

MR. POWELL AND THE C. E. W. M. A.

SOME thirty years ago, the Bishop of London, in a sermon at St. Paul's on behalf of Foreign Missions, alluding to the work done abroad said:

"The Church of England is not dead yet." The following Sunday we heard a discourse at St. George's, Southwark, by Cardinal Wiseman. His Eminence was then in the flush of excitement caused by the famous, audacious, and mendacious proclamation, annexing England to the See of Rome. He poured the vials of contempt upon the English Church, and after quoting the above words of the Bishop of London, he said:—"Not dead yet—the doctor is at the bedside—the weeping friends are around, the patient is silent, he is dying, and all the Doctor can say to comfort the family is *Not dead yet*." In those days Dr. Wiseman's eloquent sarcasm was not wholly unjustified. Dull and decorous orthodoxy, had well nigh stifled the Church. There had come over the congregations a faint scent of eau-de-cologne. The pulpits were largely filled with men who thought excitement ungentlemanlike. The highest ambition of the clergy was to be refined, quiet, well dressed gentlemen. The clergy were not alone in this. We saw in those days Wesleyan and Independent ministers preach in kid gloves. If Cardinal Wiseman were to revisit the glimpses of the moon, he would be constrained to admit that the patient he said was dying has had not merely a marvellous recovery, but a more wonderful rejuvenation.

The old tree has sent out new branches loaded with the noblest fruit it ever grew.

The Church of England working men's Society, a direct birth of the revival of Church life, which commenced soon after Dr. Wiseman's sermon, is we believe, one of the chief wonders of mission work in the old country. It began so humbly, not by any might of eloquence, nor power of scholarship was it helped on, it sprang right out of the Church as a new branch bursts the thickest bark to feel its way to life and growth.

One man began it nine years ago, and now 9000 men are in this league and army of workers for God and His Church. They discard all patronage, they seek only to be put to work, they regard not customs nor conventionalities, but where souls are perishing there they go lovingly to rescue the lost by the power of the Gospel. Hearty, informal services anywhere are held, working men, artisans, speak face to face with their fellows in shop or mine, mill or factory. The more vicious are hunted for with the zeal and skill men hunt for spoil. Every device which love and talent can devise are used to lift the abandoned to a plane of decency, sobriety, honesty, and so on, step by step, to the Church's higher life of grace and communion. The sneers and approbrium with which a certain set of Churchmen greet all their brethren whose lines of work are different to the stereotyped, fusty, musty and dusty methods practised in the days of the Church's torpor, only spur this Working Men's society to

greater diligence. The fierce wrath, the teeth gnashing of party organs, furious at the success of men who are so passionately faithful to the Church of England, only incites them to deeper reverence and love for the Catholic Church which gave England christianity and liberty.

Mr. Powell, who is the founder and moving spirit of this society, has made a short visit to Hamilton and Toronto, where he was most cordially welcomed by large audiences. It hardly needs Mr. Powell to speak to discover that he is richly endowed with the gift of personal influence. He is all life, and movement and expression, even when silent. His nervous beating out the time to give more swing and go to the singing, his swift sympathetic responses to the allusions made by other speakers, to himself or the society he represents, his bright, merry laugh, and the quickness with which he changes from the humorous to the pathetic, or from mere business to deep solemnity, his fervid manly avowal of fidelity to the Church, in doctrine, order and discipline, his sovereign contempt for shallow, social conventionalities, his dignity in asserting the claims of laymen to share in the work of the Church, "as part of the concern," and the abounding frankness warmth, boldness of his utterances, all combine to form one of the most original as well as most powerful personalities the English Church has ever produced. One speaker at the meeting said that Mr. Powell's work would in the future history of the Church, rank as a nobler one than Wesley's, because it is utterly devoid of any element capable of developing into division of the Church, such as the love of rule, which marred and ultimately corrupted Wesley's work until it ended in schism.

The Church Working Men's Society has demonstrated: First, that the Church of England has the divine gifts of elasticity or adaptability. Second, that she possesses a capacity to rescue from the wilderness, wanderers the most hopelessly lost. Third, that she is endowed with a power of shepherding and herding these recovered ones. Fourth, that in her own divine life, there exists a source of divine life to all who drink at the fountain of grace she provides. In those demonstrated facts there is a complete answer to her every adversary. They furnish, also, an overwhelming rebuke to those of her sons, who in their pride and ignorance, have left the welling fountains of grace provided by the Church, to hew out cisterns which can neither give nor hold water, cisterns hewn out of their personal conceits, and patterned after the fashion of those human cisterns which hold only the bitter waters of division and schism. With such a phenomenon before the world as the Church of England Working Men's Association, the plea of any sect that it exists to provide lay liberty of work, becomes a vain pretence. Had this society existed, or had its work ever been faithfully done in the past, there would have been no Puritan secessional bodies to distract and weaken the Church, nor would Wesleyanism ever have become ought but an intensification of the Church's zeal. Mr. Powell proposes,

God willing, to revisit Canada. We can promise him a hearty, general and loving welcome.

We commend to the attention of those who have endeavoured to injure Mr. Powell's mission to Canada, a noble utterance by the celebrated French statesman, M. Jules Simon. In a speech at St. Etienne some years ago, he said, "When I find a Power or a man, whatever they may be, were they even my most mortal enemies, who give to the noble and grand cause I serve, a pledge of powerful interest and active solicitude,—when I see them aid with this vigorous effort the progress of that beneficent idea to which I have dedicated the most ardent passion of my life, the tenacity of the adversary and the implacability of the opponent abate within me, and I can only thank and bless."

If one could speak with such exalted magnanimity in regard to earthly politics or mere social reforms, what should be the attitude of all Churchmen to those who like Mr. Powell and his fellows of the Church Working Men's Association, are giving "pledges of active solicitude" to the "noble and grand cause" of reconciling their alienated brethren to Christ and to His Church? Surely in the splendid phrase of M. Jules Simon, the implacability of the opponent should abate, and such workers be crowned with every Churchman's thanks and blessings.

NOTES ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

NO 2.

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE.

THE origin of all life is in God. With Him is the "will of life." In Him "we live and move and have our being." And this is of every kind of life—of the life of body soul and spirit, without God, therefore, there can be no life. The plant, the animal, the rational being, all have life because they draw it from the source of life.

It is emphatically true that we derive our Spiritual life from God, and from Him consciously. Here is one of the differences between natural life or intellectual life, on one hand, and Spiritual life or the life of God on the other hand. Every kind of life is as truly from God as the highest. But the highest comes from the knowledge of God. We can have natural life, or intellectual life, or, in a certain sense, moral life, without knowing anything of God; but we cannot have spiritual life, eternal life, apart from this knowledge. For "this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only living and true God."

Now, men, by nature, do not possess this knowledge, nor do they develop it by the mere natural training of their powers. It must be communicated from without. It must be given to them by revelation from God. This is true of mankind at large, and it is true of every individual man.

Men were, by nature, dead in trespasses and sins. "The world by wisdom knew not God." These two truths, so to speak, lie side by side. So long as men do not know God, they must