

gone before will be waiting on the shore. Soon the gangway of perfect trust will be thrown out, and we shall step on the pier of perfect love and clasp the hands of our departed ones, and to the strains of heavenly music we shall be escorted into the grove of perfect rest, and as we see the face of our Saviour, easily distinguished from all the others, we shall sing more sweet and loud,

"Praise ye the Lord."

Books.

BY REV. JOHN MORRISON.

WHAT an embodiment of human history is compassed by these five letters, the sun-dried or fire-burnt bricks of the Assyrians, the papyrus of the Egyptians, the vellum of the Jew, the wax-coated wood or ivory tablets of the Grecians and Romans, and the paper of the moderns, each in turn have served as media on which to record human thought, action and desire. Solomon said: "Of making many books, there is no end." What would he say were he alive now when books fall from the printing press as snowflakes from winter clouds, good, bad and indifferent—a few of the first, many of the second, and an almost innumerable number of the third?

Carliste said: "In books lie the creative Phoenix ashes of the whole past, all that men have deserved, discovered, done, felt or imagined, lie recorded in books, wherein who so has learned the mystery of spelling printed letters may find it and appropriate it." Books are the "open sesame" by which we enter and enjoy the enchanted castle of the dim and shadowy past.

The precious gem is hidden beneath the eons of accretionary rubbish and sedimentary deposit, and to reach them requires patient toil and hard labor, yet does not the careful, earnest miner turn from the rigors of his task, nor accept the easily obtained crystal quartz for diamonds, nor fools' gold for the genuine article. The pure gems and precious gold in literature, the principles of eternal truth and righteousness, laid down in books by inspired and uninspired men, are well-nigh lost to sight beneath the accretionary rubbish deposit of the ages; let the painstaking student dig for them; not fill the pockets of the mind with the false and the impure, because easily obtained, but seek out the true and the pure.

A fountain cannot rise above its source, nor the family or individual above their reading. No reading means mentally, a barren wilderness state; poor and low reading, a mental state comparable to a cesspool; reading only the best, an enlightened mind, quickened intelligence and loftier aspirations. But, alas! so many are reading "The Ships that Pass in the Night" class, which, to the immature minds at least, ought to pass in the night so they may not see them, for their teaching is not fit for the light of day, as the after taste is that of doubt and despair, not joy and hope; they have no time to scale the lofty heights of sublime literature, but, like Bunyan's "Man with the Muck-Rake," they grovel in the dirt and dwell in the dark valley, when they should be on the mountain peaks of God's faith and practice. He or she who enters the downward course of reading should have inscribed before their eyes Dante's discovered words over the gate of hell:

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

But as Beatrice in time led him out of that low and vile place and up the bright and shining way to heaven, so may some Beatrice spirit come and lead all who have taken the down grade on the rapid road of low reading to the upper slope, where the immortalities of God are blooming ever bright and fair.

Good books are a long range telephone by which we converse with the best mind thought in every age; in the seeming solitude of the study we are not alone, but are in telephonic touch with the giant minds of both past and present. Good books are a kinetoscope by which we have projected on the mental retina the deeds and actions of the noblest earth has seen, and as we listen and hear, look and see, our study becomes an enchanted palace, compared with which the temple of Arbaeus, with its mystic vision of the future, as revealed to Ione, is as dust and ashes.

Where is my study, and of what books must my library consist? now may the reader ask. It may be the costly furnished room, in splendid mansion, with walls shelf-laden

with countless volumes, illuminated by the harnessed lighting, or it may be the chimney corner in the frontier or backwoods pioneer log cabin, with its Bible, Baxter's Saints' Rest, Pilgrim's Progress, Shakespeare and Milton, and for light the blazing hickory or old fashioned hearth. The latter has brought forth as good as the former, for the test must always be a qualitative, not a quantitative one; and those who saturate themselves with the splendid principles contained in the books mentioned will be neither illiterate nor poorly furnished for the great battles of life. But whether the home be lordly mansion or peasant cottage, guard the door by which books are carried in; let strictest quarantine code prevail; the moral and spiritual sanitarian and God-appointed guardian of the home be as alert and watchful for the sensual microbe and double entendre bacillus, as are our health authorities, for the germs of the Asiatic cholera or Bubonic plague, and against all such let the verdict be "instantaneous cremation."

Springfield, Ont.

Scope of the Literary Department.

BY MISS CLARA WALLACE.

FOR a League to shut itself up simply to meetings that are entirely devotional is to forget to be as wise as serpents.

The wide-awake pastor expects, or ought to expect, the League to be an efficient and a practical helper in all the enterprises of the Church. In short, so long as it keeps to its rightful place and is to the pastor a supplement of, and not a substitute for, his labors, it may be to him hands, feet, eyes and ears. As physical exercise develops the body, as religious work quickens our spiritual life, so study increases brain power. Christianity means wholeness of being, body and spirit. Paul preached both to the Jews and Greeks the doctrine of a perfect manhood—perfect not only on one side of his nature, but on every side. The sacredness of man's body, the culture of his intellect and purity of his heart—all sanctified by one Spirit and consecrated to one great sublime object of life—that is the scope of the Christian religion. No part of man's nature is superfluous, and the spirit of the Christian life must touch and ennoble all.

Now, the Literary Department of the Epworth League aims at the culture and development of the intellect—an element in the trinity of the human being. And the Constitution of the League, more than that of any other similar organization, has been wisely arranged and adapted to meet the claims of the youthful mind as well as the heart.

In the Constitution, literary work is specified as embracing "Bible study, essays, lectures, debates, courses of study, reading courses." Such an outline presents a task that lies within the possibilities of every League, to some extent at least.

Granting the claim, then, that real literary work means mental culture, and that Christian culture means Christian character, as a result there is clearly a very intimate relation existing between such a work and that which is called "spiritual." The two departments are co-related, and, in a large measure, are interdependent.

Great revivals of spiritual life among the people have usually been followed by revivals of intellectual life and activity. To this, England, Scotland, Germany, Holland and America bear ample testimony; and these revivals of letters have reacted in promoting the reformation and evangelization of the world. To this the missionary awakening and zeal in the Church, in the colleges and Leagues bear unmistakable evidence.

True culture is more than religion's "hand maid" so called; it is part of the Christian religion and essential to its highest type. There is not so much danger of our placing too high a value on mental culture as there is that we underestimate the value of the Literary Department to vast numbers of young people.

Notwithstanding the splendid advantages offered in these days for a liberal education, it remains to be said that a large majority of our young men and women are every year crowded past the doors of the High School and out into the busy world. Our Church would be recreant in her duty and to her privilege if she did not open a way by which these could carry forward their studies in the Bible, in biography, in history, in philosophy, in science and in art.