

Dean Vaughan says that *ἀγ.* indicates an act rather than quality; the bringing of the consecrated person into harmony of life and character with the consecration. Bishop Westcott says it may be most simply described as the preparation for the Presence of God.

The word "follow" (*follow after*, R.V.) is a strong word: to run after a fugitive; to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavour to acquire. See 1 Tim. vi. 11, 2 Tim. ii. 22, *φεύγε· διώκει δὲ διζ.* Ps. xxxiv. 14, *pursue it, διώξον.*

Review.

Memoir of the Life of Laurence Oliphant, and of Alice Oliphant, his Wife.
By MARGARET OLIPHANT W. OLIPHANT. In two volumes. William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London.

THIS is a truly delightful book; full of incident, and graphic description, it presents a variety of interesting subjects for study. Readable from the first page to the last, it is a biography which will make many readers think, and nobody will lay it aside as done with until it has been read through. We are not at all surprised to observe that during the short period in which this book has been before us a fourth edition has been called for. In a very attractive form it illustrates the saying "Truth is stranger than fiction," or Guizot's remark about the story of human life with the master charm of reality.

It is well said that if Mrs. Oliphant had ventured to portray in one of her novels such a career as that which she has described in this Memoir, she might have felt a difficulty in replying to critical objections as to probabilities overstepped, unities outraged, and ideals pushed to absurdity. To those even who knew him best, we are told, Laurence Oliphant's life presented features that were strange and inexplicable. The difficulty was to refer him to any recognised human standard, and to get at his gauge by comparison therewith. Now that the veil which covered his life has been raised, the problem remains unsolved. Mrs. Oliphant's "Life of Edward Irving" proved how adapted she was to trace with sympathetic skill eccentric genius in all its phases of health and disease; and certainly no contemporary writer possesses the qualifications—including, of course, personal acquaintance—which she has brought to bear upon the inquiry, in somewhat similar lines, as to the character of Laurence Oliphant, a man so unique in himself, so entirely individual and distinct in his generation. But, after all her efforts, the mystery is mystery still. Hunter, traveller, diplomatist, barrister, philanthropist, author, conspirator, M.P., soldier, slibuster, newspaper correspondent, man of Society—given to flirting—a dealer on the Stock Exchange, teamster, mystic, and idealist, Laurence Oliphant was Laurence Oliphant through it all. A puzzle he was and is.

His father, Sir Anthony Oliphant, had much of the sound and sober Scottish character of the generation brought before us in the Life of Archbishop Tait. The character of his mother does not come out so clearly as one might wish, but the letters which remain illustrate the affection of a deeply pious soul. With the purest aims, her constant endeavours to influence her gifted son in a decidedly Christian course,

sadly failed. In a way she idolized him; and the lack of discipline and wholesome restraint was most unfortunate.

Laurence was born at Cape Town in 1829, and was sent to England as a child. In his thirteenth year he was sent for to Ceylon, where his father was now Chief Justice, and from this time his life of movement, stir, and unrest may be said to have begun. Of education, strictly speaking, he had little or nothing. Mrs. Oliphant writes: "He was in no way the creation of school or college. When, as happens now and then, an education so desultory, so little consecutive or steady as his, produces a brilliant man or woman, we are apt to think that the accidental system must be on the whole the best, and education a delusion, like so many other cherished things; but the conclusion is a rash one, and it is perhaps safest in this, as in so many other directions, to follow the beaten way."

Jung Bahadur, after his visit to England, called at Colombo on his way home, and interested, and was interested by, young Oliphant. An invitation to accompany the Minister to Nepal was eagerly accepted, and the result of the rapid and brilliant rush through India was a book, very clever and much praised, which opened the way for a world of adventures.

About a year after his return from Russia he put into Mr. Blackwood's hands "The Russian Shores of the Black Sea." A mounted orderly, one day, shortly afterwards, rattled up to the door of Oliphant's lodgings in Half-Moon Street, summoning him to an interview with Lord Raglan. He wrote to his father:

I accordingly proceeded to the Ordnance, where I found not Lord Raglan, but Lord de Ros, who questioned me minutely about Sebastopol. I gave him all the information I could, and sent him my sketches, extracts from my journal, and everything I could think useful. There were a couple of old Engineer Colonels (one of them afterwards identified as Sir John Burgoyne), all three poring over a chart of the Crimea. They are evidently going to try and take Sebastopol, and I recommended their landing at Balaclava and marching across, which I think they will do. Lord de Ros was immensely civil. I think Lord Raglan ought in civility to make me his private secretary. It would be great fun. I met Lord de Ros again this morning, and had a long talk with him. I did not mention my anxiety to get out. It is very ticklish saying anything about one's self on such occasions, and I must just bide my time and qualify myself—be able to answer the lash, as you always say.

Later on, Lord Elgin, with whose family the Oliphants had some friendship, invited Laurence to accompany him as Secretary on his special mission to Washington. In his letters he gives a lively picture of his life in the States and in Canada at this time. Thus he writes, as the Governor-General's private secretary:

My life is much like that of a Cabinet Minister or Parliamentary swell, now that the House is sitting. I am there every night till the small hours, taking little relaxations in the shape of evening visits when a bore gets up. That keeps me in bed till late, so that breakfast and the drive in (from Spencer Wood), etc., detain me from the office till near one. Then I get through business for the next three hours—chiefly consisting of drafting letters, which in the end I ought to be a dab at. . . . I also append my valuable signature to a great deal without knowing in the least why, and run out to the most notorious gossips to pick up the last bits of news, political or social, with which to regale his Excellency, who duly rings for me for that purpose when he has read his letters and had his interviews. Then he walks out with an A.D.C., and I go to the House. There I take up my seat on a chair exclusively my own next the Speaker, and members (I have made it my business to know them nearly all) come and tell me the news, and I am on chaffing terms with the Opposition.

During his stay in the United States, probably, he had been attracted by the "spiritualist" movement. "I would willingly," he writes to his mother, "go into a dungeon for the rest of my days if I was vouchsafed a

supernatural revelation of a faith ; but I should consider myself positively wicked if upon so momentous a subject I was content with any assumptions of my erring and imperfect fellow-creatures, when against the light of my own conscience." *A supernatural revelation!* This is the key-note of his aspirations, or at all events of many of them. He seems to have known, in reality, very little about the Christian life ; and it is no matter of surprise to see how, unmistakably earnest, and withal eccentric, he fell under the sway of a Spiritualist. An obscure American named Harris became his Director.

We must quote the passage in which Mrs. Oliphant describes the teaching of this lecturer, Mr. Harris (vol. ii., p. 4) :

Very little, if anything, is said that is inconsistent with orthodox Christianity, slightly tempered by a theory, afterwards more fully developed, which replaces the Trinity by a Father and Mother God—a twofold instead of a threefold Unity—though even that is so little dwelt upon that it might easily be overlooked, even by a critical hearer ; but not even the most careless could, I think, be unimpressed by the fervent and living nobility of faith, the high spiritual indignation against wrong-doing and against all that detracts from the Divine essence and spirit of Christianity, with which the dingy pages, badly printed upon bad paper and in the meanest form, still burn and glow. The effect, no doubt, must have been greatly heightened when they were spoken by a man possessing so much sympathetic power as Mr. Harris evidently had, to an audience already prepared, as the hearers in whom we are most interested certainly were, for the communication of this sacred fire.

The very points which had most occupied Oliphant's mind—the hollow ness and unreality of what was called religion, the difference between the Divine creed and precepts, and the everyday existence of those who were their exponents and professed believers—we read, were the object of Harris's crusade. Harris taught that men should put what they believed into practice, not playing with the possibilities of a divided allegiance between God and mammon, but giving an absolute—nay, remorseless—obedience, at the cost of any or every sacrifice, to the principles of a perfect life. Mrs. Oliphant adds :

I presume confidently that, so far as the disciples could be aware, the prophet himself at this period was without blame, and maintained his own high standard. Perhaps, it may be suggested by profane criticism, the mystery in which he wrapped himself would be beneficial to the maintenance of this impression upon their minds. The great novelty in him was that he required no adhesion to any doctrine, and did not demand of his converts that they should agree with him upon anything but the necessity of living a Christ-like life.

Of Harris's methods in the Brocton community, Mrs. Oliphant writes :

He arranged them in groups of three or four persons to assimilate ; but if the magnetism of one was found to be injurious to another, Harris was aware of it at once, and instantly separated them. Any strong, merely natural affection was injurious. In such cases, all ties of relationship were broken ruthlessly, and separations made between parents and children, husbands and wives [Oliphant was separated from his wife], until "the affection was no longer selfish, but changed into a great spiritual love for the race ; so that, instead of acting and reacting on one another, it could be poured out on all the world, or at least on those who were in a condition to receive this pure spiritual love," to the perfection of which the most perfect harmony was necessary, any bickering or jealousy immediately dispelling the influx, and "breaking the sphere."

Of the Brocton community, the idea of which was "*living the Life*," and of Oliphant's residence in the Holy Land with his first wife, we have no space now to write. His "*Land of Gilead*," and his "*Episodes of Adventure*," were reviewed in these pages. That most strange and melancholy book, "*Scientific Religion*," with its "problems of psychology," alas ! was written at Haifa in 1888.

Oliphant paid a final visit to the States in the spring of 1888, and to the astonishment of his friends returned to be married to Miss Rosamond Dale Owen, grand-daughter of Robert Owen, the Socialist. "I was induced by a curious combination of circumstances," he wrote, "to make a pilgrimage of 1,100 miles from New York to see a lady of whom I had only heard, but whom I found to be a most remarkable person. She had reached all my results—nothing in 'Scientific Religion' was new to her." The marriage took place at Malvern in August, 1888. But he had not been married more than a day or two when he was seized with an illness so violent as to put his life into immediate danger. On his sick-bed, the Name which is above every name was constantly on his lips. A day or two before his death he exclaimed, appearing perfectly happy, "Christ has touched me"; and during the last hours he was heard to hum and sing in snatches the hymn, "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

Mrs. Oliphant thus concludes :

The generation, not only of his contemporaries, but of their children, must be exhausted, indeed, before the name of Laurence Oliphant will cease to conjure memories of all that was most brilliant in intellect, most tender in heart, most trenchant in attack, most eager to succour in life. There has been no such bold satirist, no such cynic philosopher, no such devoted enthusiast, no adventurer so daring and gay, no religious teacher so absolute and visionary, in this Victorian age, now beginning to round towards its end, and which holds in its brilliant roll no more attractive and interesting name.

Short Notices.

Tithe and Glebe Lands Acts, 1891 and 1888. By G. F. CHAMBERS, Barrister-at-Law. London: Knight.

THIS book deals with two subjects which, though co-related, are yet quite distinct. In the tithe portions of the book the author exhibits first of all a convenient abstract of the new Tithe Act, together with the full text of the Act and of the Lord Chancellor's rules issued under it. The information given is in a concise and handy form, and every beneficed clergyman whose income depends upon tithes should possess himself of a copy of this cheap and useful little book.

But Mr. Chambers' book has a value of its own on another ground, the practical importance of which is, we fancy, at present little understood by the parochial clergy. Probably it will surprise many of our readers to be told that the beneficed clergy of England and Wales are the owners as life tenants of nearly 700,000 acres of land, the gross estimated rental of which was as recently as five years ago returned to Parliament at more than £900,000. In bygone years probably the greater part of this land was either profitably let or profitably farmed by the clergy concerned. It is unhappily now but too true that the bulk of it at this moment is neither let nor farmed on terms in the least degree commercially satisfactory. It was in view of this that Parliament in 1888 passed the Glebe Lands Act, whereby the clerical owners of glebe lands were enabled under the supervision of the Land Commissioners (now the Board of Agriculture) to sell the freeholds of portions of their glebe lands and add the interest on the purchase-money to the annual value of their livings. It is obvious that the cases must be very numerous at the present time (owing to the difficulty of obtaining agricultural tenants,