

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Contributors would oblige us much and save mistakes being made by observing the following rules:—(1.) Never write with a pencil, but with ink. (2.) Make each letter in names of persons and places quite distinct. (3.) Do not repeat dates, as for instance, by saying, "On Sunday last, the twenty-second instant, being the second Sunday in Lent;" but, give only date and month thus, "On 28th February," such or such a thing happened. (4.) Do not use "instant" or "ultimo" for a date as it leads to mistakes. (5.) Notice the form of our news paragraphs and please follow it by giving us first the name of the place you are writing about, next the name of the Church or Parish, then a word or two, not more, indicating the main subject of your communication, and write on one side of the paper. Our subscribers will always find news items inserted. We solicit and gratefully welcome such assistance; especially when written pithily and plainly.

M. M., whose contributions display no small degree of literary taste and skill, asks how she may be put in the way of earning money by her talents? The ambition is honourable and healthy, but no more difficult question could be asked us, yet we are asked it frequently by young writers—and old ones too. M. M. must study closely, write freely, then mercilessly criticise, condense, re-cast, re-write her work, and until she finds her contributions sought after, be satisfied to enjoy the delight of composition and the ennobling stimulus arising from the consciousness that she is giving delight, instruction, consolation and even more blessed gifts to thousands of her fellow mortals. Literary work is usually its own rich reward—but too often this is its only recompense!

W. M. We regret the necessity of excluding a letter relating to the controversy regarding our Divine Redeemer and His earthly mother. Our correspondents' language would be appropriate enough in a discussion confined to theologians, but the DOMINION CHURCHMAN is read in almost every Church of England family in Canada. There is a danger lest a too free treatment of this subject should lead to irreverent thoughts, and words by those who have a tendency to impropriety of speech in regard to sacred things and themes. No greater injury can be done to a young mind than to weaken its reverence for things "worthy to be had in reverence." Carlyle has a noble protest against this which all should think over who cannot enjoy a flower without grubbing at the root.

BOOK NOTICES.

CHURCH READER FOR LENT, compiled and edited by the Rev. Dr. Cross. Published by T. Whittaker, New York, may be had at Rowsell & Hutchisons', Toronto, \$1.25. We cannot better describe the contents of this work than in the words of the compiler and editor—the eloquent and scholarly Dr. Cross. He says in a letter to Mr. Whittaker, "During the Lenten season, many clergy find little time for preparing sermons. Desiring to be of some little service to them, I have taken your suggestion and compiled this volume. The sermons are chiefly condensations, they will average only about ten minutes in delivery. If they should aid any of my younger brethren, relieve the pressure of an over-burthened brain, or furnish a crumb of daily bread to some hungry soul in private, I shall be thankful and happy. Yours in Christ, J. Cross." We recommend this volume as certain to be highly serviceable for the work indicated by Dr. Cross. The selections number forty-seven, they are taken from the discourses of emi-

nent divines, with especial reference to topics suitable for Lenten reading. But they would be valuable at all seasons to fall back upon in case of indisposition or when the fount of composition has run dry, as it does with all men at times.

CHRISTIAN TRUTH AND MODERN OPINION. Seven sermons preached by Clergymen in New York, with preface by Right Rev. Dr. Thompson. Published by T. Whittaker, New York, may be had of Rowsell & Hutchison, Toronto. Price \$1.25.

These seven sermons are apologetic. They were preached with a special intention of meeting certain phases of opinion growing out of a supposed opposition between scientific thinking and certain conceptions of the Christian faith. The subjects treated are, "The Christian Doctrine of Providence, and of Prayer;" "Moral responsibility and Physical Law;" "The Relation of Miracles to the Christian Faith;" "The Oneness of Scripture;" "Immortality;" "Evolution and a Personal Creator." There is a striking passage in the discourse on "Immortality." An objector to the popular notion of Heaven says: "I find myself endowed with a great variety of tastes and capacities. I love music and art, I find pleasure in exploring the wonders of science, I delight in genial society, I like to study men in the history of the past, as well as in the present. I find myself absorbed in the great mysteries of philosophy, in trying to open the secret chambers of thought, and while I acknowledge that a sound moral nature and a profound sentiment of reverence are essential to a well balanced character, I do not think that a man can fill up the measure of his being, if he is nothing more than what is ordinarily understood to be a pious person. And any condition of existence would therefore seem to me imperfect and unsatisfactory, in which all the nobler elements of my nature did not find room for development and expansion. But in the view that is ordinarily presented of the future world, I find no recognition of any such opportunities, or of any varieties, either of character or employment. Heaven is spoken of as a place

"Where congregations ne'er break up
And Sabbaths never end:"

as if mere rest from labor and attendance upon religious services filled up the whole measure of one's desires and capacities." The preacher asks, "What shall we say, in reply to all this?" We regard his answer complete, we cannot quote it at length, but it is this in effect that the objection to such ideas, based upon a charge of a want of spirituality of mind, is very weak, for the most spiritually minded now take keen enjoyment out of non-spiritual things. He says, "Is it not better to acknowledge that God is honored and served by the consecrated use of all the powers and faculties with which He has endowed us, and that our immortal life must provide for the culture and exercise of every lofty gift which pertains to our nature?" The feeling expressed in the above objection to the popular idea of Heaven has been a prolific source of religious indifference and infidelity. The phrase "Where congregations ne'er break up," has done Christianity infinite harm, happily it has no foundation in the revealed Word, and the clergy would do well to guard their young people from acquiring the false and dangerous impression which this phrase conveys. The Sermon on "Miracles and the Christian Faith," is a well reasoned discourse; the concluding passage affirming that the character of Christ and Christianity are the two greatest of miracles, would have been increased in force by a more direct ascription of divine, supernatural power in the maintenance of the life of the Catholic Church. The Church is a miracle of spiritual vitality and moral power which no theory of human agency can explain.

REVELATION, UNIVERSAL AND SPECIAL, by Rev. Dr. W. W. Olssen, Professor of Greek and Hebrew, St. Stephens College, New York. Published by T. Whittaker, N.Y., may be had of Rowsell & Hutchison, Toronto. Price \$1.25. This, like the preceding volume, is of an apologetic character, appealing to a higher class of readers, to indeed the narrow class of "thinkers." Dr. Olssen's work is well worthy of careful study, he disposes of certain of

certain of Mr. Herbert Spencer's theories in a masterly way. His knowledge of ancient and modern literature is shown to be most extensive. The work will be found invaluable to the clergy, not only as a storehouse of weapons for defence, but a granary of food—thoughts for mental enjoyment and nourishment.

SERMON FOR LENT.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."—St. Matthew xvi. 24.

The principle of self-denial as a religious practice appears to be very deeply rooted in human nature. Whosoever there is real earnestness of soul, any realisation of an invisible and higher power, there we find, as by an almost universal law, in one form or another—the principle and practice of self-denial. It is only as we descend towards the grosser depths of materialism that we lose sight of it; at first by degrees, the thing itself often surviving where the name of it would be repudiated, then to an increasing extent, until at last its place is taken by a debasing selfishness or an enervating luxury. And yet even in these lower depths, though extinct as a religious principle, often there remains a monstrous perversion of it, a ghostly phantom, as it were, of the high reality, and men will toil and slave and deny themselves much that they would like and enjoy, not as a means of strengthening their spiritual life, or of raising themselves to a closer communion with God, but as a part of the only worship the claims of which they acknowledge, the worship of self. What will not many a one endure and suffer in order to amass a large fortune or to get on in the world, who would laugh to scorn any suggestion of self-denial as a religious duty?

And yet the general sense of mankind affirms that it is so; nor is this witness confined to those forms of religion which are based upon the revelation of God to man, contained in Holy Scripture, for we find distinct traces of it even amongst the heathen themselves. Of this, the general practice of sacrifice to the Deity of this proof, while the self-inflicted tortures of the Indian Fakirs, and of many another groping after truth through the darkness of heathenism, apparently point in the same direction, viz., that earnestness, even in a false and debasing form of heathenism, will find its expression in self-denial, albeit that expression may be of a gross and repulsive nature.

As, however, we rise into the clearer atmosphere of Revelation, we find the principle of self-denial recognised in the Old Testament both in precept and practice. One of the strictest injunctions of those contained in Leviticus xxiii. as to the conduct of the people on the day of Atonement is, that it is to be a day on which they should "afflict their souls" (verses 27 and 32), which is taken by the commentators as the prescription of a public fast. We are, moreover, familiar with that form of self-denial of which the abstinence of the Nazirite from all that partook of the nature of wine was an instance. Of fasting of a more private and personal character, we have the example of David when interceding for the life of his child; of Ahab, in his brief period of penitence for the death of Naboth; of Esther, when preparing, at the risk of her life, to stand before King Ahasuerus; and of Daniel, when making a solemn confession of the sins of his people before God, as a result of which he received a special degree of prophetic illumination.

It is, however, in the New Testament that we have the clearest teaching both as to the importance of self-denial in general and of fasting in particular. Our text is but one of several passages in both the Gospels and Epistles which commend self-denial as a part of Christian duty, while we may suffice to refer to our Lord's own precept, "when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites," as plainly contemplating the practice of fasting as a religious duty incumbent on His followers.

We may regard self-denial and fasting from a two-fold point of view, either in relation to God, or in relation to ourselves. First, in relation to God—It may be looked upon as an act of satisfaction, or as an act of thankfulness and gratitude.

* "The word satisfaction," says Keble, "is used by Divines—Hooker for example—to express those good works, words and thoughts by which a contrite heart would naturally express its desire to make amends, if it could, for the wrong done not only to our brethren, but also to our God and Saviour by our sins; worthy fruits of penance, the Communion Service, calls them; and though, of course, there can be no merit in them strictly speaking, yet it has always been considered in the Church that He graciously accepts and rewards them; the penitential fasts, sackcloth, etc., of the Old Testament, and the revenge spoken of in the New (2 Corinthians vii. 2), are, I

* Letters of Spiritual Counsel, Keble. 3rd Ed., p. 59.