

many professedly religious circles, whether on week days or Sabbaths, and this will be found to be very much the order of things: the affairs of this life all discussed in a easy, interested, quite human fashion, but the affairs of the next either quietly ignored or spoken of in a vague, far-off, forced manner, which too frequently dies off altogether into silence, or becomes a painfully wearisome monologue on the part of individuals who are anything but thanked for a zeal which is thought far to outrun their discretion. Why this is we do not at present profess to say. But that it is, is beyond all reasonable question, whether it is a cause or a consequence, or both.

PESSIMISM.

EVERY now and then a cry of "Pessimism" is raised. The dark record of current crime is gone over with even painful minuteness. We are pointed to the murders, so common and so atrocious; to the robberies, so many and so defiant; to the seductions and general licentiousness so frequent and so much taken as matters of course; to the dishonesties in business; to the profanity of speech among old and young, so prevalent and so disgusting; to the lying, that is laughed at as clever, or at best set down as a good joke; to the drunkenness, that knows no shame; to the Sabbath-breaking, that has been even exalted into something like a religious cult; to the worldliness which, both within the church and without, has become so absorbing and so persistent; to the Agnosticism which so glories in an ignorance of things unseen and spiritual that it has the very suspicious appearance of scarcely concealed atheism and unbelief; to the popular philosophy which makes the only standard of right and wrong, utility, and leaves every one to settle for himself what that utility may mean, and what obligations it may imply; and as the result of all this, and its practical embodiment, the grand epicurean and godless conclusion so thoroughly criminal and so thoroughly hopeless, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Everything, it is said, is out of course. The restlessness of revolution, religiously, morally and socially, is upon the nations; God has become but a name, His law a tradition, and His threatenings a mere subject for jest.

Now, we don't deny but that appearances give some plausible ground for such mournful statements and such depressing prognostications. Crime is very rife. The marriage tie is often sadly relaxed, outraged and scoffed at. Female virtue is often found to be very low, and men's passions very outrageous and pitiless. We can say nothing against the charge that commercial morality is often very discreditable, and that falsehood has been so reduced to a system that it is taken by many as a necessity in the world of business, politics, society, and even religion itself. Tricks which ought, in a state of things fairly good, to involve social ostracism and the sternest reprobation, are laughed at as jokes, or applauded as cleverness incarnate. Fraud that keeps on the safe side of the law is "mighty smart," whether it develops itself in petty adulterations, or in huge "rigging" operations on the Stock Exchange or in bogus swindles. All this and a great deal more is unfortunately too true. Men and women who live apart in a small family or ecclesiastical circle of their own may know nothing of such a state of things, but the fact is all too notorious and unquestionable. And yet, after granting all that can be asked, are we to come to the conclusion that society's course is at present downward, and that "the former times were better than these?" We more than question this. No doubt we are pointed to the high unsullied honour of the British merchant in former days, which now it seems cannot be found. But is it a fact that it *can't* be found? In the midst of abounding shoddy is there no genuine cloth? Of course there is. The cases of fraud and falsehood are made notorious if not celebrated; the quiet integrity and scrupulous honour pass unknown or as matters of course. And when we go over all the items of the huge indictment against current morals and modern Christianity, is there nothing to be said *per contra*? Much every way. The ubiquity of the press, and its craving for salable and shocking sensations, brings everything to light, and leads every horror to be canvassed in all circles, whether of town or country. Let any one go back over English history, for instance, and even the comparatively little that is known of the social and religious condition of these days will make him feel that the people of the present have no need

to hang their heads in shame as they read the record of the gone by. Let any one try to represent to himself the condition of England when Whitefield and Wesley began their work, or even at a much more modern period, and he will not be so down-hearted in the contemplation of the present. What was London at the end of last century? What was England at the commencement? What about the political corruption? What about the courtly vices? What about the general coarseness and the prevailing immorality? We are bad enough, Heaven knows, but things were tolerated less than fifty years ago which would not pass muster to-day. It is said that men are now venial, that politics are corrupt and voters purchasable. It is all too true. But were they less so, even in this Canada of ours, thirty years ago than they are to-day? We doubt if they were, while certainly on the outward decorum and business quietness of an election struggle, as we had it last week, the change for the better is as marked as it is unquestionable. There is, no doubt, still plenty of work for the philanthropist and the Christian to attempt and to achieve. There is much religious languor, and the restraints of Christian morality are too often altogether thrown aside. But there is nothing greatly to depress, still less anything to lead one to fold his hands and despair. It is quite true that all past civilizations, apart from Christianity, have ended in barbarism, and that there is no element in our present civilization but that same Christianity to prevent its following in the downward course in which its predecessors have gone. But that makes all the difference. The Christianity of the present is still that of the past, and when the enemy comes in like a flood the Lord will lift up a standard against him, and the Lord's people must only the more resolutely and perseveringly, in His name, display their banners, not with the dogged resolution of despair, or with the depressing feeling that it will do no good, but with the exultant and even growing conviction that the cure for men's moral and spiritual maladies which the religion of Christ supplies is sufficient, and is alone sufficient, and will undoubtedly and at no distant day be universally effective. Let men oppose and condemn as they please; in the meantime they will not forget that to them has been committed the glorious work of seeing that it be rightly and perseveringly applied.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

THE MORMON PROBLEM. By a Citizen of Massachusetts. (Boston: James Campbell.)—A glance at this pamphlet of seventy-six pages shows that it contains an attempt to prove the morality and lawfulness of plural marriage. What next?

ST. NICHOLAS. (New York: Century Co.)—The July number of "St. Nicholas" is out, with its sense and its nonsense, its instruction, information, amusement, skilfully compounded and rendered irresistibly attractive to the intelligent juvenile.

THE SOUTHERN PULPIT. (Richmond, Va.)—The June number of the "Southern Pulpit" is to hand with a full and varied table of contents—sermons, outlines of sermons, expositions, suggestions of texts, homiletical illustrations—all well fitted to stimulate thought.

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE. (New York: Century Co.)—The July number of the "Century" opens with a portrait of Mr. Emerson, engraved from a photograph of the stone bust. Some of the other illustrations are very striking, especially those from Alaska. The reading matter is attractive, as usual, several well-known contributors' names appearing. This number contains the conclusion of "Carlyle in Ireland."

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)—Along with instalments of three serial stories that are running at present in this magazine, and some short stories, the July number contains a variety of papers more or less practical, such as "Care for the People under Despotism," by O. B. Frothingham; "Naval Courts-Martial and the Pardoning Power," by Henry Cabot Lodge; and "Shall Members of the Cabinet sit in Congress?" by Willard Brown. The poets are well represented.

THE HOMILETIC MAGAZINE. (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co.; New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co.)—In the June number of this magazine we have paper No. 4 of the "Clerical Symposium," on the doctrine of the Atonement, which has been running

its course for some months. The writer is Dr. G. W. Oliver (Wesleyan). The article is a great improvement on some which appeared in the previous numbers, and treats the subject in a manner that is in harmony with Scripture and with the general consensus of the Christian Church. The number contains several sermons and other papers on important subjects.

THE CANADA EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY. Edited by G. Mercer Adam. (Toronto: C. E. M. Publishing Co.)—"The Natural Sciences in Relation to the Work of the Higher Schools," by A. McGill, B.A.; "A Boy's Books," by Dr. Scadding; "The Literature of Education," by An Old Head Master; "Wordsworth," by the Rev. S. Lyle; "A Year in England," by A Canadian; and "Mr. Puzzle, H. M. Inspector," by James Runciman, are among the contributions to the June number of the "Educational Monthly." It also contains editorials on "Professional Works of Reference" and "Departmental Recognition of Private Schools." The usual practical departments of "University Work," "School Work," etc., are well filled.

PNEUMA BAPTISM. (Pulaski, Tenn.: Pneuma-Baptist Publishing Co.; Montreal: F. E. Grafton. Price 75 cents.)—The preface to this book informs us that "it is the purpose of the Pneuma-Baptist Publishing Company to issue such books and tracts as will tend to bring into prominence the work of the Holy Spirit, not only in 'gathering out of' the Gentiles a people, but as dwelling in the believer and in the Church as the wondrous Paraclete or Comforter." The book before us, however, appears to aim at something more than bringing baptism with the Holy Spirit into prominence. It aims at the entire abolition of water baptism, whether by sprinkling or by immersion, on the ground that it was not water-baptism that the Saviour commissioned His apostles to administer, but baptism with the Holy Ghost, or Pneuma-Baptism. The main argument in support of this singular view appears to be the fact that water is not mentioned in the commission.

WHAT OUR GIRLS OUGHT TO KNOW. By Mary J. Studley, M.D. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: W. Briggs. Price \$1.)—This book is principally, though not exclusively, occupied with matters pertaining to health; it is addressed to a class of persons about to enter on a phase of life in which they will find information on such matters urgently necessary and highly beneficial to themselves and to others; and it is written by a person peculiarly qualified to give such information. Dr. Mary J. Studley was not only an M.D., but a *doctor* in the primary sense of teaching. Throughout the book she seems to imagine herself talking to a class of young ladies, and this gives to her remarks a sprightliness which renders the book very attractive even to the casual reader. If "our girls" of the present day would just put themselves in possession of the knowledge contained in this book, and make a good use of it through life, they would confer an invaluable boon on generations to come, besides adding not a little to their own comfort and happiness.

BAPTISM AND SALVATION. By the Rev. James Roy, M.A. (Montreal: L. E. Rivard.)—Mr. Roy in this pamphlet places before his readers the following adaptation of a well-known passage of Scripture: "He that immerseth, immerseth unto the Lord; and he that poureth, poureth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks," and much more in the same vein, his object being to reconcile the hostile parties in the Baptist controversy by getting them both to understand that the mode of baptism is a matter of indifference. He also takes up the other point in the controversy—the *subject* of baptism—but here he offends one of the aforesaid hostile parties by advocating infant baptism, while his way of doing so is likely to give almost as much offence to the other; for he bases the right of the infant to be baptized, not so much on the faith of the parent, as on a "germ of salvation," a "prevenient grace," which exists naturally in the child. On the subject of salvation Mr. Roy speaks very vaguely. In a pamphlet with such a title he surely had an opportunity of pointing out the way in which God saves sinners. Of this opportunity he has not availed himself. His definition of salvation is, "Salvation is the satisfaction and well-being arising from godliness in constitution and character." If this is correct, then salvation is a *feeling*, and the poor man who prayed the Lord to give him "a good conceit" of himself was on the right track after all.