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ARCHDEACON FARRAR'S CREED.

THE THEOLOGY OF ENGLAND'S GREATEST CHURCHMAN.

Churchgoing, Creeds, Forms Are Mere Accessories—Truth, and That Alone, Shall Finally Prevail.

RETIRED in the midst of roaring London in a quiet as sweet and perfect as if it were part of the peace of a country village, is a venerable gray stone arch, scarce younger than Westminster Abbey itself. It opens on Victoria street, only a few steps from Westminster's great front portals, and in front of it the garish line of London 'buses, the ceaseless procession of London cabs, the never ending stream of London humanity, rattles and bangs, clatters and jolts, tramps and patters from morning till night, from night till morning. But somehow the noise of the city does not go beyond the arch. Within the circle of aged houses which surrounds the yard London is no longer London. The dingy fog becomes a soft, comforting haze, like that of our own autumn. The grassy oval on which small boys from one of the clerical schools were drowsily punting a football about as I passed is like a rural field. The sparrows darting from their nests in trees and ancient cornices, seem less aggressive in their chattering than when they raise their strident voices outside of this venerable spot. Nowhere is any sign of the conflict and worry of the outside world.

Five minutes' pause in Dean's Yard forms a fit introduction to an afternoon with Archdeacon Farrar, the most loving and most lovable—at once the broadest and the most devout of England's churchmen.

His first words, spoken in the semigloom of his pleasant study, were of America. He knows America and he numbers many Americans among his friends. The late Phillips Brooks, Boston's beloved bishop, spent many hours in the leather chair, to which the archdeacon motioned me. Of Bishop Potter, Lyman Abbott and many others he had kind words to say. An American (George W. Childs) gave the window above "Little Poets' Corner." In the archdeacon's church—St. Margaret's—which nestles in the very shadow of the abbey, and where he acts as Rector, in addition to his duties in the greater edifice, the "American's pew" is always reserved for visitors from over seas.

"When I was in America," he said, "I was not once permitted to sleep or sup in a hotel. All doors from those of Bishops to those of the humblest of dissenting ministers, were thrown open to me, and I gladly entered in. Not a sixpence could I pay on railroads or steamboat lines, though I traveled like a prince. Everywhere the hand of friendship and love was extended to me, and do you think I can forget."

He has not forgotten.

His enthusiasm for our vastness of territory and our bigness of heart knew no bounds. When, after he had passed from it, he began to preach a little sermon of modern things and human sympathy to me, he had captivated me as he captivates all those who come in contact with him.

Where He Thinks And Works.

His study fits the man. It is a cheerful room, noticeably warmed by its crackling grate fire in this city of chilly places. Books line the walls and clutter the tiny tables with learning that tells the tastes of a man whose mind is big and all-embracing. Near one of the windows, long-legged and high, is the queer desk on which the good man for many years has penned the words which have spread his fame beyond the limits which even his clear, bell-like preaching voice could reach. He always stands as he writes. Keepsakes and mementos of his legion of friends are everywhere. The names that are associated with them will tell as plainly as his books do why he is not a bishop—the conservatism of the Church of England could not consistently advance a man whose sympathies are so universal. Darwin and Ruskin find as warm a place among those friends as celebrated ecclesiastics do. His recent advancement has not surprised his friends less than it has pleased them.

Standing constantly in the very midst of the monuments and voices of the past, he is more modern than the century. Positioned in one of the closest and most conservative religious bodies in the world, he is more liberal than the age. Familiar with the wickidness of every individual of one of London's poorest parishes, he confidently prophesies the coming of universal good. Himself incapable of evil thought or deed, yet he is filled with an all-forgiving mercy for those who err.

A Little Sermon By Archdeacon Farrar.

The general optimist, whom everybody loves, even as he loves everybody, can only say good things and think good things:

"You say the race is getting to be longer lived," said he, sitting thoughtfully back in a great leather chair, and pressing his finger tips contemplatively together. "Yes, and it is getting to be better lived. Atheism is dead in England, as I believe it to be also in America. Agnosticism is a name for almost anything. I have known it to be the name for a very good and simple sort of christianity. People say they do not know the secrets of the universe, and they are, therefore, called Agnostics. But who does know them? Surely not I.

"I have my Bible and my faith, as other Christians have their Bibles and their faith. I know what my faith has revealed to me, and in this knowledge is my Christianity—my religion. But I do not know the secrets of the universe. If I should learn them—if any finite human being should learn them—then I would be, then he would be finite no longer, but infinite. And infinite knowledge would overwhelm poor human nature. The man who acknowledges that he does not know, need not be separated from the remainder of humanity and given a name by himself. We none of us know. We cannot know. We must not know.

"The most earnest and most learned Christian in the world can only have his Bible and his faith. But the Agnostic has not faith? Oh! I cannot believe that. We have all of us been too deeply implanted with the traditions of Christianity—of worship for the Divinity, the existence of which is attested by every phenomenon of nature, by every growing grass blade, as loudly as by the rioting thunder-storm—to be without faith.

"But is not that superstition instead of faith, you ask? Name it as you please. It will not be less effective in its influence because you name it superstition. It will still be the saving clause. So-called Agnostics are not the lost souls that many think them. They are not brave men, but all cannot be brave. If cowardice is born in them let us pity them, not blame them. And if they are, as I believe them generally to be, men who are, unconsciously, perhaps, searching among the shadows of their self-acknowledged ignorance for the pearl of conviction which is there, although they do not see it, though they doubt its genuineness, while they really do catch the glimmer of its dimmed glory, let us remember that when they find it, when they realize its worth, they will prize it with an appreciation multiplied by their searchings and their doubts."

There is no hate in the archdeacon's heart for anyone. He must be a wickid man, indeed, whom this kindly soul could utterly condemn.

The World Is Getting Better.

"Our greatest advance," he went on, "has been in the Christian virtue, mercy. Charity and mercy have increased amazingly. See our modern charitable institutions No, they are not the mere outgrowth of the practical needs of civilization. Science is too greedy. It demands more credit than it deserves. Christianity is, not slowly, driving cruelty out of the present back into the past.

"The future will be free from it. See what a change has come in the rearing of the children. The parents who guide their little ones with the rod are going out of fashion. Kindness is now the textbook from which England's infancy and youth are taught their development. Has science brought that about, or has it been Christianity's work? See how our treatment of animals has changed.

"A vast organization, headed by noble men and women, and bearing on its roster the names of a vast number of humbler but equally high-minded persons, protects dumb brutes from cruelty in England. In the United States a similiar society, founded by that great humanitarian, Henry Bergh, is thousands strong. Has not Christianity brought these things about?

And surely science itself has not made its marvelous advances without incurring a vast debt to Christianity. What has developed education except Christianity? Christianity? Who were the students, and, in turn, the teachers at the beginning of the renaissance of knowledge, which has already reached so sublime a point, and which is, apparently, too far from its climax to make a prediction of its end yet possible? Were they not the Christian monks, who, when outside the cloister walls there were universal turmoil and dissension, preserved within their monasteries a peace and quiet given over to two things—their devotions and their studies? It was they who laid the foundation stones for the grand structure of modern progress, as certainly as it was earnest Christians who laid the foundations for the abbey, whose towering and magnificent facade you gazed at before you entered here.

Mercy and Charity Everywhere.

"Mercy and charity? Mercy and charity! They are everywhere about us to-day; signs of the progress and development that have already come; signs that progress and development are as grandly inevitable in the future as they have been in the past. The imperiousness of wealth, the arrogance of class distinction, must continue to give way to them. Already the poor man's voice is loud in England, and not loud in wailing, but loud in counsel that is carefully regarded and respectfully heeded.

"Mercy and charity—Christian virtues both—support our hospitals and homes; preserve our children from vice and teach them virtue; dominate our law and magistrates; move our monarchs—control our world. Can anyone who really thinks assume that humanity is not growing better? That Christianity is not gaining power?"

"But the church itself," I asked, "as differentiated from abstract religious sentiment—is that growing, too? Does the number of churchgoers, of open worshipers, keep pace with population in its growth?"

The broad minded churchman sank back again into the depths of the cavernous chair from which the earnestness of his remarks had drawn him, and, with half-closed eyes, expressed an opinion amazing in its width and wisdom, coming, as it did from a high official of the Church of England.

"I do not know," he slowly said "that that follows, or that it needs to follow I do not know that the number of 'church-goers,' as you describe them, has grown as rapidly as has the number of men and women. I do not know that it has not, mind you."

Then, after another brief pause, he started forward again, and, with a little gesture of earnestness, exclaimed, softly:

"Need we care?

"Cannot a man be a Christian unless he attends church? I think he can be. It is, of course, most desirable for all Christians to openly acknowledge their Christianity by regular attendence at a place of worship. It is giorious that we are permitted to gather in public edifices and acknowledge our devotion. It makes us proud of our religion, and pride—the right kind of pride—is a wonderfully good influence. And from each other we gather force. There is power—magnetic and inspiring sympathy—in numbers. Church worship and church membership are great helps particularly to the young. It is a fine thing for the young man to listen to the Word of Our Lord and to pray to Him and feel His presence in the midst of a concourse of other listeners, of other supplicators, of sympathizers.

But the voice of God is loud in the wilderness. Does He not adjure us to petition Him in secret? What consolation is so passing sweet as that which comes to us when we are alone with Him? Churches are the visible evidences of religion; but religion—ah! religion exists elsewhere than in the pews; is preached from other places than the pulpit; has melodies even sweeter than the voices of any human choir, and harmonies deeper, grander more profound, more heart-filling, than those of any organ in the world."

I cannot tell in print the grandeur of his words as they were spoken there in the quiet, slowly darkening study. As he stopped speaking he relaxed. He had become tense and eager in his earnestness, but now he sank again into the shadow, I could not see his face, but I knew his eyes were closed, and that he was thinking deeply. The fading light revealed beyond the window quaint roofs and bits of strange old architecture. Sparrows flew up twittering. Not a hint of the roar of London penetrated the room. I was in a new world, talking with a new kind of Church of England man. The clergy I had met in London—not inconsiderable in number or unimportant in position—had been good men of strong convictions and high intellect. But they had not taught me to expect this from their archdeacon. I said nothing, knowing that he would go on.

"'Worship the spirit with the spirit' are the words of Our Lord," he broke the silence with. "We need not go to any church to do that."

This again was unexpected.

"Forms are necessary to some people just as churchgoing is to perhaps the majority of Christians. But because a man does not conform to them need make him none the less a Christian. He need not be less noble, less sincere, less earnest, less absolutely truthful in his Christianity because he does not swing incense or go where others swing it. His prayers may be quite as devout and entirely as likely to be answered, though they

(Continued on page 6.)



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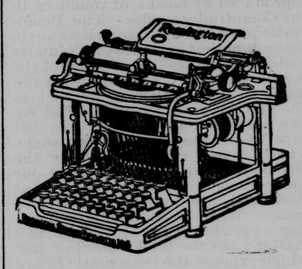
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