

all religious matters, and to give equality to all religious faiths. This law provided that the State should no longer support the clergy, and that all Church properties should be transferred to "associations culturelles," which were to manage the properties in accordance with certain provisions of the law. Furthermore, applications for permission to hold church services were to be made to the police, and it was provided that if the terms were not complied with by December 11th, 1906, the churches should be closed and the property confiscated. The Protestant denominations speedily complied with these requirements, but the Catholics, in deference to an encyclical issued by the Pope, refused, and during the year, in the face of much opposition, inventories of all church properties were taken by the Government. In the meantime, as a compromise, the State then offered to grant one year's respite on condition that the congregations would declare loyalty to the Government and make the required applications to the police for permission to hold services; but the Pope forbade this, and the crisis was precipitated. Immediately evictions took place, not only from the churches, but from palaces, seminaries, convents, etc., priests and members of religious orders being turned out by the thousand.

Upon January 11th of this year the Pope again issued an encyclical, more clearly defining the position of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church, he says, does not desire a religious war. He has not abandoned the ecclesiastical properties, but the Church cannot accept the organization imposed on it by the French Government. She cannot prevent the spoliation in progress, but she cannot take advantage of the proposed cultural associations, which are "contrary to the ecclesiastical hierarchy given to the Church by the Divine Founder." In other words, because they transfer to the Government an authority held to belong only to the Pope as head of the Church.

On January 22nd the French Cabinet approved a bill suppressing the formality of requiring a declaration before holding a public meeting; hence the churches may now remain open for public worship. This may possibly check, somewhat, the exodus of the evicted priests and nuns who have been seeking refuge as speedily as may be in foreign lands.

THE "SEPARATION" MOVEMENT.

It is not a mere coincidence that the English people are making a determined attempt to free national education from ecclesiastical control; that the Emperor of Germany has dissolved the Reichstag in order to put an end to the dictation of the Clerical party in the Reichstag; that the Spanish Government has inaugurated a policy which can end only in the separation of Church and State in that country; and that the French people, with singular unanimity, have registered their determination that the union between the State and the churches of all kinds shall cease, and that education throughout France, so far as it is possible, shall be secular. These are different phases of a movement which began with the Reformation, and which will not end until Church and State are everywhere entirely dissociated. This movement may mean, in the intention of some of its supporters, and in the apprehension of many of its opposers, the final separation of religion and government; it means, in the judgment of the Outlook, the drawing of a hard-and-fast line between politics and ecclesiasticism. It means ultimately the freedom of the Church; for the attempt of the Church, in various countries, under various names, to exercise direct political control has done more to put the Church into chains, hamper its growth, check its influence, and dry up its power at the source, than any other single condition which Christianity has faced since it began its westward march. This move-

ment, though it may have an anti-religious appearance, is a manifestation of the deeper and broader religious spirit of modern times, and will result in a victory for religion, rather than for secularism. The Church as an organization, in this country, as in so many others, has lingered behind the Church as spiritually conceived by those of its members who in every generation are leading the way to a larger and nobler thought of the Incarnation and of the kingdom of God among men.

It is because of this spiritual conception of religion, as opposed to a purely ecclesiastical conception, that the majority of Englishmen of many faiths and creeds are determined that in English schools the dogma of no special Church shall be taught. It is not only the Nonconformist who is in revolt against the authority of the Established Church in English schools; it is also a large body of English Churchmen. When John Bright, years ago, took a distinguished American Bishop of the Episcopal Church into the House of Lords and semi-humorously shook his fist at the bench of Bishops, the American Bishop said to him, "I agree with you. They ought not to be there; their influence ought to be exerted in other ways." For this reason, and because the Established Church is becoming more and more penetrated with a sense of the impossibility of keeping the Church in organic relation with the Government, disestablishment, though it may be long deferred, will ultimately come. And it will be welcomed alike by the sacramentarian who revolts, as did the leaders of the Oxford Movement, from the control of the Church of God by any group of statesmen, however eminent; by evangelic Churchmen to whom the Church is above all an organized religious experience, and by the Board of Churchmen to whom the Church is a divine influence, penetrating society from all sides through spiritual channels. When the Church of England is detached from the Government of England, it will become for the first time a free Church, and after a brief period of readjustment it will secure a spiritual authority which it has not possessed since the Reformation.—[Outlook.]

From "Peter Bell."

(Wordsworth.)

As well might Peter, in the Fleet,
Have been fast bound, a begging
debtor;—
He travelled here, he travelled there;—
But not the value of a hair
Was heart or head the better.
He roved among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day,—
But nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.
In vain, through every chanceful year,
Did nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more.
Small change it made in Peter's heart
To see his gentle panniered train
With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
Where'er the tender grass was leading
Its earliest green along the lane.
In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter, on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.
At noon, when by the forest's edge,
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart,—he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky.
On a fair prospect some have looked,
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as steadfast as the scene
On which they gazed themselves away.
Within the breast of Peter Bell
These silent raptures found no place
He was a carl as wild and rude
As ever hue and cry pursued.
As ever ran a felon's race.

The Quiet Hour.

Your Life: What Can God Make of It?

And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, a rod.
Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.—Exod. iv. 2, 17.

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;

And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged

A furious battle, and man yelled, and

swords

Shocked upon swords and shields. A

prince's banner

Wavered, then staggered backward,

hemmed by foes.

A craven hung along the battle's edge.

And thought, "Had I a sword of keener

steel—

That blue blade that the king's son

bears,—but this

Blunt thing!" he snapt and flung it

from his hand

And lowering crept away and left the

field.

Then came the king's son, wounded, sore

bestead,

And weaponless, and saw the broken

sword.

Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,

And ran and snatched it, and with battle-

shout—

Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,

And saved a great cause that heroic day.

—E. R. Sill.

St. Paul, who delights in a paradox, says: "When I am weak, then am I strong." If he speaks truly, and if we also can make the same startling declaration, then we may well refuse to be discouraged, no matter how great the odds against us may be—with GOD on our side we are sure to win, though the whole universe might be against us. Want of faith rather than true humility prompts us to try to avoid responsibility.

Let us look for a moment at Moses. He had tried eagerly and impetuously to free his brethren from their terrible slavery—tried in his own strength, and had utterly failed. He is not willing to risk a second failure, so, when the duty is placed before him, instead of going straight forward, thinking only of God's power, he looks at his own proved weakness, and takes refuge in a false humility. It is really pride which urges him not to attempt anything which he is not likely to make a success of—failure is so humiliating. First, he tries to shelter himself behind the assertion of his own unimportance. "Who am I?" he asks, as though anyone can be unimportant when GOD is one with him in his work. Then he declares that he is not eloquent, but slow of speech, and that some other person can be found more worthy for the great and responsible duty of a leader. But such an attempt to shrink from plain duty behind apparent humility is very displeasing to God. We read that "the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses." He who gives eloquence to one man can also give it to another, or enable him to do the work without it. If God wants a man to do any work for Him He can easily provide the laborer with all necessary tools. "What is that in thine hand?" he asks the reluctant Moses, and whatever he held in his hand—though it might be only a slight stick—is all he needs when God is working through him and it. The miracles he is able to work by means of that ordinary rod are sufficient to bring Israel in triumph and safety out of an apparently hopeless position. God can use one person to do His work just as easily as another. When the greatest preacher in the world fails to touch the heart of a hardened sinner, the miracle may be worked through the tiny helpless hands of a dead baby. Never say that your life is valueless and unimportant. If it is held as a rod in the hand of God, He can work any miracle through your life. Not once only, but innumerable times. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God

chosen" to work marvellous miracles. Indeed He often chooses the weakest instruments purposely, "that no flesh should glory in His presence." "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Gideon was forbidden to fight the Midianites with a great army of men, and only allowed to take 300, so that no one might think that his own power or strength had given him the victory. We see everywhere God's power working wonders by means of common things. "All flesh is grass," as we know, but think how wonderful it is that the almost infinite powers of a man's mind should be built up of such material. Deprive him of necessary food—food which comes directly or indirectly from the grass—and his mind will soon grow wandering and powerless. And if God has also chosen such common things as water, and bread and wine, to minister to the life of the spirit, dare we venture to assert that He cannot use them—as the rod of Moses was used—to work miracles? Our Lord's parables have shown us that we must not call anything "common." He has opened our eyes to the realities of which earthly things are but the shadow. When we talk of a shepherd and his sheep, of wheat and tares, of sowing seed or reaping the harvest of what we have sown, of darkness and light, how often we are speaking of spiritual rather than of material things.

Let us give up measuring our own powers and contrasting them with the greatness of the work God calls us to do. Moses knew nothing of the wonder-working power of that rod he held in his hand. Let us look away from ourselves and up to God, and then Go Forward! and do the work He is calling us to do. It may seem far beyond our powers. What matter! With God all things are possible. Moses was no more able than any other man to draw water out of a rock or cut a path through the sea, and certainly a lifeless bit of wood was powerless to work such miracles. But the same God who did such mighty works by means of Moses and his rod, can work wonders through us too, if we will only trust Him and place ourselves unreservedly at His disposal. Complete consecration and unwavering trust! If only God could always find these in us, what great things He could do by means of our lives! Let us try to win these two things. Let us consecrate ourselves entirely to His service, and pray earnestly that He will make use of us to carry His messages to others. Then let us go forward confidently, trusting Him to answer our prayers. How often we fail just because our prayers have become listless and lifeless, and we don't really expect any answer to them. A real failure—which is very different from an outward, apparent failure—can almost invariably be traced to want of real, trustful, determined prayer. Ruskin says, "there is nothing so small but that we may honor God by asking His guidance of it, or insult Him by taking it into our own hands."

The age of miracles is not yet over. God still does mighty works through weak hands. May I mention one instance. A short time ago, Bishop Schereschewsky died in Japan. He was a Polish Jew who became a Christian through study of the Old Testament. In 1859 he went out as a missionary to China, learned the difficult language with marvellous quickness, and within a few years he had translated into the Mandarin dialect the entire Bible and a large part of the Prayer Book. He was made Bishop of China, but was soon stricken with paralysis. Forced to give up the work of a bishop, he did not settle down into idleness with the idea that he could do no more work. On the contrary, he began the tremendous task of translating the whole Bible into the Wen-li, or classical written language of China. His helpless condition prevented the use of a pen, but that difficulty did not daunt him. He worked away until he was able to press down the keys of a typewriter with one finger. When he found himself unable to do even that, he used a stick to press down the keys, slowly and laboriously writing the Chinese words phonetically in English letters. This took nine years, then with the help of a Japanese and a Chinese secretary the whole book was written out again, this time in Chinese characters. So this helpless man, who was unable to walk a step and might have considered himself cut off from service, performed the marvellous task of