

Mr. Gladstone and the Pope.

The letter to the Archbishop of York removes Mr. Gladstone still further from that central position which he occupied so long and so worthily says *The Christian Leader*. The disillusionment which we have had as to the power exercised by Rome over the Irish members has made Mr. Gladstone's favorite measure an impossible policy for British Protestants, and now the disclosure as to the great orator's own sentiments makes himself as impossible a leader. He regards the Pope's proposed inquiry into the validity of Anglican orders with the liveliest satisfaction. The Pope's attitude in the matter "seems to me," he writes, "an attitude in the largest sense paternal, and while it will probably stand among the latest recollections of my lifetime it will ever be cherished with cordial sentiments of reverence, of gratitude, and of high appreciation."

This is a bigger sorrow for multitudes than even the death and burial of Home Rule, and if there was nothing more in it than disappointment and grief we should have grieved in silence. But unfortunately there is more in it. Mr. Gladstone's letter is a symptom of a movement which is gathering force and rushing us on to new calamities. It is bad enough that the hold of Romanism grips Ireland with undiminished strength, but what would it be to have the heel of the priest upon the necks of ourselves and of our children? That we are within "measurable distance" of that calamity we shall not say, but that the late Premier's letter reveals a Romeward movement no one can fail to see. There is not a shadow of Protestant sentiment in the letter. There is no recognition of any service rendered by the heroic men who suffered and died that England and Scotland might have gospel light and liberty. It is taken for granted throughout that we have no reluctance to unite Rome and no reason whatever for persisting in separation. He actually rejoices over the melancholy fact that the Church of England has not engaged in any attempt to enlighten Roman Catholics! "Happily," he says, "no system of proselytism exists to set a bister on our mutual relations with the Latin Church, which from its magnitude and the close web of its organization overshadows all western Christendom." The word "bister" is not a misprint, as some belated reader may think, for "blister." It is a French term, and means a dark paint. The English Church, whatever other communities may have done, has not bedaubed herself with that offence against Romanism. But, if this is a virtue, the fathers of the English Reformation must have erred and sinned lamentably.

If there had been any doubt as to this being Mr. Gladstone's meaning, that doubt is dispelled by the satisfaction with which he regards the spread of sacramentarian doctrine in the Church of England. This revival of idolatry—of the worship of that which is not God—forms to the late leader a grateful spectacle, and this for the simple reason that it brings the Church of England into line with Rome. "In this character," he says, "the writer has viewed with profound and thankful satisfaction, during the last half-century and more, the progressive advance of a great work of restoration in Christian doctrine. It has not been wholly confined, within his own country, to the Anglican communion, but it is best that he should speak of that which has been most under his eye. . . . It is not to be denied that a very large part of these improvements has lain in a direction which has diminished the breadth of separation between ourselves and the authorised teaching of the Unreformed Church both in the East and the West; so that while, on the one hand, they were improvements in religious doctrine and life, on the other hand they were testimonials recorded against ourselves and in favour of bodies outside our own precincts—that is to say, they were valuable contributions to the cause of Christian reunion."

Mr. Gladstone has never understood the Protestantism of Great Britain. This has been a misfortune due to his birth and his early training in a practically unreformed Church. Those outside the influence of such an organisation have no right conception of its power. Let them measure it by its hold upon this gigantic intellect and upon the leaders of thought in almost every other European country. Its darkness and tyranny are spreading. They are spreading in the Scotch establish-

ment and in the rapidly advancing ritual of many of the Dissenting communions. If we are not to refuse obedience to the duty of the time, this evil should be grappled with at once. We have been hindered by two things. Those outside the Church of England were so firm in their Protestantism, and were so sure that a people which had once known the blessings of spiritual freedom could never again submit to the yoke of priestcraft. But that apparently impossible thing is happening under our own eyes. Then those within the Church of England have feared to loose from their moorings, and have understood their Dissenting brethren almost as little as the Ritualists themselves. It is now high time to cast both indifference and prejudice to the winds. Let us come together for prayer; for, if God help us not, we and the cause we love best are undone. Let us wait upon God and power will once more clothe the feeble, and those who cried to God for help will live to praise Him for His answer to their cry.

The Globe's Armor Plate of Air.

We owe our immunity to our atmosphere, which serves as a bullet proof cuirass for the world. When a meteor enters the atmosphere, the friction produced by its gigantic speed makes it flash up like the arrow of Acastes, only more so. The ingenious experiments of Lord Kelvin have shown that the heat thus produced, just as a brake showers sparks from a carriage wheel, or a lucifer match lights on the box, is sufficient to consume the meteor as if it were suddenly cast into a furnace heated to 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 degrees. Obviously the smaller meteors are utterly consumed before they have penetrated far into the atmosphere, which their fate has shown to rise to a height of about 120 miles.

Only a very large one can descend, as that of Madrid is said to have done, to within twenty miles of the earth before being burst by the expansion due to heat and by the resistance of the air. The fact that fragments do occasionally reach the earth is the best proof of the great size of some of the meteors that we encounter. If it were not for the "blessed air," the explosion of them all, with the accompanying fervent heat, would take place in our midst. It is safe to say that such a state of things would render our great towns uninhabitable. In London we are somewhat inclined to gird at the atmosphere, with its smoke and its fog and its east wind. But none of us can tell how often it has saved him from a terrible and invisible fate, in being, as Mark Twain has it, "shot with a rock." If we are more inclined to recognize the atmosphere services in future, the Madrid meteor will not have exploded in vain.—*The Spectator*.

Providential Care.

"Do you bring everything to God when you ask for His guidance?" was the inquiry which a devout Christian made of our friend, who himself had known the Lord for many years, and had become rooted and grounded in the faith. "No," he responded, to the surprise of the questioner, who evidently anticipated a very different answer. "I commit my ways unto the Lord at the beginning of each day, and in doing this believe that He accepts me, and feel that to pause every moment to speak to Him about every question that may arise during the hours of the day is unnecessary."

It is certain that when the continual crying unto the Lord for help in small matters may indicate a weakness of faith, the committing everything to God in one single act may be the better experience, since it indicates a perfect trust. This may include everything, and when truly genuine may preserve us from a certain unrest of mind which belongs to ripe Christian character. Nevertheless, our life is marked by unexpected emergencies, and it is one of the great privileges of the Christian to bring everything to God, asking for His guidance and care, in the perfect assurance that His ear is attentive at all times when we call upon Him. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance," is the best guide for our daily practice.—*Christian Advocate*.