

be safely assumed that the support of the Army is much more broadbased than it was. Another interesting portion of the report was the balance-sheet, which showed that the income was larger than ever—about £8 000. The real cost of the Army throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Canada and India was £20 000, and it should not be forgotten that £6 000 of this amount have been subscribed by the rank and file of the Church Army throughout the world. It was their great ambition, as far as possible, to make the 200 branches self-supporting. The Bishop, the Dean of Ripon, and the Rev. H. M. Hay Aitken, gave words of hearty encouragement to the "Army." In the evening a "Consecration Convention" was held in the same place, Chaplain General Edgehill, D.D., presiding.

**LAY READERS.**—The Bishop of Salisbury, England, has issued the following rules for persons hereafter admitted as lay readers in the diocese:—The person must be a male communicant, of sufficient age—which may vary according to circumstances—and must be nominated to the Bishop by the incumbent of the parish in which he is to work. He will be required to undergo a short examination, which will usually be conducted by the Rural Dean, in—1. Selected portions of the Bible; 2. The Prayer Book; 3. Selected portions of English Church History. The subjects, until further notice, will be:—1. The two books of Samuel, the Gospel according to St. Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles. 2. General knowledge of the Prayer-book, to be studied in Bishop Barry's Teachers' Prayer-book, or Evan Daniel or Preeter on the Book of Common Prayer. 3. Dissent in its relation to the Church of England, by Canon G. H. Curteis. Lay readers are authorised to read the Word of God and explain the same to such persons in the parish as the Incumbent shall direct, to read the lessons in Church, and to read in such buildings as the Bishop may allow such portion of the Morning and Evening services as the Bishop shall direct.

#### THE DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL

Canon Espin, who is Chancellor of the Diocese of Liverpool, held a visitation in St. Nicholas Parish Church of that city, and among other things spoke of a recent division in the House of Commons on the much agitated (by interested and rich persons) question of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, and said he was entirely convinced that the law of God forbade the marriage of a man with his deceased wife's sister, and the Catholic Church universally had held the same doctrine. It was quite true that the Roman Catholic and other Churches had granted dispensations, and a recent and scandalous case had occurred in the Roman Church in which a great prince had been permitted to marry his own niece. Such things were done in that Church because, according to the Roman Catholic faith, the Pope was held to have power to dispense even with Divine laws. Luther Melancthon, and all the great Reformers held the same view upon the subject as the English Churchmen. In Protestant Germany no doubt the same principle of dispensations prevailed. A man could obtain from the Crown in Prussia, a license to marry his wife's sister and his own niece, and often such marriages took place in Germany. The principle, however, was admitted that such marriages were forbidden by the law of God, and the only difference amongst the churches was that the English Church had not allowed that any person—prince or potentate—could dispense with the law of God, and much less do it for the payment of a sum of money. The Scripture argument was inferential and constructive, but to his mind it was absolutely convincing. He felt sure, however,

that eventually the question in this country would have to be settled upon social and domestic grounds, perhaps also somewhat upon political grounds, rather than upon the mere argument from Scripture. If a man were authorised to marry his wife's sister, why should not he also be permitted to marry his wife's niece, or his brother's widow? The only logical course would be to propose a law to authorise a man to marry anybody who was not a blood relation—his step-mother, if he liked. That would be logical, but of course the sense of the community—the sense of propriety and decency—would be outraged by such a proposal. Still, they might rely upon it that if once the principle which treated one's wife's relatives as one's own relatives were given away they could not stop until they had reached that abyss. From the United States, where the marriage tie was extremely lax, and where marriage with the deceased wife's sister was permitted, he had received the most painful and distressing reports as to its effect upon domestic comfort. Having also alluded to what had taken place in France with regard to this question, the Chancellor said he sincerely hoped that the Bill would not pass, but if it should pass he trusted that the parties desiring to contract such marriages, which the clergy believed to be unlawful, would be referred to the civil registrar. The important question would then arise as to whether it was possible for Church people to recognise as married persons those who, according to their convictions, were prohibited by the law of God from marrying one another.—*Selected.*

#### THE PEOPLE'S GOSPEL.

Every little while we hear it said, What an interesting time this is to live in, with its eager activities and rapid gains, its marvellous inventions and triumphant forces, its conquests by hand and brain, its telling out aloud of the secrets of the earth and sea and air and stars! But we are living, all of us, in the presence of a far more majestic movement, and it is the old miracle of the Galilean mountain side and the hungry wayfarers over again. Underneath, within, beyond all these mechanisms and positions of mortal energy and skill, there is building silently another Commonwealth, a house of almighty justice and love for the brotherhood of man, a city of God out of Heaven, not reared by the builders of roads, or factories, or ships, or empires, or universities. Ministers of the Gospel proclaim it; statesmen may help bring it on; scholars may serve in it; but so can every one of us, like the common men who before they were apostles handed the bread to the multitude,—our young men and boys like the lad with the loaves. Out of the class-rooms of colleges, out of libraries, lecture halls, workshops, and the fields ought to come workmen in that work, and master-workmen. Out of the homes of a believing and thankful people and the arms of gracious mothers should come laborers just as needful and just as true as those of Galilee, who find it honor enough and mastery enough to follow the steps and share the homely lot of Him who is the Master of us all. And all this will be the People's Gospel.—*Bishop Huntington.*

#### RELIGIOUS DUTY.

Many persons have an idea that they are free from religious duties until they agree to be bound by them. They think that attendance upon worship, the support of the Church, the avoidance of unprofitable amusements, and the maintenance of high Christian character may be binding upon the acknowledged Christian, but they do not apply to the irreligious man, especially the avowed sceptic.

But moral obligation is not created by con-

tract, nor does it depend upon belief. It requires no contract to bring a man within the range of God's physical laws. Disregard of the laws of health is punished, irrespective of the ignorance or disbelief of him who disregards them. Strychnine would kill, even though the victim did not believe in the power of poison or the fact of death; and so of the civil laws. It requires no contract to obligate a man to obey the laws of the state. He may be ignorant of those laws; he may refuse to obey them; he may deny their existence; yet they bind him, and for their violation he is justly punished. And so the moral laws; it requires no contract to bring man under their authority. By the very nature of his being he is under their authority.

There can be no evasion of the laws by which God carries on His moral government. They must be obeyed or disobeyed. Among those laws are the duties pertaining to the Church of Christ. That Church is a most important part of that moral government. Indeed, it is, on earth, the very embodiment of that moral government. It is the duty of ever one to whom that Church is presented, to enter it, to sustain it, and to be conformed in conduct and character to its teachings. Each one of these duties is binding; and the non-performance of the first—that of entering the Church—by no means lessens the obligations of the others; nor does disregard of them all either change their nature or diminish their force. The Divine law, which lays these duties upon every one, is an eternal fact; and neither its existence nor its power is in any way affected by men's belief concerning it.—*O. S. B., in the Standard of the Cross.*

#### WHITSUNDAY AND TRINITY.

The steady onward progress of the Christian year reaches a climax in its doctrinal teaching with Whitsunday and Trinity Sunday. The Nativity, the Circumcision, the Presentation in the Temple, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension are past, and we rise to the fulness of the consecration of the entire year, and our own lives in its passage, with the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and the commemoration of the Blessed Trinity in Unity. These are combined in the preface of the eucharistic service for Trinity Sunday, which declares, "It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should, at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God; for the precious death and merits of Thy Son, Christ our Lord; and for the sending to us of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who are one with Thee, in Thy eternal Godhead." So the feast of Trinity is the consummation of the Christian Year. The Sundays which follow it are but the lessening reflections of it; as they press into action the practical duties of God's service, flowing naturally out from the confession of a true and saving faith. The Church, in her zodiacal of the Christian seasons, takes the great acts of her blessed Saviour's life, and makes them visible in all the beauty of her feasts, or in the awful grandeur of her great Atonement. Thus each of them, in turn, embodies, represents and impresses the gracious doctrine which results from it. The teaching of Trinity Sunday is the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures teach it; and more than that, the Scriptures are because of it. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." "I and My Father are one." "He is the Lord of all, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever." So, as expressed in the Creed of the first general Council which met at Nicea, A.D. 325, the Christian world declares its faith, "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light,