

For Dominion Presbyterian.

### God Knows.

BY GEO. W. ARMSTRONG.

The Lord knows all things first and fast,  
The future, present and the past;  
What e're men do, or think, or say,  
In secret or in light of day.

God knows!

When fierce temptations would oppress,  
And give the mind and soul distress;  
In struggles 'gainst all wrong desires,  
And just that carnal passions fire;

God knows!

When darkness intercepts the way,  
And clouds conceal the sun's bright ray,  
And pain, and fear, and doubt, and gloom,  
Flourish unchecked and grow, and bloom,

God knows!

When troubles, tears and anguish rend  
The heart, because of some lost friend;  
Sorrows assail like sourceries,  
Bereavements and adversities;

God knows!

When griefs and tribulations cease,  
When all is joy and calm and peace;  
When pleasure with her sceptre grand,  
Entrance as with a fairy wand;

God knows!

When conflict ends, and glories crown,  
And victor gains applause, renown,  
For struggle over self and sins,  
An faith a moral triumph wins;

God knows!

That Christ will help the earnest soul,  
Struggling 'gainst odds to be made whole;  
And overcoming then will crown,  
And raise him to His Father's throne;

God knows!

London, Ont.

### Our Religious Life as Viewed by a Briton.

Mr. Samuel Smith, a member of the British Parliament, a thorough-going Scotch Presbyterian, an exceedingly well informed gentleman on all religious subjects, especially those in which British statesmen are interested at the present time, visited our country last autumn. He was a delegate to the Pan-Presbyterian Council at Washington. On his return to his own country he was invited to address the Y.M.C.A. of Liverpool. A very full report of this address has been published. Mr. Smith spoke chiefly of religious life in the United States and Canada. Speaking of our American people he said:

"The Protestants of America were more Protestant than they were in this country. They were the descendants in the main of the various non-conformist bodies who were persecuted in this country 250 years ago, the Pilgrim fathers, Presbyterians, Quakers, etc., in the reign of the Stuarts. They really founded the American colonies, and the result was to this day the Protestant bodies of America represent a more fervent evangelical Protestantism than is common in this country, and there was little of that nondescript blend between Protestantism and Romanism which they found in England. There was but little of what we would call High Church doctrine there. The extreme sense of freedom prevailing in America made it very difficult to maintain priestly pretensions. One of the interesting features of the country was that Roman Catholicism itself undergoes considerable change, tending much more in the direction of liberty than in Europe. Some of its leading ecclesiastics had been

recently compelled by the pope to abjure their advanced ideas."

On Mr. Smith's recent visit he noticed rather decidedly that the religious life of America developed more upon the social side than it did in the older countries. There was a strong element of kindness in it. He was struck with the brotherly feeling which exists, the readiness to help and show friendship to one another. After speaking of the freedom of American Christians in their intercourse and fellowship with one another, he said:

"There was in American religious life a lack of conventionality. In England they imitated other people's forms of speech and modes of action, and this resulted in a species of unreality. This criticism applied not only to religious, but to all aspects of life. In America people said exactly what they thought and did not copy one another, and follow some imaginary fashion. On the whole, this was a healthy thing and a good sign. Here and in old countries they had too much coldness, stiffness and reserve in regard to all religious matters."

There were certain phases of religious life here which did not impress Mr. Smith favorably. The element of amusement and social enjoyment was sometimes given a prominence, to the serious injury of the devotional element. He then referred to the common habit of strangers who, entering a city, and seeking a place of worship inquire for the most popular preacher, and are sure to be sent to the most sensational one, and suppose that he represents the preachers of the town. Mr. Smith does not regard these as types of the best religious life of the country.

Speaking of our church music, Mr. Smith observes:

"They have choirs, who are often paid enormous sums, performing solos, duets, or quartets, while the congregation sat and listened. This was found in fashionable congregations; not in those cases where the spiritual life was sound and strong; but there was undoubtedly far too much of it."

Referring to the temperance movement in America, the speaker said:

"He was very much struck with the extraordinary temperance of the people. Alcohol was scarcely ever seen on the table. He thought he did not see wine, spirits or alcohol more than once or twice all the time he was in the states or Canada. Practically speaking, it never appeared at the table, and he thought a great proportion of the people did not indulge in it at all. At the same time, there was much drinking at the saloon bars, and the evil undoubtedly existed as it did here."

Mr. Smith evidently did not associate with ward politicians, club men, men of the world, or even with that class of Christians whose religion chiefly consists in showy ritualism.

He does not believe in the union of church and state, and is anxiously hoping for their complete separation. He is a statesman of the Gladstone type, even more pronounced in his opposition to sacerdotalism and the Romanizing tendency of the High Church party in the English establishment than was the "Grand Old Man" himself. Would that both America and Britain had many such men in public life as Mr. Smith!—The United Presbyterian.

### A Word About Sunday.

Frederick W. Robertson was a man who never could be charged with narrowness or bigotry. He was a broad-minded man and was in full sympathy with the trials and perplexities of his fellow men. In his Life and Letters there are these wise and strong words relative to the Sabbath question: "I am convinced there is a deep truth in the strict view which many take of the observance of Sunday. \* \* I am more and more sure by experience that the reason for the observance of the Sabbath lies deep in the everlasting necessities of human nature; an 'that as long as man is man, the blessedness of keeping it, not as a day of rest only, but as a day of spiritual rest, will never be annulled.' In another letter he writes: 'I certainly do feel by experience the eternal necessity of the Sabbath. The soul withers without it; it thrives in proportion to the fidelity of its observance. Nay, I even believe the stern rigor of the Puritan Sabbath had a grand effect upon the soul. Fancy a man thrown in upon himself, with no permitted music, or relaxation, nor literature, nor secular conversation—nothing but his Bible, his own soul and God's silence; What hearts of iron this system must have made! How different from our stuffed-arm-chair religion and 'gospel of comfort?' as if to be made comfortable were the chief end of religion. I am persuaded, however, that the Sabbath must rest not on an enactment, but on the necessities of human nature. It is not necessary because it is commanded; but it is commanded because it is necessary."

### Don't Grumble.

Don't be a grumbler. Some people contrive to get hold of the prickly side of everything, to run against all the sharp corners and find out all the disagreeable things. Half the strength spent in growing would often set things right. You may as well make up your mind, to begin with, that no one ever found the world quite as he would like it, but you are to take your share of the troubles and bear them bravely. You will be very sure to have burdens laid upon you that belong to other people unless you are a shirk yourself; but don't grumble. If the work needs doing, and you can do it, never mind about the other person who ought to have done it and didn't. Those workers who fill up the gaps, smooth away the rough spots and finish up the job that others have undone—they are the true peacemakers and worth a whole regiment of growlers.

### The Function of Church Music.

Above all it should be spiritual. What function does it serve, if it does not refresh the tired soul, kindle it anew with enthusiasm, thrill it with inspiration, exalt it with upward, aspiring thoughts, and help it to feel the unity of religion and life, and the nearness of God and heaven? Now if music is to fulfill this function, the first requisite is that it be of such a character that the people can enter into its spirit, and feel its kinship with their own best feelings. If it does not appeal to them, or cause an awakening response within their hearts, it will have failed to serve its purpose.—The Evangelist.