

write books. I hold it as a sign of God's goodness to the race, that the master minds of every age have been compelled—constrained by an inward power, to write their thoughts in books. By the book instead of the living man, we lose something; we lose the glow that shone upon his face, the sparkle of the eye as if a star shot glory through the veil, the impassioned tones, the quivering lip, the eloquent tear; those no printer's type can give you. But we also have great gain. I am afraid of the orator, the impassioned speaker: the eloquent look and phrase take my reason captive—hold me in a spell; but the book I can read calmly, and calmly reason about—master of myself and ready to consider the thoughts and judgments laid before me. Thank God for books; they make the world a great democracy, and put all men on a level. There we have access to the most precious thoughts of the greatest minds; they give the same to labourer and to sage; they give to us all the spiritual presence of the greatest of the race. No matter how poor I may be, or how obscure, the greatest and noblest of present and past enter into my humble home and dwell with me. Milton sings to me his mighty epic which tells of Paradise lost: Shakspeare lays open before me the worlds of imagination and the strange workings of the human heart. I hear ancient Cicero and modern John Bright; I talk with Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Locke, Hamilton and Stuart Mill; I read the Lives of Plutarch, and seem to live among them; I watch the fall of Greece and the rise of Rome; I follow the fortunes of that imperial power through civil strife and foreign war, and through gradual but sure decay—Gibbon all the time my pleasant guide; I compel the brilliant Lord Macaulay to take me through some English history. They speak as royally to me as to any king; their epigrams, their arguments, their deductions, their simple records, all of them are mine—I live among the aristocracy of intellect. And to be with men with those minds, and to know those facts of history, is surely better—better as entertainment—than the average evening party, or the average play.

But there are still stronger considerations. Why is it that so many homes are so dull and dreary? how is it that in so many cases a few months of married life bring about a fearful disenchantment? Because there is so little in common; because they have no resources by which they can interest each other; because he can only talk politics and business, and he thinks that she can talk neither, and they grow weary of dullness. But think of it as reaching farther still, while the soul lives the mind must live. It is as much a sin to neglect the mind as it is to starve the soul, and the man who does it must answer for the iniquity. You have time, you have opportunity, and for the waste of those precious talents God will bring you to judgment.

In connection with this, it is quite natural that I should say a word or two as to the attitude you should, as I think, hold toward controverted questions in theology. For you cannot read much—you cannot be in any way a student of past or present, without seeing that thinking, honest men differ in opinion on many questions and answers. Should a young man go into those controversies? Should he mix in the fray? By all means, since you are a man, go. Since you have a mind, yes. Let me ask you to lay down a rule for your guidance which shall be absolute—that the search after knowledge shall be disinterested. Don't seek knowledge in order that you may prop up some preconceived opinion, but let opinion spring from knowledge gained. Too often men start with notions, and then all knowledge that comes to them is perverted, biased, warped, to fit in with the old orthodoxy. Gentlemen, seek to gain truth through knowledge, and wherever that truth would lead you, go; boldly and fearlessly, go. If it should lead away from your old creeds and theories, go after it. Follow it, no matter where it leads, what interests it opposes, to what party it allies you, from whom it may sever you; follow it through loss, through suffering, through calumny, to the cross. Don't be afraid of that vile old bugbear they call orthodoxy. If it stands in the way, knock it over, trample it down, and follow after truth. For want of that disinterestedness many a great religious genius has flamed with uncertain light; many a great intellect has been warped, and distorted, and finally destroyed. They have cared more for preconceived theories than for real truth. I hold it as true manliness and a sign of mental power when a man can give up a theory when he finds it false, and can cast away an old creed when he has found it wrong. Be sure that the new light is light, not a phantom, but a fact; be sure that you are not actuated by a mischievous love for heresies, but when you know the truth follow it to any whither.

Follow the truth! What can I say to you better than that? Follow truth as to matters of opinion and belief; follow truth as to matters of conduct and daily life. For need I remind you that all the rest is worth nothing without this last—without religion which binds the soul to God, and blesses and beautifies all the work of life? The mind must be fed with facts, and the soul can only live by union with the Father of all spirits, and the God of all love. You may get wealth; you may get honour; you may get position; you may get friendship in abundance; you may become distinguished for wisdom, and either, or all, will be worth nothing except strengthened, purified, and beautified by religion. It is only by faith in God that the real good, the real value of these things can be saved to a man. Gentlemen, let me say to you, that if you are going to accomplish anything in the world, you must have an ideal; for business, you must know what you want to do and the pro-

bable way to the end; for political life, if you wish to lead, if you wish to bring about some real results, you must have an ideal, an end and an aim. So it is in science, and so it is in art. In religion, too, you must have an ideal; something to copy; something to mould your character after; something into the likeness of which you can grow. You want a picture which shall show, not merely in general outline, but in complete array of detail what life must become. Your choice is limited to one; there is but one; the man Christ Jesus. Do you want to have in your mind principles of life and conduct that shall guide you wisely? Do you want to entertain affections that are pure and purifying? Do you want to live the life of a great, beautiful, noble man? Then you must take the principles of Christ for your mind, and the love of Christ for your heart—Christ as your ideal, your example, your Redeemer. I can imagine a young man looking out with fear upon the world. He wants to save his manhood; but he sees how thick strewn temptations are—how the ways of the world wind—how many are being sucked down in the eddies and swirls of passion—and says to his own soul: "How can I escape all that—how avoid the snares and pitfalls—how pass that way to heaven?" And the only possible answer rings in upon his ears—assuring his soul of strength and ultimate triumph: "In business, in politics, in social life, in joy, in sorrow, in wealth, in poverty, in living, in dying, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

THINGS IN GENERAL.

A CHALLENGE.

A French journalist fonder of fun than of fighting, on being challenged, accepted the cartel with: "Of course, I claim the choice of weapons. You wish to kill me; I will do my best to kill you. Good, I have in my house 20 loaves of siege-bread, which I have kept for souvenirs. We will sit down and eat against each other. One of us is sure to die." Knowing by experience the nature of siege-bread, the challenger, did not care to run the risk involved in such a contest, and, like a sensible fellow, laughed, and shook hands.—*Chambers's Journal*.

CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALITY COMPARED.

It is said that the Chinese are untruthful; but Mrs. Opie, in her classical book on lying, did not have to go to China for the illustrations either of the nice gradations or the great popularity of this practice. She dealt with it entirely as the phenomenon of a religious country. Moreover, as we are just fresh from a political campaign, perhaps the less we say about veracity the better, even in comparison with the pagans. An intelligent gentleman, many years a resident of China, and accustomed to large business transactions with their merchants, informs us that among these merchants in the great centres of commerce the standard of mercantile honour is higher than anywhere else in the world. The tea and silk sent us from China are no doubt often adulterated, which is, of course, very immoral; but the highest English authority, Dr. Hassall, declared, in his big book upon the subject, that in his country every article under heaven that can be adulterated is adulterated.

"But they are such dreadful opium smokers!" ejaculates the complacent tobacco chewing deacon, as he seeks the spittoon. Very true; and we are not bringing forward these godless heathens as models of all the virtues. But speaking of opium recalls another passage in Chinese history, which throws light on this comparison of Christian and pagan morality. The Chinese Government undertook to suppress the opium traffic, so as to cut off the foreign supply and arrest the demoralizing influence of its use among the people. Profoundly impressed by the dreadful evils of this increasing habit, the authorities did their utmost to stop the smuggling of the article; but, when its virgorous measures began to be effective, the great Christian nation which was embarked in the traffic, made war upon the country, and forced the accursed drug upon it at the cannon's mouth. The conduct of England in this "opium war" will be infamous through all time; but its policy was as deliberate as its motives were execrable.—*Popular Science Monthly*.

THE AMERICAN CAREER OF THE SPARROW.

The first attempt, as far as is known, to introduce the common house sparrow of Europe to our country was made by a gentleman named Desblois, in Portland, Maine, during the autumn of 1858; he brought over a few birds from the Continent, and liberated them in a large garden which was situated within the central part of the city. They remained there sheltered and secure under the eaves of a neighbouring church throughout the winter, and in the following spring settled down happily enough to the labour of nest building and rearing their young. Two years later the first pair of these finches were set at liberty near Madison Square, New York City; the importation was steadily repeated, the birds being released in the Central Park and at Jersey City. They were first introduced to Boston in 1868 by the city government, and to Philadelphia by the municipal authorities in 1869, and from these small beginnings the house-sparrow has been spread all over this Northern country.