? Who holds the key of that so surely as the spiritualist? who so surely understands that great saying, 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death'? 'The last enemy!' Yes! 'Destroyed!' Yes! for we repudiate it; we say there is no such thing. The shell falls off and is buried or burnt; the garment is worn out and put aside; the vehicle can go no further, and is deserted; the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and is for ever useless now; but the singing bird is not destroyed, the wearer of the garment has not ceased to be, the traveller has not ended his journey, the well is not dry.

The spiritualist knows that death is as natural as birth—that it is, indeed, only a new birth—that death is promotion and, in a way, an advantage for all who pass through it. He knows that the great experiment of life is not at an end, that the human chances are not exhausted, that a fixed condition and a hopeless hell are the bad dreams of ignorant fear. He knows that the undone work will be recommenced under better conditions, in a sphere where the light will be clearer, the teachers wiser, and the spirit-powers more developed. He knows that natural law and the unbroken order will prevent anything arbitrary on the other side, that each one will go to his own place, and that desire and fitness will determine advance to a better. He knows that justice, perfect justice, will be done. Who, then, holds the key to the future life so surely as he who sees and knows all this?

So, then, perhaps these illustrations may suffice to show that spiritualism is the key to all things, seeing that it is the key to the Bible, to human nature and human life, to religion, to the life of Jesus, and to the future life; for what

is true of these mighty concerns is likely to be true of everything and everywhere.

We make no apologies, then, to-day ; we ask for no toleration ; we beg no one's pardon ; we do not speak

With bated breath and whispering humbleness ;

we repudiate the notion that we are only one more sect, that we are the bringers-in of some novelty. ' Novelty ! ' why the central truth of spiritualism belongs to the primary formations of religion. We sometimes talk of keeping the anniversary of modern spiritualism. You cannot do it. It has not come to this earth within the memory of man. Practically, it never commenced, and it certainly never ceased. It is everywhere ; it is away among the foundations of every religion ; it lurks in every creed ; it nestles in the cradle of every great reviver of religion, from Moses to Jesus, and from Jesus to John Wesley.

It is sometimes said that spiritualists are superstitious. They who say so do not understand. One half of spiritualism is pure Christianity ; the other half is pure science. No ; the real superstition lies in quite another direction. It is to be found in old creeds and liturgies, in old ceremonies and sacraments, in pulpits where men grind over again dead dogmas, and at altars where other men prostrate themselves before dead symbols. But the worst of all superstitions is that indicated by a recent thinker, who said that ' superstition is the perpetuation of a low form of belief along with the higher knowledge,' and many who accuse spiritualists of superstition might do well to ponder that. For my own part, I look for the time when spiritualism will be recognised as giving the simplest and sanest interpretation of the very things with which science busies itself, to say nothing of the speculations which harass and worry the churches.

So then, friends, we meet together, strengthened by the knowledge that, pressing hard on the wave of agnostic materialism, there is a wave of intensest interest in spiritual subjects, which looks as though it would prevail. Perhaps the wave of mediumship has somewhat abated ; I know not ; but I do know that the wave of spiritual inquiry is mounting higher every day. It is true, as one has sharply said, that ' a philosophical spirit of agnosticism in a few has cast the general ignorance and shallowness into swaggering forms of incredulity for everything but the omnipotence of physical science ; ' but the world is finding out that scepticism is what one rightly called it, ' a kind of cramp,' and the best part of the world is getting tired of the cramp, and we shall come to our own, and our own will come to us by and by. Meanwhile there is nothing for it but to stand fast at our post, as good soldiers : and if that standing fast sometimes looks too much like standing still, be comforted :

They also serve, who only stand and wait.

THE 'SPECTATOR'S' MOTHERLY REPROOF.

THE *Spectator*, taking for its text Mr. Page Hopps' eulogium of Dr. Martineau in the *Chronicle*, wrote a very dignified but—dare we say it?—somewhat prosy article on the subject. The study in the *Chronicle* seems to have pained the writer in the *Spectator*. The style did not please him. It was in too high a key. The *Spectator* should be merciful. How can it expect every one to reach the motherly dignity of its own solemn columns? One passage seems to have made the *Spectator* writer not only unhappy but confused. He confesses that he could not grasp the meaning of this:

'his very thinking is on the lines of a kind of enchanted mathematics.' We are very sorry the *Spectator* could not understand this, for really it seems very simple. Dr. Martineau's thinking has in it an intellectual orderliness which reminds us of nothing so much as mathematics; but the mathematics, instead of being abstract, dull and formal, is brilliant with poetry and romance—is, in fact, 'enchanted.' It seems the most natural thing in the world to say. If the *Spectator* could not see this, we do not wonder that it felt distressed. Poor dear old mother!

NOTES BY THE WAY.

HERO WORSHIP.—Hero worship is all very well in its way, but it sometimes takes extremely 'soft' ways of expressing itself. We have all heard of the silly people who, after 'The Duke' or 'The Prince' has left the luncheon tent, rush in and scramble or fight for the precious crumbs of his French roll. Here is something to match it. A celebrated artist had an interview with the Pope, and in his book he tells us with pride, 'When he was gone I carefully collected the snuff which covered the green baize all round the gilt chair, and presented it to a young lady, an enthusiastic admirer of the Holy Father.' 'Lord! what fools we be!'

THE SUPERNATURAL.—That was a fruitful saying by Professor Alfred Russel Wallace; 'Spiritualism abolishes the terms "supernatural" and "miracle" by an extension of the sphere of law and the realm of nature; and in so doing it takes up and explains whatever is true in the superstitions and so-called miracles of all ages.'

JEST AND EARNEST.—'Well, Uncle Silas, your boy is home from college?' 'Yes, wuss luck.' 'Worse luck! Why?' 'He's larned so much, he can't plow up nothin' but my feelins, nor harrer nothin' but my soul.'

POCKET BOROUGH.—Agreeing or not agreeing generally with Mr. Chamberlain, onlookers may

reasonably wonder what is happening to Birmingham. That energetic town used to be famous for its political independence. But what is the meaning of the transactions which persistently go on, if not behind its back, at all events without its active intervention? Mr. Joseph Chamberlain consults, bargains, announces, threatens, and decides just as if he were arranging matters for an old screw business. Is it possible that Birmingham is becoming a pocket borough, in the sense that it leaves a proprietor to dispose of its political power? We do not believe it, and we are inclined to think that unless a signal change comes over the spirit of somebody's dream, Birmingham will startle the country some of these days. It may never again take the lead in Liberalism as in the good old days; but it will show all England, by a striking object-lesson, that the days of oligarchies are over and that Liberalism resents nothing so much as being farmed out.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.—The *Daily Chronicle* has spotted a really interesting text which we commend to the modern woman and the ancient man. It is Deuteronomy xxii., 5, and it runs thus:—'A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, . . . for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.' Lady cyclists and pioneer clubs, beware!

A scholarly correspondent sends us the follow-

ing :—True import of 2nd Timothy, 3rd chapter, 16th verse, according to the following authorities :—

- ORIGEN, about 230 A.D., 'Every Scripture being inspired of God is useful.'
 THE SYRIAC, about 250 A.D., 'Every Scripture which is written by the Spirit is profitable.'
 THE VULGATE, about 400 A.D., 'Every Scripture divinely inspired is useful.'
 THEODORET, about 430 A.D., 'He called the Scripture which is spiritual divinely inspired.'
 WYCLIFF, 1380 A.D., 'All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach.'
 ERASMUS, 1521 A.D. 'All Scripture which has been given us not by human skill has great usefulness.'
 LUTHER, 1522, 'All Scripture which is inspired by God is useful.'
 TYNDALE, 1534, 'All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable to teach.'
 CRANMER, 1539, same as the last.
 RHEIMS, 1852, 'All Scripture inspired of God is profitable.'
 GROTIUS, 1630, 'All Scripture which is inspired of God is also useful.'
 HAMMOND, 1689, 'All Scripture being inspired is also profitable'

WAKEFIELD, 1795, 'Every writing inspired of God is useful.'

EDGAR TAYLOR, 1840, 'Every writing divinely inspired is profitable.'

SHARPE, 1856, 'All writing inspired of God is also profitable.'

ALFORD, 1869, 'Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable.'

The Genevan version of 1557 was the first version in which the word *is* was inserted in the first part of the verse, which runs thus: 'The whole Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, &c.' This innovation was copied by the translators of the present authorised version under James I, 1611, and the passage now stands thus in our 'authorised' Bibles: 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, &c.' though the Revised Version rightly restores the old reading, 'Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable, &c.'

OUR FATHER'S CHURCH. Number IV. of 'Meeting Places' is now ready. Hitherto copies have been sent to members only, but it has been determined to offer it to others. Anyone wishing to see it should write to Miss E. E. Trower, 1, Carlton Terrace, Red Hill, Surrey, enclosing one penny stamp.

LIGHT ON THE PATH.

IN one of the smallest villages in England stands one of the smallest chapels in the world—very homely, very humble, and rather old. Over the little latched door there is a tablet let into the brick wall. On this tablet there is a bit of Latin, followed by the following lines :—

This house of prayer is set apart
 For all who join in hand and heart
 To worship God above,
 Where party names shall cease to be,
 And all shall join in unity
 To sing redeeming love.

Somebody's pleasant dream in the past of the Coming Day in the present.

The bit of Latin runs thus :—*Frustra laborat qui omnibus placere studet.* (He labors in vain who tries to please everybody). At the top of the homely tablet there is the simple name—FREE CHAPEL. Forty years ago, as a theological student of a Baptist college, Mr. Page Hopps was sent to preach there. A

blessed but unsuspected prophecy!

SOCIALISM.—In a leaflet, issued by the editor of *The Clarion*, we find this :—'What is Socialism? What do Socialists want? They want to "nationalize the land and instruments of production." What does that mean? It means that the land and all the mills, farms, shops, works, houses, railways, canals, ships and mines shall belong to the people of England. That all the work shall be done by the people of England, and all the produce of the work shall be used by the people of England. It means that the railways, the mines, and other industries shall belong to the people and be managed by the people, just as the Post Office now belongs to the people, and is managed by the State.' Would Socialists, then, be content to have all the labour of England regulated and straight-waistcoated after the model of the Post Office? It is an important illustration—for the Socialist.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

'The sanitary code of the Pentateuch.' By the Rev. C. G. K. Gillespie, A.K.C., &c. London: The Religious Tract Society. A little book on a great subject. Multitudes who, in a general way, think of the ancient Hebrews as a race of half-civilised wanderers, would be astonished to find how clearly the evidence points them out as, in many respects, a race of advanced sanitary reformers. In a very condensed form a vast number of curious instances are given. We only regret the industrious author did not more freely give Biblical references in the body of the work.

'Matter, Force and Spirit; or scientific evidence of a supreme intelligence.' London and New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. This little book, as its title indicates, is a scholarly and scientific setting forth of evidence in favour of Theism, or, rather, of belief in 'The Infinite and Universal Spirit.' There are many who regard this as a settled question. There are others who think it never will and never can be settled. Between these stand

the rational believers in God, who know that the ideal ever needs restating and that 'the evidences' constantly need adjusting to the knowledge and the temper of the time. The writer of this thoughtful book seems to have been influenced by this consideration, as we find him carefully leading up to the stupendous suggestions of Thought-transference and Hypnotism, and connecting these with gravitation, which also works at a distance as a force which 'acts independently of a medium of transfer.' 'This,' he says, 'is spirit,' and it certainly does whisper a grand and suggestive thought concerning the possibilities of an omniscient God. If we are proving that the human mind is a force which can act at a distance, what may we infer as to God? The argument, from page 104 to the end, is a subtle and beautiful one. It could not have been written, just like this, thirty years ago. Its concluding reference to Spiritualism is deeply serious and full of significance. Men of science and teachers of religion who despise or neglect it simply efface themselves.

LOWELL LINES.

1.—GREAT truths are portions of the soul of man.

Sonnets.

2.—WE see but half the causes of our deeds,
Seeking them wholly in the outer life,
And heedless of the encircling spirit-world,
Which, tho' unseen, is felt, and sows in us
All germs of pure and world-wide purposes.

Glance Behind the Curtain.

3.—GOD doth not work as man works, but
makes all
The crooked paths of ill to goodness tend.

Legend of Brittany.

4.—WISDOM is stern sorrow's patient child,
And empire over self, and all the deep,
Strong charities that make men seem like
gods.

Prometheus.

5.—FACTS are only the pulp in which the
idea or event-seed is softly embedded till it
ripens.

Biglow Papers.

6.—THOU seest no beauty save thou make it
first;

Man, woman, nature, each is but a glass
Where the soul sees the image of herself,
Visible echoes, offsprings of herself.

The Parting of the Ways.

7.—MANY make the household,
But only one the home.

The Dead House.

8.—THE beauty and truth of impressions
depend on the substance in which they are
made.

Letters.

9.— I perchance
AM one raised up by the almighty arm
To witness some great truth to all the world.

Glance Behind the Curtain.

10.—THE one soul no more rejoices
In the star's anthem than the insect's hum.

Ode.

11.—HE who needeth love, to love hath right.
Chippewa Legend.

12.—THOUGHTS that great hearts broke for, we
Breathe cheaply in the common air ;
The dust we trample headlessly,
Throbb'd once in saints and heroes rare,
Who perished, opening for their race
New pathways to the commonplace.
Masaccio.

13.—BOOKS are good dry forage—we can keep
alive on them ; but, after all, men are the
only fresh pasture.
Letters.

14.—THANK Heaven! whatsoever the rate is
At which some things are sold,
Nature is ever had ' free gratis,
Children half-price,' as of old.
Letters.

15.—A MAN cannot escape in thought, any
more than he can in language, from the past
and the present.
Essay on Thoreau.

16.—HOPE is truth—the future giveth
More than present takes away,
And the soul forever liveth
Nearer God from day to day.
The Rose.

17.—THAT friendship should be able to
endure silence without suspicion is the surest
touchstone of its sufficiency.
Letters.

18.—NATURE still o'erleaps reflection's plan
And one must do his service as he can.
To W. G. Curtis.

19.—THE divine life of Nature is more
wonderful, more various, more sublime in
man than in any other of her works, and the
wisdom that is gained by commerce with
men or with one's own soul among men, is
the most delightful as it is the most precious
of all.
Essay on Thoreau.

20.—PATIENCE a little; learn to wait ;
Hours are long on the clock of fate.
Villa Franca.

21.—IT is something to be that to somebody
which in the day of inexperience one dreamed
of being to all.
Letters.

22.—ALL God's angels come to us disguised
On the Death of a Friend's Child.

23.—FOR whom the heart of man shuts out,
Sometimes the heart of God takes in,
And fences them all around about
With silence mid the world's loud din.
The Forlorn.

24.—TO a healthy mind, the world is a
constant challenge of opportunity.
Essay on Thoreau.

25.—BEAUTY and truth and all that these
contain,
Drop not like ripened fruit about our feet ;
We climb to them through years of sweat and
pain.
To Palfrey.

26.—CHANCES have laws as fixed as planets
have.
Columbus.

27.—LOVE is blind but with the fleshly eye,
That so its inner sight may be more clear.
Love.

28.—AFTER all, the kind of world one carries
about in one's self is the important thing, and
the world outside takes all its grace, color,
and value from that.
Letters.

29.—WHO deemeth small things are beneath
his state,
Will be too small for what is truly great.
Mind's Paradox.

30.—BE noble! and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own.
Sonnets.