The Coming Day.

SEPTEMBER, 1891.

OUR FATHER'S CHURCH.

AN IDEAL.

EVERY Church, in its way, has its mission; but we have arrived at the parting of the ways for all churches. It is being very generally felt that the basis of doctrine or rite is not a lasting basis. The best men and women in every church are looking longingly beneath and beyond dogma and rite, to find the permanent and universal basis of a Church that shall be truly human and divine. "Episcopal," "Presbyterian," "Baptist," "Wesleyan," "Congregational," "Unitarian," "Non-subscribing,"—all are palpably limited or verbal, merely doctrinal or formal. Not one of them goes down to the foundation.

The hour has fully come, not for a new sect—God forbid!—but for a new testimony—if only as a John the Baptist in the wilderness, crying, "Prepare ye the way." It would be a delightful thing if, for instance, the Unitarians would blossom out, as they well might do, and put the ideal before the world. Their history is an honourable one; their testimony has been greatly needed, and, to-day, they unquestionably point the way in which, theologically, all the churches will have to go. But the ideal does not seem to be with them, though it might most naturally proceed from them. The word "Unitarian" will have to perish. It is doctrinal, verbal, partial: but the ideal Church will be social, spiritual, and universal. At first, not "universal" in the sense of including all the world in it, but universal in its basis, spirit, and testimony.

It would be one of the supreme events of the century, in the religious world, if the Unitarians, from every part of this kingdom, would meet together, and solemnly, before God and the world, put themselves right with the world, and take the lead in a way perfectly open to them. At present their name is a barrier; their testimony is never clear; their letter shadows their spirit; their heresy misrepresents their inspiration; their dogmatic protest hides even from themselves their true vocation. They have a mission from heaven, if they did but know it. Will they ever understand it?

The ideal name for the Church now needed is "OUR FATHER'S CHURCH." Does not that touch the richest chords? Is it not, in itself, a winning invitation, a self-evident gospel, and a sufficient confession of faith? Truly understood, is not a Church this very thing,—a haven for the children who long to know The Father's love, and do His will? Why lower the Church by designating it by the name of an official or a conclave, a rite or a founder, an assembly or a doctrine,—or the repudiation of doctrine?

"Our Father's Church." What light would stream forth from that delightful and instructive name! The testimony, if now made, would deeply touch the heart and mind of Christendom. It is ready for it. Tired of texts, and embarrassed with dogma, it is even longing for it: and the effect of it might be wonderful.

Put into the form of a declaration, this is what we mean:—

["*When ye pray say, Our Father who art in Heaven.*" JESUS.]

OUR FATHER'S CHURCH,

is based on the perception and acceptance of these Seven Guiding Principles or Ideals;—

1. THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD, WHO IS THE INMOST UPLIFTING LIFE OF ALL THINGS.

   [God Himself can never be known, though His Fatherhood may be. The truest thing we can say of Him is that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being," and that, therefore, in a very profound sense, He is "Our Father" He is fully revealed in no book, no creed, no church, but is ever The Ideal, the best in all things everywhere, the ceaseless Creator, "the inmost uplifting Life of all things."]

2. THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN, FOR SYMPATHY AND MUTUAL INSTRUCTION.

   [Mankind is one of the manifestations of God, coming, in the fulness of time, from lower forms of life, and achieving, by slow degrees, the rudiments of reverence and aspiration, sympathy and self-sacrifice, the spiritual perception of the meaning of life and the consciousness of the mysterious presence of "Our Father." Jesus, historically or ideally, represents this stage of human development, and therefore the world has naturally associated with him the ideal of Human Brotherhood. This, in the end, will conquer individual brutalities and national antagonisms, and accomplish the ideal of perfect civilisation which is simply the art of living together for "sympathy and mutual instruction."]

3. THE CEASELESS DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCE OF THE HUMAN RACE, BY STRUGGLE AND POSSESSION, SORROW AND JOY, DEATH AND LIFE.

   [The great doctrine of Development has deep spiritual applications. When properly understood, it will be recognised as the equivalent of Paul's doctrine concerning "the earnest expectation of the Creation" which "groaneth and travaileth in pain together," and "waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God"; or of John's supremely enlightening saying, "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." Man is not yet created: he is being created; and the instruments of his creation are "struggle and possession, sorrow and joy, death and life." Those last words have far-reaching significance. What we call "death" is really a stage in the creation of man; and the life to which it leads will carry on the glorious process of his development.]

4. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN EVERYWHERE UPON THE EARTH.

[The time has fully come for seeking the realisation of Religion in common life, and for teaching that the truest fruits of Church-life should be found, not in the Church, but in the world. The Church, will, one day, point, not to itself, but to the world. The ideal is to throw all into the common stock, and to find or found God's kingdom in the streets. "On earth," His kingdon must come, as in Heaven; so that, from the dock-gates to the throne, its principles and spirit shall prevail. To make that true is the Church's mission and ideal.]

5. THE UNRESERVED RECOGNITION OF THE "SECULAR" WORLD, AS CONTAINING ALL SACRED THINGS.

[The time has also fully come for tenderly but firmly putting aside, or passing by, the artificial sanctities of the Church,—its altars, crucifixes, holy ecclesiastical persons and places, saving rites, the body and blood of Christ in sensuous forms. The truest altars of the world are the homely tables on which men and women lay the sacramental daily bread, honestly earned and sweetly used; the counters and desks where the business of God's world is righteously carried on; the factories and gardens and fields where that is done by which God's children are clothed and fed; the school-houses where the mind is trained to think, compare and understand; and the parliaments and courts where good laws are made and justice is done. The duties, toils and struggles of our common life are the truest sanctities of the world, and the keenest revelations of the intentions of God.]

6. THE UNCEASING INSPIRATION OF MAN BY GOD.

[It is the perception of this that is breaking up all the older forms of faith. Belief in the sole authority of the Bible, as the one revelation from God, was the weapon which served, at The Reformation, to beat down the claim that asserted the sole authority of a Church or a man; but the weapon has become a chain. Hence the unrest in all the Churches, and the longing for emancipation. The great religious want of the age is a return to the delightful faith of the psalmists and prophets, of Jesus and Paul, that our Father is the ever-present teacher, uplifter and inspirer of His children;—from age to age developing the human mind and conscience, making these more and more clearly responsive and authoritative, as He leads us out of darkness, into His marvellous light. Inspiration does not involve infallibility; it only implies that heavenly wisdom and love are present, as aids. The measure of inspiration is always the measure of ability to receive and use.]

7. THE CONSTANT COMMUNION OF KINDRED SPIRITS IN THE UNSEEN AND THE SEEN.

[Nothing is truer of the senses than that they are illusory. They accustom us to a certain narrow range, and tell us nothing of their extreme

limitations, but rather suggest the reverse, as though they revealed all there is to see and feel and hear. Paul said that the things which are seen are temporal, while the things which are not seen are eternal. We might as truly say that the things which are seen are on the shores, while the things that are not seen are on the oceans and continents of the universe. God and the angels are the greatest of all realities, and only the limits of the senses and the poverty of the earth-developed spirit prevent us knowing how completely right that ancient Christian was who said, "We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses."]

"Our Father's Church" would not expect uniformity of belief. It would even invite differences of opinion, and seek for "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." It would hold that true church-membership does not involve the meeting together in one place, and would therefore welcome and count as its adherents all who professed to accept its ideals and aims. In this way, it would offer sympathy and encouragement to thousands of isolated and spiritually lonely souls, and, with simple ways of worship, it might cover the land with happy havens of refuge for now houseless spirits, many of whom are drifting on to unbelief because they know no alternative to the wearisome scholastic combatants and their creeds.

"Our Father's Church" would always be free and progressive: free, that is to say, to revise any of its conclusions, and progressive in relation to all its outlooks and hopes. It could never recognise finalities, and its delight would be to receive fresh messages from above. It would teach that the great end of human life is the harmonious development of the inner self. It would believe in the "living God." There is a sense in which it would not be the Church of Christ, because it would take Christ at his word, and press on to The Father. Jesus Christ was "the firstborn (*i.e.* the chief) among many brethren"; but he himself told us to join with him in prayer to "Our Father"; and we are most true to him when we go on to Him whom he called "the only true God." If that simple-hearted, truth-loving and brave reformer were here to-day, he would be the first to lead us on, and to call us away from the survivals of imperfect stages which are now forced upon us in his name.

"Our Father's Church" would do everything in its power to bring The Father's children together for mutual sympathy and heartening. "The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all," said the Hebrew sage. The Church has too often forgotten this; but, in proportion as it remembers it, it will be worthy of The Father's name. In a true Church, the bond of union should be, not doctrine, but sympathy: and the poor, most of all, need sympathy, the light of hope, the sense of brotherhood. The bitterness of their lot is the feeling that no one cares for *them*: and this is to be overcome, not so much by what the modern world calls "charity," as by love.

"Our Father's Church" would not be anxious to multiply isolated Church enterprises. It would rather teach men and women to act together in the open world for the good of all,—to apply its principles and ideals as masters and servants, parents and children, buyers and sellers, citizens and friends. Its highest ideal would be to be "a well of water," springing up everywhere "unto everlasting life."

RELIGIO-POLITICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

Up to the seventeenth century two principles or theories had contended for supremacy in the political life of our country. First one and then the other appeared uppermost, though one chiefly preponderated up to this time. The first principle was "the divine right of kings." It was asserted that the monarch got his crown direct from God, and consequently was responsible to no earthly tribunal. Not to the law, for his will was the law; nor to the people, for they were his subjects—bound to obey him in everything. He was not only above the law, but he was its source and sanction. Parliament existed for the purpose of furnishing him with means of carrying on government or waging foreign wars; and if in his sovereign will he determined to do without one he had the right to do so. Thus a mortal man was clothed with the attributes of divinity, for it was an axiom that the king could do no wrong. But, as wrong *was* done, the scheme of responsible ministers had to be invented as time went on, in order that some one should bear the consequence of wrong doing. So it is; one fiction always gives birth to another, until the forms of government become so many fictions, and nothing is what it professes to be. "Under the British constitution," says Fonblanque, "the sovereign must govern through his ministers, who are responsible to parliament for his political acts, which are always presumed to be done by their advice."

Out of this belief came the doctrine that the king had a right to compel the consciences of his subjects, and force them to adopt his special religious views. He was not only the head of the State, but he was head of the Church as well, and every doctrine, as well as every law, might be determined by his individual will. For he owed his crown to God—not to the people. Upon our coin is still stamped this doctrine, "Victoria Dei Gratia—Britt. Regina." Philosophers were found who formulated this doctrine in learned phrases,* and bishops and preachers without number proclaimed it from the pulpit. These ideas had floated down the stream of time from the Middle Ages, when it was held that the Pope of Rome, as the vicegerent of God, had the power of setting up or deposing of kings. When a monarch was crowned by a priest as representative of the Pope, he was supposed to be crowned by God Himself, and so was the Lord's anointed, master of the people and all they had. In 1213 this doctrine was literally acted on—when John, having given up his crown to the Pope's legate, had it graciously returned to him on his submission. Half a century before (1172), the king had to submit to scourgings from the hands of priests before his kingdom could have the interdict of excommunication lifted from it.

Principles are nothing without persons to enforce them, and the men who championed these principles in the seventeenth century were of various character. There was the pedant James the First, who came from the badgerings and baitings of

* Hobbes in his *Leviathan*, for instance.

the rough Calvinistic Scotch Presbyterians, to be flattered and soothed by English bishops as the Lord's anointed. He found the change so delightful that he declared there could be no king without a bishop. There was his son, Charles the First, in whom the elements were curiously mixed He was generous, brave, and gentle, and he had the sentiment of piety; but he had a genius for lying and deceit, and his word could hardly ever be relied on. Unhappily he was married to one who fostered the worst elements of his character, by insisting that he had no need to keep his word with his subjects, for they were his property, body and soul alike. There was Archbishop Laud, personally pure and disinterested, but fanatically given over to the doctrine of divine right in Church and State. Wentworth was one who had in his original nature the qualities that constitute the hero. He was a man of genius, with a strong, invincible will, and courage that would face any odds. But he was selfishly ambitious—he was tempted and fell. These men, with a great number of others to assist them, did their utmost to make the monarch absolute master of the lives and consciences of Englishmen. They could hardly have realized to themselves the task they undertook. It was no less than making slaves of a people strong-willed and valiant, of stable purpose and heroic achievement, and of a capacity for progress that has made them again and again the pivot on which the fortunes of mankind have turned.

The opposing principle to this was "Vox populi, vox Dei." It asserted that the people were the only true source of power, and, acting through their representatives in parliament, the only legitimate makers of law. According to this doctrine, law was supreme, and the king was as much a subject of the law as the lowest person in the land. He was simply the chief magistrate, the executor of the law. It was his business to attend to that work as other men did to theirs, and to do it in the people's name and on their behalf. The king reigned, he did not rule—he was the people's delegate, trusted with power for their welfare. Thus he was the special guardian of the law, whose duty it was to administer it with impartial justice. That this was the theory of the constitution is evident from the words of *Magna Charta:* "No free-man shall be taken, or imprisoned, or dispossessed of his tenement, or be outlawed, or exiled, or in any otherwise proceeded against, unless by the judgment of his peers, or the law of the land." Our forefathers held that God was the only legitimate sovereign of the realm, and that the true object of all legislation was to embody His will in the statute book; for rulers were but His deputies.

Thus the struggle of the seventeenth century was one between an all-embracing despotism of the individual will of the king and personal freedom guaranteed and guarded by the law—in other words, between superstition and religion. The men who represented liberty and religion were really great men. Hampden was single-minded, patriotic, conscientious, and entirely unselfish. Pym was an orator who knew no fear where right was concerned. St. John was a learned lawyer, subtle and keen, and, beyond all, zealous for liberty and progress. Cromwell was the bold warrior, the far-seeing statesman, and prayerful and pure in life. Milton was scholar, poet, and patriot, prophet and saint, beloved of God and all good men. Many other worthies there were who struggled and suffered, but these were the chief ones.

There was a clear issue between the two parties. The king said that he was the State and his will was the law. No, said the friends of liberty, law is king. On the one side were the king, the hereditary aristocracy, the State Church priesthood, and their followers; on the other were the Nonconformists, generally termed Puritans, the true successors of the democratic Wickliffites. They had risen above all ecclesiastical subjection, for they asserted the right of individual conscience to rule, and the immediate and personal communion with God. Thus their piety went beyond forms and institutions. One of the compacts they entered into with each other was that they would obey whatever truth they possessed and all that should afterwards be made known to them. Thus did they acknowledge the permanency of piety and assert the principle of progress.

The struggle of these principles led to a civil war, which brought Charles, Laud, and Wentworth to the scaffold, and led to dire misery among the people. But the old notions were so irretrievably damaged, that conditions were produced amidst which patriotic men could combine to make a free people, and play was found for conscience in religious and social matters. It is true that a reaction came, that monarchy was restored, and the Episcopal Church reinstated; and a wicked use king and priest made of the power they regained. But in 1688 another change came; a king who tried to rule on absolute principles was driven away and another placed on the throne who swore to rule according to law. In the meantime, Nonconformity had risen, and has continued to grow ever since, as representative of pure Nationalism. Liberalism has grown out of it and won victory after victory, and still aspires to win more; and never will it cease to press on to new achievements as long as an institution which is out of date exists, or ignorance shrouds the people's minds in darkness, or poverty demoralises and degrades them. Much has been done, but much more requires doing before the work of the reformer is completed, either theologically, socially, or politically.

W. M.

WHO WAS JEHOVAH?

[READ BY J. PAGE HOPPS BEFORE THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, IN THE BANQUETING HALL, ST. JAMES' HALL.]

[CONCLUDED.]

I venture to say that only on these lines can we find any solution of the difficult problem presented by the moral and spiritual characteristics of Jehovah. The problem turns upon the fact that these moral and spiritual characteristics are altogether contradictory and confused. On the one hand, we have the priceless Ten Commandments, and, on the other hand, we have a multitude of statements which are grossly inconsistent with them, unless we assume that the author of the commandments has no need to keep them; for we find him acting like the most arbitrary despot,—fanciful, fickle, and horribly cruel.

He tells Moses to make him a dwelling house, and gives him minute directions as to the tables, and curtains, and candlesticks, and tassels, and shovels, and pans (Exodus xxv-vii).

He gives directions as to the marriage of a widow with her deceased husband's brother, and as to what the widow is to do if he should refuse to have her:—she is to come to him in the presence of the elders, "and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed."

He complains of the Hebrews as obstinate, and threatens to destroy them, but is prevented by Moses who protests against his hot wrath, and appeals to his vanity by saying that if he hastily destroyed these people the Egyptians would mock him because of his failure; and then, we are told, Jehovah repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people, and did it not (Exodus xxxii).

He wants to destroy Ahab, and looks round and asks some one to tempt him to his ruin: and, after many had spoken, he deliberately chooses "a lying spirit" and sends him to do his will; "There came forth a spirit and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will persuade him. And Jehovah said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so."—(1 Kings xxii). It is true this is only a rival prophet's statement, but, in the story, the event justifies him.

When, at a certain time, the children of Israel were led away into idolatry, "the anger of Jehovah was kindled" against them, and the usual pestilence was sent to punish them; "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them up before Jehovah against the sun, that the fierce anger of Jehovah may be turned away from Israel." And then, in the sight of all the people, one of the heathen women came up with one of the children of Israel; whereupon Phinehas took a javelin in his hand, and thrust both of them through the body, and they died; and then the pestilence was stayed, after it had slain four and twenty thousand persons. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy." And then he added; "Vex the Midianites, and smite them." (Numbers xxv).

Samuel, the great prophet, said to Saul the king, "Thus saith Jehovah; go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." But Saul spared the king "and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and of the lambs, and all that was good": he only obeyed Jehovah to the extent of utterly destroying all the people—men, women, and children, with the edge of the sword. But Samuel was angry, "and Jehovah repented that he had made Saul king over Israel," and Samuel "hewed Agag in pieces before Jehovah" (1 Samuel xv). The honest test is to put 19th century men into the positions of Saul and Samuel,

and to see how the story would look if, instead of Saul and Samuel, we read, for instance, the Duke of Cambridge and the Bishop of London. What should we think, what ought we to think, if the Duke of Cambridge put to death all the men, women, and children of a captured town, if the Bishop of London cut into pieces, before Our Father, a respited king, and if, because the Duke had "spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs and all that was good," the Lord said; 'It repenteth me that I ever made the Duke Commander in chief'? There is no relevance in the reply that we ought to judge men by the standards of their own age: for here the very point is that we are considering, not what men said and did, but God. We cannot judge God by the standards of varying ages. The moment people put in the plea of "the standard of past ages" they surrender everything, and I am content; for I can quite understand that Samuel, or the spirit which used him and took the name of Jehovah, acted in harmony with the standard of the age: and that is precisely what I am trying to shew.

There was a famine in the days of David, and David "inquired of Jehovah" the reason for it: "and Jehovah answered; It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." So David said to the Gibeonites; "What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of Jehovah? And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, *that* will I do for you. And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and devised against us *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto Jehovah in Gibeah of Saul, *whom* Jehovah did choose. And the king said I will give *them*," "and they hanged them in the hill before Jehovah . . . and, after that, Jehovah was intreated (or pacified) for the land"—(2 Samuel, xxi). And so the wretched old feud was settled by a series of most brutal murders, and the famine was removed, and Jehovah was content!

It is not much to be wondered at that a very powerful section of the early Christians (the Gnostics) held that Jehovah was really a king of demons, the antagonist of the Supreme Intelligence of the Universe.

In plainly stating these facts, I have said nothing of the Hebrews by way of serious blame. They knew no better. The savage-hearted bigot and the remorseless fighting raider pictured a Jehovah to their minds: or kindred spirits found them out and used them. The barbaric poet who cried out; "Jehovah is a man of war . . thy right hand, O Jehovah, has dashed the enemy in pieces," (Exodus xv) honestly believed in a fighting deity to match his own violent spirit: and that other poet who (in Psalm lxviii) pictured Jehovah as promising that he would bring his people that their feet might be "dipped in the blood" of their enemies, "and the tongues of their dogs in the same," could not help his adoring brutality. I do not blame him: I only blame the nineteenth century civilised Englishmen and Englishwomen who shut enlightened eyes to plain facts, and try to keep up the strange delusion that the chaos of spirits called "Jehovah" were the one eternal and unchanging God.

Of course there are rays of light amid the painful gloom,—cadences of music

amid these dissonant cries. The frequent demand for righteousness is something on the other side; though, on investigation, the disappointing fact appears that Jehovah's reproofs and reproaches for "sin" too often turn out to be only reproofs and reproaches because of a tendency to desert him for "other gods": and the hottest denunciations and the severest penalties are often seen to be reserved, not for real sin at all, but for departures from the rigid lines of Jehovah-worship. As we are so often reminded;—he is indeed "a jealous god."

But, as time goes on, the ugly features disappear or are toned down; the sublime truth of the unity and aloneness of the everlasting God comes forth like a glorious sun from dense fogs and clouds, and the evolution of the disagreeable and changeful Jehovah of a barbarous tribe ends, in Jesus, in the Heavenly Father of us all.

I thankfully admit that almost from the first there is the feeling after something higher than ugly anthropomorphism, and that there was an undercurrent which seemed to be bearing on even these debased spirit-haunters to the sublime discovery in which the chaotic worship of fifty contradictory Jehovahs ended—that beyond and within all the gods and their makers there dwelt One whose mysterious life was the cause of all life, and who was revealed even in the very anxiety which led the restless soul to worship anything rather than have no God at all. The vital mistake is made when the crude and pitiable imaginings of barbarians, or the equally crude and pitiable announcements of barbaric spirits, are taken as the revelations of the Most High.

There is a "survival of the fittest" even in the beating-in of these disorderly or imperfect things from the Unseen: and the fittest did survive. If any one likes to say that this justifies the theory of gradual revelation by God (thus bringing in all the ugly stages as parts of the "revelation") I have only to say that in such a case the word "revelation" is inappropriate. The proper word would be *discovery*, and the operating agent would be, not God, but man.

Agreed about this, we might then, possibly, pass on to a reconciling thought—something like the following. The journey from the confusions of Jehovah-worship to the sunshine of the worship of the Father *may*, in the sphere of Religion, be regarded as the equivalent of the journey from the chimpanzee to Shakspeare, in the sphere of Natural History, for both of which the Great Creator is responsible only as He is responsible for all the developments and consequences of the working out of Natural Law. But that takes all so-called "revelations" out of the sphere of supernatural disclosure on the part of God, and leaves them, where I want them to be left, in the sphere of natural discovery on the part of man.

Thus understood, we may discern, in a sense, the striving of God's spirit with man in these early efforts to find Him: and so we may look back upon these baffled seekers with pathetic and grateful thoughts, not unlike the thoughts we cherish when we think of those who first struck out the human path in the jungle, away from the cave and the growl of the brute over the half crunched bone: and so, to our eyes, these poor brothers and sisters, with their ghastly spirit hauntings, their bloody rites and their savage oracles, may look pathetic enough, asking our pity, not our blame: but, for God's sake and for man's, do not ask us to see the ideal God in their Molochs, their Elohim, their Jehovahs and their Baals: do not ask us to call that a direct

revelation from God which was only the croak of a disorderly spirit or the crude thought of a poor struggling man.

All this is of the greatest possible practical value. It helps us to stand on our guard against the assaults of so-called "revelations": it makes an end of pernicious finalities and infallibilities: it teaches us what true divine guidance is: it leads us safely back to the ever-advancing human soul: it preserves for us the heavenly vision of a pure and perfect Ideal God—beyond though within us all. "The dim and shadowy outlines of the superhuman deity fade slowly away from before us," said Professor Clifford, "and, as the mist of his presence floats aside, we perceive with greater and greater clearness the shape of a yet grander and nobler figure—of Him who made all gods and shall unmake them. From the dim dawn of history, and from the inmost depth of every soul, the face of our father, Man, looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says, 'Before Jehovah was, I am!'" Yes; but beyond the old gods and their makers a vaster presence looms—in whom we all "live and move and have our being." Jehovah disappears, only that the Father may appear. Moses and Samuel recede, only that we may listen to Jesus and John and Paul. For the rudimentary local God, we are going on to the discovery of the God of the mighty Human Brotherhood—the God whom a modern prophet called "the altogether beautiful of the Universe."

"The ancient gods are dead.
Jove rules no longer o'er the Olympian plain;
The ocean waits for Neptune's car in vain;
Apollo tunes no more his golden lyre;
Vesuvius trembles not with Vulcan's fire;
Mars leads not now the armies of the world;
Young Cupid's darts at Pluto are not hurled,
And Venus' charms are fled.
The ancient gods are dead.

Valhallah's noble halls are empty now,
Where Thor, the mighty thunderer, from his brow
Shot lightnings forth upon the trembling earth,
And Odin held his wassail, and loud mirth
Echoed from roof to roof, as went the feast
Until the day dawned, and the waiting east
Made radiant Balder's head.
The ancient gods are dead.

On Sinai's rugged heights the clouds appear—
The prophet goes no longer there to hear
The eternal word, nor full of gladness sees
Heaven's judgment break on all his enemies.
The flower-sprinkled sod, by God's command,
Reeks not with useless blood, nor through the land
His vengeful armies spread.
The ancient gods are dead.

No frowning despot sits on heaven's throne,
Dispensing favours by his will alone,
Sends some to heaven and some to lowest hell,
In unprogressive bliss or woe to dwell;

Demands no horrid sacrifice of blood,
Nor nails his victims to the cruel wood
In others' guilty stead.
The ancient gods are dead.

"Law rules majestic in the courts above,
And has no moods, but, hand in hand with love,
Sweeps through the universe, and smiling sees
The spheres obedient to her vast decrees;—
Proclaims all men the sons, not slaves, of God,
And breathes the message of his Fatherhood.
The true God is not dead."

[A correspondent asks why, in our quotations from the Bible, we use the word "Jehovah" instead of the word "Lord" which is the Bible word. We thought every reader of *The Coming Day* would know why. The word "Lord" is the misleading and unfortunate English translation of the Hebrew word *Jehovah*, *Yaveh* or *Jahveh*.]

A SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF BELIEF IN A FUTURE LIFE.

V.

The limitations of the senses.

[CONTINUED.]

WHAT is true of sound is as true of sight. We live in a world that is made luminous to us under certain conditions, and our sense of sight is the measure of our knowledge of objects, for the most part: but what Mr. Tyndall said of vibrations which the auditory nerves cannot catch, we may also say of objects that *vision* cannot perceive. A beam of light, says Mr. Tyndall, "is a train of innumerable waves excited in and propagated through an almost infinitely attenuated and elastic medium which fills all space and which we name the ether." "These waves enter the pupil, cross the ball, and impinge upon the retina at the back of the eye. The act is as real and as truly mechanical as the stroke of the sea waves upon the shore. The motion of the ether is communicated to the retina, transmitted thence along the optic nerve of the brain, and there announces itself to consciousness as light." But some waves cannot thus "announce" themselves, as the eye is not capable of receiving or transmitting them. What Mr. Tyndall calls "the luminiferous ether" may only be what we know as atmosphere in a more subtile state, but it is so attenuated and elastic that it can convey the vibrations answering to light at a rate of about 200,000 miles a second. Compared with that, we in our ordinary atmosphere, may be said to be living in thick mud. What a suggestion have we here as to an unseen Universe, ay! and as to exquisitely subtile beings living their refined and happy life in it! And, indeed, no one has been more suggestive as to that Universe than Mr. Tyndall himself, though, apparently, in spite of himself. It is he who has helped to teach us the scientific uses of the imagination. It is he who has urged us "to see the invisible as well as the visible in matter: to picture with the eye of the mind those operations which entirely elude the eye of the body." It is he who has told us that "the region that is inaccessible to sense embraces much of the intellectual life of the physical investigator." It is he who has insisted that everywhere Matter runs out into the unseen, where, nevertheless, the earnest investigator must go with inferences and assurances. It is he who, even of a magnet, bade us follow it till it became a mere "assemblage of molecular magnets which you

cannot see and feel, but which must be intellectually discerned." It is he who has assured us that "in the course of scientific investigation we make continued incursions from a physical world where we observe facts, into a super or sub-physical world where the facts elude all observation, and we are thrown back upon the picturing power of the *mind*." We are only following these masters of modern Science, then, when we follow Mind as well as Matter, Life as well as Light, into the great invisible, and when we maintain that objects and even organised beings may exist in an unseen Universe, intangible to us, but not less real on that account,—perhaps more real, subtile, and sensitive, as existing in a sphere of things nearer to the sources of all vitality than this.

The other senses lead, in like manner, into the Unseen. There is, for instance, a great deal that is very suggestive about the sense of touch, which is the indicator of our relations to external things: and a very poor and misleading indicator it is. We are absolutely certain that there are forms of Matter which are to us quite invisible and intangible, and that these substances can pass through others that appear to us to be absolutely impenetrable. The gases, for instance, are as truly Matter as the solid metals, and hydrogen is as much a substance as iron: and yet the one is solid to our touch, and the other is as nothing to that sense: and the gas can readily pass through the metal. It is only habit, and the limitation of our sense of touch, that lead us to think of Matter in a certain subtile condition as less real than denser substances: and, as the life principle is itself something intensely subtile, it is quite conceivable that it might be united to Matter in such a subtile condition that we, with our present gross sense of touch, would be utterly unable to come into contact with it; nay, it is even conceivable that this exquisite living substance might be the organised body of a conscious living being, and yet that, while it might itself be able to readily pass through the densest substances, it should be absolutely beyond apprehension by any of the dull crude senses at present at our command. Every object is to the hand what the hand is to it. A hand more sensitive would realise things in quite a different way. A hand is scientifically conceivable, that should be subtile enough to pass through granite, and exquisite enough to feel the difference between oxygen and ozone.

So again, with the sense of odour which is altogether in *us*, just as the sense of hearing is. There is nothing in what we call odour that is in any respect like odour. Odour does not exist, as such, till the vibrating particles which produce it reach and affect the nerves and brain. Speaking of musk, Huxley gives a curious explanation of the phenomenon of smell,—a little technical in its language perhaps, but still exceedingly lucid, and remarkably suggestive. He says:—

"Infinitesimal particles of musk fly off from the surface of the odorous body, and, becoming diffused through the air, are carried into the nasal passages, and thence into the olfactory chambers, where they come into contact with the filamentous extremities of the delicate olfactory epithelium. . . . The inner ends of the olfactory cells are connected with the nerve fibres, and these nerve fibres, passing into the cavity of the skull, at length end in a part of the brain, the olfactory sensorium. . . . The epithelium may be said to be receptive, the nerve fibres transmissive, and the sensorium sensifacient. For, in the act of smelling, the particles of odorous substance produce a molecular change, (which Hartley was in all probability right in terming a vibration) in the epithelium, and this change, being transmitted to the nerve fibres, passes along them with a measurable velocity, and finally reaching the sensorium, is immediately followed by the sensation." He adds,—"It remains true that no similarity exists, nor, indeed, is conceivable

between the cause of the sensation and the sensation." . . "Sensations are, in the strictest sense of the words, immaterial entities. Thus, the most elementary study of sensations justifies Descartes' position, that we know more of mind than we do of body; that the immaterial world is a firmer reality than the material."

That concluding sentence is singularly suggestive. Let the callow materialist pause. It is not a tiresome spiritualist but a seasoned "scientist" who assures us that, as a matter of science and logic, the unseen is more of a reality than the seen. But Paul knew it, 1800 years ago! (2 Cor., iv., 18.)

I can now only refer to Isaac Taylor's beautiful and subtile argument based upon the delicate and ethereal nature of the objects that convey or excite sensations. He says:—

"Sensation may be considered as the product of two powers, combined and acting one upon the other: that is to say,—on the one side there is the material property, the emanation or the vibration of ethereal and elastic elements; and on the other side there is the percipient faculty, or the power of being wrought upon by these material vibrations. Now it is only fair to suppose that these correlative powers are so far analogous or similar, as that if the one be invisible and imponderable the other may be so too. If it be a fact that the exciting principle, although present and active, may elude detection in every way except that one in which it affects the sense, why may not the percipient principle be equally invisible and impalpable?"

The instance of the sense of smell is adduced as an illustration.

"The scent of musk, powerful as it is, may fill a chamber, and yet it is totally imperceptible to the eye, and the touch, and the ear, and the taste; nevertheless it is a very energetic influence, although attenuated in a degree inconceivable. . . Why then should not the olfactory sense itself be capable of existing in an equally impalpable and invisible condition? or why may not it be attenuated in an equal degree, and yet retain its power and reality?"

It is true that it is the coarse *body* that receives the emanations or vibrations which excite the sense of odour; but it is not the coarse body that detects the meaning of them. It transmits them to some subtile vital centre, to some exquisite refined inner sense, and *there* the vibrations or emanations are translated into smell: and it is a question that may well be asked:—Why may not that subtile sense be as real and as independent as the subtile causes that affect it; and why may not the unity of such senses outlast and outlive the gross body, and exist independently in that Universe of the unseen to which they even now properly belong?

Does any one think it a lowering of the great hope of immortality to connect it with an argument based upon the nature and operations of our ordinary senses? In my judgment, the very reverse of this is the case: but, any way, it must be admitted that immortality means continued existence beyond the change called death, and that nothing could better bring home to us the possibility and probability of this than the discovery of the fact that we even now belong to the Unseen, and that behind the earthwork of the flesh there stands the living soul.

(To be continued.)

THE JEWISH JINGO'S ORATORIO.

NEXT to *The Messiah*, the *Israel in Egypt* is the object of our musical idolatry. What we have said of the one we may say of the other, that its beauties and sublimities are undeniable: and yet, the sublime frequently borders not upon the ridiculous but upon a glorified use of hammer and tongs.

The words, however, chiefly concern us here; and the words are simply execrable. If we were not so used to them, we should think them detestable. The Jewish Jingo reveled in a fighting Jewish God, his champion, the hater of those whom he hated, and the furious destroyer of those whom he had to fight. Hence this Oratorio,—one long catalogue of ghastly feats of annihilating strength.

The celebrated "hail-stone" chorus is simply demoniacal,—but how the Jewish Jingo reveled in the idea of pelting the Egyptians with hailstones mixed with fire! How glibly and ferociously he recites the horrid exploits of his God! He turned the rivers into blood: He sent frogs and flies and lice, blotches and blains on man and beast, and the locusts to devour the fruits of the earth. He smote all the first-born of the Egyptians, and drowned by an almighty trick every one of their fighting men. His right hand dashed the enemy in pieces. His wrath consumed them as stubble. The blast of His nostrils controlled the streams, that the horse and his rider might be sunk in the sea.

Beyond all that, there is very little in the words of the Oratorio. It is mainly one long turbulent brazen yell in praise of "The Lord" as "a man of war"—and *such* a man of war! Even the few peaceful and dainty words in another mood have for their motive;—Them he smashed, that he might bring us in!

One of the wonders of the Oratorio is the musically delicious and textually nasty solo "Their land brought forth." It was sung at the Crystal Palace by a woman with one of the loveliest voices in England, and if one could have been left to one's imagination, heavenly words could have been readily supplied; but twenty thousand picked people knew that this charming singer was fouling her musical diamonds with something like this;—"frogs in the king's chambers; frogs, frogs; pestilence; blotches and blains, man and beast; blotches and blains, blotches and blains broke forth, blotches and blains, blotches and blains."

This disgusting rubbish is at once followed by a furious cannonade from the chorus about flies and lice, three thousand decent girls and men flinging at one another something like this; "All manner of flies, lice in all their quarters, all manner of flies, and there came lice, all manner of flies and lice, he spake the word, all manner of flies, lice, flies, and the locusts."

We doubt whether anybody could produce, in the English language, anything to match it, for so much downright blasphemy, falsehood and vulgarity in so short a space. But the modern British Philistine is in some respects not unlike the ancient Jewish Jingo, and he either likes it, condones it, is used to it, or takes no notice. We have done our best to hold up the mirror, at all events, and to make him see.

LIGHT ON THE PATH.

We have printed in these pages about half of "The New Book of Common Prayer,"—enough to set forth its spirit and aims. The Book (of twelve services) will be published shortly, at the nominal price of Sixpence, in cloth.

Efforts are being made to make illegal the practice of hypnotism, except by a doctor. It is a little comical. For years, these doctors have been deriding mesmerism and everything connected with it, and now they want to turn the occult region in which it occurs into a private preserve!

The Declaration of Faith issued by Mr. Spurgeon, and endorsed by twenty-nine other pained and sorrowing believers in the old creed, is a very remarkable sign of the times. It is a protest against "the loosening hold of many upon the truths of revelation," and is really the record of a chapter closed. It might be called, *The last dying speech and confession of orthodoxy.* Here once more, and for the last time let us hope, old giant orthodoxy rolls out his dreadful growl, ending with the threat of "hopeless perdition." He has done much mischief in his day, but now, as John Bunyan said of another giant, "he is grown so crazy and stiff in his joints that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by." It must, however, be confessed, that the old giant is justly vexed to see his relations "go by," who once served as his retainers but profess not to know him now. But, after all, we really admire men like Mr. Spurgeon. They are at least loyal and straightforward. It is difficult to say as much of some who, though they have surrendered the old faith, use the old phrases and protest that they are just as far as ever from admitting that the Unitarians were right after all!

We rejoice that the late strikes have driven into the heads of many onlookers the lesson so greatly needed to be learnt,—that every trade or calling should have, in addition to its Union, a permanent Board for the settlement of disputes and difficulties. All such Boards should consist of properly elected representatives of workers and payers, and these should meet from time to time on equal terms—and not only when there is trouble. Wherever an interest in profits can be given, wise men should try it. Any one who understands human nature will easily see how that opens the door for every kind of content and improvement. Come it will.

The movement for devising a national system for providing old age pensions is now noticeably promising. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, whose occupation seems otherwise to be gone, and who is seeking a vocation, has vigorously taken the subject up, and we hope and believe he may be very usefully employed in working it out. The need is very urgent, but the whole subject is beset with difficulties. One thing is clear,—that it is a growing disgrace to us to have only the workhouse as the last abiding place of poor old people. Compulsory insurance is at present impossible, but a palpably good bargain would soon become popular: and it is a good bargain that must be offered as an inducement to wage-earning people, to purchase safety after sixty. It *can* be worked out.