

earth, what it is, how we may find it out, and how we may do it; and although several of the trains of thought will depend upon the belief in a Divine Providence, yet their essential truth will not be greatly affected by the adoption of other theories of life. To most of us, the belief in God seems to simplify much in human life and action, which otherwise would remain dark and complicated. Moreover, the manifestations of God in Christ and the record of Divine Revelation in Holy Scripture bring into clear light the notions of Divine government and grace which otherwise must have remained dim and uncertain. Still, a man will not escape from the obligation to work by refusing to acknowledge the great Taskmaster; and even he will be forced to ask the question, What is my place and work in human life?

1. We begin, then, by laying down the principle that every one is bound to do some work in the world—has actually some kind of vocation which he is bound to recognize and fulfil. And further, that the doing of such work is not only a man's bounden duty, but his greatest happiness as well. Great mistakes are made, and very false notions prevail on the subject of labour. It may be well to glance at them before setting forth the positive side of the subject. Labour, instead of being regarded as a blessing and a glory, is often looked upon as a misfortune. Idleness, which is one of the most shameful and disgraceful things in the world, is often considered to be a mark of distinction. In vain do Scripture, reason, experience denounce these fatal heresies. Human sloth, conceit, arrogance are often too strong to be overthrown by the power of truth. The poor man is apt to regard his daily labour as a simple misfortune or even as a curse, and to look with envy upon his better endowed neighbour who has no need to work

in order that he may live. He does not notice the penalty of idleness, he knows the inconveniences and ignores the unnumbered blessings connected with faithful toil, and he forgets how ill it has often fared with some of his class who have been suddenly relieved from the necessity of daily toil, and how seldom they have been made better or happier by the change.

A similar mistake is made by the wealthy man who despises the toiler, considers himself a superior person because he is under no necessity of labouring, and would regard work as of the nature of a personal degradation. Such an one forgets that it is to work that he owes his own emancipation from the necessity of working. It is labour which has accumulated the wealth by which he is supported; and in his stupid thoughtlessness he is despising the very power which has raised him to his place of pre-eminence and honouring the vice which has placed his brother beneath him in the social scale.

We find the same foolish errors illustrated in some men, drawn from that are called the higher ranks of society, but ill-provided with the means of maintaining their position. To such persons it is often very vexations to see their friends, their social equals, their nearest relatives, freed from the necessity of work, while they are forced to labour if they would live. It is a great hardship that there should not be, for such as themselves, some elegant sinecure offices which they could adorn without the necessity for painful or fatiguing exertion.

We cannot be quite sorry that, in the present day at least, there is very little compassion felt for these sufferers. At any rate we will waste no more time upon them, but only pass on to show the importance and the necessity of every one taking his share in the work of the world.