

which the Lord bore to him. And they brought him the books, and sought to know his opinion of them. Then he praised the writers for their veracity, and said that a few things had been omitted by them, and that all but a little of the teaching of the most important miracles was recorded. And he added that they who dis course of the coming of Christ in the flesh ought not to omit to speak of His divinity, lest in course of time men who are used to such discourses might suppose that Christ was only what He appeared to be. Thereupon the brethren exhorted him to write at once the things which he judged the most important for instruction, and which he saw omitted by the others. And he did so; and, therefore, from the beginning he discoursed about the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, judging this to be the necessary beginning of the Gospel, and from it he went on to the Incarnation."

St. John was something more than a mere recorder or eye-witness. To him was assigned the more sacred work of delineating the inner divine life of the Lord Jesus, "so that men believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, might have life in His name." The short sentences with which his Gospel opens "go right down to the very root of all philosophy and of all mysteries." Let us take one of these sentences, and try to understand something of what St. John means when he speaks of Jesus as being "the True Light." When speaking of the Baptists, he says, "He was not that Light." He does not say that the Baptist was not a light [he certainly was that,—a burning and a shining light" (John v. 35)—a light and a guide to many], but that he was not the true, the original Light. He was only a borrowed light, imperfect, incomplete, transitory. The true, the original Light, from which all other lights are reflected is Jesus Christ. That is what St. John says, and Jesus Christ said the same of Himself. He, the meek and lowly One, described Himself in terms which, if they were not true, would be most presumptuous, most blasphemous, and which none but He could say without presumption and blasphemy—"I am the Light of the World."

First, what is light? No one knows. We can easily perceive the difference between light and the absence of light, darkness; and we know what are some of the effects of light, but what light in itself is we do not know, and no one can tell us. Even so we do not, we cannot, know what is the nature, the being of Jesus Christ, though we do know the difference between His absence and His presence in our hearts.

What, then, are the effects of light? What does it do?

(1). For one thing, it is the means of life. Without it things cannot grow. It is essential to our existence. We read in Scripture of the bread of life, the water of life, the tree of life; that is, of the bread and the water and the tree which sustain life. But light is as necessary for our existence as bread or water, or the fruits of the earth, and hence the Saviour says: "Who-soever followeth Me shall have the light of life." In the language of Scripture, spiritual darkness stands for spiritual death. "The people who sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up." "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

(2). For another thing, light renders things visible, and reveals what really is. The sun-

beam shows us small specks of dust floating in the air. It does not make the specks. They are always there, but we are not always able to see them. They are hidden from our eyes. There is, as it were, a covering over them. The sunbeam removes that covering; it reveals them to us. The first ray of morning light takes away the covering of darkness from the trees and the hills, the rivers and the meadows, but they were there all the time, though we could not see them. So, too, the realities of the spiritual world are there whether we see them or not. Revelation means simply an unveiling. Christ came to take away the veil, the covering, to show us what is, to show us sin in its hideousness, God in the beauty of holiness. And, therefore, in this sense also, He is the Light of World.

(3). Again, light enables man to work and guides his steps. For man does not carry within him all that he requires.

In order to move and work in the world, he must be illuminated by the light of the world. It is true that it is quite possible for a man to overcome obstacles, and to do noble and useful work (e. g. Henry Fawcett), even though he be deprived of the precious gift of sight, and be therefore unable to avail himself of the light. Yet every blind person must necessarily be dependent to a very large extent upon the work, and the discoveries, and the information, and the kind offices of those who have eyes to see. That is, he is indirectly dependent upon light. So it is true that many who cannot, or who will not, use Christ Light are nevertheless indebted to it more than they imagine. They are surrounded on all sides by Christian influences which, unconsciously perhaps to themselves, are helping to form their judgments and to mould their characters. Whether a man knows it or not Christ is the Light which lighteth him. Whatever light he has comes from Christ, and can come from no other source. True, it may be a reflected light, for

Light can be reflected; and just as the light which we get from the moon and the planets is reflected from the sun, so the light that a man gets from the study of God's world of nature, or from intercourse with Christian friends, is a borrowed—a reflected light. These are not that Light, but are sent to bear witness of that Light.

The moon above, the Church below,
..... all their radiance, all their glow,
Each borrows of its Sun.

Every real Christian we meet reflects Christ's light, and in this sense the Saviour said of Christians, "Ye are the light of the world."

"By lamp light," says St. Augustine, "we may advance to the day." Artificial, borrowed, reflected lights are useful, we could not well get on without them; but they will not do always and for all kinds of work. We cannot paint, or design, or match colours by candle light, for that we want the light of the sun, the true, original light. So in our life's work, there are often perplexities which we have to solve, duties which we have to perform, temptations which we have to meet—when no human aid is of any the least avail, and when we shall to a certainty do bad work, miss the right path, hopelessly confuse right and wrong, unless we are guided by that True Light which lighteth every man. "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you, for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."

Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near;
O may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes.

A subscriber in Prince Edward Island, renewing his subscription, writes:—"The GUARDIAN I think has much improved, more interesting in Church matters, and I like it much better. May it go on and prosper."

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The gigantic scheme of social rescue which "General" Booth launched, in characteristically sensational form, by the publication of his famous book, "In Darkest England," strikes at least one of the currents of modern thought. Whether, in the result, the movement will turn out to be the crowning success of Mr. Booth's marvellous career, or whether it will end in his being overwhelmed and swept away before a deluge too mighty for him to resist, are speculations in which we cannot and need not now indulge. If he can, indeed, raise and restore to useful citizenship the unhappy "tenth" who are now "submerged," and if he can, moreover, prevent another tenth from sinking into the abyss as fast as the places of the first are vacated, he will certainly have solved the darkest, and the most hopeless, and the most depressing problem of human existence. The odds do look heavy against one man's succeeding where the whole world, it may be said, has failed. But if Mr. Booth can show good results, even on a much smaller scale than when he dreamed that he alone was the man, the world will not judge him very harshly. We may well concede that, in the work of seeking to raise the fallen, it is better to have tried and lost, than never to have tried at all.

But it is not with the success or failure of one particular venture that we are now concerned. We rather wish to call attention to the fact that one current of thought in these days does undoubtedly run in favour of the Church's undertaking social work. It is urged, as one of the reasons why working men have fallen from attendance at church, that they do not find that the questions treated of there are those in which they feel interested. It is highly possible that an objection of this kind is a heavier indictment against the objectors than against the Church. We should certainly hold that the Church which consented to waive the preaching of "Christ crucified" in favour of the promulgation of the New Unionism, had lost her mission in the world, and become a reflector, not of any light Divine, but of the "darkness visible" of human selfishness. She would have joined her voice to the many which in these days would have us believe that man can live by bread alone, and that the whole interests of humanity are limited to "panem et Circenses," the hours of work and the rate of wages. She would have turned her back fatally upon the teaching that the gain of a world would be dearly purchased at the cost of a soul.

We take it for granted, then, that the chief and highest function of the Church is, and must ever be, the teaching of spiritual truth and the salvation of souls. But the difficult question remains—can she, without abnegation of this supreme function, take any direct and effective part in the solution of the social problems of the day? The answer is not one to be given off-hand.

In the first place it may be conceded that many people in these days are more partial to what they call work, than to doctrine, however spiritual or true. If a man would only "work," they would let him teach whatever he chose. If the Church would take up what they regard as work, they would not trouble themselves about