

Signs of the Times

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12.

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The Signs of the Times.

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THE YEAR'S RECORD.

ANOTHER year has sped,
'Tis numbered with the past;
Its transient hours have fled,
Unceasing to the last.
Its record now is all complete,
Sealed up to the great judgment-seat.

The fleeting hours are passed,
Their deeds are in the book,
Which shall be oped at last,
And God shall on it look.
Will it be faultless in his sight,
Because its deeds have all been right?

Mercy is yet my plea;
I have an advocate!
To him I now will flee,
Before it be too late!
Though the true record stand the same,
Write, Pardon, Thou, against my name?

Jesus, I look to thee;
Thy blood can still atone;
Still I may hope to be
Faultless before the throne!
Blessed be God! Blessed his Son,
My Advocate before the throne!

For time to come, my all
I consecrate to thee!
For help, on thee I call,
That I may faithful be.
My record be of victory won!
Prepared to hear the glad, Well done!
—R. F. Cottrell.

General Articles.

THE TRUE STANDARD OF MANHOOD.

BY MRS E. G. WHITE.

God designs that improvement shall be the life-work of all his followers, and that it shall be guided and controlled by correct experience. The true man is one who is willing to sacrifice his own interest for the good of others, and who forgets himself in binding up the broken-hearted. Many fail to understand the true object of life; and under the influence of cherished errors, they sacrifice all there is of life that is really valuable.

Nero and Caesar were acknowledged by the world as great men; but did God regard them as such? No! they were not connected by liv-

ing faith to the great heart of humanity. They were in the world, and ate, and drank, and slept, as men of the world; but they were Satanic in their cruelty. Wherever went these monsters in human form, bloodshed and destruction marked their pathway. They were lauded while living; but when they were buried, the world rejoiced. In contrast with the lives of these men is that of Martin Luther. He was not born a prince. He wore no royal crown. From a cloistered cell his voice was heard, and his influence felt. He had a noble, generous heart, as well as a vigorous intellect, and all his powers were exercised for the good of humanity. He stood bravely for truth and right, and breasted the world's opposition, to benefit his fellow-men.

Intellect is a mightier force than wealth or physical power. If sanctified and controlled by the Spirit of God, it can exert a powerful influence for good. Yet intellect alone does not make the man, according to the divine standard. One's claim to a true manhood must be determined by his use of the powers which God has given him.

That which will bless humanity is spiritual life. If the man is in harmony with God, he will depend continually upon him for strength. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." It should be our life-work to press forward continually toward the perfection of Christian character, ever striving for conformity to the will of God. The efforts begun upon earth will continue throughout eternity. God has set before the human family an elevated standard, and he who is true to his God-given manhood will not only promote the happiness of his fellow-creatures in this life, but will aid them to secure an eternal reward in the life to come.

The members of the human family are entitled to the name of men and women only when they employ their talents, in every possible way, for the good of others. The life of Christ is before us as a pattern, and it is when ministering, like angels of mercy, to the wants of others that man is closely allied to God. It is the nature of Christianity to make happy families and happy members of society. Discord, selfishness, and strife will be put away from everyone who possesses the Spirit of Christ.

Those who are partakers of Christ's love

have no right to think that there is a limit to their influence and work in trying to benefit humanity. Christ did not become weary in his efforts to save fallen man. Our work is to be continuous and persevering. We shall find work to do until the Master shall bid us lay our armor at his feet. We must wait and watch, submissive to God's will, ready and willing to spring to our duty at every call.

Angels are engaged night and day in the service of God, for the uplifting of man in accordance with the plan of salvation. Man is required to love God supremely, that is, with all his might, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself. This he cannot possibly do unless he shall deny himself. Said Christ, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

To deny self means to rule the spirit when passion is seeking for the mastery; to resist the temptation to censure and to speak fault-finding words; to have patience with the child that is dull, and whose conduct is grievous and trying; to stand at the post of duty when others may fail; to lift responsibilities wherever and whenever duty requires it, not for the purpose of applause, not for policy, but for the sake of the Master, who has given each of his followers a work to be done with unwavering fidelity; when one might praise himself, to keep silent and let other lips praise him. Self-denial is to do good to others when inclination would lead us to serve and please ourselves. Although our fellow-men may never appreciate our efforts, we are to work on.

Fellow-Christians, search carefully, and see whether the word of God is indeed the rule of your life. Do you take Christ with you when you leave the closet of prayer? Does your religion stand guard at the door of your lips? Is your heart drawn out in sympathy and love for others outside of your own family? Are you diligently seeking a clearer understanding of Scripture truth, that you may let your light shine forth to others? These questions you may answer to your own souls. Let your speech be seasoned with grace, and your demeanor show Christian elevation. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that

love him." Ever remember that the moral nature needs to be braced with constant watchfulness and prayer. As long as you look to Christ, you are safe; but the moment you trust to yourself, you lose your hold upon God, and you are in great peril.

Many limit the divine Providence, and divorce mercy and love from his character. They urge that the greatness and majesty of God would forbid him to interest himself in the concerns of the weakest of his creatures. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

It is difficult for human beings to give attention to the lesser matters of life while the mind is engaged in business of greater importance. But should not this union exist? Man formed in the image of his Maker should unite the larger responsibilities with the smaller. He may be engrossed with occupations of overwhelming importance, and neglect the instruction which his children need. These duties may be looked upon as the lesser duties of life, when they in reality lie at the very foundation of society. Happiness of families and churches depends upon *home influences*. Eternal interests depend upon the proper discharge of the duties of this life. The world is not so much in need of great minds as of good men who will be a blessing in their homes.

"ROMANIZING" HISTORY.

THE Boston correspondent of the New York *Evening Post* gives an account in the columns of that paper for November 17, of the first of a series of public meetings which will be held in Boston during the coming winter for the agitation of the question of Roman Catholic interference with the public schools. At the meeting last week the Committee of One Hundred, appointed, at the mass-meeting in July, to look after the interests of the Protestants, made a statement upon their own authority, charging that Anderson's General History, which was substituted by the Boston School Committee for Swinton's History, had been Romanized by the alteration or omission of passages which might seem to reflect upon the Catholics. As to Anderson's History itself, which was substituted for Swinton's on the ground that "it gives a fair account of indulgences"—to quote from the words of the School Committee—the Committee of One Hundred charge that "it does not contain a word about indulgences." The committee then go on to present the case against Anderson's book as follows:—

"What then are we to understand? That the committee had not examined the book, and had been imposed upon? or having examined it, they would impose upon the public? We leave the gentlemen to explain. It was further said in the committee: 'If facts are to be given in a history, they must be given as they are, and not distorted.' Very true, and that is just what Swinton does. But how about the history that does not give the facts?

"On page 598 of Anderson's new General History we read that in the reign of Maximilian I. 'Martin Luther published his famous ninety-five theses against the *doctrines* of the Catholic Church.' Is this what the members of the Boston School Committee call 'truthful history'? Do they know that Martin Luther's theses were against indulgences? Again, on page 599, we read that 'from the spread of Luther's tenets grew *what is called* the Reformation.' And this is all that the School Committee of Boston would teach the youth of America concerning one of the greatest and grandest events of modern history. Cardinal Newman, a very high authority of the Roman Catholic Church, says in his pamphlet in reply to Mr. W. E. Gladstone's 'Vatican Decrees,' that, while Protestants speak of the *blessed* Reformation, Catholics, when they describe it, speak of it as the *so-called* Reformation.' Singular agreement between Anderson, the author, and Newman, the cardinal.

"Why is it that Anderson's General History, so highly commended by the School Committee of Boston, speaks thus slightly of such a great event, and otherwise falsifies and distorts history? Why? Anderson's History has been Romanized.

"Three years ago the Third Plenary Roman Catholic Council of Baltimore that put Swinton's History on the index of prohibited books, and enjoined priests everywhere to be diligent in purging schools of such dangerous works, placed Anderson's General History on the same list. How does it happen, then, that Anderson, three years ago condemned and prohibited by the Romish Church, is now commended and eulogized by that church, and substituted in the public school for another prohibited book which the church had succeeded in having removed? Why? The book has been Romanized and doctored to meet the wishes of the Roman Catholic hierarchy."

Following this in parallel columns are passages from the old Anderson History, and the history now in use, showing how the text has been altered and revised to avoid giving offense to Roman Catholic sensibilities. For example, in the old version, a passage referring to Henry IV. as endeavoring to gain the favor of the church by persecuting the followers of Wycliffe, is omitted entirely in the new version. A passage in the old history that reads as follows is also omitted in the new: "The Inquisition was established at Toulouse, and all who refused to conform to the tenets of the Church of Rome were mercilessly punished." One of the changes noted in the phraseology of the two versions is the substitution of the words "*rise of the Albigenses*," for "*the persecution of the Albigenses*." These citations are sufficient to show that the charge that the Anderson History has been Romanized is based on self-evident truth. No intelligent person would have the hardihood to pretend that the alterations and omissions noted could have been made with any other purpose in view than that of conforming the history to the strictly Roman Catholic standard. The exposition made by the committee shows also what we may expect in every case where the

Papists obtain the ruling hand in the public schools, as they have in Boston. It will mean that the children who attend them will receive their history only after it has passed through a process of evisceration at the hands of the bigoted, jealous, narrow-minded, and truth-hating ecclesiastics who form the great majority of the priesthood of the Roman Church. This is taking it for granted that the Romanists would not allow the public schools to stand at all where their influence was dominant. Where they cannot do away altogether with the public-school system, they can introduce their garbled and falsified text-books in the schools, and so accomplish in a more indirect way their chief ends.—*N. Y. Observer*.

THOROUGHLY FURNISHED.

PAUL tells Timothy what the man of God is to do. The object of his Bible training is good works. Not that good works are in themselves meritorious or saving, but they are the evidences of regeneration. The man of God must do them because of the new life that he has received. Life will reveal itself in action. Spiritual life cannot lie dormant any more than natural life. How intensely active is a child. Its vitality is irrepressible. But the child's activity needs to be wisely directed, and so does the Christian's. He is to be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

That word translated "thoroughly furnished" occurs only here in the New Testament. It means completely equipped—fitted up with all that is necessary. The figure is that of a factory. At first there is an empty building. Then an engine is put in, then dies and drills and tools of all kinds adapted to the manufacture of something useful. It requires great labor and skill to furnish a factory for the production of any one article of utility. But let us imagine a factory that is to turn out everything good and useful—to make buttons and brooms, carpets and curtains, pianos and plows, hats and harness, clothing, furniture and implements of all kinds—what wonderful furnishing that factory would need! But such a factory is the man of God, the Christian soldier, the servant of the Most High. He is to do all sorts of good works, from soothing the sorrows of a little child, to rebuking sin in high places, and helping a fellow-citizen to triumph over the last enemy, death. How important, then, that the man of God make the word of God his *vade mecum*—his constant companion and counselor. How important that he lay up the word in his heart!

Our Saviour illustrates the result of this thorough furnishing in his conflict with Satan in the wilderness. Wherever the adversary attacked him he was ready to repel him with a quotation from the word of God. In this we are to imitate him. All that we need is in the inspired word. If we are not good soldiers of the cross, efficient laborers in the vineyard, thoroughly furnished unto every good work, ready at last to render up our account with joy, and to be welcomed as the blessed of our Father, it will be simply and solely because we did not equip ourselves fully out of the armory of our Lord.—*Interior*.

THE LEADERSHIP OF HOPE.

THE difference between taking counsel with one's fears and with one's hopes was practically illustrated twenty-five years ago in the campaigns of McClellan and Grant. Both were honest men, well-trained officers, and sincere patriots; but the one always waited on his apprehensions, and the other moved with his hopes. It is safe to say that no great enterprise was ever yet inaugurated, sustained, or completed in any other spirit than that of hope. The Suez Canal was not built, nor the ocean cable laid, nor the great war of a quarter of a century ago brought to a successful termination, by men who were easily discouraged. All these undertakings, and all undertakings of equal magnitude, have had their roots in hope.

Nothing is ever to be gained by taking counsel with one's fears. Courage is the keynote of success—the music to which every attacking column that has ever surmounted a strong position has always marched. In the vicissitudes of life, which come not only to one's personal estate, but to one's affections, one's aspirations, and one's bodily health, there are recurring depressions, times of discouragement and almost of despair; these are unavoidable in every life, however resolutely directed. No one can avoid them; they seem to inhere in the order of growth. One secret of successful living is to learn to recognize them when they come, and to refuse to follow their promptings.

No man ought ever to settle an important question when he is discouraged or depressed; he ought to recognize such a condition as something abnormal and unhealthful—a condition which makes wise judgment and right action impossible. If we learn to treat our times of depression and discouragement as symptoms of disease, and avoid deciding or acting when they are upon us—to look at them as something apart from our best and truest selves, we shall avoid the mistakes into which they will lead us, and we shall do much to overcome them. When depression is not distinctly physical, it is largely a matter of habit; it can be thrown off by force of will. When it is purely physical, it must be treated as a disease, and one must wait upon the return to health. But there is a great deal of depression that is a matter of feeling, and that can be overcome by fighting against it, and by treating it as if it were an unnatural and abnormal thing. A discouraged man is a defeated man. Many a man has given up in the moment of discouragement advantages which, if they had been pushed a little further, would have resulted in a permanent success. Many an enterprise has failed because at the critical moment, when courage was the essential thing, counsel was taken with fear, and the flag was struck which might have been successfully carried forward and planted on the citadel.

The inspirations of life, those sudden revelations of things we may attain, are the children of hope; depression never yet gave birth to an inspiring thought or purpose. We only

really live when we hope, and when hope leads us forward by its divine impulsion. If the good and evil angels of each were personified, hope would shine from the face of one and despair from the face of the other. To listen to the words of discouragement is to throw away one's strength and opportunity, to reject the crown of achievement. To wait on the counsel of hope is to strike resolutely through all difficulties and to grasp that success to which all men were born, if character matched faith, and faith kept locked hands with hope.—*Christian Union.*

BEGINNING AGAIN.

WHEN sometimes our feet grow weary
On the rugged hills of life—
The path stretching long and dreary,
With trial and labor rife—
We pause on the toilsome journey,
Glancing backward in valley and glen,
And sigh with an infinite longing,
To return and begin again.

For behind is the dew of the morning,
In all its freshness and light,
And before are the doubts and shadows,
And the chill and gloom of the night.
We remember the sunny places
We passed so carelessly then,
And ask, with a passionate longing,
To return and begin again.

Ah, vain indeed is the asking!
Life's duties press all of us on.
And who dare shrink from the labor,
Or sigh for the sunshine that's gone?
And it may be, not far on before us,
Wait fairer places than them;
Life's paths may yet lead by still waters,
Though we may not begin again.

For, evermore upward and onward
Be our paths on the hills of life,
And soon with a radiant dawning
Transfigure the toil and the strife,
And our Father's hand will lead us
Tenderly upward then;
In the joy and peace of a fairer world
He'll let us begin again.

—Selected.

SPECIAL PRAYERS AND ANSWERS.

THE other day a man said to me: "The reason why I have stopped serving God is because out of the thousands of prayers I offered to him, not one was ever answered, and at the same time God has promised to answer prayer. Therefore I consider the whole thing foolishness;" or words to that effect. That man was certainly very hasty in his conclusion, and could not have known very much about faith. But there are a great many persons who are troubled in the same way; they do not see that God has answered their prayers, and they cannot see any reason why he should not. To such the following Bible reasons may be of use:—

1. God will not answer those who are living in rebellion against him. Common sense would tell us that before we can expect God to grant our petition we must submit ourselves to him in willing obedience. But the word of God says plainly: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Prov. 28:9. If we are cherishing any known sin, we cannot expect God to grant our petition, for if he were to do so, he would be to that extent encouraging us in our sin. He would give

some foundation to the oft-heard excuse for duty, "Well, the Lord has blessed me while I was living so, therefore I know it cannot be wrong." The Lord may, in his mercy, bless one who is sinning in ignorance, but he cannot bless those who are living in willful disobedience. Says David: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Ps. 66:18. Therefore before we approach God with any special request, we must search our hearts and seek the Lord for grace to put away every sin. Then we must come to him in that spirit of humble obedience that Christ had when he said: "Not my will, but thine, be done." Then God will hear us, for "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

2. Our prayers are often not answered because we ask with a wrong motive. James says: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." This may seem a little severe, but a man cannot always tell what is in his heart, for "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Many a man would be astonished if God revealed to him the true motive of his request. He would, perhaps, see that selfishness was the main cause of his request. Simon the sorcerer asked for the gift of the Holy Ghost. That was a good desire, but he desired it from a selfish motive, and to use to his own end. Therefore he could not have it, until his heart was right within him. Nothing can be more desirable than to have our motives right in God's sight. Let us pray with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

3. Another reason why we cannot always see a direct answer to a special prayer, is because what we have asked for may be the worst thing we could have. Paul says: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." This is, perhaps, the most common reason why we think our prayers a failure. We do not know what is best for us. We are in the same condition as a little helpless sick child, who does not know what ails it, or what is good for it, but asks for almost anything that comes into its mind, hoping thereby to get relief. In the same way we oftentimes cry for things that are not best for us to have, but if we ask in faith, God will give us that which will do us most good, just as the nurse gives the little sufferer that which is best for it. So we must not be discouraged if God does not answer our prayers just in the way we think he ought, but must remember that he doeth all things well and for our good. Though the way may be dark for a time, we know that God is working to accomplish an ultimate result. Let us not, like Hezekiah, press any particular request, or undertake to dictate to God, but let us leave it with him to do that which is best for us, and in the words of the Saviour say, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

FRANK HOPE.

THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

THE man who listens to the voice of right and obeys it will enjoy intense internal delights which spring from active moral faculties. There is no possession which brings so much real joy as an approving conscience. Its approbations are sweeter and richer than the sweetest strains of music. They thrill the whole soul with delight. To be able to stand erect, to look every man in the face without fear, to be conscious of having done our duty to God and our fellow-men, is the supremest happiness that it is permitted mortal man to enjoy.

On the other hand, commit sin, violate God's moral laws, and groanings and tears await you. Just so soon as you think the malicious thought, indulge the vicious feeling, and execute the wicked purpose, you feel the shock. In a moment the harmony of life has fled, the chorus of the soul is thrown into discord, and all melody is gone. When the excitement is passed, and the lights are out, you will hear the discord within. You will have strange and mysterious longings for that which you have not; your soul will utter its sighs for rest and peace. The great effort of most men is to hide themselves from themselves. They hate to be alone. The reason of this is that they feel that all is not right within. They know that there are unpleasant guests there making all kinds of discords. To close their ears to these they rush from business to pleasure and from pleasure back to business.

Another effect of sin is that it incapacitates the soul for right action. It perverts the conscience, warps the judgment, enslaves the will, and cuts the wings of the imagination. This becomes very evident when anyone gives loose rein to his passions. Then the path between honor and disgrace, respect and infamy, is very short. Sin drives him at headlong speed down to shame and ruin.

Another characteristic of the divine laws is that they act independently. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If a man obey the laws of health, he will enjoy good health, though at the same time he might cheat and lie and steal. What he has sown, that shall he also reap. On the other hand, the man who is honest and truthful, if he neglect the laws of health, must suffer the consequences of his neglect. The men who sow only to this world shall reap this world's goods. They have sown for time, and shall reap the rewards of time; they have not sown for eternity, and they shall not reap the rewards of eternity.

Another characteristic of the divine laws is that they are universal. The same physical, organic, and moral laws prevail in all parts of the earth. Water boils at the same temperature at the level of the sea in the torrid as in the frigid zone. The overladen, leaky vessel will go down in the Pacific as in the Atlantic. Poison taken into the stomach will destroy life as readily in China as America. Not less universal are God's moral laws. It is impossible to conceive a place where

truthfulness is not right, and where untruthfulness is not wrong; where gratitude is not praiseworthy, and ingratitude is not blameworthy. We cannot imagine a place in the universe of God where the false, dishonest, censorious, and selfish man can be happy, nor where the honest, sincere, charitable, and self-sacrificing person can be miserable.

A fourth characteristic of these laws is that they are eternal. So long as God endures, these laws shall endure. In them is everlasting blessedness; in them is everlasting punishment. God is love, has been, and always will be love. But whether his love shall be to a soul joy and blessedness, or pain and misery, depends upon its character. The same fire that melts the gold, hardens the clay. The same beautiful sunlight, so cheering to the eye in a healthy condition, becomes the most exquisite torture to the diseased eye. So God's love, which is sweeter than the sunshine, and dearer than life to the good man, is to the wicked the most painful of all things, because there is nothing that so kindles the fires of remorse within him.—*Selected.*

CALMNESS IN ARGUMENT.

BANISH utterly out of all conversation, and especially out of all learned and intellectual conference, everything that tends to provoke passion, or raise a fire in the blood. Let no sharp language, no noisy exclamation, no sarcasms or biting jests, be heard among you, no perverse or invidious consequences to be drawn from each other's opinions, and imputed to the person; let there be no willful perversion of another's meaning, no sudden seizure of a lapsed syllable to play upon it, nor any absurd construction of an innocent mistake. Suffer not your tongue to insult a modest opponent who begins to yield; let there be no crowing or triumph, even when there is evident victory on your side. All these things are enemies to friendship, and the ruin of free conversation. The impartial search of truth requires all calmness and serenity, all temper and candor. Mutual instruction can never be obtained in the midst of passion, pride, and clamor.—*Selected.*

THE SILENT SERMON.

IT has been truly said that a holy life is a continual sermon. Though it be silent in its speech, yet it speaks with a force that cannot be unheeded, even by the most careless—a force that pulpit oratory never can attain, however eloquent it may be. We may extol the name of Jesus from the pulpit, in words of eloquence and elegance, and be listened to with indifference; but let the humblest disciple of Christ manifest holiness in his daily walk and conversation; let him be meek and lowly as our Saviour was; patient under difficulties; bold and fearless in danger; trusting and confident in the darkest hour, and he wields an influence for Christ which all the eloquence and wisdom of this world cannot equal. Best of all sermons is the silent sermon of a holy life; and, indeed, without it all other preaching is useless and vain.—*Thorp.*

THE DECLARATION OF THE HEAVENS.

WE were standing on a green strip of land, the waters of Casco Bay on either side, and also on either side was spread a rare panorama, a display of the handiwork which all along the firmament was showing the skill and glory of God. The setting sun was sending great bands of golden sheen along the western horizon on the one hand, while a full moon was rising in majestic splendor on the other. To the right the waters of the bay glanced with seeming scintillations of burnished gold; on the left, the smooth surface sparkled with the calm radiance of silvery brightness. "Oh," exclaimed a young friend at my side, "how can anyone deny the existence of a God who ever gazes on a scene like this! And yet they do," was added with a tone of regret and sadness. In our heart of hearts we have always been exceedingly skeptical as to the sincerity of skepticism, and on such an evening as the one described, it would seem that involuntary, spontaneous belief in a divine power must assert itself in the heart of any intelligent human being. . . .

When at the close of day one stands surrounded by the mighty illuminations of the heavens, when the condensed glory of the great monarch of day is flushing sky, earth, and sea, with widespread rainbow tints of his receding rays, and luna, with the calm grandeur of her paler light, is mounting higher and higher in the blue expanse, riding with unimpeded course along her given way, what wonder that the solemn march of the luminous bodies drew from the psalmist the impassioned utterance, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" And how every work and design of art and cunning known among men and women pales into insignificance and comparative worthlessness when considered beside the perfect work of God? Viewing the firmament at the hour of sun setting and moon rising, watching the stars come twinkling forth, each in its appointed place, behold the fancy work, the intricate, exquisite, finished handiwork of the fingers of almighty God! And yet man is the most wonderful and most noble of all his created works; man, with his intellect so like a God.

One great, grand lesson should be borne into the soul through the silent yet stupendous influence of the daily and nocturnal declaration of the heavens. Shall mortal man be more wise than God himself? Shall the thing created deny the great Creator of all things? Look abroad at nightfall; consider for an earnest, serious moment the heavens which God has created, the moon and the stars, the matchless samples of the work of his fingers; then open wide the soul to the glorious convictions which will leap into life, and with all the heart make haste to recognize and acknowledge the power, the belief, the trust awakened by the grand declaration of the heavens. For in very truth they declare in golden and in silvery voices the existence and the glory of our God.—*Christian at Work.*

A GREAT NEED.

THE great need of the church to-day is a cordial and demonstrative faith. If our hearts were as full of the promises as our heads are—if we believed in them as the bride believes in the husband for whose sake she leaves all else that is familiar and dear and goes to a new home, her only knowledge of which is from his word, the world would feel the power of the church as it did in apostolic times. Men are waiting all around us for a demonstration of the life of our religion. They admire it as a system. They see, too, that it has some influence for good upon individuals and society. But they do not see in those who profess it evidence of the constraining love of Christ. They hear us sing,—

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;"

But when they look for the crosses on our shoulders, lo, they are not there! Instead of staggering under them as pilgrims, we are riding in palace cars. We are being "carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease." And instead of leaving all to follow Christ, we send a few of our enthusiastic brethren and sisters to the famishing heathen, and give a dollar a year to foreign missions.—*Interior.*

AGAINST COVETOUSNESS.

No divided or impure heart whatever can clearly and steadily see the light of God. But we do not need to be told what a darkening influence is exercised over Christian men by the love of money in particular. We are, unhappily, too familiar with its ravages in the modern church; with disciples, genuine enough, zealous sometimes to a fault, and loud in their profession of Christianity, who nevertheless betray, by the stationariness of their moral character, or by their unconscious perseverance in faulty habits which everyone notices but themselves, or by overlooking very obvious duties lying in their path, that they cannot be walking open-eyed in the light of God.

Christians who, throughout the greater part of life, remain unchastened, ungentle, unmel- lowed, hardly distinguishable from the utter worldling by reason of their petty, grasping, saving ways, are frequent enough everywhere. Were the cause of such religion to be faithfully inquired after, or could it be plainly told, how often would it prove to be just this—that the real desire of their heart is not bent with single-minded longing upon the attainment of God's approval or of his celestial rewards, but has become diverted to an excessive degree on temporal objects, chained down to earth, and made earthly by the over-eager pursuit of success, or by an over-warm delight in such perishable gains as they have been able to win for themselves in the scramble of business.

With such Christians a reverse process has been going on from that which happened to the converts of Ephesus. The eyes of those hearts at Ephesus were enlightened, so that they saw the riches of God's own inheritance—the celestial wealth destined for children

of God in the everlasting kingdom of their Father. But we suffer the dazzle of corrupt gold to fall across our vision, and draw after it the worship of the heart; then our eyes, which were full of Heaven's own light, grow dim again, the celestial glory fades away, the shining crown suspended over Christian heads has leave to hang there unseen, and we toil on to rake together in the dark what is but dust after all, though it be the dust of gold.—*J. Oswald Dykes.*

ALL IS THINE.

I LOVE my God but with no love of mine,
For I have none to give;
I love thee, Lord; but all the love is thine,
For by thy love I live.
I am as nothing, and rejoice to be
Emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in thee.
Thou, Lord, alone, art all thy children need,
And there is none beside;
From thee the streams of blessedness proceed,
In thee the blessed abide;
Fountain of life, and all-abounding grace,
Our Source, our Center, and our Dwelling-place.
—*Madame Guyon.*

"BE CONVERTED."

"REPENT ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." The words to be emphasized in this passage are, "*Be converted.*" Repentance is one of the prerequisites. The blotting out of sin is one of the results, or accompanying blessings, of conversion. The main thing is to be converted. This involves a turning away from sin, a cleaving to Christ by faith, and an experience of the regenerating power of the Spirit. This should be a thorough work. There should be so much of conscientiousness and earnestness in it as to revolutionize the whole life. All that is sinful should cease at conversion. St. John says that those who are born of God cannot sin. He does not mean to say that it is impossible for them to fall from grace, but that unless they do fall from grace they cannot sin. The Christian character and sinfulness are incompatible. The Christian must not transgress God's law. He must not do wrong. He must be holy as regards the law, whether he professes the blessing of entire sanctification or not. One Christian is under just as great obligation as another to keep the commandments of God and abstain from every appearance of evil. In conversion God forgives all sin. The work of cleansing is complete. All the sins of the past and all the guilt of the present are taken away, made to be as if they had never been. We are not now speaking of the "roots of sin," "the remains of the carnal mind," which Mr. Wesley says may remain in the believer, and can be eradicated only by a further work of grace; we are speaking of actual sin. This is taken away, and the soul is at peace with God. Conversion does more for believers than some people acknowledge. Theologians tell us that the great blessings of regeneration, justification, and adoption are all bestowed in the moment of conversion. One of these blessings is never given without the others. They are concomitant; that is, they are collaterally connected with each

other in the experience of pardon. By justification we are delivered from past transgressions; by regeneration we experience the inward change of a new heart; and by adoption we are made members of God's great spiritual household. What a work is this! How worthy of being sought and enjoyed! How quickly it should engage the attention of every sinner! Repent and be converted! Get away from your sin, which disturbs and destroys, and will drag you down to endless death. Gain the new heart, and become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Let this engage your first attention. Yield to God. Ask him to forgive you and make you his child. To your dying day, yea, to all eternity, you will thank him for the rich experience he will give you.—*Selected.*

EXAMPLES.

THE Scripture has lighted up excellent examples of holiness in the lives of the saints upon earth, for our direction and imitation. There is a great advantage in looking on examples; they are more instructive than marked precepts, and more clearly convey the knowledge of our duty. A work done in our sight by another directs us better in the practice of it; it is more acceptable and of more powerful efficacy to reform us than counsel and admonition by words. A reproof, if spoken with an imperious air, wherein vanity has a visible ascendant, is heard with distaste and often with disdain; but an excellent example is a silent reproof, not directed immediately to irregular persons, but discovering what ought to be done, and leaving the application to themselves, so that the impression is more quick and penetrating than of words. In difficult precepts no argument is more effectual than example; for the possibility of performances is confirmed by instances, and the pretense of infirmity is taken away. The command binds us to duty. Examples encourage us to performance.—*Selected.*

SPOILED FRUIT.

"THE fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Gal. 5: 22, 23.

The little fox "selfishness" will spoil the fruit "love."

The little fox "discontent" will spoil the fruit "joy."

The little fox "anxious thought" will spoil the fruit "peace."

The little fox "impatience" will spoil the fruit "long-suffering."

The little fox "a bitter word" will spoil the fruit "gentleness."

The little fox "indolence" will spoil the fruit "goodness."

The little fox "doubt" will spoil the fruit "faith."

The little fox "pride" will spoil the fruit "meekness."

The little fox "love of pleasure" will spoil the fruit "temperance."—*Sel.*

THE faithful man pursues his way quietly.

The Signs of the Times.

"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

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OAKLAND, CAL., SIXTH-DAY, DECEMBER 28, 1888.

TRUTH AND ITS IMPORTANCE.

WHEN Jesus stood before Pilate, accused as a malfactor, he vindicated his character by these simple words: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." John 18:37. Pilate, unconscious of the fact that Jesus had already given the substance of the best definition of truth, asked, "What is truth?" and immediately went out. His question, and the fact that he did not seem to expect an answer, would indicate that he did not believe in the existence of such a thing as truth.

There have always been, and are still, many, many people in the same condition as Pilate. There are many who affect to disbelieve in the existence of truth and goodness. The reason for this is plain. Their own hearts are corrupt, and they have naturally sought the association of those of like character, until they know nothing of truth. The licentious man, who has always associated with men and women of low and depraved tastes, does not believe that there is such a thing as virtue. The knave thinks all men can be bought, providing the price is fixed high enough. Pharaoh, who knew nothing by experience of real worship directed to a God who could discern the motives, did not believe that there existed any such being. Only the man whose heart is pure, or who has longings for purity of soul, can know and appreciate the truth; for it is only the man who will do God's will who shall know of the doctrine. John 7:17.

When Jesus said that he came into the world to bear witness of the truth, and that everyone that is of the truth would hear his voice, he expressed in another form what he had already told his disciples: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." John 14:6. He is the one that is holy and true, "the faithful and true witness." One of the definitions of truth is, "Exact accordance with that which is, or has been, or shall be." This exactly agrees with what is revealed of Jesus. He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," Jehovah, "the one which is, and which was, and which is to come."

In his prayer for the disciples Jesus told what truth is, and what it will do. Said he: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." John 17:17. But Jesus is the Word of God, the one through whom alone the character, and attributes, and power of God are made known to men. The law of God, the ten commandments, is declared to be the truth, as the psalmist says: "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth;" and, "Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are truth." Ps. 119:142, 151. These commandments were spoken by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai, and "he added no more," so that they are, in an eminent degree, the truthful word of which Christ spoke in his prayer, yet it was the voice of the Son of God, the divine Word, who uttered them, so that the commandments of God are inseparably connected with our Lord Jesus Christ. They proceeded from him, being an expression of his own righteousness.

That this is so is shown still farther by the words of the prophet concerning Christ: "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honorable." Isa. 42:21. There cannot be the slightest doubt that this chapter is a prophecy of the Messiah, and the law is ex-

pressly declared to be his righteousness. So when the prophet David spoke by inspiration in Christ's stead, he said: "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." Now take these facts, together with Christ's words, "Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice," and we have the most positive evidence that the keeping of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are inseparably connected. No one can keep the commandments without faith in Jesus, and no one ever has real faith in Jesus except as he is driven to it by the terms of the violated law, and by a sincere desire to have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in him. The righteousness which is "through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9), is the only righteousness that will secure one a dwelling-place in the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell.

The importance of this truth is shown by what it will do for us. Christ showed in his prayer that it will sanctify us. The apostle Peter writes: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit," etc. 1 Peter 1:22. And Christ, who declared himself to be the embodiment of the truth, said to the Jews who believed in him: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31, 32. But the same apostle who wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit," also said of the believing Gentiles: "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts 15:8, 9.

From these texts which we have just grouped together, we learn that the law of God is the truth that makes men free, and purifies the heart, but that it is not the law in the abstract that does this, but "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and that this is effected by "the Spirit of truth." The law of God is called a "law of liberty," and so it is, but only to those who obey it; and none can obey it except as they yield to the striving of the Holy Spirit, and come to Christ.

The truth which makes free is not an outward compliance with the ten commandments. The Pharisees outwardly appeared righteous unto men, yet they were in the worst kind of bondage. David says: "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom." Ps. 51:6. And speaking of the man who shall abide in the holy hill of the Lord, who shall be "delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God," he says that it is the one that "walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." Ps. 15:2. The man who does that is one with Christ, even as he was one with the Father, because Christ had the law in his heart.

The keeping of the commandments of truth is all that God requires of man. Says Solomon: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccl. 12:13, 14. There can be nothing more required of man than to do this; but it cannot be done except by faith in Christ. This does not mean a passive assent to the principles of the Christian religion, but such faith as brings Christ to dwell in the heart, so that he can work in us that which is good.

The comprehensiveness of the law of truth is shown by the text last quoted. It is the whole duty of man, and by it every work, with every secret thing, shall be brought into judgment. This shows that the commandments of God are that word of God which is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12. Keeping the commandments is something more than a form. It consists in having every act, every word, and ev-

ery thought just such as they would be if Jesus were dwelling within the man, acting and speaking and thinking through him. It consists in acting and speaking in every instance just as Jesus would act or speak under the same circumstances. Surely this cannot be done unless Christ dwells in the heart.

Who, then, has outgrown the ten commandments? Are they of a lower grade of morality than is required of Christians in this age? Nay, verily. Let no one say that to exalt the law of God is to deny Christ; for in no other way can we so exalt Christ, and so appreciate the necessity of having his continual presence with us, as by exalting the breadth and holiness of the law.

But will there ever be any people on the earth who will have attained to that perfection of character? Indeed there will be. Says the prophet: "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth." Zeph. 3:13. When the Lord comes there will be a company who will be found "complete in him," having not their own righteousness, but that perfect righteousness of God, which comes by faith of Jesus Christ. To perfect this work in the hearts of individuals, and to prepare such a company, is the work of the Third Angel's Message. That message, therefore, is not a mass of dry theories, but is a living, practical reality.

Happy will those persons be who form the remnant of Israel, in whose hearts the righteousness of God's law of truth is perfected. For them mansions will be prepared in that glorious city wherein there shall in nowise enter anything that defileth, "neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Rev. 21:27. And as they approach that great and strong city, the walls and bulwarks of which are everlasting salvation, the cry will be raised, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth, may enter in" (Isa. 26:1, 2); and as the everlasting doors are lifted up, they will enter, with the King of glory at their head, and shall henceforth have a right to the tree of life, and dwell in his presence forever. W.

THE CAUSE OF APOSTASY.

THE apostle Peter, speaking of a class of false teachers in the Christian church, and to be especially abundant in the last days, says of them: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error." 2 Peter 2:18.

There is here the expression of a most important fact, and one which, if overlooked, will cause the ruin of many. That is, that the false teachers of the last days will allure believers into the acceptance of false doctrines, not by directly preaching those errors, but by the seductive influence of the lusts of the flesh. The situation as indicated by the apostle is this: Here are some who are "clean escaped from them who live in error." They have accepted the truth concerning the Sabbath of the Lord, the nature of man, the ministration of angels, the coming of the Lord, and the inheritance of the saints, and are free from the gross errors that have been handed down to the popular churches as a legacy from the Catholic Church. And now these false teachers come around, and by acting as the devil's agents in appealing to the lusts of the flesh, they accomplish the ruin of those souls, and cause them to deny the truth which they once held.

This proves again the truth that infidelity is not a thing of the intellect, but of the heart and life. Many men have apostatized from Christianity as a whole, and others from what is known as the Third Angel's Message, ostensibly because they found it impossible any longer to hold to the doctrine. But if the inner life, the secret thoughts, of those men were known, it would be found in every instance that the cause of their unbelief was impurity of thought and life. The cherished lusts of the flesh will be found to be the worm at the root, which destroys the vitality of the plant, and makes it impossible to maintain its position in the soil of faith.

It is a universal truth that, "if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." That is, if any man has a sincere desire to have the will of God wrought in him, to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, God will reveal to him in some way what is truth. And the man who has some truth, who is in that condition, will not only have no difficulty in retaining his faith, but will receive greater light of the same kind. "Light is sown for the righteous," and "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

It is a very common saying that the man who holds the Bible doctrine of the soul, and the condition of man in death, can never be a Spiritualist. That is true, providing he retains his belief in the Bible doctrine of the soul, and of the condition of man in death. But if he lets go his hold on that doctrine, he has no safeguard whatever against that great masterpiece of deception. The question, then, is, How can he continue to believe the Bible doctrine, so as to be safe from that deception? The answer, and the only answer, that can be given is that he can hold to his belief only by living a pure life, by cleansing the soul from every defilement, by being pure in heart. The man who fails to live such a life, who regards iniquity in his heart, who loves sensual pleasures, and who indulges in impure imaginings, will surely fall away from the truth, and no power can prevent him; while the man who has true charity, godliness, temperance, patience, virtue, etc., can never fall.

Paul says that when Satan works with "all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," he will cause the ruin of those who "received not the love of the truth." He does not say that those are deceived who received not the truth, but who received not the love of the truth, intimating that many who have received the truth may be led captive by the deceptions of Satan. The love of the truth is to be distinguished from love for the truth. The "love of the truth" is the love of God, the love which brought the truth to man, a portion of the same love which God has in His heart for man, in which is no trace of impurity; for "the truth" of God is nothing else but the wisdom which is from above, and that is "first pure." The man who has not "the love of the truth," might as well be destitute of the form of the truth. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This is a truth that applies to this present life as well as to the future. It is true that when we reach the heavenly Jerusalem, we shall see God face to face, with no evil between; but all who share that inestimable blessing must in this life have, like Moses, "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." The soul that is as pure as the sunlight may enjoy the closest communion with God, and has a hold that will keep it when others fall around him. There shall in nowise enter into the New Jerusalem "anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abominations," but only those who have washed their robes of character, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

w.

HOW TO "CHRISTIANIZE THE MASSES."

The Philadelphia *Times* has the following pertinent remarks relative to "Christianizing the Masses," a question which is now being generally discussed by both press and pulpit:—

"The first and essential step toward Christianizing the masses in our centers of population is to Christianize the Christians. Until that is done, nothing else can be done that will be effective. While the churches remain pleasant and fashionable, Sunday clubs, whose sittings are sold to the highest bidder, and in which the worship is conducted in a fashionable manner, that says to the poor, 'These are no places for you,' the poor will stay away. Until Christians are willing to make their religion one of self-sacrifice—willing to worship on equal terms with the masses—they will have little influence in the way of inducing them to come into the churches. . . . The great wall which riches and social distinction have raised between the Protestant church and the masses must be broken down, or, in spite of all, the proportion of church goers to population in our large cities will continue to decrease."

The *Times* is not, we believe, a religious journal, but it has stated this matter much more aptly than even many of the ministers who have discussed it. Unconverted churches can have but little power for good, and before they can reach the masses they must gain the experience for which David prayed. "Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation," he cried, "and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Truly, "the first and essential step toward Christianizing the masses, is to Christianize [convert] the Christians."

CATHOLICS ARE SPIRITUALISTS.

THE tenth of this month we had the privilege (or misfortune) to listen to a lecture on the "Relation of Man to the Spirit World," by the Rev. Father Rooney, in the Church of St. Dominic, San Francisco. He stated that the angels had a connection and communication with this earth, as did also the saints who had died; that modern Spiritualism was of the devil, and should be called "Spiritism" instead of "Spiritualism;" that the only true Spiritualists were the Roman Catholics. The only difference he made was this, that modern Spiritualists professed to call spirits at their will, which could only be the spirits of devils, while Roman Catholics believed that the good spirits of angels and dead saints came to man at the command of God.

But the query arose in our minds, What is there in the Roman Catholic view to prevent all Romanists from joining the vast and increasing body of Spiritualists? Nothing. The Bible declares that "the dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9), that "his sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not" (Job 14), that "his thoughts perish" in death (Ps. 146), and many other such like declarations. Then those spirits who appear to devout Roman Catholics, professing to be the spirit of St. Peter, or Paul, or Simon, or Bridget, or Patrick, or Mary, are lying spirits. Satan "is transformed into an angel of light." 2 Cor. 11:14. Those who worship the dead or sacrifice to the dead, sacrifice to devils. 1 Cor. 10:20; Ps. 106:28, 36, 37. And when these lying spirits come in these guises, and deceive by these guises, what is there to hinder their deceiving as to who sent them? Nothing. They will say, "God sent us," and the devotee is deceived. But he who cleaves to the truth will bring every spirit "to the law and to the testimony;" and if they speak not according to that, they are in darkness and not light. Spiritualists and Roman Catholics will yet unite. Our safety is to depart from both.

m. c. w.

THE BOOK OF ROMANS.

WITH the next issue we begin a series of articles of a practical nature upon the book of Romans, designed to aid the Bible-reader to a better understanding of that portion of God's word, that he may read and study it with more pleasure and profit. Our plan is to make each article distinct and complete in itself as far as possible, so that whoever has only a single number of the paper, may read with profit the article which it contains; and yet, from the very nature of the case, many of the articles will depend much upon what has gone before. Under the heading of each article will appear the chapter and verse of Romans which is the subject of comment, so that all who desire to do so may keep the connection of thought.

Quite often a single sentence will furnish the basis for an entire article, and around it will be gathered other passages of Scripture relating to the same topic, so that as the thoughtful reader peruses the book of Romans each verse may teem with suggestions of deep spiritual truths. It is very true, as Chalmers says, that "people, in reading the Bible, are often not conscious of the extreme listlessness with which they pass along the familiar and oft-repeated words of Scripture, without the impression of their meaning being at all present with the thoughts,—and how, during the mechanical currency of the thoughts through their lips, the thinking power is often asleep

for whole passages together." One object of these articles will be to make this impossible to the reader of the book of Romans, by linking so many thoughts with each passage that they will involuntary come to his mind as he reads it.

Very little heed will be given to the varying opinions of the numerous commentators, our object being to lead the mind of the reader directly to the truth contained in the sacred word, and help him to draw from it for himself some of its wealth. Questions which any who read this may wish to ask upon any portion of the epistle, will be thankfully received, and will be considered in their proper order.

As to the time and place of the writing of this epistle, there is little doubt. When the apostle wrote it, he had never visited Rome, but was planning to do so. Rom. 1:10, 11; 15:23-28. From this last text we learn that he was just about to visit Jerusalem, with the contributions which the Gentile Christians had made for the support of the poor saints in that city. Now this contribution was taken on Paul's last visit to Jerusalem. Acts 20:2, 3; 24:17. On this trip he was accompanied by certain brethren whose names are mentioned in the first epistle to the Corinthians, some of whom undoubtedly lived there; and the letter itself commends, and was evidently delivered by, Phebe, "a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea" (Rom. 16:1), the port of Corinth. The epistle to the Romans was, therefore, undoubtedly written from Corinth, about 58 A. D.

There is probably no other epistle of Paul to which Peter's words (2 Peter 3:16) have more special application than to the epistle to the Romans. In it there are "some things hard to be understood," and thousands of unlearned and unstable souls have wrested them to their own destruction. But the apostle does not say that there are things in Paul's writings that cannot be understood. That there are some things in the book of Romans, as well as in other portions of the Bible, that no man does fully understand, cannot be doubted. Yet no one will wrest these things to his own destruction, unless he has previously done so to the other portions of Scripture, which are more plain. That is, the man who has a sincere desire for truth, and who reverently accepts and firmly holds to those portions of Scripture which are comparatively simple, will not be harassed by doubts as to those things which seem utterly to baffle his comprehension. Believing that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," he will know that the more obscure parts cannot conflict with any other part, and so will possess his soul in patience until prayerful study, or the arising of the Day-star, shall lighten up the whole.

That the epistle to the Romans is not a book for learned theologians alone, but that the common people may understand it, will be evident to all who think for a moment of the persons to whom it was written. It was written as a letter to the church in Rome. Although Rome was the metropolis of the world, it is not at all to be doubted that the apostle could have written to them as he did to the church in the proud and opulent city of Corinth: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." 1 Cor. 1:26. The church in Rome was doubtless principally composed, as most of the true churches of Christ have been in all ages, of the laboring classes, those whose station in life was lowly, and who had not enjoyed the advantages of what is known as a "liberal education." There were carpenters, and blacksmiths, and masons, and shop-keepers, and shoe-makers, and tent-makers, and gardeners, and housekeepers, among those to whom Paul wrote, and doubtless they formed the majority. Nevertheless the apostle wrote to them, expecting them to understand his letter. The apostle who wrote, "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (1 Cor. 14:19), could not write an epistle in language impossible to be understood by the common people which composed the church. Of course they needed to receive and study it in the spirit in which it was written. They needed the aid of the

Spirit of God, in order to understand it. But we have the promise of the same Spirit if we but ask for it, and so we may understand it as well as they. Surely that Spirit which indicted the epistle can make it plain to those who humbly put themselves in the way of being guided by it. On this point, the following remarks by Dr. Albert Barnes, in the introduction to his comments on this epistle, are most pertinent:—

"It cannot be denied that one reason why the epistles of Paul have been regarded as so difficult, has been an unwillingness to admit the truth of the plain doctrines which he teaches. The heart is by nature opposed to them, and comes to believe them with great reluctance. This feeling will account for no small part of the difficulties felt in regard to this epistle. There is one great maxim in interpreting the Scriptures, that can never be departed from. It is, that men can never understand them aright, until they are willing to suffer them to speak out their fair and proper meaning. When men are determined not to find certain doctrines in the Bible, nothing is more natural than that they should find difficulties in it, and complain much of its great obscurity and mystery."

"Perhaps, on the whole, there is no book of the New Testament that more demands a humble, docile, and prayerful disposition in its interpretation than this epistle. Its profound doctrines; its abstruse inquiries; and the opposition of many of those doctrines to the views of the unrenowned and unsubdued heart of man, make a spirit of docility and prayer peculiarly needful in its investigation. No man ever yet understood the reasonings and views of the apostle Paul but under the influence of elevated piety. None ever found opposition to his doctrines recede, and difficulties vanish, who did not bring the mind in an humble frame to receive all that has been revealed; and that, in a spirit of humble prayer, did not purpose to lay aside all bias, and open the heart to the full influence of the elevated truths which he inculcates. Where there is a willingness that God should reign and do all his pleasure, this epistle may be in its general character easily understood."

Olshausen, also, after giving an analysis of the epistle, says:—

"Such being the nature of the contents of the epistle to the Romans, it may be understood why it is usually regarded as very difficult. Indeed, it may be said that where there is wanting in the reader's own life an experience analogous to that of the apostle, it is utterly unintelligible. Everything in the epistle wears so strongly the impress of the greatest originality, liveliness and freshness of experience; the apostle casts so sure and clear a glance into the most delicate circumstances of spiritual life in the regenerate; he can with such admirable clearness resolve the particular into the general, that the reader who occupies the low and confined level of natural worldly knowledge, now feels his brain reel as he gazes at those stupendous periods of development in the universe disclosed by Paul, and now finds his vision fail as it contemplates the minute and microscopic processes which Paul unveils in the hidden depth of the soul. Where, however, analogous inward experience, and the spiritual eye sharpened thereby, come to the task, the essential purport of the epistle makes itself clear, even to the simplest mind."

We believe that both of these writers have stated the exact truth. A study of the epistle, with a prayerful, sincere desire to know and do God's will, and to have him work his own will in the soul, will lead to a general understanding of it, and will aid in giving the spiritual experience of which it treats. But when the Spirit has performed its work so that the individual can exclaim, Oh, the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! Oh, the blessedness of the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile! he will study the epistle with an enjoyment so much more intense that it will seem as though he never before knew anything about it.

That the Holy Spirit, which is given to guide us into all truth, may so soften our hearts as to make them easily susceptible to its influence; that we may have such a longing desire and determined purpose to do the will of God, that he may cause us to know of the doctrine; and that so we may find in this epistle that reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, which shall make us perfect, "thoroughly furnished unto all good works," is the sincere prayer of the writer.

HOW IT MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED.

THE *Interior* has in its November supplement some extracts from what purport to be the Scriptures of the most ancient Egyptians, and in commenting on them it takes occasion to eulogize to some extent the Egyptian sun-god, Osiris, contrasting him with Baal and Dagon, the Asiatic conceptions of Deity. It then says:—

"The Christian would have no difficulty in worshipping Osiris. Osiris was God. Osiris was to God what the sun shining through a murky haze is to the sun rising in unclouded splendor. His outlines and attributes, and his attitude toward man as Creator, Father, Saviour, and righteous Judge, are all there, and not so very dimly, either. The obscuring veil between Ptah-hotep and God was a good deal more transparent than that which hangs before the devotee in every Roman Catholic fane. Abraham came out of Ur into a theological sunrise. God unveiled himself, and Abraham became the apostle of the monotheistic reformation, which restored the primitive church. If we are going to allow Romanism to stand in our view as a Christian church, despite its corruptions, we will find it hard to exclude Ptah-hotep and his fellow-worshippers of Osiris. There is a shorter drop between the Jehovah of the first of Genesis and the Osiris of Egypt than there is between the Christ of the gospels and the Christ of the Vatican. If we count as Christian the worshippers of Mary, and admit that they have enough of truth to save them, we shall certainly find no difficulty in including among the elect the followers of Ptah-hotep and Zoroaster, and other sages of the ancient world who worshiped God."

It then goes on, consistently with the above, to deny that Abraham was "the sole and solitary member of the church living on earth during his time," and claims that from all the heathen nations there was "a mighty flood pouring into the golden city." The *Interior's* position is consistent. If the Catholic Church be a Christian church, then it is certain that the worshippers of Osiris and of Apollo cannot be barred from the list. But when that is granted, it must also be claimed that it was unnecessary for the Lord to bring Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and a mistake to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, in order that they might serve him. Straws show which way the wind blows; and the indications are that the long-dreamed-of temporal millennium, when all the world shall be converted, will be brought about by the acknowledgment of not only Catholics, but Mohammedans, Buddhists, and the most enlightened heathen nations as Christians. If the Catholic Church is to be acknowledged as Christian there is no reason why the heathen religion should not be called Christian also.

WHAT OF THE CITIES?

"WHAT of the Cities?" is the title of an article in the New York *Observer* of December 13, in which the needs of the cities, as set forth in a conference held recently in Chickering Hall, New York, is discussed at considerable length. Some of the facts brought out were the same as those presented at the Syracuse convention, referred to in these columns last week, under the title, "Iniquity Abounding," but some are both new and startling, and relate not alone to New York, but also to other large cities in various parts of our country. "It appears," says the *Observer*, "that while in the whole country one in five is a member of some evangelical church, in New York there is only one in thirteen; in Chicago, one in twenty-one; in Cincinnati, one in twenty-three; in San Francisco, one in thirty-seven."

It was to consider these and other facts of a like nature, especially as relating to New York, that the conference was convened; and the paper previously quoted says: "It was undenominational, and met to consider the gospel needs of the city. It met none too soon. We have no more burning question to meet and solve than this." "There are great masses of humanity in our great cities that are Christless. Could all the church bells in Christendom be rung at one time, these masses would be unmoved. The present means of sowing the gospel seed is utterly inadequate. Learned divines may thunder away at these non-church goers as sternly as they please. The church goers listen and approve, but the thunder-

bolts never reach their intended victims. They never come where the preachers are." "They are just as likely to come into our churches as the heathen of the Congo, and no more. They must be reached in the same way. Somebody must take the gospel to them, and preach Jesus to them, or they will live and die ignorant and indifferent, indifferent because ignorant."

Again the *Observer* says: "The saloon is rightly given as one of the antagonistic forces. New York has twenty saloons to one Protestant church, while San Francisco has sixty-five places for the sale of liquor, to one evangelical church. Multiply the sixty-five saloons of San Francisco by the number of hours per week they ply their business; then take the sum of hours per week in which the churches are in use, and the contrast is too painfully impressive."

Such is the condition of so-called Christian cities; and it was plainly stated in the Syracuse Convention, before referred to, that "the proportion of non-church goers is as great in the country as in the city;" and yet we are asked by some to believe that the world is rapidly growing better, that the world will soon be conquered for Christ, and the millennium ushered in! But the facts do not warrant the belief that the world is improving in morals. On the contrary, the evidences thicken on every hand which show that we are even now in the last days, when the Scriptures assure us that iniquity shall abound. Surely iniquity does abound, and on every hand the hearts of thoughtful men are "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth."

PRESENT WITH THE LORD.

"For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." 2 Cor. 5:1-9.

A CORRESPONDENT who has lately accepted the truth, desires an explanation of the above scripture. It has been presented as proof that the soul is immortal, and that it exists as an intelligent, conscious entity separate from the body between death and the resurrection. It is said that "absent from the body" is the death of the body; and "present with the Lord" is the disembodied soul in the presence of God. But no such doctrine is taught by the apostle.

The subject of the apostle's discourse which drew out the above words, was not the intermediate state; it was this life as contrasted with the life to come; it was this time of light affliction which was working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; it was the things temporal as contrasted to the things eternal. The temporal things are seen by mortal eyes; the eternal are now seen only by faith. These were the objects before the apostle when he wrote the words which are quoted at the head of this article. In this scripture he presents not two conditions,—life and death,—but three conditions, this life, death, and the life to come. The first he describes by "the earthly house of this tabernacle," "in this," "this tabernacle," "mortality," and "at home in the body." He designates the second condition—death—by the terms, "dissolved," "found naked," and "unclothed." The third, the future immortal life, is indicated by "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens," "clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven," "being clothed," "clothed upon," "swallowed up of life," "absent from the body," and "present with the Lord." With this explanation of terms, the passage is easily understood.

The objective part of the apostle's words is the future immortal life. That was the goal to be

reached, the object of his hope, the fulfillment of his most ardent desires. Obstacles may intervene, but it will come. Death may destroy this earthly tabernacle, but we know God has something better. "For we know," says the apostle, "that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved [that is, though we may die], we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." There is an immortal life, which Christ will give beyond the grave.

But the apostle did not wish to obtain it this way. He did not desire the intermediate state, and yet why should he not desire it, if that means to be "present with the Lord"? It does not mean this. Death is an enemy (1 Cor. 15:26); it comes in consequence of sin (James 1:15); it is the legitimate progeny of Satan, who has the power of death (Heb. 2:14). Death was not what the apostle longed for; he longed for the presence of God, in the immortal life. While God will redeem us forever, though we do die or are dissolved, he will redeem some who do not pass through death, who are not "unclothed," whose house is not dissolved. For this the apostle groans, "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven." He longs that "immortality" should be "swallowed up of life." This takes place at the resurrection, when Christ comes again. "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." 1 Cor. 15:51-55. A parallel text to the scripture under consideration is Rom. 8:23: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The redemption of our bodies will be when Christ comes. "For our conversation [citizenship] is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. 3:20, 21. Therefore, "mortality" will be "clothed upon," or swallowed up of life, when Christ shall come again and make his faithful ones like himself.

"Present with the Lord" relates to the same time, the coming of Christ. Nowhere is it said in the Bible that we will be with the Lord at death; for death is the enemy that shuts the saints in the prison-house of the grave. 1 Cor. 15:26, *et al.* But the Scriptures do expressly state that the saints are to be with the Lord at his second coming: "For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; John 14:1-3.

That the coming of Christ is the time to which Paul referred, is fully evident from the fact that the thing for which the apostle groaned was the thing for which God had wrought him. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God." That is, God has worked out, produced us, quarried us out from the world, for this purpose. The same word is used in chapter 4:17, where it is said that the light affliction *worketh* for us, or *worketh* out for us, an exceeding weight of glory. That is, these are the means by which God is fitting us for the glory beyond. He has not produced us for death, which is the consequence, or wages, of sin, or the end of wrath. He did not call us through Christ that we might be "unclothed," and enter the grave's dark portals. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." John 3:36. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake [are alive at Christ's coming] or sleep [die before he comes], we should *live together*

with him." 1 Thess. 5:9, 10. Therefore the self-same thing for which the apostle groaned, and for which God had called him, is immortal life in the presence of the Lord; and this life will be given at the second coming of Christ.

And to confirm this promise of the new life, God gives to each of his children "the earnest of the Spirit," called in Rom. 8:23, "the first-fruits of the Spirit." "Earnest," says Worcester, is "part of the price paid for property or goods sold, or money given in token that a bargain is ratified, or to bind a contract, often called 'earnest money.'" That portion of his Spirit which God places upon his people is the earnest money, or pledge that God will do all that he has promised, if they will but meet the conditions. And God promises men life, not death. Christ's coming is life, not death. Col. 3:3. Then the faithful whose house has been "dissolved," or taken down, will receive the house from Heaven, immortal life. Then the faithful who are "not found naked," or "unclothed," who are alive at his coming, will be "clothed upon" with immortality, and "mortality" will be "swallowed up of life."

The passage therefore under consideration furnishes no proof whatever of a conscious intermediate state, but does present how highly the apostle regarded the coming of Christ, and how he longed for that coming. It is a strong proof of the real life and the glorified, resurrected body beyond the grave.

M. C. W.

THE SURE WORD CANNOT FAIL.

THE psalmist, speaking of the heavens and the earth, says: "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed." Now read the following from "A Bird's-eye View of the World," by the eminent French geographer, Onesime Reclus, and you will see how facts sustain the prophecy:—

"In three or four generations the year 2000 will dawn on men dismayed at the sight of exhausted continents, worn-out islands, rivers run dry, forests consumed, the world ripe, and famine at the gates. The planet will be old, but, more than that, it will be mutilated."

He has put the time off too long, but he shows the fact that the world is getting old and worn out. This one fact is sufficient to show that the end cannot be far off. The sure word of prophecy cannot fail. Soon the time will come when this old earth, the scene of so many bloody wars, will be renewed, and made to blossom as the rose; and then "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."

OTHER USES OF TRIALS.

ONE of the uses of trials, to which we referred last week, is to reveal to us the imperfections and defects of our character. We may not know what lusts lurk in our sinful flesh, until tested. If the temptation is resisted, the lust is crucified, the victory is ours. But if we fall, the trial may be a benefit in that it has revealed the "weak spot" in our character. Henceforth, by watchfulness and faith in that strength which Christ alone can give, "out of weakness" we may be "made strong." Heb. 11:34.

There are other trials which do not come to those defective in character. If they are defective, they never reveal it by being overcome by the trial. Such a trial was brought to Abraham when the messenger of the Lord said to him: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Gen. 22:2.

Whether the enemy of all good suggested to the loving father's heart that the message was only evil, or unreal, we know not. This we know, it was sufficiently evident to Abraham that the command was from God. If he was assailed by doubts, his acts showed it not. We know that his human feelings must have suffered. His bright boy of promise to be slain by his own hand! What a night must have been that first one after the message was delivered!

How feeling would prompt him to linger! How, day after day, as he journeyed by the side of his loved boy, was his heart wrung with anguish unspeakable! And during the silent nightwatches of the journey between his home and Mount Moriah, with the son of promise by his side, what agonized prayers must have escaped to God for grace and strength to endure and obey! And strength was granted, and faith triumphed over such a trial as mortal never knew. And that great example of simple faith in God has shone out from the sacred page through all past centuries, to cheer, encourage, and confirm the faltering hearts of God's people as they were met with the terrible trials of life. It brought God's blessing to Abraham, but its great purpose was doubtless the blessing it has been and will be to others.

God thus manifested the power of faith in Paul. He was not only chosen to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, but said the Lord to Ananias, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Acts 9:16. And Paul knew that this was his lot, knew that wherever he might go, "bonds and afflictions" waited for him. Acts 20:23. A list of some of these trials and persecutions is given in the eleventh chapter of 2 Corinthians. Was it pleasurable to his physical feelings? Did not the flesh cry out for more ease? Did it not cost him struggles? Listen to his own words:—

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body [press down, discipline, beat my body], and bring it into subjection." 1 Cor. 9:26, 27. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." 2 Cor. 4:8, 9.

These passages, and many others which might be given, show something of the terrible trials through which the apostle passed. He wrote them, not to complain; on the contrary, they are inspired by the Spirit of God for our benefit, to show how faith has, and therefore can, triumph over all trials, till these great trials, from an earthly standpoint, become to the child of faith the "light affliction, which is but for a moment" and which "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4:17.

Now all these afflictions were not for the apostle alone. If that had been their sole purpose, they never would have been recorded. But God overruled the great apostle's life, and his Spirit inspired its record for the benefit of the children of God who should meet trials in the future. This is one of the purposes which God has in permitting such sore trials on his faithful ones. They show us the power of divine grace, and the triumph of simple faith over all earthly affliction, and they especially fit the one who bears them to be a help to others. It is to this object of trials that the apostle refers in the following comforting passage:—

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." 2 Cor. 1:3-6.

And these precious assurances ought to lead us to that One who not only suffered great afflictions, but "was in all points tempted [tried] like as we are," who was made "in all things . . . like unto his brethren." The grace and consolation which come from Christ infinitely abound above the afflictions and trials. Then, afflicted soul, learn the lesson which the trial through grace is designed to teach. If the trial still remain, bear it patiently, hopefully, for Christ's sake, and thus will be manifested through you the power of God's grace, and the beauty of simple faith. You will reap its fruitage when you are glorified with Christ.

M. C. W.

The Commentary.

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

RESISTING THE TRUTH.

(Lesson 2, January 12, 1889.)

1. WHEN Moses and Aaron delivered their message to Pharaoh, what answer did they get?

"And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Ex. 5:1, 2.

2. Of what did Pharaoh accuse them?

"And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens." Verses 4, 5.

3. What additional burden was placed on the Israelites in consequence?

"And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish aught thereof; for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein; and let them not regard vain words." Verses 6-9.

4. When Moses the second time repeated God's promise to the Israelites, how did they receive his words?

"And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel; but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." Ex. 6:9.

5. How did this make Moses feel about going again before Pharaoh?

"And Moses spake before the Lord, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" Verse 12.

6. What assurance did the Lord give him?

"And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." Ex. 7:1.

7. What was meant by this?

"Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land." Ex. 7:2.

"And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." Ex. 4:16.

8. What was Moses told to do when Pharaoh should ask for a miracle?

"When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle for you, then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent." Ex. 7:9.

9. When this miracle was performed, what did Pharaoh's sorcerers do?

"And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded; and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." Verses 10-12.

10. What manifestation of God's power followed this act of the magicians?

"But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." Verse 12, last clause.

11. What effect did the rejection of this evidence have upon Pharaoh?

"And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had spoken." Verse 13, see Revised Version.

12. What were Moses and Aaron told to do next?

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the

waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone." Verse 19.

13. What was the result?

"And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt." Verses 20, 21.

14. What destroyed the effect of this miracle upon Pharaoh?

"And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the Lord had said." Verse 22.

15. What plague was next threatened, if the king should refuse to let the people go?

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs." Ex. 8:1, 2.

16. Was this done?

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt." Verses 5, 6.

17. How severe was this plague?

"And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs. And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants." "And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt." Verses 3, 4, 6.

18. What did the magicians do?

"And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt." Verse 7.

19. What request and promise did Pharaoh then make?

"Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord." Verse 8.

20. Why did not his magicians and sorcerers remove the plague? See note.

21. What is a magician?—"One skilled in magic; one who practices the black art; an enchanter, a necromancer; a sorcerer or sorceress."—Webster. See also definition of "magic."

22. What is sorcery?—"Divination by the assistance or supposed assistance of evil spirits; or the power of commanding evil spirits; magic; enchantment; witchcraft."—Webster. See also definition of "witchcraft" and "enchantment."

23. Whom did the heathen worship?

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." 1 Cor. 10:20.

24. Then on whose side were Pharaoh and his magicians?

25. What does the Bible say is Satan's sole work?

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

(Concluded next week.)

NOTES.

If in our version the word "Jehovah" were allowed to appear wherever it does in the corresponding place in the Hebrew, the sense would often appear more clearly. "Jehovah" is the distinctive title of the one true

God. Paul says, "There be gods many, and lords many; but to us there is but one God." He is the one who made all things, and who exists by his own power. This God, Pharaoh did not know. When Moses and Aaron said, "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go," he rudely exclaimed, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." If Moses had said, as our version indicates, "Thus saith the Lord," it would not have been distinctive, for the sun-god, which Pharaoh worshiped, corresponded to the Canaanitish Baal, which means "lord." Pharaoh knew many lords and gods, and one above all, the sun-god, which was known as "the lord;" he knew Ra, and Osiris, and Isis, and Phthah, and Set, but he did not know Jehovah, the only Lord. He might have known God, but, like the other heathen, he did not like to retain God in his knowledge. Still God gave him this opportunity to know and to recognize him; and when Pharaoh haughtily said, "I know not Jehovah," the Lord brought judgments upon him until he was forced to confess his power.

"AND the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works?" The word "let" is used in its primitive sense of hindering, or causing to cease. That this is so, is shown by the next verse, where the king continues, "Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens." Whatever opinion may be held as to the reason, this much is certain, that in consequence of the coming of Moses and Aaron, and what they had said, the Israelites had to some extent ceased from their work. This is still further shown by the fact that Pharaoh said of them, "They be idle" (verse 8), and to them, "Ye are idle, ye are idle" (verse 17). It was because of this that the king increased their task, compelling them to make brick without straw.

To the Jews Jesus once said, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." John 12:35. Nothing is more evident than that when a person turns away from the light he goes into darkness. Light and darkness are opposite conditions, so that if a man is not in the light he is in the dark. That proposition needs no argument. It was on this principle that Pharaoh's heart was hardened. Ample evidence of the superiority of God's power over that of Satan, as exhibited through the magicians, was given to Pharaoh, but when he refused to accept it, that very rejection was a hardening of his heart. The light which, if it were accepted, would acquaint him with God, was rejected, and by thus shutting himself farther away from God, hardness of heart and blindness of mind necessarily followed. For this no one was to blame but Pharaoh himself. The Revised Version renders Ex. 7:9 thus: "And Pharaoh's heart was hardened."

THE only reason that can be given why the magicians did not remove the plague of frogs,

is that they could not. That they would gladly have done everything in their power to destroy the effect of the miracle upon the mind of Pharaoh, and to make him believe that the power that was with Moses was no greater than that with them, there is no reason to doubt. It is most reasonable, also, to conclude that as the king had called the magicians to his assistance for the purpose of withstanding Moses, he would first call upon them to remove the plague. But they could not. The fact that Pharaoh was obliged to call upon Moses and Aaron to remove the plague, was an additional humiliation, and emphasized the fact that the power that was with them was greater than that power that was with the magicians.

NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

THE MISSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

(January 6.—Mark 1: 1-11.)

THE words, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ," used to introduce Mark's narrative, evidently mean the beginning of the earthly ministry of our Lord, and the events which immediately preceded it. Commenting upon this text Dr. George F. Pentecost says: "Had Mark been writing of the beginning of the being and work of Christ, like John, he must have gone back into eternity, where he was with the Father; had he desired to write from the beginning of the gospel as declared to man, he must have gone back to the garden of Eden, where Christ's coming was first announced to Adam and Eve." And this is true, for the promise of redemption to our first parents, the promise to Abraham, and the truth preached to the children of Israel, was the gospel, the good news of salvation from sin and from its awful penalty. Christ is set forth in the Scriptures as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13: 8), and the whole throng of the redeemed, from Adam to the last soul ransomed from the pit of destruction, will ascribe their salvation to God and to the Lamb. Rev. 7: 9, 10.

BUT the gospel means much more than simply salvation from the penalty of sin. It means purity even in this life. "She shall bring forth a son," said the angel, "and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1: 21. The great end to be attained is not simply eternal life; God is to be honored in our salvation, and that can be done only by the complete vindication in each one of our hearts of the righteousness of his Government. The mere bestowal of eternal life, unending existence, would not be a vindication of the righteousness of God's law; that which is to be attained is holiness, without which eternal existence would be alike impossible and undesirable. This we must get through Christ, whom the apostle tells us "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The last is the logical result of the others. God will not, yea, cannot, imbue with eternal life that which is antagonistic to

his very being, neither can he suffer that to become extinct which is in harmony with him. Christ was raised from the dead because, being without sin, it was not possible that he should be holden of death (Acts 2: 24); and likewise those who have been made partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1: 4), those in whom the Spirit of God dwells, shall be quickened by his Spirit that dwelleth in them. Rom. 8: 11. As it is written, "Righteousness tendeth to life," but "the wages of sin is death."

THE value of the gospel is derived from the divinity of its Author. It is "the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." In one sense all are the sons of God, but it is not in any such sense as this that the term is applied to Christ. His absolute divinity is most clearly set forth in the Scriptures. In Isa. 9: 6 he is called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." And in John 1: 1-3, 14 we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with 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 (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." While the apostle Paul tells us that he is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. 1: 4. And of the value of the gospel he says (verse 16): "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

THE gospel was not new to the world in the days of John the Baptist, but the personal work and ministry of that gospel by the Son of God was new. Hitherto the Lord of the vineyard (Luke 20) had sent his servants to receive of the fruit, but now he would send his Son. But before him was to go a messenger, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." John was this messenger. The fruit which the Lord would fain have received from his vineyard (the house of Israel and the men of Judah, Isa. 5: 7) was the fruit of righteousness. Says the prophet: "He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." And it was for this reason that John came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

THE Jewish people had almost entirely lost sight of the object of the coming of the promised Saviour. They looked for a political deliverer, but Jesus was coming to save them from their sins, to deliver them from the dominion of Satan, not from the power of the empire of Rome. He was coming to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance; but before he could help any they must realize their need of help; and it was John's mission to turn the thoughts of the people

from themselves to God, away from their own "righteousness, which is of the law," to "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. 3: 9. John's preaching was calculated to prepare the people to receive Christ not as an earthly king but as a spiritual deliverer.

ONE notable feature in John's work was the humble spirit in which it was done. It was no part of his mission to exalt himself. He came saying, "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." But while worthy of note, John's humility was only what we would expect in the forerunner of the Saviour. The spirit of self-exaltation is entirely foreign to the gospel of Christ. The great Captain of our salvation humbled himself, and they who would be Christ's must crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

MANY have queried why it was necessary for Christ to be baptized. He was not a sinner, and even John seemed to feel that the rite could have no significance in the case of the Saviour of the world. But Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." The following comment, made in substance by an able writer on the International Lessons, may serve to throw some light upon this text:—

Jesus, when he came to this world, came not only in behalf of sinners, but he so identified himself with them that he judicially took their place under the law and assumed their condition because of sin. Therefore he stood forth as the representative and substitute for sinners, and walked before them in the way of confession and appropriation.

Christ's baptism was a significant type of his own death, or rather burial and resurrection, and we have in it two things: first, the way in which he was to fulfill all righteousness, viz., by dying and being raised again; and second, the way in which we come into righteousness, viz., by union with him we die to sin and become alive to righteousness. This death and resurrection to newness of life we signify by our baptism.

C. P. B.

NORWALK, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CAL.

I HAVE been preaching for three weeks at this place, and laboring to bring the Norwalk church nearer to God. The Lord seems to have added his blessing to these efforts, as is shown by forward steps in the missionary work, promises from several to attend meetings more regularly hereafter, and many resolutions expressed to become better acquainted with the contents of our denominational books. There has also been considerable outside interest in our meetings, and five persons have signed the covenant, two have been baptized, and three have been received into the church. My post-office address for some weeks will be Rivera, Los Angeles County, California.

E. A. BRIGGS.

December 11, 1888.

The Home Circle.

LEARN TO WAIT.

LEARN to wait—life's hardest lesson,
Conned, perchance, through blinding tears,
While the heart-throbs sadly echo
To the tread of passing years.

Learn to wait—hope's slow fruition;
Faint not, though the way seem long;
There is joy in each condition—
Hearts through suffering may grow strong.

Constant sunshine, howe'er welcome,
Ne'er will ripen fruit or flower;
Giant oaks owe half their greatness
To the scathing tempest's power.

Thus a soul untouched by sorrow
Aims not at a higher state;
Joy seeks not a brighter morrow,
Only sad hearts learn to wait.

Human strength and human greatness
Spring not from life's sunny side;
Heroes must be more than driftwood
Floating on a waveless tide.

—Selected.

MISS SUSAN'S HOME MISSION.

I. GOING ABROAD.

"AND so you really are going at last, Miss Susan?"

I had come from quite a distance on the other side of the scattering country parish to see Miss Susan Mildmay, hearing that she was going away as a missionary. I was just in time, for I found the dear little spinster surrounded by bags and boxes waiting for the stage which was to carry her over the first dozen miles of her long journey.

"Yes, indeed," she said, with a smile, "I've always had it on my mind to go, you know. I thought I'd do it when I was a girl—when father and mother were strong, and there seemed plenty of others to take care of them. But it was not laid out for me. All the others married or died, and so here I've been. Father lost his health, and when he was taken there was poor Mark. Now they've all done with me; and it seems exactly as if Providence was opening the way for me, for I've had the chance to let the little house with the furniture just as it stands. So I've been for the last six months winding up and getting ready. And," she straightened herself up with a smile, brushing away the tear which had come with the memory of poor Mark, "there's work in me yet, I'm only forty-three, and strong and hearty."

"I should think, Miss Susan," I said, "that you would need a little rest before going to work again."

"Rest? Bless your heart, dear, it rests me to work. Perhaps it makes you laugh to think of me going for a missionary, and no wonder if it does, I'm sure. When I used to think of it when I was young, I always laid out to do a great deal of studying and fit myself for it. But I haven't had the chance of that, you see. The years have gone and gone, and I haven't had time. You wouldn't think I was the sort to go on a mission, now would you?" she asked, with a laugh.

"I'm not so sure of that," I said.

"Well, I had about made up my mind long ago that the Lord didn't want me for that branch of his work. But," she brightened

wonderfully as she went on, "since Mr. Vernon went out last year he's been writing to me pretty regular, and you'd be surprised at some of the things he says. Says they want just such work as I could do as bad as they want preachers. Says they want somebody to teach those poor creatures that it's nice to be clean and to wear decent clothes—"

"He must be a very sensible man," I said.

"Yes—and says," Miss Susan grew more animated and earnest with every word, "that it isn't much good to tell the poor souls about the love of Christ till they learn that love is a good thing. How can they learn to love their Saviour till they learn to love each other?—till they know there's something better than going to war and torturing their prisoners, eh?"

She grasped my hand and looked into my face with beaming eyes.

"Miss Susan," I said, giving her dear hard-working hand a reassuring clasp, "if Mr. Vernon wants someone to go and tell people how to love each other, he can't do better than to send for you."

"Anyone can do that, you know," she went on. "And it's a wonder," her voice softened, "if I can't whisper something about the love of Christ too—eh, dear?"

"Ah! Miss Susan, I shall see you bringing your own stars for the King's crown."

Tears came into her eyes, but she had no time to shed them, for a few kindly neighbors were beginning to gather, to wish her Godspeed on her journey.

II. ALTERED PURPOSES.

"There's the stage coming," cried someone. Miss Susan grasped her bags, others carried the boxes to the gate, and we watched the approach of the lumbering vehicle through a cloud of dust.

The driver drew up, but instead of looking inquiringly for a passenger and concerning himself about Miss Susan's baggage, he busied himself with lifting from the stage two children who came towards her, each carrying a small bundle of clothing. The older one, an unattractive-looking boy, gazed, half-curiously, half-defiantly, around, but the little girl, several years younger, looked from one to another of the strangers about her with a wistful, pitiful little face.

"Here's a letter for Miss Susan Mildmay," said the boy. "Isaac Barry was our father, and he's dead."

"Isaac Barry dead!" exclaimed Miss Susan, coming forward in surprise and dismay.

She opened the letter and read what some of the shrewder of her neighbors had already guessed. Her cousin, Isaac Barry, had sent his orphan children to her to be cared for.

"It takes my breath away," said poor little Miss Susan, sinking down on a garden bench with a look of helpless bewilderment.

"I suppose you might as well go on," said someone to the stage driver. "She can't go to-day anyway."

"Nor any day, I'm afraid," said another, as Miss Susan took the neglected-looking little girl in her arms and cried, thinking of her cousin Isaac.

There was quite a season of subdued excitement among the neighbors, and at length one of Miss Susan's friends came to her.

"Seems to me, Miss Susan, it's a great pity for all your plans to be tipped over this way. Isaac Barry has a brother out West that ought to take these children. It's his duty, not yours."

"May be so," said Miss Susan, "but John Barry isn't that sort of a man. He wouldn't do it unless he had to, and if he had to, he might not always be kind; poor fatherless and motherless children!"

"And you're going to give it all up?"

"Yes, the Lord's laid out other work for me, you see. I guess Mr. Atkins'll give up the lease of the house when he knows how 'tis."

She gave one look at the distant stage-coach, and carrying the poor little waif who had come to her arms, turned her back upon hopes and plans, and went again into the little house.

"Well," said old Farmer Ryder, a staunch friend of Miss Susan's, as I walked with him through a quiet country lane, when the neighbors took leave of her half an hour later, "if I hadn't always believed there was a Heaven for some folks, I'd believe it when I look at Susan Mildmay."

"How is that?" I asked.

"Why, you know some o' these science folks tell us there isn't anything but this life—that such as it is we just live it out, and that's an end o' the whole business. But don't talk to me! Now here's Susan been a convenience for other folks all her life. Nobody's ever thought o' what she'd like, it's always been what did others like her to do for 'em. She's worked and worked year in and year out, first of all for her parents—and there wasn't never anyone harder to do for'n her father when his health give out. She was to marry Seth Marsh—good fellow Seth was—but she couldn't leave the old folks, so after waiting till he got tired, he went off and married someone else. And when her parents died there was her brother Mark—weak-minded, and desperate hard to get along with. And then the Lord took him away, and now't she was just going to have the desire of her heart, that no-account cousin o' hers has up and died, and left these young ones for her to take care of. No, sir," the old farmer gave a vigorous stamp, "don't tell me there ain't a chance somewheres for such as her."

After that day, my way lay for many years far from the country neighborhood.

"How is Miss Susan getting on with her family?" I sometimes asked in writing to friends. And the answer came in varying tones: "Having a tussle to get some kind of decency into the ill-brought-up children." "Having her poor, gentle little life bothered out of her by that scape-grace of a boy."

Long afterwards the word came: "It really seems as though Miss Susan is managing to infuse some of her own grace into the spirit of that boy. For years all the neighbors held up their hands over his pranks, wondering what kind of an end he would come to,

and thinking the very best thing he could do would be to run away and leave her in peace. But a marvelous change has come over him, and he's joined the church, and now Miss Susan's talking of mortgaging her little place to get him educated. A shame, folks say. But he's a bright young chap, after all."

III. FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER.

Fourteen years after the day I had seen Miss Susan turn from her cherished plans to give a home and a mother to two homeless and motherless children, I found myself at church in a town not very far from where she lived.

A young minister in the pulpit so held my attention that I could scarcely follow out my desire to try if I could find a few familiar faces in the congregation. His earnest face and voice gave fullest evidence that his whole heart was set upon his Master's business, and he was listened to with more than usual interest.

Among those who seemed absorbed in his eloquently-given message, was one whose face seemed to bring me a flavor of memories of long ago. I could not get a fair sight of the eyes intently fixed upon the speaker, but surely I could not be mistaken in the mouth, with its lines of patient peace. Thinner of face and grayer of hair than of old, I still held to my opinion, and felt no surprise when the eyes, beaming with a wealth of unspoken content, were turned upon me in the vestibule at the close of the service.

"Miss Susan Mildmay!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, it's me," was the glad response. "And how long it's been—and how good it is to see you! And—this is *my boy*."

What a fullness of satisfied, gratified love and pride was crowded in her tone as she placed her hand on the arm of the young minister, who had come quietly to her side. I saw him lay his own over it as he bowed to me.

"What!" I said, "not the boy who came to you that day?"

"Yes, that very boy, Isaac Barry," said Miss Susan, in a flutter of delight. "Yes, I remember, you were there that day. Dear me—so long ago! And you haven't heard, have you?" went on the dear little soul, in a half whisper, as the young man's attention was claimed by others, "no, you've only just come, so of course you haven't—that Isaac's going for a missionary—and I'm going too!"

"You, Miss Susan!"

"At last! There's work in me yet, and Isaac says there's plenty of just such work to be done as I can do. And, oh," she rapturously clasped my hand, "don't you remember the time I thought the Lord was ready for me out there, and he wasn't? No, dear, he wanted me here yet. Sometimes (I can confess it now) I used to get almost discouraged with Isaac. And then I used to say to myself—sharp: 'Susan Mildmay, you setting up to want to go to look after lost sheep when the sheep are at your very door—and not half such forlorn, miserable sheep as you thought of tackling out there, either. I'm ashamed of you!' And then I'd take courage and go on. And now look!"

"Miss Susan," I said, "if that boy of yours brings a thousand stars for the Master's crown every one of them will owe their brightness to you."—*Sydney Dayre, in New York Observer.*

Health and Temperance.

SOME ALLIED EVILS.

It is a truth which all observation and experience tend to confirm, that vicious habits and other things of evil, like "birds of a feather," are usually found flocking together. It is to be remembered that nearly all gambling and drinking resorts are furnished with reading matter and pictures as near the line of positive obscenity as the law will allow. A significant case in point is the recent introduction of the Spanish bull-fight in the Belgian watering place at Spa, one of the most notorious gambling resorts in Europe. The proprietors of the gambling dens at Spa, having succeeded by various subterfuges in re-instating the prohibited *roulette* and *trente-et-quarante*, find that the gaming table no longer satisfies the cravings of famished pleasure seekers, and so they have decided to introduce bull-fights.

It is in ways like these that the devil and those who are engaged in his service take advantage of the weaknesses of human nature. They know that indulgence in one form of evil is quite sure to be followed by indulgence in another. When they have once broken down the moral restraints around the hearts of the boys and young men so far as to permit the introduction of vile and impure thoughts, they know that the rest is comparatively easy. From such things the transition to vicious habits and open acts of wickedness is direct and rapid. The boy whose mind has been debauched by vile pictures, is quite sure to become a good customer of the cigarette dealer, and after that of the liquor seller, and along with these of the keeper of the gambling house and the brothel. All these evil trades, and particularly the three latter, are closely allied. They are always in fact, and often literally, "next door" to each other. There is a fellow feeling between them which makes them "wondrous kind" in furnishing victims to one another, and in defending one another's interests. They are to a large degree interdependent. They stand and fall together.—*New York Observer.*

SIMPLE CURE FOR COLD FEET.

THE following remedy for cold feet is recommended for sedentary sufferers, as well as policemen, cab-drivers, and others who are exposed to the cold: "All that is necessary is to stand erect and very gradually to lift one's self up upon the tips of the toes, so as to pull all the tendons of the foot at full strain. This is not to hop or jump up and down, but simply to rise—the slower the better—upon tip-toe, and to remain standing on the point of the toes as long as possible, then gradually coming to the natural position. Repeat this several times, and, by the amount of work the tips of the toes are made to do in sustaining the body's weight, a sufficient and lively circulation is set up. A heavy pair of woolen stockings drawn over thin cotten ones is also to be recommended for keeping the feet warm."—*Selected.*

NON-ALCOHOLIC MEDICATION.

SUSAN DODDS, M. D., of St. Louis, Mo., writes thus to the *Union Signal* concerning her experience in treating disease without the use of alcohol:—

"So far as my own personal experience is concerned, and that of my sister-in-law, with whom I am associated, I would say that during the twenty years that we have been in practice we have treated successfully both acute and chronic diseases without using alcohol in any form.

"When the 'crisis' comes in a fever—and we have had the very worst forms of it to deal with—instead of applying the whip (alcohol) to rouse the jaded and temporarily exhausted energies of the system, we follow the very reverse method. *We let the patient rest*; this is the supreme moment, when the doctor, if he is wise, will prescribe persistent *let aloneativeness*. 'Masterly inactivity' is what is needed more than anything else, save good nursing.

"The system needs quiet; it has been undergoing the greatest activity for days, perhaps for weeks, in the powerful effort to expel poisons from the vital domain—for that is just what a fever means; it is an action of the system to throw out impurities.

"The climax, then, having been reached, Nature calls a halt; the object has been accomplished, and there follows a period of repose; the temperature lowers; the pulse weakens; the strength (apparently) is gone. It is just here that the mistake is usually made; the 'let-down' (rest) is mistaken for collapse, when it is really nothing of the sort. It is Nature's breathing spell. She is tired out; sleep is wanted.

"Then it is time to keep hands off, to let Nature have her way; all will turn out well; the patient will pull through. And, greatly to the astonishment of friends (and others), instead of there being a tardy, feeble recovery, there will be a prompt and vigorous reaction; no set-back, 'no relapses,' but a steady progress back to life and health.

"How often have I seen it in typhoid fever, diphtheria, bronchitis, scarlatina, inflammation of the bowels, pneumonia, brain fever, and the rest.

"So rapid, indeed, is the recovery, that lookers-on remark, after it is all over, 'Why, there was not so very much the matter after all.'

"This, the rapid recovery, is as it should be. Convalescence *ought* to be prompt, and it would be if it were not interfered with. Stimulants (in the opinion of the writer), of whatever kind, have no place in Nature's *materia medica*, not even in so-called prostration. When Nature pulls in the check rein, then is the time to stop.

"Unfortunately, that has not been the custom; it has been the other way; and many lives have been lost in consequence. At the very moment when exhausted Nature says, 'Rest,' wine or other stimulant is resorted to, and the vital powers, rousing to a final effort, work themselves to death. The embers of life are stirred, until the fire is extinguished forever."

News and Notes.

RELIGIOUS.

—Rev. Isaac Erret, editor of the *Christian Standard*, Cincinnati, died on the 10th inst.

—The Moravian mission of the Nushagak River, Alaska, is three thousand miles from its base of supplies.

—The *Interior* says that "twenty-nine different languages are in use by those who preach and teach and read the Bible" to the inhabitants of Pennsylvania.

—Wealthy Jewish citizens of New York have, so says the *Times and Observer*, organized a social club in which no gambling is allowed. Evidently the members are not patrons of church fairs.

—It is stated that in order to conciliate the Czar the Pope is strongly inclined to grant all the concessions demanded by Russia, including the introduction of the Russian language in Catholic Churches in Little Russia and Lithuania.

—A medical missionary society has been in successful operation in New York for seven years. The society is unsectarian, as is evidenced by the fact that the forty-three students in training during 1887 belonged to nine different denominations.

—It is stated that the Jaffa and Jerusalem railway is fast approaching completion, and within a few months the Holy City will be placed in direct communication with the sea-coast. Jaffa, or Joppa, is the starting-point of the road.

—The Supreme Court of Turin has decided that a Jewess married to a Jew must raise her children in the religion in which she was born, according to the will and testament of her husband, though she may have chosen to embrace the Christian religion.

—The *Church Progress* (Catholic) says that "the recent Catholic Congress held in Zurich, Switzerland, was a great success. The members decided to convoke a general assembly of Swiss Catholics next year for the purpose of founding an association in defense of the church and of the Holy Father."

—The report that the Pope sent a second receipt to the Irish bishops some two weeks since, has been confirmed. The document, it is understood, reaffirms the position taken by the Vatican some months since, and requires the bishops and clergy to carry out the wishes expressed by the Pope in his former letter.

—A colored clergyman makes the statement that secret societies are among the great evils which afflicted the colored race in the South. Memphis has eighty-two of them, and almost all the adults of both sexes are members of one or more of them. He said that they are formidable rivals to the churches.

SECULAR.

—Civil war still rages in Hayti.

—Only four per cent. of the corn crop of the United States is exported.

—The excitement over the Panama Canal crisis has greatly abated in France.

—December 18 a severe snow-storm interrupted railroad travel in Nova Scotia.

—The bill for the admission of the Territories is to be called up in the House January 15.

—Another mysterious murder has been committed in the White Chapel District of London.

—The recent severe storm in Canada caused intense suffering in the Province of Quebec.

—A man who had been unmercifully beaten by White Caps, died near Kansas City on the 16th inst.

—Another Japanese steel gunboat will be launched next month. It is expected to steam twenty knots.

—Oliver Ditson, the musician, died at his home in Boston, on the 21st inst., aged seventy-seven years.

—It is stated that gambling is extensively carried on in the Pullman cars on some of the trans-continental lines.

—The French man-of-war *Roland* arrived at Colon on the night of the 17th inst., to look after French interests there.

—The Sultan of Zanzibar returned recently to his dominions and immediately began practicing horrible cruelties upon persons obnoxious to him. Accused persons were cruelly murdered in the streets by his order, without even the semblance of a trial.

—The friends of the Blair Sunday Bill express themselves as confident of its passage before the 4th of March, 1889.

—It is said to be certain that England will send no one to Washington to succeed Lord Sackville as long as Cleveland is President.

—Quite a severe shock of earthquake was experienced in Washington and Warren Counties, N. Y., on the morning of the 19th inst.

—A chair of temperance will be endowed by the Catholic Total Abstinence Societies in the Catholic University at Washington, D. C.

—The number of co-operative banks of one sort and another in our whole country is nearly 4,000. In 1876 there were scarcely 1,000.

—The schooner, *August Flower*, from Philadelphia, is believed to have been lost, with her crew of four men, in a recent gale on the Atlantic.

—Monsignor Kirby has telegraphed to Ireland a denial of the story that the Pope refused to bless the reliquaries sent to him by an Irish priest.

—Terrible storms, causing loss of life and property, are reported from the Department of Pyrenees-Orientales, France, under date of December 16.

—The corn crop of the United States for 1888 is estimated at 2,000,000,000 bushels. Corn is grown to some extent in every State and Territory except Alaska.

—The Rome correspondent of the *New York Mail and Express* makes the prediction that the next Pope will be an American, most probably Cardinal Gibbons.

—Recent news from Samoa, by way of Auckland, reports hard fighting between the forces of Mataafa and Tamases. The latter was defeated. About 100 were killed.

—During a trial in London on the 17th inst., a phonograph was introduced to reproduce a letter and other papers. The instrument was worked successfully.

—The *Freeman's Journal* (Catholic) says that "it is undoubtedly idle to waste time in attempting to have the present public-school system made acceptable to Catholics."

—An attempt was made on the 20th inst. to destroy the car works at Litchfield, Ill., by a dynamite bomb. Part of the building was wrecked, and two of the employes seriously injured.

—A railroad train was robbed on the 16th inst. near Duck Hill, La. One passenger, who left the train with a Winchester rifle, was fired upon and mortally wounded by the robbers.

—A dynamite magazine, three miles from Bradford, Pa., containing 800 pounds of dynamite, blew up on the 16th inst., doing great damage to surrounding property. No one was injured.

—The fire insurance losses in this country and Canada, during November, amounted to \$9,058,700, a reduction of \$7,000,000 as compared with last year, and of \$1,000,000 as compared with 1886.

—Eleven men, employed in repairing a railroad bridge across the Merrimac, near Hookset, N. H., on the 19th inst., were thrown into the water by the moving of the ice, and three of them were drowned.

—The total loss by fire in the United States and Canada for eleven months of 1888, foots up \$113,654,220, a reduction of five millions from last year, but an increase of eight millions over the record of 1886.

—The total production of anthracite of all the companies for the week ended on Saturday last was 780,015 tons, as compared with 770,845 tons for the corresponding week in 1887, an increase of 9,170 tons.

—A few days since Representative Breckinridge, of Kentucky, introduced the joint resolution reported during the last Congress by Representative Tucker from the Committee on Judiciary, proposing an amendment to the Constitution defining polygamy, and making it unlawful within the jurisdiction of the United States, or any State.

—Two Germans were recently discovered photographing French forts, and were unceremoniously hustled out of the country. The apparatus used for taking the pictures resembled a book. The incident is not likely to add anything to the good feeling between the two countries, nor will it contribute to the freedom of tourists who wish to visit French fortresses.

—An important experiment was successfully made on the 21st inst., at the Annapolis (Md.) proving grounds. A steel-pointed iron projectile weighing 250 pounds was fired from one of the new steel breech-loading rifled guns of the new cruiser *Chicago*, which penetrated a steel target ten inches thick and cut through the solid oak back.

—It is estimated that it will cost \$2,000,000 to establish the boundary between Alaska and the British possessions.

—A dispatch from Calcutta, India, under date of December 19, states that the Chittagons Hill tribes have raided the lowlands, killing a number of people. An expedition, consisting of 1,200 men, has started out to punish them.

—For weeks past all sorts of rumors have been current concerning Stanley, the noted African explorer; now, however, it is positively asserted that a letter has been received from him, stating that he has joined Emin Pasha.

—Late advices from South Africa say that the king of Swaziland recently caused the massacre of his premier and six chiefs, and their people, who were supposed to be concerned in a plot to dethrone him in favor of his brother.

—A new dynamite gun is on exhibition in New York. It is claimed that it is capable of throwing shells a distance of five miles. The so-called gun is a rapidly revolving disk, from the periphery of which the projectiles are thrown.

—After the recent election in Servia, the peasants belonging to the radical party celebrated their victory by burning the houses of their opponents. It is said that the sky was lurid for three nights from the reflexion of the flames of burning buildings.

—A bill has been introduced in the Senate providing that instead of the amounts now paid, the salaries of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States shall be \$20,500 a year, and of each Associate Justice \$20,000. The present salaries are: Chief Justice, \$10,500; Associate Justices, each, \$10,000.

—December 20 a combined force of British and Egyptians made an attack upon the rebel position at Suakin. They stormed the redoubts and the trenches, and, after an engagement lasting half an hour, drove the enemy into the bush. The rebels are reported to have lost 1,000 killed. The British loss was four.

—It is said that there is a movement on foot in New York for American capitalists to take up the Panama Canal and finish it. It is not at all likely, however, that anything will come of it. The original stockholders are not yet ready to give the canal up, and it now seems probable that they will furnish means to continue the work.

—Two attempts have been recently made to wreck an express train on the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad, in Missouri. In the second instance the train, which carried 200 people, was saved by an engine which passed over the road several minutes in advance. The engine was wrecked, and the track torn up for nearly a quarter of a mile. The fireman, though suffering from a broken ankle, crawled back more than a mile and flagged the train.

—Last July the Legislature of New York passed a law restricting the profitable labor of convicts to the manufacture of articles needed by the prisons or charitable institutions. The result has been to make 2,600 idle convicts in the three State prisons, and to greatly increase the sickness and misery of the prisoners. The deficit in the State prison accounts will amount to \$400,000 a year, which the tax-payers will have to pay for keeping the convicts in idleness. A great deal of complaint is being made over the results of idleness of convicts.

Obituary.

HAMILTON.—Died in San Diego, Cal., December 17, Mrs. J. A. Hamilton, in the fifty-seventh year of her age. Sister Hamilton has been striving to walk in all the commandments of God for about nine years. Services by the writer. Text, Psalm 17: 15.

S. THURSTON.

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IS THE
LEADING SUBJECT OF THE DAY.

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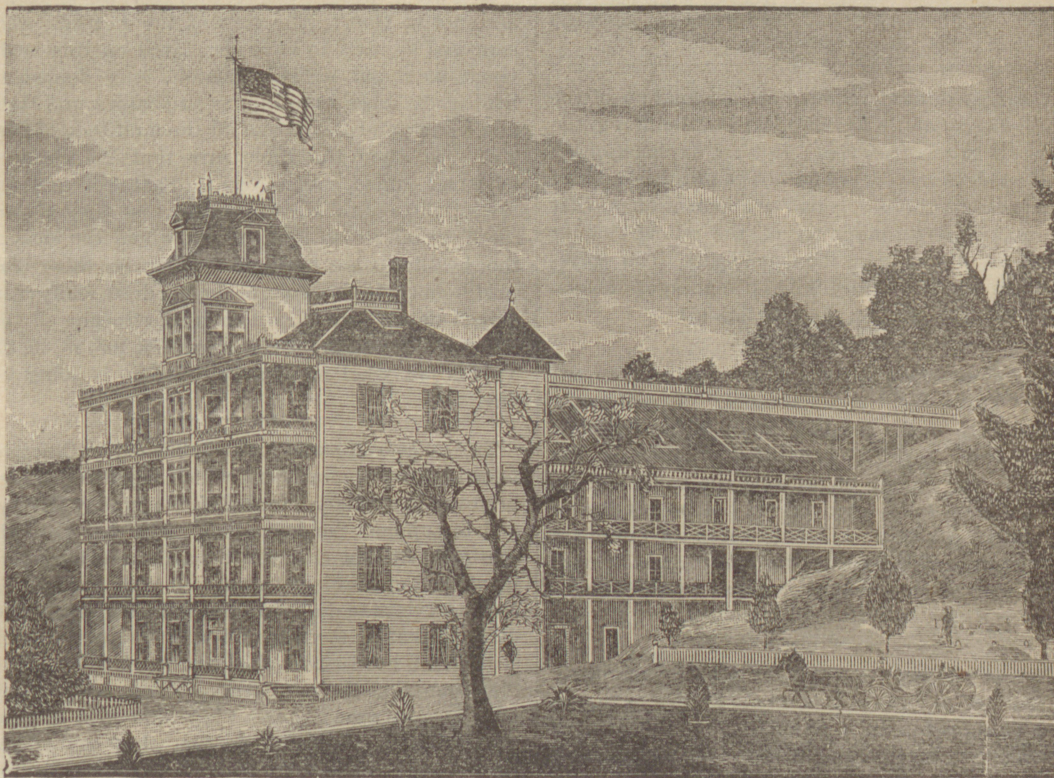
The December number contains: "The *Sentinel* and the Churches," "One Pope or Many?" "The Divine Right of Civil Government," "W. C. T. U. and Politics," "Romanism and Republicanism," "The Church and State *alias* the Prohibition Party," etc.

The January, 1889, *Sentinel* contains: "The Illinois Sunday Convention," "Principles Not Parties," "Sunday-law Arguments," a report of the "National Sunday Convention" held in Washington, D. C., Dec. 11-13, 1888, and various other interesting articles and items.

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RURAL HEALTH RETREAT, St. Helena, Cal.

The Signs of the Times.

OAKLAND, CAL., SIXTH-DAY, DECEMBER 28, 1888.

We send no papers from this office without pay in advance unless by special arrangement. When persons receive copies without ordering them, they are sent by other parties, and we can give no information in regard to them. Persons thus receiving copies of the SIGNS are not indebted to the office, and will not be called upon for pay. Please read the papers and hand them to your friends to read.

A CORRESPONDENT requests an explanation of the ninth chapter of the Revelation, from the first to the eleventh verses, inclusive. But an explanation of the first eleven verses would not be of much interest to our readers unless they had an explanation of what followed, and examination of the whole chapter would at present take too much space. Our correspondent will find a very full explanation of Revelation 9 in "Thoughts on the Revelation."

We call attention to the article in this number, entitled "Truth, and Its Importance." It will prove a great help to the practical study of the Sabbath-school lesson, which is entitled, "Resisting the Truth." The danger of resisting the truth will be realized more fully when we see the importance of the truth. An article will be given in each number, on the practical bearing of the lesson, and these we know will prove a help, not only to our Sabbath-school workers, but to all Bible students.

THE *Advance* says that this is the time when many are tempted to indulge in what are known as "questionable amusements," such as attendance at theaters, or dancing or card-playing parties. To the question so often asked, "Can the Christian go to the theater, or dance, or play cards?" the writer replies that it is a matter for one's own conscience. So is everything a matter for one's own conscience, but the conscience needs to be well instructed. Our reply to the question, "Can a Christian do these things?" would be, Yes, he can, but he will cease to be a Christian. If he wishes to retain his spiritual life, he must keep away.

ONE of the subjects under discussion at the Baptist Congress recently held in Richmond, Va., was "Education," which was taken up under the questions, "How Far Shall the State Educate?" and "Common versus Parochial Schools." On the first, Professor Puryear, of Richmond College, "held that the State should educate only the children of the poor, and that only in the rudiments of knowledge; and that it could not give any religious instruction without violating the rights of conscience." With the latter part of this view especially, we most heartily agree, and we are sorry to learn from the *Independent's* correspondent, that "this very conservative view is now held by only a minority in the South." It is the only view that will preserve religious freedom in this country.

THE best things are not always the best known. Quite recently we noticed in the account of the opening of a training school for male nurses, at Bellevue Hospital, New York, the statement that "there is no other school of its kind in America." But we know that there is. The Medical and Surgical Sanitarium, at Battle Creek, Mich., has a training school for both male and female nurses, which has been in successful operation for about three years. Each student has a two years' drill in practical nursing, and the vast number of patients and the variety of diseases treated at the Sanitarium, make the facilities for practical instruction unsurpassed in this country. Besides this, regular lectures are given throughout the entire course, and the students are thoroughly drilled in physiology, hygiene, and all the principles underlying the proper care of the sick, and the treatment of ordinary diseases. We had the pleasure of being present at the exercises when one class was graduated last month, and

learned something of the readiness with which the students could meet emergencies. The school has not been boomed by a big endowment, but the Sanitarium nurses are already in great demand. The school has a good patronage, but there are yet scores and hundreds of young people who ought to avail themselves of its advantages.

THE apostle states in 1 Cor. 10:20 "that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God." The gods of the heathen were supposed by them to have once lived on this earth. Great men and mighty warriors were deified, or made gods. Such were Jupiter, and Saturn, and Mars, and Venus, and Diana, and all the multitude of false gods. So when the Bible says that the children of Israel joined themselves to Baal-peor and ate the sacrifices of the dead, it means that they ate the sacrifices offered to dead heroes, whom the idols of the heathen were made to honor. So those who paid homage to the idols, or deified dead, really worshiped devils, through whom were wrought all the wonders ascribed to these powers. Ps. 105:28, 36, 37. This is just what modern Spiritualism is doing today.

THE *Catholic Home*, a paper published in Chicago, referring to the movement which is getting under headway in that city, "to abolish the Sunday slavery, and to suppress Sunday crime," says that Catholic sentiment in that city, which has lain so long dormant under flagitious outrage, is now awakening and is anxious to do battle for home and altar, and declares that new vigor will now be put into the struggle of good citizenship against anarchy. The statement that the movement is for the suppression of "Sunday crime" shows what their idea of good citizenship is. It is strange that they cannot see that such a movement, instead of being against anarchy, is in reality in favor of disregard to the laws; for by their opposition to "Sunday crime" they give tacit leave to criminals to break the laws on other days with impunity.

THE pastors and officers of thirty-three German Evangelical Churches in New York and Brooklyn, met one evening last week and formed an organization which, it is said, "may lead to important political results." One of the leading ministers stated that its object is "to maintain and defend the civil and religious liberty" of this country, whenever it seems to be in danger. He said that it was proposed to break the power of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. This latter they will find an impossibility, and the probabilities are that this league will simply try to substitute one ecclesiastical domination for another, or else will think to purify Catholicism by a union with it; and either plan would only make a bad matter worse. There is always danger when ministers and church people organize to effect "important political results," no matter how good their intentions may be.

ON Sunday evening of last week a mass-meeting in the interest of city missions was held in the place of the regular services at the First Baptist Church, San Francisco, at which one of the most prominent lawyers in the city was present, and spoke as follows:—

"We hear a great deal of heathenism in foreign lands, and recently a missionary came here and raised \$75,000 for the benefit of the ignorant. We ought to send missionaries to foreign lands to raise money to teach the people in this city. There is no place under the canopy of heaven where there is so much sin, so much wickedness, crime, and riot as right here in this city of San Francisco. We need the missionaries here, and we need them badly. Tonight there are 40,000 young men, and many young women, in saloons and places of a like nature because they have nowhere else to go."

This is undoubtedly true, yet we do not regard it as a reason why missionary work should not be done in foreign lands. If the gospel had to convert the entire world, then it might be well to have all the people in one country converted before beginning to evangelize those of another; but since the gospel

is to be "preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations," the more widely it can be spread at once the better. In spite of all the effort put forth, there will be millions of heathen in the United States when the end comes.

ONE of the most common and most hurtful practices among those who have named the name of Christ, is that alluded to in 2 Cor. 10:12. Says the apostle: "We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." Christ is the great example, the only perfect pattern, and the Christian can follow others only as they follow Christ.

Said the apostle: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." But in thus following Paul, they would really have followed Christ, for they were to follow the apostle only as he followed the Master, and thus the life of Christ, not that of his apostle, was the pattern.

It is not enough that we should be as good as our neighbor. "Every man," says the apostle John, "that hath this hope [the Christian hope] in him purifieth himself," not as his brother in the church is pure, not as his minister is pure, but "even as he [Christ] is pure." "By beholding we become changed," and if we behold Christ we shall at last bear his divine image; but if we behold our imperfect brethren we shall bear with us to the Judgment their imperfections, which instead of serving to excuse us, as we once fondly imagined they would, will serve only to sink us in perdition.

STRENGTH INSTEAD OF WEAKNESS.

PHYSIOLOGISTS tell us that a well-set broken bone of a healthy person becomes stronger than before it was broken. The new process which unites the parts is stronger than the parts united. There is a precious thought here for those struggling against special sins. That sin may be born in a man, inherited from a long list of ancestors; its power in him may be made strong by yielding to it, till by it Satan leads him captive at will. It is the man's weak point. The disposition which leads to the commission of the sin is the weakness of his otherwise strong character. It is not the sin which weakens: it is the disposition, the underlying selfishness, from which the sin springs. Realizing this, knowing by the law and Spirit of God and our own repeated failures our own weakness, our broken character, we can come boldly to the great Physician, place our case entirely in his hands, and "out of weakness" be "made strong." Heb. 11:34. The weak point in our characters can through grace become our strong one. The hatred of all sin will be more fully developed when the power of the besetting sin is seen; and God's grace will never seem so precious, nor his love so strong, as when viewed from the victor's side of vanquished sin. Therefore, "brethren, be strong in the Lord and the power of his might."

THE New York *Tribune* reports a prominent Hebrew gentleman of that city as saying that "the time is not far distant when Hebrews, as well as Christians, will worship on the first day of the week. The Jewish press," said he, "are working to bring about the change, and it is a reform greatly to be desired."

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