

OUR QUESTIONERS.

Availing myself of the SPECTATOR's liberal offer to answer reasonable questions, I would ask, was a worthy Ecclesiastic in Montreal justified in describing the turning to the East, during the recitation of a creed, as a species of "Sun Worship?" I had always thought that the position was symbolical, and in no way idolatrous. A description of the origin of the custom would be interesting to many.

We are under the impression that the Ecclesiastic referred to must have been misreported, for we think that no clergyman in Montreal was likely to fall into a mistake on the subject. We refer our correspondent to the writings of Wheatley, Secker, Collis and others, but perhaps a short extract from Secker will suffice:—

"Turning towards the east is an ancient custom—as indeed in most religions, men have directed their worship some particular way. And this practice being intended to honour CHRIST, the Sun of Righteousness, who hath risen upon us, to enlighten us with that doctrine of salvation to which we then declare our adherence, it ought not to be condemned as superstition."

The term Scientist is used so frequently in our pulpits now-a-days in a sense hostile to the interests of true religion, that one would like to know what range ministers would assign to it. Does it include all who devote their lives to the study of Science, or has it some exclusive signification which brings it specially within the realm of pulpit warnings?

The term is used quite loosely, with no well defined idea as to its meaning. But Ministers have got to imagine that the Scientist is opposed to the interests of Religion, when as a rule, he is only trying to find out what are the facts of the world of nature. In this way he is brought into collision with Biblical interpreters, for his assured facts do not always agree with their theology. Ministers only regard the Scientist as opposed to the interests of Religion when said Scientist does not fully accept their dogmas. If he will—he gets applauded—for he gives confirmation to what they have advanced. So that before we can say what "the term Scientist includes," we must know what the particular Scientist teaches. Ministers as a general thing do not carefully discriminate, and warn you against all who do not agree with them.

Can a satisfactory reason be assigned for the apparent inability of the American nation to maintain any humorous or comic journal to equal in good taste, refinement and genuine wit, the English *Punch*? Attempts have been made in this direction but they have utterly failed, and the specimens which are now struggling to take root in Canada are for the most part distinguished for their vulgarity and feebleness, and give no evidence of the possession of the smallest germ of wit.

The youth of the American nation is the best reason we can give. A young people are rarely humorous in the true sense of the word. Humour is in good part criticism, and criticism is only likely to be well received when a people have so much history at their back, and so many great institutions which have grown grey in demonstrating their goodness that they can afford to be laughed at. The American people are sensitive to all criticism, for they are not quite sure of their position. They are proud of the things they have done, yet envious of older countries. This will correct itself by and by.

As to Canada, the same thing applies—plus—our people do not read much. They have old world notions of Conservatism, and do not like to be laughed at. The comic papers are at a great disadvantage, just as high-class literary papers are, for the people do not require them. Change will happen here too let us hope.

Oblige a stranger by defining the terms Conservative, Liberal, Grit and Rouge as they apply to Canadian politicians, and say if these distinctions bear precisely the same interpretation in each Province of the Dominion.

Couldn't, dear stranger. No mortal could define the political phrases in use among us. Broadly, the followers of Sir John A. Macdonald are called Conservatives, and the followers of Mr. Mackenzie are called Liberals, or Grits, a kind of nickname. The only difference between them now is the question of protection vs. free trade, and the highest aim of each party is office. The Conservatives are not conservative in the English sense of the word. Still less are the Liberals like English Liberals. The Toronto *Globe* is the great organ of the Liberal party, but its liberalism could not be discovered by the aid of a powerful microscope.

The distinctions do not bear precisely the same meaning in each province. Liberals of the Province of Quebec are often Dominion Conservatives. It is simply a question of men and place.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"THE FUTURE LIFE."

SIR,—The late Charles Kingsley toward the close of his life, said he had often almost wished to die in order that he might see and know something of the life beyond. He seemed, however, to have had no very definite views concerning it, except that he believed and took comfort from the fact that God was the loving Father of us all, and consequently He would deal kindly and tenderly with us, as His erring children. In that hope he lived and died. Now, he is no doubt in full possession of that knowledge which he so long and so anxiously desired.

At this time there are many who have similar longings, and hopes, for on this subject there is a deep and widespread interest, especially among theological students, young ministers, and young men generally, as well as among thoughtful Christians, more advanced in life. This being the case, many would no doubt like to see the subject thoroughly discussed, by competent writers, in the pages of your excellent journal. I do not see why we should be afraid of it. If the old orthodox view be correct and scriptural, it would lose nothing by discussion, it would rather tend, I should think, to confirm and establish it, in the minds of those who are now wavering and perplexed. On the other hand, if it can be shown that the old view is not "according to the Scriptures," we should accept it with thankfulness, for such a discovery could not be displeasing to Him who delighteth in them that hope in His mercy, and whose word is truth. While said doctrine may not be one of the "fundamentals," it is so regarded by church authorities generally, therefore it is important that we should

know whether it be of God, or man—human or divine. The sooner the matter is thoroughly examined and settled, as far as it can be settled, the better. This duty, it seems to me, devolves upon the Professors in our Theological Schools, the leading Ministers of the Gospel, and Editors of religious periodicals and newspapers. In England the discussion is already considerably advanced, and no harm has been done. Among the Congregationalists, the *English Independent* informs us that it is now "an open question" in the Churches, and some of the leading and most influential ministers have discarded the old idea (like Canon Farrar, of Westminster,) and that without either disturbing the Churches, or affecting their Christian or ministerial standing in the least.

I am aware that several articles, by writers of some note, have already appeared in the SPECTATOR, but while they might be suitable for certain high-class readers, they were not exactly the thing for the common people, they were a little too abstruse and metaphysical for some of your readers, and did not look at the subject from a Bible standpoint. While metaphysics and science may help us to the discovery of truth, we want in this case especially to find out the true meaning of the word of God. We must stand or fall by that, and to that only can we appeal in the investigation and settlement of this deeply interesting and solemn question.

I will close this letter by indicating what I think should be the points and order of discussion, without giving offence to any except those who for certain reasons prefer darkness to light, and error to truth. There are three opinions relating to the future life, all of which are supposed to be susceptible of proof from the word of God, viz., everlasting conscious suffering, conditional immortality, or life in Christ only, and restoration, either universal or partial, according to conduct, in the world to come. If these three phases of the subject were discussed in the SPECTATOR, in a temperate and Christian manner, I am sure good would be done, and many who are now perplexed and anxious, might find mental quiet and rest.

Montreal, March 29th, 1878.

QUARTUS.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

BY PROXY. A novel by James Payn. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. Paper; pp. 158. Price 35 cents.

Mr. Payn's last book is sensational enough to satisfy the most jaded novel reader, and to wake up the attention even of those to whom the burden of new novels is sore. The plot is founded on an almost inconceivable incident, but it is an original conception. The stealing of a jewel from a Buddhist idol, it is true, may have been suggested by Wilkie Collins' "Moonstone," but the idea of a man consenting to undergo the most horrible form of death life, but to purchase a daughter's future prosperity, is a bold device on which to found a story. The working out of the idea not unnaturally suggests that the unworthy specimen of an Englishman who could consent to such a bargain, finds the temptation to fulfil his part of an irresistible, and the consequent complications in the love affairs of his son and his deliverer's of originality in every point is compensated for by the daring nature of the main incident, Ralph Pennycook, who suffers by proxy, is well drawn, and the analysis of his nature consistent and skillful. Indeed it is in the treatment of Pennycook and of Conway, the victim of his own life and regrets, that the excellence of the story consists; in these subordinate characters are not strongly marked, excepting an eccentric old gentleman with a large heart and a passion for auction sales. His kindly and somewhat vulgar wife is a pleasant personage, but we think we have met her before—in fiction, of course, for the reality is frequent enough. The Chinese scenes, and the manner in which the Pecksniffishness of celestial philosophy and the horrible stolidity and cruelty of the denizens of the Flowery Land are told, are novel, striking, and cleverly handled; they sharply contrast with our western conceptions of "the fitness of things." The idea expressed in the title is ingeniously worked into the named. There is a want of thoroughness of thought and carefulness of style which suggests that a little more pains might have made this a very powerful novel instead of a possibly repay the author for a lost opportunity, which might have shown, not only possibilities in the way of sensation and scene without going out of ordinary life to find them, but also ability to make the most of them when found.

DAVID'S LITTLE LAD, by L. T. Meade. THE ROMANCE PERIOD. English Literature Primers, by Eugene Lawrence. Harper's Half-Hour Series. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. Price 25 cents each.

These are two new numbers in the Series. The first a pretty story of Welsh life, sound and good in thought and teaching; the second containing a wonderful little essay on English Literature from Chaucer to Bacon. How Mr. Lawrence says so much and so well in such small compass is amazing.

PLATONIS DIALOGI VI. Harper's Greek and Latin Texts. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. 18 mo., pp. 327; Paper, 42 cents. Cloth, 65 cents.

Messrs. Harpers publish in very convenient form a number of Greek and Latin texts, which are well adapted for the use of schools and colleges, but more so, perhaps, for those who like to keep up their classics by occasional reference to a handy volume on the desk or in the pocket. The present number contains the Euthyphron, Apologia Socratis, Crito, Phaedo, Gorgias and Protagoras, edited by Hermann. The typography is excellent, paper and binding both good, and the whole marvellously cheap.

George Eliot has cleared £40,000 on "Daniel Deronda."

The diary of Napoleon at St. Helena will shortly be published.

"The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston," by his son, is in preparation by the Appletons.

William and Mary Howitt are living at Merau, in the Tyrol, where they are busy with literary work. William is eighty-two years old.

The paper of the late Hon. Gideon Welles on Grant's final campaign in Virginia was divided by the editor of the *Atlantic*, and the last half will be published in the April number.

Among some autograph letters lately sold in London, was one written by Kitty Clive to David Garrick, in reference to the stoppage of her salary, in which she says: "I hope the stoppage of money is not a french fashion." This brought something over \$75.

Mr. Stanley's forthcoming book of "New Discoveries in Africa," has been competed for by the principal London publishers. But the house of Sampson, Low & Co., a member of which went to the Continent to get it, is supposed to have carried off the prize.