

The Fraternal.

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LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS for the FRATERNAL should be addressed to the Editor, Rev. F. C. SPURR, Regent's Park Chapel, N. W., and all other communications to the Secretary, Rev. E. D. deRUSSETT, Baptist Church, Harrow.

Editorial Foreword.

Owing to stern war conditions it was found impossible to publish the summer number of the *Fraternal*. The staff of the printing house from which this magazine is issued has been so reduced by military conscription that the whole work of the establishment now devolves upon one or two persons who are compelled to work under serious restrictions. Our brethren must bear the inevitable. The present number is a double one; hence, while there has been delay in its appearance, there is no diminution of matter, taking the whole year together.

The New Religion of Mr. Wells.*

By THE EDITOR.

Three distinct voices, speaking of religion, have been heard during the war. The first has proclaimed a revival of religion, the second has predicted a collapse of religion, the third has pleaded for a re-hearing of religion. The first was premature, the second stupid, the third is urgent. Some of the spokesmen have surprised us; we did not expect *them* to come forward as the Knights of Faith. Professor Ray Lankester, sympathising

*"Mr. Britling sees it through." "*The War and the future.*"
"God the Invisible King."—By H. G. WELLS. Cassell & Co.

with the Church; Dr. Beattie Crozier, casting away his "Paganism" and confessing, in the words of a Christian hymnist his faith; Professor Gilbert Murray wistfully recalling Christian language about "One who shed His blood to save us," and wondering whether after all it is not true—such are some of the surprises of the war. But the erstwhile sceptic whose voice on behalf of religion has sounded further than any other is undoubtedly Mr. H. G. Wells. His evolution has been remarkable. From draper's apprentice, via student of science, to journalist, writer of imaginative fiction, sociologist, socialist, rationalist, and fervid apostle on behalf of the Kingdom of God, has been his way of life thus far. And he is but just turned fifty, and the best part of his journey may lie before him. To religion he has come at last, as every man must who has the courage to trace any ray of light to its Source. Mr. Wells was proclaimed by Mr. McCabe a few years ago as "our only prophet." Now the prophet and his trumpeter are in collision. The ex-monk follows the latest work of his former hero with a volume blaring forth "The bankruptcy of religion." It is a little odd that Mr. McCabe should have chosen the moment when a galaxy of eminent men are writing upon the *broadening* of religion, to hold forth upon the *bankruptcy* of religion! But some men see only what they wish to see.

Meanwhile we may accept Mr. McCabe's former estimate of Mr. Wells as in some degree true. Mr. Wells indeed claims to be a prophet and to interpret the spirit of the present generation. It is for this reason that his recent books possess exceptional interest. Certainly he speaks for a large number of men, and we must hear what he and they have to say.

The war has undoubtedly wrought a great change in Mr. Wells. It has turned him to "religion." There was no need whatever for him to resent, with such fine scorn, the suggestion that he had become an orthodox Christian. The Churches would love to have him as comrade and friend because of his passion for 'the Kingdom of God' (a phrase, he must remember, that be-

longs to the religious literature which deserves of him a greater respect than it receives); but it is a little petty for him to push away with indignation the brotherly hands laid upon his shoulders by men who are as honest as he.

Mr. Wells has sought to explain his religion in three recent books, of which the most explicit—if the shortest—is “God the Invisible King.” He claims to have found God “as a still small voice within.” He has an “undoubting, immediate sense of God.” A passion for God—for the living God—runs through these pages. Experience is speaking. Mr. Wells has found something—*some One*. His words throb with life. It is not the literary artist that speaks here, but the human soul vibrating with the sense of a newly-discovered source of vitality, external to itself and Divine. The experience thrills and captivates us. It finds an echo in every Christian soul. Mr. Wells is one of the elect: one of the *illuminati*. And we cannot disown him; neither must he disown us. We may, and do, challenge the labels he has written to describe his experience. We object to the intellectual account he gives of things too great to be settled by an epigram. But we thank God for his religious experience. And he must not be angry, nor imagine that we are elated at the prospect of landing a big fish for the Church, when we add that he in heart is a Christian and it remains for him to bring his thinking into harmony with his own soul experience, and with the more universal soul experiences. For Mr. Wells is under the necessity of finding *in history* the roots of that life which has become suddenly a new thing to him. It is only *in him* that it is new, and the new in him must be related to the old without him.

A bye-service Mr. Wells renders in his new book is his trenchant criticism of Rationalism—the Rationalism he has finished with. He very properly regards the rationalistic attacks upon religion as out of date, for the most part, by fifty years. He speaks of the ‘priggishness’ and Pharisaism of the ‘benevolent atheism’ which stands upon its own goodwill “without a reference, without a standard;” of the “immodesty and self-right-

eousness of the benevolent atheist who has never got away from himself." Frankly he declares that "without God, the service of man is no better than a hobby or sentimentality, or an hypocrisy in the undisciplined prison of the natural life." All this will be hard reading for those rationalists who, less than reasonable, have mistaken themselves for supermen. But it is good that this chastisement of their pride has been administered by a former prophet of their own.

There are several sentences in "God the Invisible King" that are regrettable and wholly unworthy of their author. Thus: "The clergy of our own day play the part of the New Testament Pharisees with the utmost exactness and complete unconsciousness. One cannot imagine a modern Ecclesiastic conversing with a Magdalen in terms of ordinary civility, unless she was in a very high social position indeed." Does Mr. Wells believe that arrant nonsense? It is more than nonsense, it is wickedly untrue. I know more clerics than does Mr. Wells, and I know of none of whom it is even remotely true. I know of hundreds of whom the exact opposite is true. It is a pity to bring into a serious book on religion libellous matter such as that just quoted. This is, however, by the way.

The central thing in the book concerns belief in GOD. There are some great things said of God in these pages: things that the saints in all the ages have said. Mr. Wells repeats them because they are true to him. And all who hear his testimony will add their 'Amen.' God is a personal friend, a stimulant and a liberty to the soul—it is what the saints have always insisted upon. The call to consecration, to co-operation with God, to seek His Kingdom: it is all thoroughly Christian. "God is a person who can be known as one knows a friend. He is as real as an embrace. He is a stimulant. He makes us love immortally and more abundantly. The finding of God is the beginning of service. It is not an escape from life and action: it is the release of life and action from the prison of the mortal self. The believer owes all his being and every moment of his life to God,

to keep mind and body as clean, pure, wholesome, active and completely at God's service as he can. God takes all. He takes you, blood and bones and house and acres. He takes skill and influence and expectations. It is our chief business to bring about the establishment of His real and visible Kingdom throughout the world. The Kingdom of God on earth is not a metaphor, not a mere spiritual state, not a dream, not an uncertain project: it is the thing before us, it is the close and inevitable destiny of mankind." What Christian can read such glowing words and remain unmoved? No man could write in such a strain and with such manifest sincerity unless he had 'felt the powers of the age to come.' In this call to service, in this placing of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first; in this glow of soul at the thought of an all-embracing God, we recognise the certitude of a real religious experience. It is on the ethical and experimental sides that the strength of Mr. Wells' lies, so far as this book is concerned. Its weakness lies in the incoherent and inadequate manner in which God is set forth. Mr. Wells loves God with his heart; he confuses Him with his mind. Experimentally he speaks of the God we know and love; intellectually he gives us a new God who has no relation whatever to the God of the heart. Mr. Wells finds the Christian conception of God repugnant to him. He will have none of the Trinity. He is quite certain that during the first three centuries 'Christianity had not defined its God.' He is equally certain that the doctrine of the Trinity was forced upon the Church at the Council of Nicea, and then "protected by curses to save it from a *reductio ad absurdum*." Such an amazing position makes a modern educated man rub his eyes and wonder where this clever novelist can have been, and what he has been reading in order to arrive at so amazing a conclusion. The truth is most evident, Mr. Wells has not the remotest idea what the doctrine of the Trinity is. He also, upon this point, is fifty years and more behind the times. It is tri-theism that he is fighting; but then Christianity has no doctrine of tri-theism. From the secularist in the parks one expects to

see torn to pieces, with fine rage, a supposed Christian doctrine of which Christianity knows nothing. But from Mr. Wells one expects something different.

Neither has Mr. Wells any place for Christ, and herein is the most amazing omission from his pages. Both for friend and foe the person of Christ is the centre of Christianity; the most vital or the most vulnerable point of all. The one Being in all history who has ever professed to give a definite and satisfying revelation of God to man is passed by, and that is a book which treats of God! The omission is inexplicable. All that Mr. Wells has to say about Christ is that He "never certainly claimed to be the Messiah," that was He "vague upon the scheme (sic) of salvation and the significance of His martyrdom." And he dismisses Him in the farewell line, "never more shall we return to those who gather under the Cross." Geometry we can discuss without Euclid; and Astronomy without reference to Copernicus, save in the way of history; but we cannot discuss the Divinity without reference to Him who declared that He alone made the Father adequately known.

With the Trinity and Christ gone, Mr. Wells of course has to begin *de novo*, and in that simple fact lies the doom of his system. He wants a religion without a history; a tree without roots; a religious experience without antecedents. And he asks for the impossible. To adopt an old phrase, if the religion of Mr. Wells, as intellectually conceived, is quite new, it is not true. All that belongs to the soul of the race is ancient. Nothing of universal worth comes into the individual life, or the life of a generation new, for the first time. New generations waken to old realities which are new only to them. Christianity to every man is a thing new to him when it seizes him; but it could not be thus if in itself it were not old. The new irrigating streamlet that waters my garden proceeds from a broad river which is ancient. God never comes to any man of to-day for the first time in the history of humanity. He comes to each man because He belongs to all men, and because He came to all the fathers.

And He is the same God evermore. The trouble with the God of Mr. Wells—the intellectual God—is that he has never been here before. He is a new invention. He is quite 'modern,' as Mr. Wells says. That is his condemnation. *He is not old enough to be a God*; not experienced enough to be trusted; not great enough to be worshipped.

The more closely this new Deity is examined, the less of a god is he seen to be. He is *finite*—this is his chief characteristic. The heart of the revelation brought by Mr. Wells is the finiteness of God. "The most fundamental difference between this new faith and any recognised form of Christianity is that it worships a finite God." What a finite God is becomes clear in the very precise words of our author: "He exists in time just as a current of thought may do; He changes and becomes more, even as a man's purpose gathers itself together; somewhere in the dawning of mankind He had a beginning, an awakening, and as mankind grows, he grows. With our eyes he looks out upon the universe he invades, and with our hands he lays hands upon it. The first purpose of God is the attainment of clear knowledge . . . to an end he is only beginning to apprehend." And if it is asked, of what use is such a God as this, the answer is, that he is out on a great adventure, facing the blackness of the unknown, as one that leads mankind through a dark jungle to a great conquest. Truly, this god *is* new: an amazing being for a god! He knows not the end: things are unknown to him as much as to us. His one quality is heroic courage, but in all else that makes a god he is lamentably deficient. Mr. Wells has the feeling that his god may be found out, and that it may be objected that this being is only "the collective mind and purpose of the human race, the sum of mankind," the projection upon a huge sheet, by means of artificial light, of the picture man has painted upon his poor slide. And that in truth is all that the new god is; he is a conception wholly inadequate alike to the life of man and to the life of the universe. He is not a real being. Mr. Wells is wholly agnostic towards God the Creator of all things, whom he styles the

"Veiled Being;" but he adores the god-redeemer in whom he has entire faith. But how can the god he sketches ever be man's redeemer since he has all to learn, and nothing but his courage to ensure the conquest of the great goal? How can He be our guide if He knows not the route we have to tread? This new god leaves us with all our old difficulties unsolved. The mind must still grope after a Creator, a Fount of life, a Director of means to one great end. The mind, quieted for a time, will return to its old interrogations, and demand an adequate answer to all its great questions. Mr. Wells may leave the big questions untouched; but humanity cannot be so easily satisfied. The new god is entirely provincial. He is related only to *man*: to one small planet, to one speck in the universal order. He is as much an earth deity as were the gods of the ancients, tied to their own soil or their own hills. He is not equal to the whole, of which we are an insignificant part. Mr. Wells has fallen into the old error of making man the centre of all things. I do not for a moment dispute the fact that he has entered into a real and deep religious experience of the living God: it is the intellectual account of this god that is wholly inadequate and unsatisfying—he has been constructed too hastily, and he is impossible.

None the less it is a brave attempt, and we may be thankful for it. Mr. Wells is moving. He has left the arid region of rationalism, and has entered into the secret of God. He declares that never again will he return to the Cross. That must not be taken too seriously. The road he has commenced to travel leads to the Cross, and he will yet arrive.

The effort of Mr. Wells is yet another proof that pure Theism, in any form, does not get to the heart of life. Dr. MacLaren, almost with his last breath, said that the search for God with Christ left out must end in bewilderment. Mr. Wells has been crying out for a human god—one who can warm his heart, and be friendly with him. And the experience of which he writes so glowingly and so sincerely is completely explained, and only explained, by the Incarnation. For the Incarnation not

only brings God near to us, making Him the companion of our pilgrimage, the sharer of our burden, the Captain of our fight and the Redeemer of our spirits—it brings us to God in the fullest sense. It relieves us from provincialism and gives us the freedom of the Universe. It shows purpose in all things, and guarantees the 'end,' not only of one small world, but of the entire system of things. Men can never be content with two separated gods: one a "Veiled Being," dumb and tantalising; the other a "Lesser Being," having all to learn, but infinitely kind and good towards us, and ready to do his best to get us through our struggle. Men must have unity of thought, and bring into one focus alike their own relationship to God and that of the Universe. And that focus is found in Jesus Christ. The tired and disillusioned world is once again crying out for God. It is the business of the Church to show the world that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—unveiled by Him and brought close home to us—is the God we need, and the only God who can satisfy both mind and heart.

"*The RATIONAL WAY to SPIRITUAL REVIVAL*" is a live book recently published by Dr. Frank Ballard. It is a challenging shillingsworth, and deserves the closest study by all our ministers. Written with scrupulous fairness, it frankly faces the present state of the Churches, and examines the plea for "revival" in the light of the new Biblical and scientific knowledge. Dr. Ballard finds a true place for emotion in religious revivals; but he is merciless in dealing with emotionalism that is divorced from intelligence. All who are anxious to see a worthy revival of religion in our midst should read this remarkably timely little book. (Kelly, 1/-)

THE FRATERNAL Spiritual Retreats.

By **The Rev. R. H. COATS, M.A., B.D.**
(Contributed by special request).

Having been granted the privilege of attending three Spiritual Retreats, as conducted by the Church of Rome and the Church of England, I gladly contribute to *The Fraternal* some account of my experiences and general conclusions.

I.—THE NEED OF A RETREAT.

A Christian minister's need of a Retreat is precisely the same as an ocean vessel's need of a dry dock. After being fitted up and made seaworthy in the building yard, a ship glides into water and is safely launched. It takes kindly to the new element, and makes several prosperous and successful voyages. Then comes a change. The ship labours in its going. It has not the way on it that it once had, and ever more pressure is required to make it go at all. The explanation is very simple. Seaweeds and barnacles have fastened themselves upon it, and what is urgently needed is that the ship shall leave the ocean highways for awhile and go into dock to be overhauled. Very similar is the career of many a Christian minister. After much hammering in the college building-yard, he is pronounced seaworthy, and launched with flying colours at his ordination. At first he takes kindly to the new element, and bounds prosperously through the waters of ministerial service. But presently the pace slackens, and the ship begins to labour. Unwonted efforts are required to compel even a little headway, and when these are relaxed there is an ominous slowing down. What is the explanation? Have the sail-filling breezes of the Holy Spirit ceased? Is there any less resolute will-power in the engine room than there was? No; but these propelling influences are counteracted by the barnacles of routine, sloth, drudgery, or over-work, which threaten to bring the ship at last to a standstill.

The obvious remedy for all this is the dry dock. Such a minister must learn to shut off steam for awhile, stop all machinery, leave the accustomed routes, and go into a Retreat for spiritual repairs. It is the only way. The inevitable depreciation and exhaustion incidental to a faithful ministry must be recuperated somehow. One of the most important blue-books issued recently is the Second Interim Report on the Investigation of Industrial Fatigue by Physiological Methods. This report states that, in factories and elsewhere, the suspension of week-end rest and the consequent residual fatigue have resulted in lowered efficiency and lessened output. Overtime, it says, is both physiologically and economically extravagant, and wholly fails to achieve its object. The same principle applies, in an even greater degree, to the labours of the spirit. Many a Christian minister is doing less for the Kingdom than he might accomplish, simply because he is working overtime. He would do far more, and do it better, if he had an opportunity to get right away from the work itself for a season of prolonged, systematic fellowship with God, either alone or in the society of kindred souls.

II.—THE AIM OF A RETREAT.

A Retreat is not a summer holiday; neither is it a summer school. Men go to a Retreat, not in order to rest and refresh their bodies by quiet withdrawal from the world; nor yet to exercise their minds by attending lectures or taking part in conferences and debates. Rather, they go to discipline their souls by humbling themselves before God, and seeking through prayer and penitence the infilling of His Spirit. A Retreat may be likened to a gymnasium for the soul, in which we are taught to exercise ourselves unto godliness, especially in the matter of deep breathing. The Retreatant is one who deliberately turns away from the varied panorama of human life, in order that he may see things with that "inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude." He purposely excludes the world's Babel of distracting sounds, in order to hear what the Lord will speak; whether or no He

speaking peace to His people and to His saints. We go to a Retreat to think things over quietly, to know the plague of our own heart and its remedy in God, and to realise once more our high calling in Christ Jesus, far from the telephone and the daily newspaper. They who go into Retreat challenge the right of the world to have first claim upon us. They affirm that God has the first claim, and an absolute and exclusive claim; and that the majesty and love of God, and His redeeming grace toward us in Christ Jesus, are such stupendous and overwhelming realities as to deserve our undivided and concentrated attention in a series of ordered meditations, which shall wholly occupy a number of quiet days. We are to muse on these things till the fire burns within us, and the soul is inebriated, not indeed with wine, but with the Holy Spirit. Milton knew well the meaning and purpose of a Retreat when he wrote the lines—

"Wisdom's self

Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude
Where, with her best nurse contemplation,
She plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all-to ruffled, and sometimes impaired."

Of course, all this is difficult and requires practice. It is a hard thing to meditate; far harder than it is to read, to study, or to acquire knowledge. Meditation is not simply reasoning about things; neither is it the same as idle and passive reverie, which meanders aimlessly whithersoever the discursive fancy leads. Meditation is a strenuous and concentrated activity of the spirit, by which we endeavour to see some truth steadily and to see it whole. In meditation we take the kaleidoscopic fragments of truth, as they come to us in experience, and try to rearrange them in ordered pattern which has some meaning for the eternal world. The trouble is, alas, that men to-day do not know how to meditate. They have lost the art, or are too impatient to wish to learn it. It is the aim of a Retreat to help them to acquire so valuable a possession, and so to bestow on them the secret of tranquil abiding joy and inward peace.

III.—THE METHOD OF A RETREAT.

(a) It is essential to the success of a Retreat that there should be *physical withdrawal as well as spiritual detachment* from the throng of the world's life. External quietude powerfully assists internal recollection. For this purpose the best kind of building is a public school or college, or perhaps a country gentleman's mansion; any place that has a number of bedrooms or cubicles within its precincts, together with a chapel, a hall, a kitchen, a library, and extensive grounds in which to wander. A single "Quiet Day" is not enough, especially if it be held in the midst of a city's din. In every Retreat there should be something cloistral and sabbatic, an atmosphere of seclusion and repose and peace; and, above all, a continuity of impression extending over not less than three days. It should be clearly understood that a Retreat is before all things a sanctuary, a mercy-seat, a quiet haven, a city of refuge for the hunted, the oppressed, the over-driven.

(b) Further, the conduct of a Retreat should be *entirely in the hands of one person*. A Retreat is not an occasion for conference or debate. Those who take part assemble not in order to dispute together or to canvas one another's minds, but to learn what is the mind of Christ, as it may be interpreted by a humble and spiritually experienced saint of God. This does not mean that one man of exceptional gifts is unduly exalted above his brethren. The director of a Retreat does not lecture, he suggests and guides. His aim is to reduce the devout life to its simplest elements, in a series of carefully ordered prayers and meditations, and so to efface himself that God and the soul shall be left closeted and confronted with one another. In some cases a heart-searching conference on personal causes of failure in the work of the ministry may *close* a Retreat.

(c) The most important thing in a Retreat, however, is the *rule of silence*. Except for a strictly limited period, after the principal meals, general conversation is suppressed during the whole of a Retreat, and the entire time is taken up with religious exer-

cises, spiritual reading, silent meditation and prayer. At first, this may seem an intolerable restriction. Yet experience shows that this is just the aspect of a Retreat which is most appreciated. It is such a relief to surrender, for a while, one's privilege of always talking, and to find oneself in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. The strange thing is that the atmosphere of a Retreat is so wholesome and restraining that even the most loquacious person finds, after a day of it, that he *does not want* to talk! He would rather listen to God than hear his own voice in prattle with his neighbour. Can any better evidence of the work of grace be found? All we can say is, that it is the Lord's doing, and wondrous in our eyes. Ministers, especially, who are apt to be given to too much speaking, in the course of their ordinary calling, would do well to submit themselves to this spiritual regimen and discipline of enforced quietude. "He that hath an ear, *let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*"

IV.—THE CRITICISM OF A RETREAT.

(a) Perhaps it may be thought by some that the *Free Church equivalent of a Retreat* is to be found in the gatherings that are held at Swanwick. I should say not. The fellowship movement there is doing a great work. It fulfils the external conditions of a Retreat, in that it takes a group of men right out of the world, for three or four days at a time, into an entirely favourable atmosphere for conference and prayer. But the aims of the two institutions are entirely different. In a Retreat we have corporate silence, austerity, meditation, the reading aloud of spiritual books at mealtimes, the quiet contemplation of purely spiritual topics under the guidance of one director. At Swanwick we have volleys of hearty laughter and abundance of light badinage and friendly gossip, a coruscation of witticisms after every meal in the form of notices, and very animated discussions on diverse topics, in which all may take part. The ideals pursued by a spiritual Retreat and the Swanwick movement are both praiseworthy. But they are distinct, and cannot be combined.

(b) But is not this a *mediaeval, monkish, ecclesiastical in-*

stitution, suited to the genius of the Anglican or Roman Churches, but incapable of being transferred to the Free Churches? There is some force in this objection. For one thing, Free Churchmen have not the variety of religious services which Anglicans and Roman Catholics possess, and they might find it difficult to fill up a whole day, and especially three days, with religious services, if they have nothing interesting to do, nothing varied to think about, nothing beautiful to look upon. Romanists have the mass, the altar, the stations of the cross, the rosary of the Blessed Virgin, and innumerable ceremonies to assist devotion; while Nonconformists have only prayers, a hymn or two, an address, and then more prayers, perhaps in a dreary and uninteresting building. Must not a Retreat in such circumstances be the apotheosis of ennui and boredom? In spite of these difficulties, I believe that, with certain modifications, the essential elements of a Retreat may be retained and adapted to our needs. Already the Unitarians and Wesleyan Methodists are groping their way in this direction, and the spirit of the time favours the likelihood of further developments amongst us all. It is even probable that the Spiritual Retreat may be the characteristic form of religious revival in the future, as evangelistic missions have been the characteristic form of revival in the past. Missions make Christians, but Retreats give us apostles, and it is these we need to-day.

V.—THE BENEFIT OF A RETREAT.

The blessings that may be experienced in a Retreat can only be known by those who have taken part in them. On this point the unvarying testimony is glowingly enthusiastic. "I have passed three days in heaven," says one. Another writes, "The greatest happiness I could procure for my son, my father, or my friend, would be to get him to make a Retreat also." A third testifies, "I feel for the first time, as it were, unfolded and revealed to myself, with the inner man set in order, and eyes that look out and see straight. It is indeed a wonderful awakening. Life has new perspectives and new values, and the spirit breathes

free and is refreshed." Such is the general experience. The few days spent in dry dock accomplish the work that is expected of them. Barnacles are removed, engines and boilers are repaired, worn out parts are restored, and the ship, glad to be back in the familiar waters once again, carries its Master's merchandise with more ease and promptitude and dispatch to its appointed haven.

In the "*MASTER PROBLEM*" Mr. James Marchant has just put at the disposal of Social workers, a mass of information which, although painful and shocking, is necessary to be known if the real meaning of the 'social problem' is to be grasped. No man will lightly read a book of this kind which frankly faces the trade of the black sisterhood, exposes its sources, shows the futility of many pseudo 'remedies,' and seeks to point out a way of race regeneration. Ministers, magistrates, councillors, and all who lead public opinion, ought to master the contents of this volume. It is an invaluable piece of sociological work, finely written and admirably balanced. It has won the approval of many social and Christian leaders. (Stanley Paul & Co. 5/-)

Interim Lessons.

A PLEA FOR A PROGRAMME.

By Rev. F. GOLDSMITH FRENCH.

Every recent generation, in the throes of its own great crises, has been told by the detached and chilly philosophers that the real issues of the day would only be rightly understood by the generations to come. With its measure of truth and its admixture of falseness, that saying of the pundits has done immeasurable harm. Truly enough there are some elements in the present world crisis which must wait for the historians, and the whole brood of them will have ample material to work on for many a year. But just as surely there are some outstanding lessons which may be learned now: truths which cannot be so easily recovered when the mass of white-hot problems and issues has grown cooler. Moreover, if this generation does not learn them, there will be left to our successors a heritage of uncertainty and defective thinking which will rob the present tragic drama of what ought to be some of its more wholesome effects.

To the friendly and intimate circle which will read these pages this is a vital matter. Men called, as we are, to shape in some measure the thinking of our day, cannot afford to let the hours go by and its events find secular record, without striving to snatch from the mad welter of things some materials for positive and constructive thought. For, after all, it is thinking, true or false, which lies behind all the activities of our day. Never before have we had such proof that philosophy can be "procuress to the lords of hell." The whole mass of sorrow, which lies like a drab cloud over the fair summer earth, was born not primarily of diplomacies or of armaments, but from the passionate

heart of man, and begotten by debased thinking and crooked philosophies.

For this reason we may regret that the leadership given to the thought of our own nation by its outstanding men has been so inadequate. Action has been plentiful, and policy sincere enough, but a nation in the throes of such a crisis cannot live on mere movement. We have needed, and not had often enough, those weighty and calm statements of our moral case, which steady the mind and heart of a people. A sound national instinct has happily saved the situation, but even with that as a governing motive there was, we believe, great need for a far more frequent and explicit statement of the moral case of Britain. The only excuse for silence would be the absorption of our leaders in administrative effort; and that is not an adequate one; for long before administration in such a day as this, comes the need for right thinking, and as widely diffused as possible; and never in the world's story have the men who lead nations had such a case to present.

In our own special sphere the lesson of all this is very immediate and insistent. For good or ill there has been committed to us no small share in the shaping of men's philosophy; that is to say, in their estimates of life and the values which they attach to certain elements in it. And in this day of supreme testing, it is surely vital that we should remember the ancient tragedy of Israel's unteachableness, the pathos of her wasted sorrows; and should resolve that we at least will seize upon all of permanent meaning which there may be in the events of the hour, and find for it a lasting place in the thinking of Christian men and women. No greater tragedy can be conceived than that the conflict should end and find our nation no wiser than of old.

As citizens we have our concern with the manifold problems which will inevitably demand solution. Tariffs, and the involved questions of commerce; treaties and the

labyrinths of diplomacy, will all ask for our judgment as members of a great federation of humanity. But there are deeper matters which no Chamber of Commerce will touch, nor any Senate discuss. These are our specific questions, and must be handled by Christian men. We shall discover, within the next ten years, whether the Church of God has learned anything, or whether she too is leaving it all to a later generation to learn—perhaps too late. If the latter calamity is to be avoided, then the members of this fellowship must be ready to extract, if they can, from the confusion of fact and event, some coherent and permanent lessons. And further, it will be of immense value, if as regards these conclusions, drawn from history in flux, we, as public teachers, are able to a large extent to say the same thing. It is scarcely possible to overstate the importance of unanimity in such a matter. The Church of Christ must show through its accredited teachers that it has learned something, defined its knowledge, and found something like unanimity in its statement of its discoveries.

We may profitably ask then, whether, while blue books are being compiled to express the findings of this or that commission, it is not possible for the active teachable mind of the people of the Faith, to make painstaking investigation into deeper things, and reach some findings so assured and so vital, that the Church of God may emerge from the years of this vast conflict with a policy and a programme based on things learned in the hours of a great tribulation. Our ministries at the moment are manifold as never before. We have no reason to speak regretfully of the Church's services rendered to the men of the nation, either in the days of their strength or the hours of their calamities. Men as a whole will probably understand the Church on its materially ministering side as they never did before. But every young warrior, with a mind quickened by experience, will, after his return, expect to find the Church of his early associations awake to the spiritual import of the great conflict in which

he has endured physical sufferings. It will not be surprising if he himself brings to the great enquiry some very essential particulars. There is a whole army of men, within the armies of the Empire, which cannot and will not be content with merely material gain for their race.

It is impossible here and now to indicate, even in outline, the direction in which the Church will have to make its enquiries; but it is possible just to state two or three of the vital lessons of the hour which can be and ought to be well and deeply learned at the earliest moment possible. Some of them at least are likely to be unwelcome, since they seem to cast doubts upon the worth of our idealism; but for all that they must be faced fully and faithfully.

The first concerns the eternal conflict between idealism and human history. It can only be said, sadly, that at many points the cynic and the materialist seemed to have gained considerable support for their theories of human motive and nature. This in itself is an unwelcome fact. It is even possible, though dangerous, to regard it as inevitable and of little account. Yet if we will remember it, there is an old saying of the Master of men that the children of this world are, for their generation, wiser than the children of light. It is not a "text" that the devout have cared to dwell on, but we dare hardly regard it as other than a challenge to the children of light to be wise; to ensure that good causes shall be at least as well served as the evil ones. We thought we had done much for the welding together of the States of Europe, and the effective unity of all men of good will. How trivial to-day do all our organisations and our efforts appear compared with the mighty, subtle, devilish organisation which had its agents and its propaganda in every land.

Then, again, how clearly to-day stands the predominant fact that of all ideas discredited eternally by the war is the common belief in the essential value of things æsthetic and scholastic. We knew before, but we had grasped the

knowledge very lightly, that beneath a supreme efficiency in the arts and crafts of life there may still remain the utterly pagan heart; for æsthetic can readily be devoid of ethic, and craftsmanship has no ethic at all save the minor one of thoroughness. We know now that the accumulation of vast funds of information can go side by side with a lack of principle which debauches life, and remains not merely a weakness, but a deadly disease, and one withal which is contagious. Thus while the smoke still hangs heavily over all the fields of Europe, it is not too soon to remember that the sonata and the fresco, the intricate mechanism and the complicated chemical formula, the lexicon and the biblical commentary, may all be a fine superstructure brilliantly built over the hollow abyss of a pagan ethic. A few of our teachers foresaw this long since, and Dr. Newton Marshall explicitly warned us of it; never was the lesson more needed than now.

Finally, for our present purpose, we may surely suggest that one of the most famous catch phrases of philosophy has received a mortal wound. Moral evolution will have to be redefined, and much of the philosophy concerning it reviewed and recanted. A French writer, M. Chevrillon, has ventured already to say of England that "she believes once more in the devil." We dare not be quite so sure, for the English mind has a strange faculty for forming judgments akin to those of Dyer, the friend of Coleridge, who could only say of a man who had murdered his wife and children: "He must be somewhat eccentric." We are often charged, as a race, with an insular contempt for the ways of others; it is open to argument that we are weakly tolerant of strange things and standards and little inclined to ask as we ought what they really mean ethically. However that may be we have had our drama showing us the unchanged heart of man: "desperately wicked," as of old, and with no seed of redemption to be found in the fine accomplishments of mind and hand. It is no mere theo-

retical lesson: for into a world newly impressed with the might of efficiency and forcibly compelled to look at material problems, it will be beyond all things necessary that we know what we mean concerning the redemption of mankind, and speak as we know, lest our nation and others come from the furnace fires of this great tribulation into a pacific commercialism that has neither faith nor ethics.

War, and the Life of the Spirit.

The Mind of the Soldiers, as affected by the War
towards Religious Problems.

By Colonel The Rev. T. N. TATTERSALL, C.F.

It is of the utmost importance, when discussing the mind of our soldiers, to remember that our national army contains at least four groups: crusaders, patriots, volunteers, and pressed men; and that the war has affected them very differently—the sun that melts wax hardens clay—if we would have a clear understanding of their attitude towards religion and its problems of sin and punishment and forgiveness, life and death, duty and destiny. Visitors bring back from the Front many conflicting reports. They apparently forget the warning against arguing from the particular to the general. The men in the army are not all religious, nor all irreligious, nor all indifferent to religion; as they are not all crusaders, nor all patriots, nor all volunteers, nor all pressed men. We must move freely and long among them all if we would get their general feeling and attitude towards any problem—political, social, moral, religious—and we must always remember that their mind is not simple but complex, not one but many; though undoubtedly community of life and interest, work and experience, does generally bring all together and fashion them after its own

image.

One is often asked: "What do our soldiers think about religion?" The usual reply is that the vast majority seem to give it a very small place in their thoughts. That does not necessarily mean that they are indifferent to religion; but does imply that the conditions of life at the Front are less provocative of thought than many suppose. An ex-Cabinet Minister may have his mind cleared of much political rubbish when in the trenches for a few weeks, but he is an exceptional person. A burly Australian was nearer the mark when he said that one of the heaviest exactions of the war is not physical—hardships endured, sufferings borne—but the mental sterility due to our abnormal life. Some cannot think of religion because they are either too busy fighting, or, when not fighting, too weary to think at all. The sustained efforts required leave body and mind alike limp when the strain is relaxed. Some hardly dare do much thinking because of the overpowering immensity of the problems raised by the war; so they shut down their minds, and keep going as automatons, lest, if they began to think intensely, the world's agony should break them. Then, too, is not thinking affected by reading? But we do not carry many books in our knapsacks. We cannot. Many admit that they have never read a serious book while in the trenches or behind the line. Papers and novels provide the mental pabulum. Can it be wondered at that the mind gets stale and dull? The wheels go round, but they grind out little corn. Most of the thinking is interrogative. The everlasting "why?" is on their lips.

"Like children crying in the night,
Like children crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

Yet there are depths in our souls strangely moved by the war, and thoughts that can be only brokenly expressed dismay and plague us, console and encourage us; and we are more or less compelled by our experiences to have more

than a merely curious interest in religion; and many are they who are groping their way through the valley of the shadow to the hill of light.

All the men in the trenches know the meaning of sacrifice, and that has given them a deeper insight into the mystery of the Cross of Christ. The little crosses all along the Front remind them of the larger Cross on the green hill. Many once found the atonement hard to understand. How could the innocent redeem the guilty? Why should the Holy One suffer for the guilty? Why did the Father allow his Son to go to the Cross? Why did Christ accept the Cross? Why did He not come down from it? How are we benefited by His death? Why should it be only a nailed Hand that can reach down to us in our sin and bring us forgiveness and lead us in the way everlasting? These old perplexing questions are being interpreted through agonising experiences, in the light of why our soldiers are out here and for what, and very many have undoubtedly gained a better understanding of the central truth of the Christian Faith. We know now that moral causes are not won without human and divine co-operation; that without sacrifice there is no salvation. All the mystery about the Cross of Christ has not been penetrated, but there plays about it a kindly light we had not seen before, and by it our faith is being quickened. "Christ died for our sins." Let there be no uncertainty about our proclamation of the Gospel of the Cross, and the men will receive it as the blind the light. An ethical ministry only will leave them cold. An evangelical ministry will fire their hearts. They know now why good men die, and their experience has helped them to understand why Christ died. Many of our soldiers are really spiritual adventurers, crusaders, the stuff of heroes and martyrs. They were thrilled in the early days by the flourish of the flaming sword that had been drawn on behalf of the weak and for the right, and they plunged into the war because they could not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. Dixon

Scott has spoken for many: "One fights for the sake of happiness—for one's own happiness first of all, certain that did one not fight one would be miserable for ever—and then in the second place for the quiet solace and pride of those others, spiritual and mental sons of ours, if not actually physical—the men of our race who will depend for so much of their dignity upon the doings of the generation before. War is a boastful beastly business; but if we don't plunge into it now we lower the pitch of posterity's life, leave them with only some dusty relics of racial honour. To enter into this material hell now is to win for our successors a kind of immaterial heaven. There will be an ease and a splendour in their attitude towards life which a peaceful hand now would destroy. It is for the sake of that spiritual ease and enrichment of life that we fling everything aside now to learn to deal death." What if it means dying themselves? They, too, have a baptism to be baptised with, and how are they straitened until it be accomplished! They read in the gospels: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Their experience is a window of light upon that word. It grips them that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." They do not look upon themselves as saviours, nor as martyrs, nor as heroes; but men who are bravely carrying their cross have had their interest intensified in Him who endured the Cross, and despised the shame, and became obedient unto death.

The war has also revived our interest in the immortality of the soul. Sacrifice only carries us to death, and we would see a little way beyond the grave. Death has become an awful reality. It was always that to some, but most of us turned our thoughts away from it. We can do so no more. Its cold shadows play about us, waking or sleeping. "If a man die, shall he live again?" Men who look death in the face every day put that question to themselves oftener than to the padre. Everywhere along the Front we come

across the graves where brave men lie. Is the soul buried within the body? Can it be blown to bits like the body? Is death the end? Appearances are against us. Death does seem the end. But things are not always what they seem. It becomes a mental impossibility to believe that the brave beautiful spirit that but now gripped us with a warm hand was nothing more than the hideous bundle of flesh and blood we buried where it fell. The recoil against materialism is tremendous. The very idea of it freezes our blood. That we cannot stand. We simply refuse to believe that the grave has the victory. We could easier bear the victory of the Germans. Battlefields are more than cemeteries. Brave men sleep there after having fought their good fight. And if they sleep they do well. But the heart cries out for assurance. The men find it in the Gospel. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth shall never die." The thrill of those words amid the roar of the guns is indescribable. Men do hunger for the hope of immortality. If one will speak to them, who himself lives by that glorious hope, the men will always listen and respond.

So do the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, the two arms of the Gospel, enfold our men in their eternal embrace.

There is a strong tendency towards the doctrine of Providence. Because many have not been better instructed in their Christian Faith they have become fatalists. If the bullet hits them, well, it hits them, and there is nothing more to be said. The time's up. The game's finished. The day's done. There is no escaping the bullet that has your number on it. There is no need to worry about the danger if your name has not been called. So almost all the men think and talk. And it comforts them and nerves them. They are made braver by it; perhaps also made more careless by it. But the doctrine runs through all ranks. It was the professional soldier's first of all; it is now the civilian

soldier's also. And it is a great and a true Christian doctrine. John Wesley held it. "I am immortal until my work is finished." Jesus taught it. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." That is the heart of it. SOMEBODY has an interest in us. We are not the creation of blind chance. We are not under the rule of a ruthless will. We are not of no account. We have a number. We have a name. We have a work. We have a destiny. We are not on our own. We are not left to ourselves. We are not ignored. We are not forgotten. The control is not absolutely in our hands. There is ANOTHER. We see Him not, nor hear Him. We often forget Him. But He knows where to find us. Not even the smoke of battle can hide us from Him. He uses what instrument pleases Him to fetch us. When and as He wills. We submit. We cannot do other. It is our deepest conviction. What will the ministry make of it? Much, if they listen to Jesus. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's permission. He thinks about the flowers of the field. How much more of the man He made but a little lower than the angels! It was the doctrine of Saint Paul: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." It was the doctrine of Saint Peter: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Why have we neglected this great doctrine so that so many of our men go forth as fatalists, not knowing the power that upholds them, the inscrutable will that appoints their lot? There is a true Calvinism that puts iron into the blood. Michelet said of the men trained at Geneva that, "If in any part of Europe blood and tortures were required, a man to be burnt at the stake or broken on the wheel, that man was at Geneva, ready to depart, giving thanks to God, and singing psalms to Him."

But if the war has made us realise that sacrifice for a

great cause is a glorious reality and never calls upon man in vain; if we know now that there is no way of salvation than by the great sacrifice: if a sure hope of immortality has become one of our most urgent necessities; if the great conviction that our lives are in Another's hands has got hold upon us; yet has the war raised grave doubts and serious perplexities that heavily cloud the minds and hearts of many brave men. Many stumble at the first article of the Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty." They cannot take it upon their lips. The war challenges it. They say, "An almighty God would not allow a world He loved to suffer so awful and prolonged an agony. Either God is not Almighty or He is not all-loving." Never has the problem of evil been raised in so acute a form, and Christian apologists must wrestle with it valiantly if they would have our soldiers in the possession of an intellectual as well as spiritual faith. Why do we use the word Almighty when we can only take it on our lips with mental reservations? Nobody believes in absolute omnipotence. It is a relative omnipotence; and that we have not made plain. God limited Himself when he gave man freedom. To many men either omnipotence or belief in Divine Love must go from their creed. They cannot keep both. One Tommy said, "I would not let my dog live and die under our conditions." But while our creeds are in the crucible, and their final form only the rash would venture to predict, what helps most effectively the distressed mind? The example of our Lord, who had seen the Father, and had felt, as we cannot, the world's agony, yet "never doubted clouds would break," for He knew that our Father is all-wise and all-loving.

Not so deeply do our soldiers feel the problem of prayer. They know its value. They have often been driven to their knees in an agony of fear, and have risen from their knees calm and strong and unafraid, having found their way into the secret place of the most High. Do they

pray much for the cup to pass from them? Who can answer for millions? Their fatalism discourages it. "Thy will be done." But the people at home are perplexed, who have prayed for their boy's safety and return, and he has fallen and found a grave in a foreign land; and who are finding it so hard to say, "Thy will be done." But they will learn to say it. In His will is our peace.

To-Day's Preaching.

By Rev. A. M. RITCHIE, M.A. (Leicester).

One hears now and again the opinion expressed that in our Free Church worship we have too much preaching, that on the whole, a false and disproportionate emphasis is placed upon the sermon. If by preaching we mean a certain form of utterance, measured by quantity and time, there may be some truth in the charge. And if by a lessened emphasis on the sermon we could evolve a more reverent, impressive, and exalted form of worship, it might be all to the good. But I want to humbly submit that our need is not less preaching but *greater* preaching. If we are to concede anything in the way of impressiveness and beauty to the Anglican form of service, it is not because, for the most part, the sermon is "side-tracked," but in spite of that fact. A new emphasis on preaching, or, if you will, better preachers, might conceivably spell fresh life and power to the Established Church. "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the word," is the ancient motto of a city in which the interests of education and of commerce are perhaps more closely identified with the ideals of religion than in any other large community in the kingdom. A motto which has, I think, considerable application to the

modern Church. The spiritual "flourishing" of a Church is closely related to its preaching.

I shall be content if my remarks on this all-important theme provoke a helpful criticism and discussion—a provocation "unto good works!" Nothing can lie nearer the heart of the minister than the problem and the art of preaching. My impressions are the result of the somewhat random opportunities I have had of sitting in the pew. They are bound to have a tinge of ministerial bias and the colouring of a particular point of view. But lay opinion is open to the same objection. No man ever hears himself preach. My impressions, I may add, are spread over a considerable period, and have the quality of "variableness."

Well, almost invariably in my recent experiences in the pew, I have been struck with the discrepancy between the quality of the sermon and the size of the congregation. Time and again I have said, "here is good preaching worthy of a larger congregation"; if there be any connection between good preaching and good congregations, these empty pews should sooner or later fill up. This was the worrying contrast of my experience. And I found myself forced to the conclusion that there is very little relationship between what we call "good" preaching and good congregations. Of course, I shall be met with the reminder that a minister is not out to catch an audience, that a crowd is not a Church, and all the usual kindly reservations. But I submit that we are "out" to preach to the crowd, to as many as we can compel to come in. We have a mandate for the multitude.

Now, I may be wrong, but I have the impression that the average sermon of to-day is too good, in a sense it is "overdone." A sermon may be too good, not because it is over-prepared, but just for the simple reason that it is not quite preaching. In military terminology we may say of the modern sermon, the artillery is well served—better served than ever—but there are too few explosions! It may be

objected that a sermon can hardly be too good. Yes it can, just as a dinner may be over-cooked, with all the taste and flavour frizzled out of it. Our preaching, I believe, is well done to-day; we maintain a high level of general excellence; there is an average level of really "good stuff." But it lacks moral eventuality, spiritual momentum. There is rather much of the "essay" in it, it smacks of the thesis or the treatise. From the pew I felt, here was something that *had* to be done, and that if it hadn't to be done it would be done better! I was conscious of a lack of moral intensity in the sermons I heard. I had the conviction that the former preachers did not preach so well, so correctly, with such quiet decorum. Here was something balanced, careful, judicious, but with a certain under-current of joylessness running through it all. The fire was well-laid, but somehow it didn't burn. It only smouldered. I found myself amid beautiful scenery, far inland, and I wanted a sight of the resounding sea. There was wanting the crash of moral imperatives, the sense of being "up against things." I was in a garden, trim and neat, well-cared for, and I wanted a touch of the wild

"Where Nature sows herself,
 And reaps her crops; whose garments are the clouds;
 Whose lamps, the moon and stars;
 . . . whose orators, the thunderbolts of God."

Most of the sermons to which I listened were delivered from manuscript. They were almost without exception read. Many of them conveyed the sense of being "productions." The reading or otherwise of sermons is a "vexed" question, and there is no decision. No doubt we are often saved from a worse calamity by the written word. I have no prejudice against the "read" sermon. So much depends on the reading—but, as a general rule something "vital" is lost or is mis-spent. It would seem that many men are able to give an address or make a speech without notes,

or with the barest notes, but they are unable somehow to attain the same freedom in preaching. Why is this? I have the notion that if some of us were to be henceforth deprived of all further supplies of sermon paper, we should strike a new level of "greatness" in pulpit power. Though more or less bound by "the paper" myself I am convinced that for most of us, unless we can come near reading like a Chalmers, the "spoken" sermon is the "living" sermon. It would mean a more accumulative, a more intense preparation. We might lose something in finish and correctness, but there might be gain in the more vital points of human contact, in persuasiveness and power.

Finally, my experience has led me to the conclusion that there is room and need for greater preaching on apologetic lines. I use the word "apologetic" in its wider and more general sense. We must not merely sound the note of certainty; we must *reach* it first. There are difficulties, moral and social, practical as well as intellectual. In the passionate and complex life of to-day, there are ideals that have been well-nigh dethroned. There is wild and riotous thinking; there is questioning and unconcern. We used to plead certain things guilty, inadequate, destructive. We have got to speak *for* our ideals, not only of them. Some of the good people in our Churches, of mature faith and experience, who like "the finest of the wheat," must recognise that the new ground has to be cleared, broken up, and the seed sown. There is often, I am afraid, a surprising lack of moral and intellectual sympathy among at least a few in the Church, whose attitude is by no means negligible, to the preacher in his wider range of appeal. There is, here and there, a narrow jealousy for the "Old Gospel," critical and detective-like in its attitude, which has a hampering effect on the preacher's mind and soul.

But withal our preaching is not vain—though we be all more or less in the same condemnation, the writer included. I have been reading again that lofty address of our own

Dr. Maclaren, delivered at the Spring Assembly of 1901. I close with two of his sentences :— “ But, however condemnatory may be the light of an ideal of our office, the absence or dimness of that light is fatal. The more loftily we think of our work, the more lowly will be the estimate of ourselves, and the more earnest our efforts to reach up to the height of our possibilities, which are therefore our duties.”

The Limitation of Symbolism.

(Picture of the Son of Man.—1. Rev. 13.)

By **Rev. F. J. MALYON** (Brisbane).

The picture of the “Son of Man” in this chapter suggests some remarks on the general character of such symbols in the Apocalypse. “Qui legit intelligat.” It may be at once said that they are not of a character which tolerates the sharper definitions of pictorial art. They must be held in the mind, not as clearly-cut symbols which translate themselves into appeals to the eye and which have their exact correspondences in visible facts, but rather in their totality, and with a dominant sense of their inner correspondences with moral and spiritual ideas. To translate them into picture is inevitably to run at some point into a grotesqueness which impairs and degrades their solemnity. This is shown in Albrecht Dürer’s sixteen wood-cuts illustrative of the Apocalypse. Professor Milligan goes too far in saying that these are *only* grotesque. One must be always impressed with Dürer’s strong individuality, “lurking,” as Lord Lindsay remarks, below a mind “like a lake, stirred by every breath of wind which descends on it through the circumjacent valleys”; with the fertility of his invention, the plenitude of his thought, his simplicity and fearlessness. But his very truthfulness to Nature is his

enemy in his dealing with such themes as the Apocalyptic visions; investing them, as it does, with a realism which is foreign to their spirit and intent. Take, for example, "the four riders" (cap vi). The power is at once felt of the onward movement of three horsemen with bow, sword, and balances; the intense, inexorable purpose with which they drive on over the prostrate forms at their feet; but the fourth rider, Death on the pale horse, followed by Hell, portrayed as the wide-opened jaws of a monster into which a crowned head is sinking, degenerates into a ghastly caricature of the most offensive German type—a harlequinade, far surpassing in hideousness the traditional skeleton with scythe and hour-glass.

Similarly, the angel with his feet like pillars of fire, the one foot upon the sea and the other upon the earth. If we are solemnly impressed by the awful face of the angel breaking forth from the sun, the solemnity degenerates into something akin to amusement, at the feet like solid columns, ending in flame at the knees, and at the Evangelist "who kneels on a promontory, with the corner of the great book presented by the angel in his mouth, apparently in imminent danger of asphyxiation."

In short, such symbols as the lamb with seven horns and seven eyes; the four living creatures, each with six wings, and full of eyes before and behind; the beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on the horns ten diadems—do not lend themselves to the pencil. An illustration of the sadly grotesque effect of such an attempt may be seen in Mr. Elliott's "*Horæ Apocalyplicæ*," where is a picture of the locust of chap. ix., with a gold crown on the head, hair like women's, a breastplate of iron, and a tail like a scorpion's.

Archbishop Trench very aptly draws the comparison between the modes in which the Greek and the Hebrew mind respectively dealt with symbolism. With the Greek, the æsthetic element is dominant, so that the first necessity of

the symbol is that it shall satisfy the sense of beauty, form, and proportion. With the Hebrew, the first necessity is "that the symbol should set forth truly and fully the religious idea of which it is intended to be the vehicle. How it would appear when it clothed itself in an outward form and shape; whether it would find favour and allowance at the bar of taste, was quite a secondary consideration; may be confidently affirmed not to have been a consideration at all."

The imagery of the Apocalypse is Hebrew and not Greek. It is doubtful if there is any symbol taken from heathenism; so that the symbols of the Apocalypse are to be read from the Jewish and not from the heathen stand-point.

But to say that these symbols jar upon the æsthetic sense is not to detract from their value as symbols, nor to decry them as violations of the fitness of things. It may fairly be asked if, with all their apparent incongruity, and even monstrousness, they may not, after all, be true to a higher canon of congruity. Certain it is, that the great visible divine economy, both of nature and of man, distinctly includes the grotesque, the monstrous, the ridiculous (or what we style such). We recognise the fact in the phrase "freaks of Nature."

But *are* they freaks? Are they incongruous? Until we shall have grasped in mind the whole kosmos, it will not be safe for us to answer that question too positively. The apparent incongruity, viewed from a higher plane, may merge into beautiful congruity. Tested by a more subtle sense; brought into connection and relation with the whole region of mental and spiritual phenomena; regarded as a factor of that larger realm which embraces ideas and spiritual verities along with external phenomena; the outwardly grotesque may resolve itself into the spiritually beautiful, the superficial incongruity into essential and profound harmony.

This possibility emerges into fact in certain utterances of our Lord, notably in His parables. Long since, the

absurdity has been recognised of attempting to make a parable "go on all fours"; in other words, to insist on a hard and literal correspondence between the minutest details of the symbol and the thing symbolised. Sound exposition has advanced to a broader, freer, yet deeper and more spiritual treatment of these utterances, grasping below mere correspondences of detail to that deeper fundamental harmony and parallelism between the two grand spheres of cosmic being—that of Nature and that of Spirit; between the three kingdoms of Nature, History, and Revelation. The selection of symbols and parables in Scripture, therefore, is not arbitrary, but is based on an insight into the essence of things" (Milligan).

Thus, then, in this picture of the Son of Man, the attempt to portray to the eye the girded figure, with snow-white hair, flaming eyes, and a sword proceeding out of His mouth,—with feet like shining brass, and holding seven stars in His hand, would result as satisfactorily as the attempt to picture the mysterious combination of eyes and wheels and wings in Ezekiel's vision. If, on the other hand, we frankly admit the impossibility of this, and relegate this symbolism to a higher region, as a delineation (imperfect through the imperfection of human speech and the inevitable power of the sensuous) of deep-lying spiritual facts, priestly and royal dignity, purity, divine insight, divine indignation of sin; if we thus bring the deeper suggestions of outward humanity and Nature into relation with their true correspondents in the spiritual realm—we gain something more and deeper than a pictorial appeal to the imagination. We grasp what we cannot formulate; nevertheless we grasp it. Dropping the outward correspondence, we are the freer to penetrate to the depths of the symbolism, and reach an inner correspondence no less real and no less apprehensible.

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By J. W. THIRTLE, LL.D., D.D.

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Baptists have reason to be proud of Dr. Thirtle. He is one of themselves, an elder in a London Church, a writer upon the staff of the *Christian*, and a very original scholar. He has brought to the study of the Old Testament a well-equipped mind entirely free from conventional trammels. He has looked afresh at the books of the Psalter and the prophecies of Isaiah, and the results of his studies are at once challenging and constructive.

The Titles of the Psalms first appeared a few years ago and marked a new era in the understanding of the Psalter. The principle discovered by Dr. Thirtle has now been generally accepted by scholars—Jewish and Christian alike. He has given us a key which easily unlocks the mystery of the titles of the psalms, and for the first time makes the study of the Psalter a living thing. We are glad to see a cheaper edition of a book which has well been described as epoch making.

In *Old Testament Problems* we have a book which frankly challenges the accepted positions of the Higher Criticism with regard to the post exilic date of many of the psalms and the dual authorship of Isaiah. And the challenge is not that of the Urquhart school—abuse, dogmatic statement and general charges of infidelity hurled at the heads of men with whom one disagrees. It is the challenge of scholarship and original research. Dr. Thirtle advances some startling facts in support of his thesis that the "Songs of Degrees" belong to the time of Hezekiah and refer to events in his reign. The present reviewer cannot follow him all the way, but he certainly thinks that Dr. Thirtle has

made out an excellent case for a fresh study of what is admittedly a difficult problem. With regard to the studies on Isaiah, it must be conceded that Dr. Thirtle has brought forward a mass of evidence in support of the theory that the servant of Jehovah is Hezekiah. He finds in Isaiah II. more references to Israel under Hezekiah than to Israel in exile. Again the present reviewer feels that the key does not in every case fit the lock, but he has to admit that in this new light the position that many regard as settled may have to be reopened. It is criticism against criticism, and the work is cleverly done.

The *Lord's Prayer* is really a remarkable volume. One might be inclined to ask whether there is room for a new book on so well worn a theme. There is certainly room for this fresh and original study of the Paternoster. It strikes out quite a new line of exposition. One great value of the book is its wealth of illustrations drawn from Jewish sources, unfamiliar to most readers. The volume is full of suggestion for preachers and students.

These three volumes are worthy of a place upon the shelves of all our ministers. They offer a feast of good things in the way of original Bible study.

X.

Circulating Library.

Our Library is still passing through the experimental stage, but there is every reason for encouragement as not only have seventeen groups been formed and duly supplied with boxes but the first quarterly exchange has taken place almost without a hitch. Considering the difficulties they have to cope with the librarians have done splendidly, and they seemed to have realised that the whole scheme really depends upon their promptness.

Some slight variations have had to be made in the catalogue owing to the impossibility of getting certain books which, although published comparatively recently, are

already out of print. We are indebted to three or four brethren who by the loan or gift of books have come to our aid and enabled us to issue so many boxes exactly as they are catalogued.

We anticipate that we shall have to produce an enlarged list to meet the demand of new groups which are being formed, and the Librarian, Dr. Wicks of Loughton, would be pleased to receive suggestions as to books the brethren would like included in this.

Our letter bag had shown that there is a considerable number of men who cannot possibly join a group for the purpose of participating in the scheme owing to their isolated position. This has been carefully considered by the committee, and it has been decided to form another section of the Library which will consist partly of some books kindly presented to us by Mrs. Newton Marshall and partly of some purchased from our Book Fund. These will be made up into boxes of five and supplied to brethren who otherwise would be excluded from the benefits of the Library. If possible brethren will be wise to get another brother to share the box with them so as to lessen the cost of postage.

Applications for these boxes should be sent to the Secretary at once.

Below is appended a list of books which will be given to any brethren making application for them on postcards. No one will receive more than one volume, but it will be well if the titles of half a dozen are sent in case the special one desired has been already disposed of, as applications will be dealt with in the order in which they are received. These should be sent to the Secretary at once, and money for postage should be remitted in halfpenny stamps immediately on receipt of the books.

The committee are much indebted to Mrs. Newton Marshall for giving us these books, and also those we are retaining for the purpose of our Circulating Library, and the fact that they are from the library of Dr. Marshall only

adds to our appreciation of the gift.

Angus, Bible Handbook; Beet, Key to unlock Bible; Berkeley, George, Works of, Vol. I; Booth, Chas., Pauperism, &c.; Bosanquet, Essentials of Logic; Bruce, Apologetics, &c.; Bury, Students' Roman Empire; Christlieb, Modern Doubt, &c.; Clifford, Inspiration and Authority of Bible; Davies, Henrich Ewald; Gray, Modern Humanist; Greer, Visions; Griffiths, From Sin to Salvation; Harris (Rendel), Cult of Heavenly Twins; Harris (Rendel), The Dioscuri in the Christian Legends; Hase, Handbook to Controversy with Rome, 2 vols., Edited by A. W. Streane; Howell, Labour Legislation &c., 2 vols.; Keynes, Formal Logic; Medley, W., Interpretations of Horace; Neander, Life of Christ (Bohn's Liby.); Nicholls, Advance of Romanism in England; Orr, The Ritschlian Theology, &c.; Pearson, Grammar of Science; Pennington, Preludes to Reformation; Renan, Les Apotres; Rouse, Old Testament Criticism, &c.; Sayce, Premier of Assyriology; Sayce, Introduction to Ezra, &c.; Schiller, Studies in Humanism; Strickenburg, Christian Sociology; Sully, Teachers' Handbook Psychology; Tanzelmann, Treatise of Electrical Theory and the Problem of Universe; Reid, G. A., The Principles of Heredity; Schaff, Bible Dictionary; Spence, Christian Reunion; Whatley, Kingdom of God; Whistons, Josephus; Unseen Universe; Veitch, Dualism & Monism; Veitch, Knowing & Being; Welsh, The People & the Priest; Welton, Manual of Logic; Caird, Edward, The Critical Philosophy of Kant, 2 vols.; Cambridge Greek Test, 1st Epistle to the Corinthians; Cox, Samuel, The Book of Ruth; D'Aubigne, History of Reformation; Driver, Introduction to Literature of Old Testament; Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the days of Christ; Edwards, T. C., Commentary on 1st Epistle to Corinthians; Foster, J. B., The Finality of Christian Religion, Part I.; Hinton, J. H., The Epistle to Romans; Jevons, W. S., Elementary Lessons in Logic; Maclaren, Alex., Genesis; Marshall, Alfred, Principles of Economics, Vol. I.

Prayer Union Notes.

By Rev. J. W. EWING, M.A., D.D.

I am sure that all the members of the Prayer Union will rejoice in the recovered health of our secretary, Rev. J. E. Martin. Since the last issue of the *Fraternal* he has been very ill, but is now happily better and resuming work. Everyone of us will wish for our friend, not only that his strength may be sustained, but that his ministry, enriched and deepened through trial, may be even more fruitful than in past years.

The events of the time are weaving new ties of comradeship and fellowship among us. Some of our brethren have lost sons on the battlefield, and to them our hearts go out in inexpressible sympathy. Others have sons wounded, or imprisoned in enemy countries, and for them too our prayerful thought is enlisted. May God comfort all sad hearts among us, and enable us from our own experience to minister to the many sorrowing ones around us with a success impossible unless we too had suffered!

During the past two or three months no changes have been more dramatic than those in Russia, and it is well we should remember our brethren in that land who are affected by them. Some of these, like Robert Fetler, had been exiled into Siberia under the late regime, but now they are recalled and brought back with honour and joy to their people. The return of the exiles from afar, in carriages provided by the Government, makes one think of the days when the captives of Babylon were restored to Jerusalem through the edict of Cyrus. Our brethren are coming back to an inspiring opportunity. Instead of restriction and police surveillance they can meet now where they will, and at Petrograd, besides the indoor services, they are hold-

ing open-air meetings in the Nevsky Prospect. When they contrast yesterday and to-day, they can surely say "We were like them that dream," "The Lord hath done great things for us." May they have the guidance of the Divine Spirit in all that they do and say in this great hour of a nation's re-birth!

In our remembrance of one another at the Mercy Seat, should we not just now have special thought of our missionary brethren? This is a time of trial for them. In coming and going they are subject to peril; their movements are often delayed, and their plans interrupted. Some of them are detained from the work in which they are eager to be engaged, and others are kept working on long after the needed furlough is due. The missionaries work is also made more difficult by the problems raised in native minds by the spectacle of "Christian nations at war." May special help be given them!

The oft-discussed return of the boys, for which we are all longing, makes us realise the churches' need of a spiritual quickening. The lads will require above all else reality, warmth, the sense of God, the atmosphere of brotherliness. Probably the form and accidents of the services will matter to them less than many imagine; but they will want, after being face to face with the issues of life and death, to feel that we are in true touch with the Lord of life, and that we have a message ringing with conviction and charged with power. Shall we not pray that the breath of the Spirit may bring us a new and more glowing life?

Some of our London churches have been holding weeks of prayer; the people gathering night by night for intercession, with an address on some spiritual theme. These meetings have proved sources of great help and uplift, leaving an impress upon the life of the churches. Could not such be held profitably throughout the land?

My devotional classic for this number is Pascal's "Pensées,"

a book very different in character and tone from others we have considered, and yet a great book with a message all its own on the deeper themes.

Blaise Pascal was born in Clermont, France, in 1623. As a young man he showed brilliant capacity in mathematics and physics, making discoveries in both of these sciences which revealed him, in the words of Professor Chrystal, as "a great original genius creating new ideas, and seizing upon, mastering, and pursuing farther everything that was fresh and unfamiliar in his time." He was converted to Christ in 1646, coming under the influence of the Jansenists, a sect of the church, with leanings towards Reformation doctrine, named after Jansen, Bishop of Ypres. Pascal attached himself to the Abbey of Port Royal, a Jansenist institution of Paris, where he lived very strictly, denying himself all indulgences, and giving his time chiefly to prayer and the study of the Bible. His health, always delicate, broke down early, and he died in 1662 at the age of 39.

It was the wish of Pascal's riper years to write a book in proof of the Christian religion, and in preparation for this he put down many "thoughts" (*pensées*). This work, however, he never lived to complete, and all we have left is the collection of "thoughts," published eight years after his death.

Even the order of the "thoughts" is uncertain. They are the materials for a temple of which we have not the plan, but the materials are of marble and cedar and gold. The fine mathematical mind of Pascal, blended with his spiritual faith and devotion, has produced a cluster of thoughts full of deep insight and suggestiveness, often aflame with passionate conviction, and always couched in language at once eloquent and concise.

Pascal was conscious of the difficulty of establishing Christianity by reason, and his "thoughts" have been described as

"excursions into the great unknown;" but as his sister has told us in her biography of Pascal, "He fixed these two truths as certain, that God has given perceptible notes of religion, especially in His Church, whereby to make Himself known to those who seek Him, and yet that He has hidden them in such a way that He shall not be perceived but by those who seek Him with all their heart."

The book, produced in the reign of Louis XIV., "an age of increasing comfort, of eager and abounding life," is a cry for God. I append some of the "thoughts."

Man's Low yet Lofty Estate.

Man is but a reed, the weakest thing in the world, yet a reed that thinks. It needs not that the world should arm to crush him. A breath of wind, a drop of water, is enough to kill him. But should the universe destroy him, man would still be nobler than his destroyer, for he knows that he is in the act of dying and the advantage that the universe has over him. The universe knows nothing about it.

Thus all our dignity consists in thought. By this we must raise ourselves, not by occupying space and time, neither of which we can fill. Let us then endeavour to think well. This is the beginning of morals.

Vanity.

Vanity is so firmly anchored in man's heart that a soldier, a labourer, a cook, a porter, boasts and wants admirers; aye, and the philosopher wants them too. And those who write against vanity wish to have the renown of having written well, and those who read them wish for the honour of having read them well, and I who write this have perhaps such desire, and perhaps those who shall read me will have the like.

The Evils of a Restless Mind.

I have discovered that all the evils of mankind come from

one only thing, and that is—not knowing how to live quietly at home.

Mine, Thine.

This dog is mine, this spot of sunshine is mine, said these poor children; and here is the beginning and the picture of the usurpation of all the world.

The Three Notes of Religion.

The three notes of religion: perpetuity, good life, miracles.

The Heart has its Reasons.

The heart has its reasons, which reason knows not of; in a thousand things we know it is so. I affirm that the heart by nature loves the Universal Being, and by nature loves itself, according to its inclinations; and it hardens itself against the one or the other at its choice. You have rejected the one and kept the other—is your love a matter of reason? It is the heart, not the reason, which perceives God. This is faith—God perceived by the heart, not by reason.

How dreadful a thing it is to perceive all one has passing away.

The Christian Church surviving Her Troubles.

There is pleasure in being in a ship beaten by the storm when we are sure that it will not perish. The persecutions which trouble the Church are of this kind.

The Dignity of Thought.

It is clear that man is made to think. Thought is his whole dignity and merit, and his whole duty is to think as he should, and his thought should begin with himself, his Maker and his end. About what then thinks the world? Never about this, but about dancing, playing on the lute, singing, verse-making, running at the ring, etc., fighting, getting made king without thinking of what it is to be a king and to be a man.

Atheism, a sign of intelligence, but of a limited intelligence.

The Church is in a good state when it has no other support than God.

Jesus in Gethsemane.

Jesus is in a garden, not of delights, like the first Adam, who ruined himself and all the human race there, but of pains, and He saved Himself and all the human race in it.

Console thyself; thou wouldst not seek ME, hadst thou not found ME.

I thought of thee in MY agony. I dropped some drops of blood for thee.

Pascal and his Saviour.

"I stretch forth my hands to my Saviour, who, predicted for four thousand years, has come to suffer and to die for me upon the earth at the time and under the circumstances which have been predicted of Him; and, by His grace, I await death in peace, in the hope of being eternally united to Him; and yet I live with joy, whether amid the good things which it pleases Him to give me, or in the ills which He sends me for my good, and which He has taught me by His example to endure."

[My edition in French is that issued by Didot Frères, Paris. A convenient English one is published by Methuen & Co., with the Life by Mme. Perier, Pascal's sister, and an introduction by C. S. Jerram.]