

THE Present Truth

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."—John xvii. 17.

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The Present Truth.

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WHEN THE MESSIAH CAME.

"BUT thou, Bethlehem Euphratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah v. 2.

THIS was the stately language of the prophet, foretelling the coming of the Messiah. This was the passage to which the chief priests and scribes turned, when Herod called them together and demanded of them where Christ was to be born.

"AND they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel." Matt. ii. 5, 6.

THEY did not quote the last clause—"whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Why not? Their "higher criticism," no doubt, had explained away those words so fraught with the breath of eternity, and so full of spiritual meaning. To them perhaps that was but a bit of

mystical poetry, which, according to their interpretation, the prophet had seen fit to attach to the weightier matters of practical prophecy.

THAT a ruler should arise, who would expel the Roman governor, soldiers, and tax-gatherers, and re-establish the glories of King David and Solomon was something that they believed, and looked forward to. They felt that to be practical. It was something which

dress in which the fact of the coming Jewish supremacy was set forth,—that was all.

YET, did it enter the minds of any of them that He who should be ruler in Israel was that day a babe in Bethlehem? Who can tell? Perhaps. But if it did they had no thought of emulating the wise men in their adoration of an infant. Indeed, they felt it would not do for them to commit



BETHLEHEM.

their minds could grasp and they could look forward to with a feeling of its possibility. They felt such a consummation was conceivable, and was something to which men of the practical trained intelligence that they felt they had attained, might look forward with some assurance of its realisation.

As for the rest, however,—that was but the mystic veil thrown round a core of reality: just the rhetorical

themselves to anything so unreasonable. It would be quite time enough to acknowledge allegiance when he had come to years of maturity, when he had donned his armour, and summoned his men-at-arms about him, and there was a reasonable certainty that he was about to drive the foreigner from the sacred soil of Palestine, and set up his kingdom.

WHEN that time should arrive, and

all this should be assured, "then" it would be time enough for them to take action. In the meantime it would be the part of wisdom for them to stand calmly by—entirely neutral—and await the progress and development of events. They did so, and the outcome was such as to convince them of the entire wisdom of their policy. If they had any hopes they were literally destroyed in the bud by the severe measures which Herod took. The incident of the quest of the wise men, the examination of the chief priests and scribes by Herod, his alarm and the cruel act in which his jealous fear resulted, passed from the minds of men, and became but an episode in the uncertain records of a troublous time.

It is thus, in centuries past, that men have ignored the accepted time, and so they do still. The Word of God is spread abroad now as never in the previous history of mankind. All the accessories which fulfil, explain, and illustrate the Scriptures are published in the view of men as never before; they are multiplying rapidly within the possible observation of all men. And yet there are chief priests, scribes, and Herods, to-day as there were eighteen hundred years ago. It is no less evident now than then that not all learning is wisdom, and that not all learned men are wise. Then the wise men worshipped in humility and faith, but the learned gave information to the enemy. Wisdom will be justified of her children no less to-day than then.

SPEAKING AND LIVING.

It requires the wisdom and prudence which only God can give to know how to speak the truths of the Word, and to remain silent when silence is more golden than speech. No rule can be stated to govern it, as the Holy Spirit must be the teacher in every occasion of need. However, merely as a suggestion of a very common danger, the following words by one writer are worth thinking of:—

I have known pious persons, rich in good works outside the home, who yet drive those with whom they live into various stages of indignation, revolt and unbelief by their well-meant homilies. Generally speaking, our religion is best shown by words to strangers and chance acquaintances, but by our lives to those who are always with us. If we live aright in the home our words are unnecessary, if not they are hurtful.

While it is by no means the case that one should be silent about Divine truth before those daily associated

with, who may not be alive to its importance, it is a fact that the danger is that one may give more attention to talking than to living. And if the life be hid with Christ, the words will spring from the abundance of the life within, and will not so often take the form of "homilies," distasteful to those who do not relish spiritual things. Such persons very often repel the wisest words, and then special wisdom is needed to know when to speak and when to remain silent, committing the case to God in prayer. Christ's life and His own ways are to be studied for wisdom to know how to speak a word in season.

THE STATE AS A RELIGIOUS TEACHER.

THE dullest observer of events in the religious education controversy can now see very plainly why the Roman Catholic Church has always favoured compulsory religious teaching in the Board schools, even when they had the gravest objections to what was taught. The great thing with Rome was to have the principle of State-taught religion maintained, trusting in its own power to turn the principle to the direct advantage of the Roman Church.

We remember commenting on this seven or eight years ago in these columns, quoting from the chief organ of the Catholic Church in England to show that, while they held the religion taught to be little better than heathenism, still they regarded those who were insisting that the Board schools should give religious instruction as "doing the work of the Pope as surely as if they were his hired emissaries." They said:—

Every year that passes sees a widening of the circle to which Catholic influences extend in this country. The day will certainly come when the true religion will be placed before the common people of England as it has not been placed before them since the time of Henry VIII.

At that time it was perhaps hardly supposed, even by them, that by 1896 they would be working in the lobbies of the House of Commons, with fair promise of success, in favour of a Bill practically establishing their own schools. The Bill does not go far enough to suit them, it is true, but the Pope, according to a recent despatch, says that it is possible to tolerate the Bill, and so it is accepted as a further confirmation of the purely papal principle that the State should be the servant of the Church, do as it is told, and pay the bills. So the hierarchy in England has issued an episcopal

message favouring the partial endowment of their schools:—

The Education Bill now before Parliament has our goodwill and approval, because it proposes to recognise by statute Voluntary and Christian schools as an integral part of the national system of elementary education. It embodies a Christian principle which, as Catholic Bishops, we must ever assert and maintain. That principle is that Christian parents possess an indefeasible natural right to have their children taught catechetically by approved teachers the definite doctrines of Christian faith and morals.

Those who have all along insisted on having a little religion made compulsory in the Board schools now find themselves illy prepared to struggle against this direct establishment of State-paid Catholic teaching. The Catholics, Roman and Anglican, both retort that the Protestant element has always wanted compulsory religious teaching, and they can say that the objectors to the proposed scheme differ only in degree and not in principle. Everything is working out in Rome's favour simply because the papal principle of advancing religion by human authority and political scheming will always work out in favour of the papal religion. The preaching of the Word—not by the State, but by those who believe—is the only thing that succeeds against Rome.

FOUNDATIONS BREAKING UP.

THERE seems to be a breaking up of the fixed social and political conditions which from time immemorial have ruled the East. From the war between China and Japan, as the starting point, great changes are taking place. In the promulgation of the Gospel the Lord is making the wrath of man to praise Him. During the war more than 120,000 Testaments or portions of Scripture were distributed among the Japanese soldiers.

Since the war there has been evidence that this sowing of the seed has borne fruit. The Japanese authorities have allowed the inmates of all the military hospitals to be furnished with Testaments. The police at Tokio and Yokohama have also each been supplied with a copy. In fact it may be said that general Bible distribution is now possible in Japan. Another result of the war is likely to be the introduction into China of modern facilities for travelling and transportation. This means that the Bible and Bible teachers will then go throughout the length and breadth of that benighted land.

It may also be said that a great change in the map of Asia is about to

be made by the cession of territory by China to Russia, in return for protection and favours past and to come. What the results of such a change as that might be time only would develop. Certain it is that the foundations of the great East are breaking up. Ancient paganism must give way, to be succeeded by modern paganism and Christianity.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES.

It is not impossible that the introduction into the eastern world of the machinery and appliances of modern western civilisation may be the means of working a great revolution in industrial matters, not unattended with privation and suffering for the labouring classes of western Europe and America, who are dependent upon manufacturing interests for their support.

Japan, China, and India possess multitudes of skilled hand-workers,—patient, painstaking, and intelligent artisans. What will be the result when all the latest and highest achievements, in the way of labour-saving mechanical appliances, are put into those skilful and patient hands? Chinese cheap labour has been excluded from the United States. But what is to hinder the progressive Oriental, or any American, or European for that matter, from taking the latest approved and perfected machinery, in any branch of manufacture, to Japan, or China, and there utilising this cheap labour in its own home?

The Japanese are an enterprising people. They are already awake to the possibilities open to them. Machinery has been imported from Europe and America; and manufactured products from Japan, equal in quality to anything that can be produced in the United States, have already, says a London journal, been offered in San Francisco at from thirty to fifty per cent. less than the prices made to dealers by American manufacturers. If Japan can undersell the United States with so wide a margin to spare as that, it can also compete with Great Britain and Europe in their own markets. Thus it will be found that there are more ways than one in which Oriental cheap labour can be brought to the doors of the western world.

As for the Chinese, they have learned more in the last two years than in the preceding twenty centuries. If they put their new-fledged acquirements into practice they will soon be close

on the heels of "Japan. What is to hinder Japan and China from producing useful goods cheaper than Continental, British, or American manufacturers? Unskilled labour is a drug in the market,—neither do they lack for those who have intelligence and whose brains are in their fingers. All that they lack is machinery,—this the forges, foundries, and machine-shops of Europe and America are ready to furnish them. Skilled workmen will not be lacking to go with the machinery and furnish all the expert training needed. Experience has already shown in Japan and China that such assistance is not needed long.

With cheap transportation by sea, and rapid communication by direct transcontinental railroad lines, every facility is within their reach to render them able to create a revolution in trade and manufactures. Such a possibility,—no, such a probability—as this adds another, and a striking factor, to the signs of the times which are multiplying around us.

LEARNING WITH THE HEART.

"WITH the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Rom. x. 10. The things of God are revealed not to the head but to the heart. Belief is not a mere intellectual assent to what God says, it is the acceptance of what He says in the heart—the seat of life. It is true that the mind of the man who believes with the heart will actively grasp the truths of the Word—for the mind of Christ is an active mind—but he who thinks to study into the mystery of God just as he would apply the mind to any problem within the range of human knowledge will fail.

The knowledge of God is salvation; it is a matter of a new life, and it is with the heart that every man must believe his way into its mysteries,—mysterious only as the finite mind attempts to state them in human language, but simplicity itself as received into the life by the working of the mighty power of God. "Behold, God exalteth by His power: who teacheth like Him?" Job. xxxvi. 22. He teaches His ways by living His way in the heart that yields to Him.

When one is ill and weak, so that the mind is unable to think clearly, even then may he know in his heart that God is good. And he who is blessed with the strongest mind will find his perception of Divine truth

growing keener just in proportion as he recognises the fact, that as all truth is in Jesus Christ, so it is revealed only as the heart receives Him into the life. "With the heart man believeth."

OFFICIAL RELIGION.

THE Russian law forbids any member of the State Church withdrawing from it. The religion is officially called Christianity, and "Christians" the people must be, whether they will or no. The following paragraph from a newspaper shows how the scheme works out:—

Just what the Russian State and Church think of religious liberty can be learned from the court proceedings at Ufa, where recently fourteen young people were charged with having denied the Orthodox faith and become Mohammedans. The defendants declared that they had never been Christians and did not want to be, and the investigations of the officials showed that their parents had indeed, many years ago, submitted to forced baptism and were entered in the Church records as converts, but that the accused had been reared as Mohammedans. On the basis of existing laws the Church declared that they had been guilty of a denial of Christianity, and decreed that they should be put into a cloister, and that their property should be confiscated until they would return to the Christian religion. Essentially the same principles of procedure and laws are in vogue in the dealings of the Orthodox Church with the Protestants of the three Baltic Provinces.

Anyone can see that the logic of the law is to make the heathen a "Christian" against his will—and that is the logic of every human religious law. Thus it is apparent that the whole system by which it is thought to make men Christians by human power and authority is itself absolute heathenism. As the Gospel goes to the world to-day it is again the light shining in gross darkness.

Like Themselves.—It is very apparent in the case of the Russian officials who would force Mohammedans to be "Christians" in spite of themselves that these officials have no idea of religion other than that a man may be forced into it. They know nothing of genuine religious conviction, and as they profess without conviction so they would force others to do the same. Error deceives men thus, but truth never. No one with an apprehension of spiritual truth can for a moment take pleasure in the thought of forcing an unwilling profession of it. The lesson applies to the Sunday-law movement in professedly Protestant countries as well as to Russian religious laws.



The Everlasting Gospel.

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

WHEN the humble shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem were astonished by the shining of the glory of the Lord round about them, as they watched their flocks by night, their fears were quieted by the voice of the angel of the Lord, who said, "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke ii. 10, 11.

The words, "good tidings," are from the one Greek word which elsewhere is rendered "Gospel;" so that we might properly read the message of the angel thus: "Behold, I bring you the Gospel of great joy, which shall be to all people." In that announcement to the shepherds, therefore, we learn several important things.

1. That the Gospel is a message that brings joy. "The kingdom of God is . . . righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Christ is anointed "with the oil of gladness," and He gives "the oil of joy for mourning."

2. It is a message of salvation from sin. For before this time the same angel had foretold to Joseph the birth of this infant, and had said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." Matt. i. 21.

3. It is something which concerns everybody,— "which shall be to all people." "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

This is assurance enough for everybody; but as if to emphasise the fact that the poor have equal rights in the Gospel with the rich, the first announcement of the birth of Christ was to men in the humblest walks of life. It was not to the chief priests and scribes,

nor to the nobles, but to shepherds, that the joyful news was first told. So the Gospel is not beyond the understanding of the uneducated. Christ Himself was born and brought up in deep poverty; He preached the Gospel to the poor, and "the common people heard Him gladly." Mark xii. 37. Since it is thus presented to the common people, who form the bulk of the whole world, there is no doubt about its being a world message.

"THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS."

BUT although the Gospel is first of all to the poor, it is not something mean and ignoble. Christ became poor that we might become rich. The great apostle who was chosen to give the message to kings, and to the great men of the earth, said in view of his hoped-for visit to the capital of the world, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i. 16. The one thing that all the world is seeking after is power. Some seek it by means of wealth, others through politics, others through learning, and still others in various other ways; but in whatever enterprise men engage, the object is the same,—power of some kind. There is in the heart of every man an unrest, an unsatisfied longing, placed there by God Himself. The mad ambition that drives some to trample on scores of their fellow-creatures, the unceasing struggle for wealth, and the reckless round of pleasures into which many plunge, are all vain endeavours to satisfy this longing.

God has not placed in the human heart a longing for any of these things; but the quest for them is a perversion of that desire which He has implanted in the human breast. He desires that man should have His power; but none of the things which men ordinarily seek, give the power of God. Consequently none of these things satisfy

man. Men set a limit to the amount of wealth which they will amass, because they think that when that limit is reached they will be satisfied; but when the fixed amount has been gained, they are as unsatisfied as ever; and so they go on seeking for satisfaction by piling up wealth, not realising that the desire of the heart cannot be met in that manner.

He who implanted that desire is the only one who can satisfy it. God is manifested in Christ, and Christ is indeed "the desire of all nations" (Haggai ii. 7), although there are so few who will believe that in Him alone is there perfect rest and satisfaction. To every unsatisfied mortal the invitation is given, "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. O fear the Lord, ye His saints; for there is no want to them that fear Him." Ps. xxxiv. 8, 9. "How precious is Thy loving-kindness, O God! and the children of men take refuge under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures." Ps. xxxvi. 7, 8, R. V.

Power is what men desire in this world, and power is what the Lord wants them to have. But the power which they are seeking would ruin them, and the power which He desires them to have is power that will save them. The Gospel brings to all men this power, and it is nothing less than the power of God. It is for everybody, if they will accept it. Let us for a while study the nature of this power, for when we have discovered it, we shall have before us the whole Gospel.

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

IN the vision which the beloved disciple had of the time just preceding the coming of the Lord, the Gospel message which prepares men for that event is thus described:—

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

Here we have plainly set before us the fact that the preaching of the

Gospel consists in preaching God as the Creator of all things, and calling on men to worship Him as such. This corresponds to what we have read in the Epistle to the Romans, that the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation." What the power of God is we learn a little farther on, where the apostle, speaking of the heathen, says:—

"That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Rom. i. 19, 20. That is to say, ever since the creation of the world, men have been able to see the power of God, if they would use their senses, for it is clearly to be discerned in the things which He has made. Creation shows the power of God. So the power of God is creative power. And since the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, it follows that the Gospel is the manifestation of creative power to save men from sin.

But we have learned that the Gospel is the good news of salvation through Christ. The Gospel consists in the preaching of Christ and Him crucified. The apostle says: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the preaching of the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor. i. 17, 18.

And still further: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. And this is why the apostle said, "And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2.

The preaching of Christ and Him crucified is the preaching of the power of God, and therefore it is the preaching of the Gospel, for the Gospel is the power of God. And this is exactly in harmony with the thought that the preaching of the Gospel is the setting forth of God as the Creator; for the power of God is creative power, and

Christ is the one by whom all things were created. No one can preach Christ without preaching Him as the Creator. All are to honour the Son even as they honour the Father. Whatever preaching fails to make prominent the fact that Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things, is not the preaching of the Gospel.

CREATION AND REDEMPTION.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us full of grace and truth." John i. 1-14. "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Col. i. 16, 17.

Let us give more careful attention to the last text, and see how creation and redemption meet in Christ. In verses thirteen and fourteen we read that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." And then, after a parenthetical remark as to who Christ is, the apostle tells us how it is that we have redemption through His blood. This is the reason: "For by Him were all things created," etc. The Revised Version, and others also, give the more literal rendering, "For *in Him* were all things created, . . . and He is before all things, and *in Him* all things consist."

So the preaching of the everlasting Gospel is the preaching of Christ the creative power of God, through whom alone salvation can come. And the power by which Christ saves men from sin is the power by which He created the worlds. We have redemption through His blood; the preaching of the cross is the preaching of the power of God; and the power of God is the power that creates; therefore the cross of Christ has in it creative power. Surely that is power enough for anybody. No wonder that the apostle exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. vi. 14.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD.

To SOME it may be a new thought that creation and redemption are the same power; to all it is and must ever be a mystery. The Gospel itself is a mystery. The Apostle Paul desired the prayers of the brethren, that utterance might be given him, "to make known the mystery of the Gospel." Eph. vi. 19. Elsewhere he says that he was made a minister of the Gospel, according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto him by the effectual working of His power, that he "should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Eph. iii. 8, 9. Here again we see the mystery of the Gospel to be the mystery of creation.

This mystery was made known to the apostle by revelation. How the revelation was made known to him we learn in his Epistle to the Galatians, where he says, "But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." And then he makes the matter still more definite, by saying, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Gal. i. 11, 12, 15, 16.

Let us sum up the last few points. 1. The Gospel is a mystery. 2. It is a mystery that is made known by revelation of Jesus Christ. 3. It was not merely that Jesus Christ revealed it to him, but that he was made to know the mystery by the revelation of Jesus Christ in him. Paul had to know the Gospel first, before he could preach it to others; and the only way in which he could be made to know it was to have Christ revealed in him. The conclusion therefore is that the Gospel is the revelation of Jesus Christ in men.

This conclusion is plainly stated by the apostle in another place, where he says that he was made a minister "according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches

of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." Col. i. 25-27.

So we are fully assured that the Gospel is the making known of Christ in men. Or rather, the Gospel is Christ in men, and the preaching of it is the making known to men of the possibility of Christ's dwelling in them. And this agrees with the statement of the angel, that they should call the name of Jesus Emmanuel, "which, being interpreted, is God with us" (Matt. i. 23); and also with the statement by the apostle that the mystery of God is God manifest in the flesh. When the angels made known to the shepherds the birth of Jesus, it was the announcement that God had come to man in the flesh; and when it was said that this good news should be to all people, it was revealed that the mystery of God dwelling in human flesh was to be declared to all men, and repeated in all who should believe Him.

And now let us briefly sum up all that we have thus far learned.

1. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Salvation is only by the power of God, and wherever the power of God is, there is salvation.

2. Christ is the power of God.

3. But Christ's salvation comes through the cross; therefore the cross of Christ is the power of God.

4. So the preaching of Christ and Him crucified is the preaching of the Gospel.

5. The power of God is the power that creates all things. Therefore the preaching of Christ and Him crucified, as the power of God, is the preaching of the creative power of God put forth for the salvation of men.

6. This is so, because Christ is the Creator of all things.

7. Not only so, but *in Him* all things were created. He is the first-born of all creation; when He was begotten, "in the days of eternity," all things were virtually created, because all creation is in Him. The substance of all creation, and the power by which all things should be made to appear, were in Christ. This is simply a statement of the mystery that only the mind of God can comprehend.

8. The mystery of the Gospel is God manifest in human flesh. Christ on earth is "God with us." So Christ dwelling in the hearts of men by faith is all the fulness of God in them.

9. And this means nothing less than the creative energy in God working in men through Jesus Christ, for their salvation. "If any man be in Christ,

he is a new creature." 2 Cor. v. 17. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. ii. 10.

All this is indicated by the apostle when he says that to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ is to make all see "what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

A SUMMARY.

In the following portion of Scripture we have the details of this mystery well summarised:—

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation* of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him in whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ; in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. Wherefore I . . . cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." Eph. i. 3-20.

Now we will note the different points of this statement. 1. All blessings are given to us in Christ. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." Rom. viii. 32.

2. This gift of all things in Christ is in accordance with the fact that He

* Some versions, as for instance the various Scandinavian versions, have, "To establish an household," or, "with regard to an household" in the fulness of times. This is warranted by the Greek, and is much clearer, when we consider the subsequent mention of the household of God.

has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that in Him we might obtain holiness. "For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 9.

3. In that choice the destiny determined for us was that we should be sons.

4. Accordingly He accepted us in the Beloved.

5. In the Beloved we have redemption through His blood.

6. All this is the making known to us of the mystery, namely, that in the fulness of times He will gather together in one household all things in Jesus Christ, both things in the heaven and things on the earth.

7. This being the fixed purpose of God, it follows that in Christ we have already obtained an inheritance; for God makes all things work out the purpose of His own will.

8. All who believe in Christ are sealed with the Holy Spirit, which is called the Holy Spirit of promise, because it is the surety of the promised inheritance.

9. This seal of the Holy Spirit is the pledge of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. iv. 30.

10. Those who have the Spirit as the seal, know what is the riches of the glory of the inheritance; that is, the glory of the future inheritance becomes theirs now, through the Spirit.

In this we see that the Gospel involves an inheritance; in fact, the mystery of the Gospel is really the possession of the inheritance, because in Him we have obtained an inheritance. Now let us see how the matter is stated in the eighth of Romans. We shall not quote the scripture entire, but simply summarise it.

Those who have the Holy Spirit of promise are sons of God; "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." But if we are children we are necessarily heirs; heirs of God because sons of God. And if heirs of God, we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. The one thing above all others that Christ is desirous that we should know is that the Father has loved us even as He loved Him.

But of what are we heirs together with Christ?—Why, of all creation, because the Father has constituted Him "heir of all things" (Heb. i. 2), and has said that "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." Rev.

xxi. 7. And this is shown by what follows in the eighth of Romans. We are now sons of God, but the glory of the sons of God doth not yet appear. Christ was the Son of God, yet He was not recognised as such by the world; "therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." 1 John iii. 1. In possessing the Spirit we are in possession of "the riches of the glory of the inheritance;" and that glory will in due time be revealed in us, in a measure far exceeding all present sufferings.

"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Rom. viii. 19-23.

Man by creation was a son of God; but through sin he became a child of wrath, even a child of Satan, to whom he rendered obedience, instead of to God. But through the grace of God in Christ those who believe are made sons of God, and receive the Holy Spirit. Thus they are sealed as heirs until the redemption of the purchased possession, that is, the whole creation, which is waiting for its redemption when the glory shall be revealed in the sons of God.

* * * Next week we shall continue the study of the Gospel, specially considering what is included in the "Purchased Possession."

PLAIN BREAD FOR HUNGRY MEN.

THAT veteran preacher and writer, Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, celebrated his fiftieth year in the ministry the other day. Speaking of his early years as a preacher he said:—

"My congregation was small, and mostly composed of shoemakers, coachmen, gardeners, and plain folk—just the best sort of material for a young beginner. I aimed my sermons at the coachmen and gardeners, and by that style of gunnery reached the whole of my little congregation. One thing I soon discovered, and that was that the half-dozen highly cultured

families in the parish relished simple, spiritual, and earnest sermons quite as much as the gardeners and the shoemakers. The Gospel of Christianity is not a delicate dainty for the fastidious few, or a difficult enigma for acute intellects alone to solve. It is God's simple bread of life for the hungering masses of humanity. There is no greater delusion than the idea that highly-educated parishioners hanker after severely intellectual or abstruse preaching."

SPIRITUALISM.

NO. 1. THE CONTENDING FORCES.

THERE are but two forces in the world—the power of God and the power of Satan. The arena where these opposing forces meet is this world, and human agency is employed on both sides, through which the warfare is waged. The Spirit of Christ and all heaven on the one hand, and Satan and the fallen angels on the other hand are engaged in an unceasing warfare, and both claim the right to control the human family.

Once, harmony existed throughout the universe of God. Not a single note of discord was to be heard. Lucifer, the son of the morning, was content to fill his allotted place as the anointed cherub that covereth. Perfect in all his ways, he was content to reflect the glory of God, laying the tribute of praise at the feet of His Creator; until he turned his eyes away from the source of his wisdom and brightness to himself, and then iniquity was found in him, and he fell, dragging with him a great host of the angels of God—those who "kept not their first estate."

The first medium that was ever used to bring the human family under control to Satan and the fallen angels was the serpent. As it now is it carries about with it the stamp of its former control. No better illustration can be found of the work of Satan, especially through Modern Spiritualism, than the serpent, as we now see it, with its poisonous breath and slimy, coiling folds, gathering up within its embrace the whole of the dominion that has passed under the control of the Fallen Cherub. Truly the whole world lieth in the embrace of the wicked one.

The first expression that the first medium ever gave vent to was a sneer at the alleged arbitrary commands of God. "What! is it possible that God could have said such a thing as that? Could He be so unjust and cruel as to curtail your liberty in this manner?" And having gained the confidence of his hearers by his apparent tender regard for their liberty, in contradistinction to the supposed hard taskmaster that was binding heavy burdens upon their shoulders, he prepared them for

the next step, which was a deliberate denial of the statement already made by God: "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." And "the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."

Since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden the world has been the abode of the fallen angels. "Reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," they have walked up and down in this world "through dry places seeking rest." Shut out from the light and glory of the presence of God, how great is that darkness that now envelops them, and how strong are the chains that bind them to this earth-sphere, and keep them out of the home of light and song where the unfallen angels dwell! There the bright and glorious beings who have never known sin dwell in the presence of the Eternal Light, always beholding the face of the Father, but here those who have fallen from that estate have become devils—groping in the darkness. How are the mighty fallen and how is the gold become dim and the most fine gold changed!

A graphic description of the casting of Satan and the fallen angels out of heaven is given in the 12th chapter of Revelation:—

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. . . . Therefore rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

That war which Satan commenced in heaven is still being continued on this earth to-day. As "the god of this world" Satan claims all that are born as his loyal subjects. There is only one way to escape his dominion, and that is to connect ourselves with the conquering forces of heaven. "This is the victory that overcometh the world—our faith."

The conflict between the two forces has been raging all through this world's history. There is no doubt as to its final outcome. The victory has already been won by Christ, and all who will may appropriate that victory by faith, and use it when coming in contact with Satan and his defeated host. What though the forces of evil are strong and threaten to sweep all before them, the forces of heaven are stronger, and they keep in check the remainder of wrath that cannot be turned unto the praise of God. In the patriarchal age some of those forces were seen by Jacob when "the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim [two hosts or camps]." In Joshua's time

they were recognised when the "Captain of the Lord's host" appeared to him prepared to dislodge the evil spirits from their high places in the idolatrous land of Canaan. In Ensha's time they were seen by the prophet and his servant: "Behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Ensha." In the days of Christ the forces of evil were fully recognised when His power was brought to bear upon the devil-possessed individuals. And as regards our own day we read: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places."

Of the control of men by evil spirits through Modern Spiritualism we shall have more to say in the following articles. Suffice it to say for the present that this period of the world's history in which we are now living is to witness the last crowning masterpiece of deception that Satan can bring to bear upon a deluded world, working with "all power and signs and lying wonders;" and therefore it is necessary that all who are the children of God should be on the alert, putting on the whole armour of God that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and be kept from the time of temptation which is coming upon all the world to try them that dwell therein.

H. CHAMPNESS.

"JUST AS I AM."

It is but a step into the kingdom. The decision may be made by any man and the step be taken within a moment—the step from the kingdom of darkness and unrest into that of light and peace. The following incident is an illustration of this:—

At a mission service held at a seaside place by an earnest servant of God, this familiar hymn was given out to be sung. Before it was begun, the gentleman who was conducting the meeting urged very solemnly that none should join in singing the words without really meaning them.

Thus cautioned, an officer who was sitting in one of the rows cast his eye down the verses, and thinking them over, he came to the determination that he could not stand up and sing, "O Lamb of God, I come." He had never really meant anything by it when he had sung it before, and decided not to sing it again.

A moment more, and the sudden blessed thought came, "I must come now!" He did not hesitate because his life had been careless before, or because his life might in future be one of difficulty or temptation. He just closed with the loving Saviour's free

offer of salvation, and trusted Him for the rest. He sprang to his feet and sang, meaning it, "O Lamb of God, I come!"

THE SOUL'S NEED—SUPPLIED.

I NEED to hide in Thee, O Lord!
Sintul, and weak, and low;
I need the cleansing of Thy blood;
To make me white as snow.
I need Thy merit and Thy grace,
For I have none to plead;
I need the shining of Thy face—
Thou knowest, Lord, my need.

I need Thy robe of righteousness,
For mine is soiled and torn;
I need regenerating grace,
I need a soul newborn;
I need the gold of faith and love
My poverty to fill;
I need enlightening from above
To know and do Thy will.

I need an Elder Brother strong
Close at my side to be;
I need a guide 'mid sin and wrong
To clear the mystery;
I need a Comforter Divine,
A heavenly hand to lead.
O Christ, Thou seest this soul of mine,
And knowest all my need!

Come, Light of Life, dispel my gloom;
Come, Love, and fill my heart;
Come, Rose of Sharon, with Thy bloom,
Thy fragrance sweet impart.
Come, Elder Brother, Mighty One,
For Thee alone I plead.
Shine Thou, Divine, eternal Sun,
Thy healing beams I need.

I hear His whisper: "I am here
At thy right hand to aid;
In sorrow's billow; have no fear;
Hope and be undismayed.
I'll shed My love as showers come down
Upon the long-mown mead.
I claim thee Mine from heaven's high throne.
I come to fill thy need."

FANNIE BOLTON.

TRUE PROSPERITY.

DAVID declared that he was envious at the foolish when he saw the prosperity of the wicked until he understood their end. By neglecting to follow the Lord and refusing to accept the life He so freely offers, the wicked man chooses death.

As the world goes, he may have all the prosperity that is possible; he may heap up riches; he may make to himself a great name and leave behind monuments of his greatness and his prosperity, but, after all, this is not real prosperity. The riches he heaped together he "knoweth not who shall gather them." The great name he secured is written only in the sand; for "the memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot," and the monuments left will crumble and decay and pass away.

According to the common standard of prosperity and security "the tabernacles of robbers prosper and they that provoke God are secure." Everybody desires prosperity, and the Lord Himself desires—more than men can desire it—that all should be prosperous; and He has given us the secret of true prosperity. Here it is:—

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

What more can we ask for than this?

But the only way for a man to avoid walking in the counsel of the ungodly is to yield Himself to the counsel of Him whose name is "called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." He says, "Counsel is Mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding; I have strength." He who follows the counsel of Jesus Christ will not stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful, but his delight will be in the law of the Lord and in His law will he meditate day and night, "and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Prosperity lies only in the line of believing what the Lord says. Through Jehoshaphat the Lord said to His people anciently—and He says the same thing to His people now—"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." Here again we see that prosperity is in the Word; so by receiving the Word in simplicity we allow the prosperity to come which the Lord desires us to have. Where His Word is permitted to enter, there is prosperity, for He hath declared, "It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

There is no prosperity outside of Jesus Christ. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." He who confesses and forsakes his sins and so finds mercy—finds what was held out to him all the while—is in the way of prosperity.

But we are not to estimate prosperity from what appears on the surface. The man who permits the Word of God to abide and abound in his heart has prosperity, because where that Word is there is the power to do all that needs to be done. We read that Joseph "was sold for a servant. Whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron; until the time that His word came; the word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance; to bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom."

The Word of God tried Joseph, and he stood the trial. He was willing to suffer unjust imprisonment, to let his reputation go to the winds, but he was unwilling to yield himself a servant of sin. His adherence to the Word of God led him into prison, but it was

his adherence to that same Word which brought him out again. He went from the dungeon to the throne and occupied a place second only to that of the king himself. The Lord was with him through it all, and Joseph knew this. But how significant it is that of all the points in this interesting career that one which was specially singled out by the Word of God to show that the Lord was with him was the experience in the Egyptian prison. He was in prison on a false charge, but "the Lord was with him, and that which he did the Lord made it to prosper." Therefore, through whatever experience the Lord's servant is called to pass, the Lord goes with him through that experience. Joseph trusted in God and He made what he did to prosper. Now, since He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," and since He is no respecter of persons, He will make to prosper all that men do to-day who yield themselves as fully as did Joseph.

Everywhere the desire exists for prosperity, and the only means of satisfying that desire is Jesus Christ the living Word, who has opened His hand to satisfy "the desire of every living thing."

D. A. ROBINSON.

Calcutta, India.

THE LORD'S COMING.

WE are away up in a far corner of the nineteenth century, and eighteen hundred years count for something, even in the Lord's calendar. How are we putting in the time? Don't flatten your face against the pane, waiting, nor sit down with the time table between your knees, reckoning when He is coming. Avoid heresy on the one hand and lunacy on the other. Hold it practically—go out and fish.—*John McNeill.*

A RICH MAN'S DREAM.

A MINISTER some time ago told this story in his sermon:—

"A prosperous member of a church in Scotland was often besought by his pastor to give to the work of evangelising the poor in Glasgow, but would always reply, 'Na, I need it for myself.' One night he dreamed that he was at the gate of heaven, which was only a few inches ajar. He tried to get in but could not, and was in agony at his poor prospect. The face of his minister appeared, who said, 'Sandy, why stand ye glowering there? Why don't ye gae in?' 'I can't; I'm too large and my purse sticks out whichever way I turn.' 'Sandy, think how mean ye have been to the Lord's poor and ye will be small enough to go

through the eye of a needle.' He awoke and began to reduce both his purse and his carnality by giving to Christ's cause."

"ALL THY WORKS PRAISE THEE, O GOD."

INVISIBLE, Immortal One!
Behind essential brightness unbelied,
Incomprehensible! What weight shall weigh?
What measures measure Thee? What know we more
Of Thee (what need to know?) than Thou hast taught,
And bidd'st us still repeat at morn and eve?
God! Everlasting Father! Holy One!
Our God, our Father, our Eternal All!
Source whence we came, and whither we return;
Who made the heaven, who made the flowery land.
Thy works all praise Thee; all Thy angels praise;
Thy saints adore, and on Thy altars burn
The fragrant incense of perpetual love.
They praise Thee now; their hearts, their voices praise,
And swell the rapture of the glorious song,
Harp, hit thy voice on high—shout, angels, shout!
And loudest, ye redeemed! Glory to God,
And to the Lamb! who bought us with His blood,
From every kindred, nation, people, tongue;
And washed and sanctified and saved our souls;
And gave us robes of linen pure, and crowns
Of life, and made us kings and priests to God.
Shout back to ancient Time! sing loud and wave
Your palms of triumph; sing, Where is thy sting,
O Death? Where is thy victory, O grave?
Thanks be to God, eternal thanks, who gave
Us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Harp, hit thy voice on high! shout, angels, shout,
And loudest, ye redeemed! Glory to God,
And to the Lamb, all glory and all praise!
All glory, and all praise, at morn at eve,
That come and go eternally, and find
Us happy still, and Thee for ever blest.
Glory to God and to the Lamb! Amen.
For ever and for evermore, Amen.

R. E. POLLOCK.

CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW.

IT was by sin—transgression of the righteous law of God, 1 John iii. 4—that the whole world became involved in ruin. Hence it was a necessity that One equal with the law should redeem us from its curse; for it is a curse to those who do not obey its requirements, because it condemns the offender. But it is a blessing to those who obey; for it is written, "Great peace have they which love Thy law," and, "All Thy commandments are righteousness." Ps. cxix. 165, 172.

Hence the need of a schoolmaster to show us wherein we have sinned, and a Saviour through whom, by faith, we are delivered from the disobedience so that we may no longer be under the condemnation. Gal. iii. 24. It is the law as a schoolmaster that drives us to Christ that we may in Him be freed from transgression. Thus "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" not that we are released from obligation to keep the law and given license to continue in sin, but that His righteousness is sufficient to keep the believer from transgressing His law.

So it was that the Jews, when they refused to see that the end or aim of the law was Jesus Christ, could not

keep the commandments. They did not have faith, "and without faith it is impossible to please Him." "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man [not the Jew, but the man] which doeth those things shall live by them." Rom. x. 3-5.

It was that these things, the righteousness of the law, might be done in men that Christ came and lived in the flesh, and that He now promises to live in all who believe, working in them His own life of obedience. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body . . . but yield yourselves unto God, . . . and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 12-14. It is yielding to the righteousness of God's law that makes us free from its condemnation. To be "under the law," then, is to be breaking it, failing to comply with its requirements; while to be under grace is to be made free from sin by the power of the grace of Christ, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." It was to this end that Jesus gave Himself for us.

C. J. HOWARD.

IGNORANT PRAYING.

THERE is a great deal of it. Prayer is very important, but it is of the highest importance that we know how we should pray and what we should pray for. To the mother of James and John, who asked Jesus to grant her sons official or prominent positions in His kingdom, He said: "Ye know not what ye ask." When we hear some Christian praying that God would wholly conform them to His image, we say to ourselves, "This is ignorant praying. Ye know not what ye ask." Such ones do not know that, in answering their prayer, God would be obliged to purge them by the fires of fierce trial, tear idols from their hearts by agonising experience, take away from them, perhaps, dear children, or wrench their property from them. We need to count the cost of some of our praying. Above all, we should pray for wisdom in all our praying.—*Zion's Herald.*

WHOM THE LORD HELPS.

THE Lord takes up none but the forsaken; makes none healthy but the sick; gives sight to none but the blind; makes none alive but the dead; sanctifies none but sinners; and to all these He is precious.—*Luther.*



AT THE HOME.

OVER THE WAY.

POOR, and lonely, and old, and grey—
That is my neighbour just over the way.
Perhaps you think in her humble cot
She sadly broods o'er her hapless lot,
And pines for the comforts that she has not—
My neighbour over the way.

I often enter her lonely door,
Not because she is old and poor,
Not to pity her lowly state
As one who is crushed by the hand of fate,
And bewails the slights of the rich and great,
My neighbour over the way.

Oh, no! but her life is a blessing to me,
As plainer and truer each day I see;
New lessons I learn of such sweet content,
Of patience with trust and tenderness lent;
I know why her life by such dark ways went—
My neighbour over the way.

God hath bereaved her that she may give—
While she's learned in patience with grace to live—

Sweetest and tenderest sympathy,
Comforting words to you and to me;
To all who sorrow how dear is she,
My neighbour over the way!

'Tis true she is poor in this world's store,
But it only proves to me more and more—
As I mark the smile in her eye serene,
Her cheery tones and her trustful mien—
That she on some inward wealth must lean,
My neighbour over the way.

Old? Yes, for the years that come and go
Have crowned her head with their silver snow;
But her heart—in its depths every summer's bloom,
Every autumn's sunshine, each spring's perfume,
Is shrined to make bright age's blight and gloom
For my neighbour over the way.

Mayhap to your eye her wrinkled face
Has naught of beauty, little of grace;
Yet an aureole rests on that silvered hair
Like the halo a pictured saint may wear,
And in chastened sweetness her brow is fair,
My neighbour over the way.

Said I she was lonely? Her pardon I ask;
She surely would call my words to task;
She has one Friend who is true and strong,
Her constant companion, her joy, her song,
For a Friend so faithful who does not long—
As my neighbour's over the way?

—Meta E. B. Thorne.

"NEVER too poor, too ugly, too dull,
too sick, too friendless, to be useful to
some one."

GOD'S GIFT.

A CRIPPLE'S STORY.

A PHYSICIAN, whose life had been made beautiful with good deeds and a high faith, once said:

"If I have been happy or useful in the world, it is due largely to the effect on my mind of a chance question from a stranger.

"I was a poor boy and a cripple! One day, standing in a field, I was watching the other boys with bitterness and envy. They were strong, healthy, well clothed, and well fed. Some of the mothers of the players sat in carriages, waiting to see the game, intending to drive their sons home when it was over. I looked at them with an angry scowl, sick at heart. A young man stood beside me, and seeing, no doubt, the discontent on my face, touched my arm.

"Say, bub! You wish you were in the place of those boys, eh?" he said.

"Yes, I do!" I broke out. "Why should they have everything, and I nothing?"

"He nodded gravely. 'I reckon God gave them money and education and health to help them to be of some account in the world. Did it ever strike you that He gave you lame legs for the same reason—to make a man of you?'

"I did not answer, and he turned away. I never saw him again. But I couldn't get his words out of my mind. My crippled legs—God's gift? To teach me patience and strength?

"I did not believe it. But I was a thoughtful boy, taught to reverence God; and the more I thought of it the more it seemed to me the stranger had told the truth. I did believe that God pitied me—and at last came to feel that it would please Him if I rose above my deformity, and by it be made

more manly and true. It worked on my temper, my thoughts, and at last my actions. Gradually it influenced my whole life. Whatever came to me I looked upon as God's gift for some special purpose. If it was a difficulty, He gave it for me to struggle with to strengthen my mind and faith; if it was a helpless invalid cast on me for support, or even a beggar, I thought God had given me another chance to do His work."—Selected.

A KIND VOICE.

THERE is no power of love so hard to get and keep as a kind voice. A kind hand is deaf and dumb. It may be rough in flesh and blood, yet do the work of a soft heart, do it with a soft touch. But there is no one thing that love so much needs as a sweet voice, to tell what it means and feels, and it is hard to get and keep in the right tone. One must start in youth, and be on the watch night and day, at work and at play, to get and keep a voice that shall speak at all times the thoughts of a kind heart.

It is often in youth that one gets a voice or tone that is sharp, and it sticks to him through life, and it stirs up ill-will and falls like a drop of gall upon the sweet joys of home. Watch it day by day as a pearl of great price, for it will be worth more to you in days to come than the best pearl hid in the sea. A kind voice is to the heart what light is to the eye. It is a light that sings as well as shines.—
Elihu Burritt.

HOME TRAINING.

PARENTS should train their children to habits of industry and self-denial. If indolence, selfishness, and pride are fostered, children will neglect both their duty to their parents and the requirements of God. They should be taught that their time is not their own; that it is lent them of God, and that for the use they make of it, they will be required to give an account to Him. Many spend hours in reading tales which do not strengthen the mind or improve the morals. This precious time should be devoted to some good purpose. It might be spent in helping their parents; and while cheerfully bearing their share of life's burdens, they would be educating themselves for usefulness and duty.

Children should be disciplined to good works. Many of them would deny themselves indulgences, if a motive for so doing were placed before them. The money that they would be inclined to spend on selfish gratification, on things not essential to comfort or happiness, might be saved for some good or benevolent purpose. Children who have sound health;

who have been trained in habits of industry, economy, and benevolence; and who have well-balanced minds, capable of mental and moral improvement, receive from their parents a legacy of priceless worth. Barriers and safeguards are thrown around them which will not be galling chains of restraint, but helps to a well-ordered life and a love of sacred things.

MRS. E. G. WHITE.

MARKETING IN GERMANY.

A LADY, recently travelling in Germany, gives a contemporary the following animated description of the German housewife's marketing expeditions:—

Would you like to go to the market with me to-day? It is a very proper thing to do, for it is an essential part of the German housekeeper's life. The system of ordering from the house, with its advantages and disadvantages, is not in vogue in the thrifty Fatherland. Among the wealthier people the marketing is entrusted to the servants, but we shall meet many a woman whose husband has a long title added to his name, in the market-house accompanied by her maid.

The maids, bareheaded, rosy-cheeked and modest-mannered, are the delivery waggons of the German housekeepers, cheerfully carrying a big basket of meat and vegetables on the left arm while the right hand grasps a net full of potatoes or fish. They will trudge along indifferent alike to sun or shower for a mile or more, nor once think of leaving "without notice" as revenge for an unusually large burden.

Market-houses are stationed at convenient places in the large cities, and there are, also, open spaces where twice a week an open-air market is held.

We will choose the "Magdeburg Market." It is wonderfully interesting to walk up and down the long aisles, paved with marble and scrupulously neat, in the early morning.

Here is a stall where mutton and lamb are sold—and nothing else. Next is a beef stall, and here the woman in attendance will serve you to a steak, a roast, heart, liver or lights! Her strong right arm brings down the cleaver with a blow which startles you. You have not yet become quite accustomed to the butcheress.

There is a fascination about the fish stall, where many fish are kept alive in running water, till we see a fish-woman pull up a wriggling eel in her hands and proceed to dress it for a customer. Then we move on to the poultry stall—game and chickens in abundance, but geese everywhere.

But the vegetables look so fresh and tempting—the fine cauliflower, cabbage of several varieties, little potatoes (for

large potatoes are considered too coarse eating in Germany), the tiny carrots delicious indeed, and still more and more, for German gardeners understand their business.

Each saleswoman has her little stall about three or four feet broad. Her name or her husband's is above the stall, and here from early morning till closing time she stands and vends her wares, knitting between her sales.

The flower booths are placed in the centre of the building. Here for a groschen you may buy a respectable cluster of flowers. Potted plants and cut flowers, cultivated and wild, are all here, and poor, indeed, is the housekeeper who does not indulge in a nose-gay to accompany her purchases.

It would be hard to find a place in which civilised housekeeping could be carried on with greater convenience than in a large German city. You remark on the contented look of the mothers as they turn their faces homeward after making their purchases.

THE HAPPY HOME.

"Happy the home when God is there,
And love fills every breast;
When one their wish, and one their prayer,
And one their heavenly rest.

"Happy the home where Jesus' name
Is sweet to every ear;
Where children early hush His fame,
And parents hold Him dear."

THE FEAR OF HEART FAILURE.

THE world is full of people who imagine that they have something the matter with the heart. There is what appears like palpitation and fluttering, then a disagreeable faintness and nervousness following. This upsets the mental equilibrium, which at once reacts upon the physical; the patient is in a state of terror, and is going to die at once of heart disease. As a matter of fact, not one patient in a thousand has any organic affection of the heart. There are sympathetic troubles and reactionary conditions, but diseases of the heart proper are rare occurrences. In the majority of cases, the trouble is entirely in the digestive organs, or in the nerves, which, in most instances, amounts to the same thing. Error in diet, stimulants, high pressure, sudden and violent exercise when one is not accustomed to it, mental strain and exposure, with wrong conditions in dress and surroundings, will almost invariably be found the provoking cause of the ills that are charged to the heart.

In more common disturbances an accumulation of gas is the incitant and the only cause. The gases gather at one point and press upon the tissues, nerves, and delicate membranes, until the strain causes excruciating pain.

As a rule, a teaspoonful of orange flower water in half a glass of pure water, a few moments of slow and careful walking about, or an entire change of position, such as lying flat upon the face, or resting upon the knees and elbows, will give immediate relief. The latter position, by the way, is an excellent corrective of insomnia. In persons who lead sedentary lives, the weight of the organs of the body presses upon certain nerves and arteries, and affects the circulation. Fifteen minutes in this position just before retiring, or if one awakens in the night and becomes restless, will frequently remove all unpleasant sensations.

One patient whose condition all medical prescriptions had failed to reach was entirely cured by assuming this position whenever he awakened and found himself nervous and restless. After a few trials he dropped asleep in this attitude almost before he knew it, and on several occasions slept two or three hours, awakening to find himself precisely as he was when he dropped off.—*Selected.*

SILK handkerchiefs should be washed with borax, in tepid water, with little or no soap. Iron them before dry.

RUBBING soap on one's needle and fingers is said to be helpful in sewing work that is stiff and hard.

THE common habit of turning the gas on full before applying the match is responsible, it is said, for much of the blackening of ceilings by smoke. When a quantity of gas ignites at once it sends up a cloud of smoke to the ceiling. Remember to turn on but a trifle and light it at once, and then turn up the jet.

"THOSE having charge of babies cannot be too particular about airing clothing. Clothing taken off at night to be put on in the morning should be aired and dried, and not left in a heap, folded up so that they will be moist in the morning from the perspiration which they take in during the day. The seeds of rheumatism are often sown by inattention to this simple matter."

"If powdered alum is added to water which for some reason or other cannot be filtered, in the proportion of a teaspoonful to every four gallons, and stirred briskly round in it, it will have the effect of precipitating any impurities to the bottom of the water, and leaving the latter pure and clear."



SPRING-TIME TEACHERS.

LITTLE blossoms, pretty blossoms,
Coming in the early spring,
What sweet thoughts of God and Heaven
Thou dost to our memory bring;
Thoughts of Him who made the flowers
On the fair young earth to grow,
Ere the taint of sin had caused Him
To pronounce the curse of woe.

Thoughts of Him who left the regions
Where undying flowers bloom,
Making even Heaven fairer
For their beauty and perfume.
Coming thus to earth from Heaven,
Did our flowerets' pure, sweet eyes
Seem to Him the best reminder
Of His home in Paradise?

May be this is why He bade us
To the little flowers go,
Telling us, "Behold the lilies,
And consider how they grow;"
For the mystery of the blooming
Of a single little flower
Holds the mystery of the world's growth,
And reveals God's wondrous power.

Jesus knew He soon must leave us
To complete His work above;
To prepare the heavenly mansions
And to plead His dying love;
Knew that His beloved disciples
Could not long remain to teach
His sweet lessons; so in wisdom
He commissioned *flowers* to preach.

Every wee knoll is a pulpit,
Each green nook a chapel fair;
Where the flowers from their censers
Offer perfumed praise and prayer.
And these little soft-voiced teachers
Breathe sweet words of love and trust
Even while their pretty petals
Fall and turn again to dust.

And the spring-time resurrection
At the South Wind's gentle call
Is a pledge to dying mortals
Of a future life for all;
And the rising of the lilies
From the dark tomb where they lay,
Is a precious spring-time token
Of a resurrection day.

JENNIE E. OWEN.

WHAT A PLANT DID.

A LITTLE plant was given to a sick child. In trying to take care of it, the family made changes in their way of living. First they cleaned the window that more light might come to the plant's leaves; then, when not too cold, they would open the window, that fresh air might help the plant to grow. Next the clean window made the rest of the room look so untidy that they used to wash the floor and walls, and arrange the furniture more neatly.

This led the father of the family to mend a broken chair or two, which kept him at home several evenings. After the work was done, he stayed at home, instead of spending his leisure at a tavern, and the money thus saved went to buy comforts for them all. And then, as the home grew attractive, the whole family loved it better than ever before, and grew healthier and happier with their flowers. Thus the little plant brought a real as well as a physical blessing.—*The Sunny Hour.*

ABOUT SEEDS.

EVERY seed contains within its covering, says "Luke Ellis," in the *Echo*, not only protection during its dormancy, but provision for its germination and sustenance for the baby plant. When ripe, or possessed of the organism suitable for its independent existence, it breaks away from the placental attachment, and commences growth on its own account.

Not only do seeds vary in their structure, covering and material, but each draws from earth and air exactly the nourishment it requires, whether it be the poison of the deadly nightshade and the aconite, the nourishing food of the wheat plant, or the delicious juices of the nectarine or grape.

Then, again, in these pellets of starchy matter that I hold in my hand, each neatly bound in its waterproof integument, lies a new world of beauty, in form, colour, and fragrance. The natural distribution of seeds is an interesting subject. As one traverses a breezy common towards the end of August there is a constant succession of tiny explosions. And pleasant it is to hear the crackling seed pods, each scattering its treasure over a wider area. The gorse is especially noticeable on this account. Then one comes upon a clump of thistles, and hovering over them a little flock of goldfinches. Every flutter of the gold-barred wing scatters the seeds, each floating away, upborne by its graceful parachute, until a rain drop arrests its flight, and it finds a moist, warm bed beneath.

The awn of the barley, the wing of the sycamore, and the keys of the ash

each provide means for dispersing the seeds. Perhaps the most remarkable instance of natural seed distribution is that of the rose of Jericho. It is rolled along by the winds until it reaches a moist spot, when it opens and parts with its seed.

It is scarcely necessary to remark that some seedsmen have their tricks of trade. Old seed that has lost its vitality is furbished up to look like new, withered seeds are plumped out, others improved in colour, while the best is largely adulterated by seed whose vitality has been purposely destroyed. Vast quantities of inferior kinds are placed in a kiln to destroy their vitality, in order to use them for adulteration to increase the apparent quantity.

APRIL'S WAY.

MARCH rode forth with his sword and drum,
And he called to the flowers, "Arise! arise!"
But the violet answered with meek, shut eyes,
"Coax us a little and we will come!"

But he could not coax—he could only chide,
And no bud will bloom at a harsh command;
He beat his drum till he shook the land,
And the little pale flowers did naught but hide.

Lovingly calling, name by name,
April tripped through the meadows bare:
"Windflower! violet! snowdrop fair!"
She coaxed them a little and so they came.
—*Ida Whipple Benham.*

GIANT PLANTS ON MOUNTAINS.

RECENT explorers of the Caucasus Mountains have reported the existence there of a peculiar race of gigantic herbaceous plants growing at a height of nearly 6,000 feet above sea-level. Plants belonging to the same botanic families, but growing at the bottom of the valleys below, do not attain an extraordinary size. For instance, a species of *campanula*—our ordinary harebell is a *campanula*—grows only two feet high in the valleys, but on the mountains it reaches a height of six feet, and its stem becomes thick and rigid, like that of a small tree.—*Sel.*

THE VIOLET TRAIN.

WHAT is known as the violet train runs at stated times from the South of France, bringing violets from the sunny slopes along the Mediterranean to Paris and London. During the latter part of April many tons of the pretty blue violets were brought into England to be sold in bunches or by the basket, and they have been sold very cheap too.

In tropical forests so large a proportion of the plants are of the sensitive variety that sometimes the path of a traveller may be traced by the wilted foliage, the plants closing their leaves and shrinking at the intruder's touch.



PRETTY IS THAT PRETTY DOES.

The spider wears a plain brown dress,
And she is a steady spinner;
To see her, quiet as a mouse,
Going about her silver house,
You would never, never, never guess
The way she gets her dinner.

She looks as if no thought of ill
In all her life had stirred her;
But while she moves with careful tread,
And while she spins her silken thread,
She is planning, planning, planning still
The way to do some murder.

The girl who reads this simple lay,
With eyes down drooped and tender,
Remember the old proverb says
That pretty is that pretty does,
And that worth does not go or stay
For poverty or splendour.

'Tis not the house, and not the dress,
That make the saint or sinner.
To see the spider sit and spin,
Shut with her web of silver in,
You would never, never, never guess
The way she gets her dinner.

—Alice Cary.

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

A FABLE.

IN a large courtyard at the back of a great house there was a clock in a tower, a bell in a little turret, a weathercock on the top of the stable, a sundial on the stable-wall, and in the middle of the courtyard a pump. One day they all got into conversation together. The weathercock was rather conceited, as is not uncommon; for many a weathercock is a little "vane." This particular one had only recently been placed in its lofty position, and it was a little proud of its gilding and the ease with which it moved about, and it said to the clock:

"What a dreary life yours must be! Always moving those long fingers round and round the same way, and at the same rate. Why don't you move them the other way sometimes, just for a change? And why don't you let the little one go as fast as the big one? And why do you count One, Two, Three, right up to Twelve, and then begin again? Why don't you count a hundred or more? And what

a long time you pause after saying One before you say Two! It must be a weary life you lead."

"Well, yes," ticked the Clock, "mine is rather a dull life, as you say, grinding steadily on, with these heavy weights pulling at my wheels day after day and night after night. But I do as I am made, you know. Sometimes I comfort myself with the thought that I am of use. I notice that the head groom looks at my face, and says, 'Eight of the clock, Jim. Hurry up my lad! Carriage wanted at nine.' And, sure enough, when I counted Nine there was the carriage ready for the master. I cannot understand it, but it seems as if I was useful somehow."

"Useful?" murmured the Weathercock, as he twisted about. "Useful? I did not think about that. I wonder if I am useful. I flatter myself I am ornamental, and I should be very comfortable if the wind did not swing me about so much at times. I like to rest quietly and look about me; but now and then the wind puffs this way and that, as it is doing this morning. It is trying to one's dignity, and I don't see that it can be of any use to me or to anybody else that I should be knocked about so. What do you think, Bell?" he asked, as the wind swung him so that his beak pointed to the turret. "Do you think I am of any use?"

"Not the least in the world," growled the Bell. "Neither am I. I only wish the stupid men would not jerk my string and agitate me as they do. One of them comes suddenly and gives a great pull that makes my iron pendant clang against my sides, so that I am in a tremor for ever so long. But there's no sense in it. It only brings me abuse, for I hear Jim say, 'Drat that bell!' as he rushes off somewhere, and, goodness knows, I don't wish to annoy him."

There was silence for a while, and then the Weathercock turned slightly, so that he faced the gnomon of the dial. That led him to ask whether he

enjoyed his existence. The Gnomon answered:

"Here I am, and here I remain; that is all I know. Nothing happens to me, and I do nothing. My shadow creeps slowly around me, that is all. I can't be of any use."

The Clock said: "It must be dreadful to be immovable like you, and I am afraid that you can't be useful to anybody or anything. I am sincerely sorry for you."

At that moment the Pump made a little gurgling sound, which was his way of laughing, and then he creaked disagreeably:

"Ha! Ha! I can settle your questions for you. Can you bring water up from the depths of the earth? That is the useful thing to do. That is what I do. Haven't you seen the men come and take hold of my handle respectfully, and bow down to me? When they do that, I pour out water for them, which they eagerly catch in buckets and carry away. The men think of me in the winter, but they don't trouble about you. They wrap me up in straw to keep me warm in the time of frost and snow."

The Clock and Vane and Bell and Dial did not quite like the scornful tone in which the Pump spoke of them; but yet they were inclined to think that he had some right to boast over them.

While they were thinking silently and sadly that they were far inferior to the Pump, the master of the house came into the courtyard with two or three other men.

"We mustn't take the youngsters far to-day," said the master. "The wind is in the sou'-west, the weathercock says, and he swings about as if a storm was brewing. At any rate, we won't start just at present. Hallo! there's rather too much of a difference between the dial and the clock." Then, looking at his watch, he continued: "Yes, there's something amiss with that fine old bit of mechanism. I'll have Wright to see to it at once. And the old pump is an eyesore. I intend to remove it soon, and to have a fountain in its place. That will be more ornamental, and quite as useful."

When the men had gone away, the Weathercock said: "How astonishing! I am of use, and didn't know it."

The Dial asked: "Did you observe that the master seems to trust me?" The Clock ticked comfortably: "Fine—old—bit—of—mech—an—ism." The Pump was in a rage. He vowed that men had no gratitude. The Bell wondered, and finally decided to hope that he was of some use.

You see the meaning already. We are all of some use, more or less, if we go on doing what we were made to do. There is not one use for us all, as the conceited old pump imagined. And when you hear anyone complain, like the

bell, that he is abused for doing what he is compelled to do, you may think, "No, *you* are not abused; it is somebody else who is being blamed, not you." There, you see it clearly enough. The Great Master has a use for us every one; but we are not so important, any of us, that He cannot do without us. Let us be humble and cheerful, and mind our own business. —*Evangelical Magazine.*



THE BANANA.

THIS fruit, just now coming in specially large quantities into the markets, is becoming better known and cheaper with us. In countries where it is grown it is a staple food, and as it is so palatable to most tastes it is good to know that it is one of the most nutritious of fruits—in fact, perhaps the most nutritious. A writer gives the following sketch of the plant:—

Although some varieties of the banana attain the size of small trees, it is an herbaceous plant, and the kinds most generally cultivated for their fruit are the dwarfs, which grow to a height of but four or five feet. The smallest of these produce the delicate fig bananas, unknown to northern markets, but almost the only ones eaten as fruit in countries where the banana is grown.

While the little fig banana is always classed as a fruit, plantains, which are the largest of the family, are invariably fried or baked and regarded as vegetables. Ordinary bananas, taken before they are quite ripe, may be acceptably prepared in the same way. For cooking or drying they are cut into strips lengthwise, while for serving in their natural state they are sliced crosswise.

A number of delicious desserts may be prepared by cutting ripe bananas into thin slices and serving with custard, with lime juice and sugar, with lemon juice and desiccated cocoanut, or in other ways that will readily suggest themselves.

Bananas can be dried as easily as

apples or peaches. In this condition they will keep for a long time, and may be eaten by themselves or used in the making of pies, cakes or puddings.

The banana is extremely sensitive to cold, and will not withstand a touch of frost. It has no seeds, but is propagated from suckers, or roots having eyes like potatoes. Each eye produces a plant, and from the largest of these, at the end of a twelvemonth, will appear a huge purple blossom. It depends from a thick stem, is big and round at the base, tapers to a point, is a foot or eighteen inches long, and is composed of many compact rows of great overlapping petals.

Beginning at the base of the blossom, these petals curl upward, disclosing the tiny "hands" of bananas, each having from eight to ten "fingers," as the individual fruits are termed by the grower. In this manner the successive hands are gradually brought to view by the unfolding and dropping of petals on alternate sides of the stem, until the bunch is complete.

Then after some weeks of life the shrunken blossom, which still clings to its lower extremity, withers and drops off. Bananas always curl their outer ends upward as they grow, and not downward, as is supposed by most persons who have only seen the bunches hanging upside down in fruit-stalls.

After the fruit is formed, it takes about three months to "fill," or attain its full size. Then, although it is still green, the bunch is cut and hung in a shaded place to ripen; for bananas, like pears, ripen best after being gathered. Thus, unlike most tropical fruit, the banana of northern markets is fully equal in flavour and nutrition, to those consumed where they are grown.

So generous is the fruitage of this extraordinary plant that its food product was estimated by Von Humboldt to be one hundred and thirty-three times greater than that of wheat, and forty-four times more than that of potatoes. In other words, if a certain area of ground would produce thirty-three pounds of wheat or ninety-nine of potatoes, an equal area of banana land would yield four thousand pounds of fruit, containing all the life-sustaining properties of both wheat and potatoes. Von Humboldt also asserted that the arable lands of Central America alone can produce enough bananas to feed the world.

IN all cakes where butter or eggs are used, the butter should be well rubbed into the flour, and the eggs whipped to a foam before the ingredients are mixed.



—Strikes and rumours of strikes are abounding in the labour world just now.

Seventy lives were reported lost in a colliery disaster in Yorkshire last week.

—The trans-Siberian railway is expected to be completed in 1900, when one can girdle the earth in thirty days.

—The ravages of the rinderpest in South Africa are said to be very serious indeed, many natives in the affected districts having lost all their cattle.

—The military authorities have provided for the use of the new X-ray photography in the Soudan expedition for the purpose of locating bullets in the body.

—Spain has been suffering from a severe drought, and the Government has had to organise public works to give employment to farm labourers who are unable to work on the land.

—Typhus and cholera are said to be breaking out in the districts lately desolated in Turkey. The pestilence may, with the approach of warm weather, prove more deadly even than the sword.

—Japan has always prohibited the opium traffic, and now that the great island of Formosa has come into Japanese hands the drug is excluded, save as a medicine. In this respect Japan rises to a higher standard than Western nations.

—Osman Digna, the leader of the Dervish column that went against the Italians at Kassala, is retreating, and the Italian forces are acting on the offensive. The Italian Government is preparing to prosecute the campaign against the Abyssinians, the latter terms of peace having been rejected.

—Crown-making is one of Birmingham's industries. The trade is principally with Africa. It is said that a very serviceable crown for the African king can be had for a sovereign, and they are taking the place of the silk hat, formerly the mark of rank amongst the small potentates of the Dark Continent.

—The funeral of Miss Ellen Richardson took place in Newcastle on April 29. It was she and her sister Anne who purchased the freedom of the slave Frederick Douglass, and thus liberated him to the work which he accomplished for his race, and in the pursuance of which he made for himself a name among the brilliant orators of his time.

—The Maxim guns employed in the defence of Bulawayo are described as doing terrible execution. The waters of the Umguza, says one report of an engagement, were dyed red with blood. Thus far every attack of the Matabeles has been repelled with severe loss to the natives. The relief forces are nearing Bulawayo, and soon the Matabeles will be put on the defensive, and then it will only be a question of a little time when the rising will be ended and the white man will be in possession of the field.

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THE old "Hall of Science," for many years the centre of the atheistical propaganda in London, will now be known as the "Hall of Mercy," having been purchased by the Salvation Army for a shelter for women.

A CORRESPONDENT who is engaged in evangelistic work in the Midlands writes us:—

It is astonishing to see how Spiritualism is spreading in the Midlands. Leicester and Northampton seem to be permeated with it.

Doubtless the same thing might be said of many parts, at home and abroad.

THE season of the annual "May Meetings" of the various religious societies has begun, and reports of missionary operations tell of many advances with the Word into hitherto unentered fields. And wherever the Word goes there the Lord is at work, saving from sin and preparing hearts for His coming. God speed every man who is feeding hungry souls with the Word of Life indeed.

THERE is a fable of a fox who was about to enter the mouth of a cave where it was evident from the multitude of footprints that many of his own kind had preceded him. But when just at the entrance he noticed that all the tracks pointed in one direction,—all were entering, none returning. He stopped, meditated, turned away. Wise fox!

Many and various are the dens, caves, yes, palaces of iniquity frequented by multitudes of men and women. But the steps point all onward and downward,—the returning

are so few that their footprints are obliterated by the hurrying feet of the great onrushing majority. The wise man says: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away. . . . The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

In Austria.—One of our Society's workers writes as follows of influences which have to be met in Vienna and other parts of Austria, where the circulation of literature and the Bible is hindered, as far as they are able, by the priests:—

Rome still shuts out God's Word wherever she can. At the same time the Virgin Mary is found in every nook and corner, worshipped under every colour and name. There are white and black statues of Mary; each neighbourhood has its particular Mary; but it is the "holy" Mary all the same. Any book with her picture and some story about her miraculous power is sold by the thousand; but the Word of God is shut out, and darkness and superstition reign supreme. The only hope is that from the great centres the light will radiate to the remote country places; but it will cost money and hard labour, and perhaps many a fine, before we gain a good foothold in these large cities.

"Hunger for Power."—The President of the Baptist Union devoted his annual address to the subject of authority and power in the church. Of the hunger for civil authority he said:—

The Roman Church was not alone in affording historical examples of the evils of power. Every Church which has sought or accepted political power as an instrument for the furtherance of religious plans has been a partaker of her fault, and in some measure of her plagues. Luther erred when he yoked the German Princes to his Reformation chariot, and the Church which bears his name has paid for that error by Erastian stripes and by widespread unbelief. Calvin made a similar mistake when he entangled the relations of ministers and magistrates in republican Geneva. The great English Reformer, Henry VIII., did not make this mistake himself, but he forced it on the Anglican Church, and that Church is weaker than she ought to be to-day because her clergy stand to minister as privileged officials of the State.

He might have gone further, and pointed out the fact that whenever Nonconformity as well has secured political power to a degree the result has been the same. The Gospel is "the power of God," and with that as a living principle there is no hunger for the earth-power—the Word is the sole reliance. But when the Word is set aside, then comes the desire for civil power and political influence.

The revival of the Sunday-law movement all over the world is bringing to all again the test on the principle of religious liberty. The sentiment of the religious world which aims at making Sunday rest compulsory, and the history of the prosecution of Sabbath-keepers, during the last year or two, in many parts, show that the hunger for civil power is a rising passion in the religious world to-day.

SATAN is responsible for Sunday enforcement and yet himself observes no Sunday rest, and keeps no holidays.

A CALCUTTA correspondent says that the drying up of the water supplies over the country is causing apprehension. He writes:—

Just now the cholera is quite prevalent here in the city. The death rate is above fifty per thousand, and the municipality have received a request from the natives asking that they be allowed to hold a particular *poojah*, day and night, for three days, on account of the cholera epidemic. This, they say, is necessary because the goddess Kahlī is angry and has sent the cholera, and they must do something to appease her wrath. This *poojah* means that they will keep up the most hideous noise without any interruption. They sing and play and dance and yell like demons, and keep it up all night. Of course the natural consequence is that the more they go on in that way the less powers they have to resist disease, and so the disease goes on from bad to worse, and they think that they must put forth greater efforts to appease their goddess. How like some Christians in their supposed worship of the true God!

The Missionary as Pioneer.—The idea that the missionary is unable to go forward until civilisation—meaning the trader and the soldier—has prepared the way is based on ignorance of the history of Christian missions. It has, on the contrary, often proved to be the case that the advance of civilisation has been the signal of trouble for the missionary. Such a case is described by a Dalziel's despatch, sent from Buluwayo last week.

The mission station belonging to the London Missionary Society at Hope Fountain—a fine place established many years before the Chartered Company came upon the scene—was looted and burnt by the Matabeles on Friday, everything belonging to the missionaries being destroyed.

It is useless to attempt to apportion blame or to condemn, but war is the common history of the subjugation of a new country. Livingstone and other missionaries have laboured in Africa unmolested; while now in some of those same districts the white is regarded as an enemy irrespective of his motives. It makes every difference whether barbarous tribes are impressed by the gun or the Gospel.