

THE 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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WHAT THEN?

The winds blow hard. What then?
He holds them in the hollow of his hand;
The furious blasts will sink when his command
Bids them be calm again.

The night is dark. What then?
To Him the darkness is as bright as day.
At His command the shades will flee away,
And all be light again.

The wave is deep. What then?
For Israel's host the waters upright stood,
And He whose power controlled that raging flood,
Still succors helpless men.

—Golden Censer.

General Articles.

ACCEPTABLE CONFESSION.

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

THE conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing, in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not take long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances to commend our souls to the God of Heaven, or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy. This is a precious promise given to fallen man to encourage him to trust in the God of love, and to seek for eternal life in his kingdom.

We read that Daniel, the prophet of God, was a man "greatly beloved" of Heaven. He held a high position in the courts of Babylon, and served and honored God alike in prosperity or trial; and yet he humbled himself and confessed his sin, and the sin of his people. With deep sorrow of heart he acknowledged: "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments; neither

have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee."

Daniel did not seek to excuse himself or his people before God; but in humility and contrition of soul he confessed the full extent and demerit of their transgressions, and vindicated God's dealings as just toward a nation that had set at naught his requirements and would not profit by his entreaties.

There is great need to-day of just such sincere heart-felt repentance and confession. Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance not to be repented of, and have not confessed our sin with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit, abhorring our iniquity, we have never sought truly for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought, we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we may not have remission of sins that are past, is that we are not willing to humble our proud hearts, and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. There is explicit instruction given concerning this matter. Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heart-felt and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is mingled with tears and sorrow, that is the outpouring of the inmost soul, finds its way to the God of infinite pity. Says the psalmist, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

There are too many confessions like Pharaoh when he was suffering the judgments of God. He acknowledged his sin, to escape further punishment, but returned to his defiance of Heaven as soon as the plagues were

stayed. Balaam's confession was of a similar character. Terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, he acknowledged his guilt, lest he should lose his life. There was no genuine repentance for sin, no contrition, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil, and no worth or virtue in his confession. Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, returned to the priests, exclaiming, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." But his confession was not of such a character as would commend him to the mercy of God. It was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation, and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were to result to him, drew forth this acknowledgment of his great sin. There was no deep, heart-breaking grief in his soul that he had delivered the Son of God to be mocked, scourged, and crucified, that he had betrayed the holy One of Israel into the hands of wicked and unscrupulous men. His confession was only prompted by a selfish and darkened heart.

After Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was, how to excuse their sin before God, and escape the dreaded sentence of death. When the Lord inquired concerning their sin, Adam replied, laying the guilt partly upon God, and partly upon his companion: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman put the blame upon the serpent, saying, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Why did you make the serpent? Why did you suffer him to come into Eden? These were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin, thus charging God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies, and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit, and will not be acceptable before Heaven. True repentance will lead men to bear their guilt themselves, and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy. Like the poor publican, not lifting up so much as their eyes unto heaven, they will smite upon their breast and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and those who do acknowledge their guilt, will be

justified; for Jesus will plead his blood in behalf of the repentant soul.

It is no degradation for man to bow down before his Maker and confess his sins and plead for forgiveness through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. It is noble to acknowledge your wrong before Him whom you have wounded by transgression and rebellion. It lifts you up before men and angels, for "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." But he who kneels before fallen man, and opens in confession the secret thoughts and imaginations of his heart, is dishonoring himself by debasing his manhood, and degrading every noble instinct of his soul. In unfolding the sins of his life to a priest corrupted with wine and licentiousness, his standard of character is lowered, and he is defiled in consequence. His thought of God is degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity; for the priest stands as a representative of God. It is this degrading confession of man to fallen man, that accounts for much of the increasing evil which is defiling the world, and fitting it for the final destruction.

There are confessions that the Lord has bidden us to make to one another, but they are of an entirely different order. If you have wronged your brother by word or deed, you are to "first be reconciled to thy brother," before your worship will be acceptable to Heaven. Says the apostle: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." This scripture has been interpreted to sustain the practice of going to the priest for absolution, but it has no such application. Confess your sins to God who only can forgive them, and your faults one to another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty to freely forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother whom you wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. The case is not brought before the priest at all, but before the only true mediator, our great High Priest, who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," and who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and is able to cleanse from every stain of iniquity.

When David sinned against Uriah and his wife, he pleaded before God for forgiveness. He declares: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." All wrong done to others reaches back from the injured one to God. Therefore David seeks for pardon, not from a priest, but from the Creator of man. He prays: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as only to be brought before God; they may be wrongs that should be confessed before individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a general kind that should be made known in the congregation of the people. But all

confession should be definite, and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you have been reproved by the Spirit of God.

When Israel was oppressed by the Ammonites, the chosen people made a plea before God that illustrates the definite character of true confession: "And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? . . . Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said, . . . We have sinned; do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day." Then they began to act in harmony with their confessions and prayers. "They put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord." And the Lord's great heart of love was grieved, "*was grieved for the misery of Israel.*"

Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. Says Paul, speaking of the work of repentance: "Ye sorrowed after a goodly sort; what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

In the days of Samuel, the Israelites wandered from God. They were suffering the consequences of sin, for they had lost their faith in God, lost their discernment of his power and wisdom to rule the nation, lost their confidence in his ability to defend and vindicate his cause. They turned from the great Ruler of the universe, and desired to be governed as were the nations around them. Before they found peace they made this definite confession: "We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king." The very sin of which they were convicted, had to be confessed. Their ingratitude pressed their souls and severed them from God.

When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrong-doer does not discern the defects of his character, nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt, he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that, if it had not been for certain circumstances, he would not have done this or that, for which he is reproved. But the examples in God's word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin, nor attempts at self-justification.

Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in the darkest shades, aggravating rather than lessening his guilt. He said: "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." He did not hesitate to declare that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God, and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

CHRIST'S HUMANITY.

OUR Lord's temptation in the wilderness was no tableau, or passion-play, for our moral edification. It was as real a spiritual testing as that which you or I undergo in the decisive moments of our life. He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Every solicitation of the tempter was made to distinctively human instincts and passions,—hunger, self-conceit, and ambition. And each was repelled as we must repel them, by faith in God and an appeal to his commandment.

There is a class of acts which spring so directly out of the sympathies which one human being feels for another, that we call them "humane." Such humanity marks the whole intercourse of Jesus with the men of his generation. Even those mighty works which most unmistakably attest his inherent divine power, are done not as an angel from another sphere, nor as a descended Deity would do them. Both in the selection of the acts and of the individuals in whose behalf they were wrought, and in the spirit and manner of the acts, they were the kind of deeds we class as kindnesses, because embodying a yearning toward one's *kind*. They were done in gentleness, and sometimes with tears. They indicated considerate allowance for, and a tender appreciation of, circumstances. There are fathomless depths of meaning in the testimony to his acts of healing that "himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

The Master's *teachings* were all saturated with the same quality. It was true that "never man spake like this man," but it was because no speaker ever embodied so much humanity in so few words. It is this which has made his teachings the only perennial in literature, as fresh and intelligible, as vital and vitalizing, in this day as when they were spoken. Alike their aim, their illustrations, their universal and every-day application, their tone of brotherhood, and their human standpoint and level, show how literally the Word was made flesh and *dwelt* among us.

Our Lord's manner of life was intensely human. He suffered from the most common physical causes, such as hunger and thirst, heat and fatigue. He avoided danger. He suffered under depression of spirits. He felt, as keenly as he perceived in others, the pangs of a wounded heart. He was a homeless wanderer and yet deeply enjoyed the cheer and comfort of the friendly homes which were open to him. He conformed to the habits of his day, and affected no singularity of dress or mode of living. He was reproached as "a friend of publicans and sinners." In that phrase appears the very tenderest and truest token of his human-heartedness. He, the Word made flesh, sought out especially those who had been dragged lowest by the flesh, with its affections and lusts. And it was the touch of his human hand, and the human tone and thrill of his voice, which awakened the smothered conscience and aspiration of their natures. There is a force which we are apt to overlook in that word of his, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." This is the picture of that whole life,—this figure of a searching Saviour, moving among the ruins of the world for the lost pearl, for the lost sheep. Because he was the Son of man, therefore the children of men were not consumed by his coming.—*Rev. Francis N. Zabriskie, D. D.*

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

THE Bible is the stronghold of Christianity. The churches could not maintain themselves without it. Its words, sounding down all the centuries, freighted with the joys and griefs and exultant hopes and victories of saints through past millenniums, vocal even with the thoughts of angels, and full of the expression of Christ himself, are accepted as the word of God. Infidelity, spiritism, every antagonist system, smites at the Bible, scoffs at this divine word, would weaken, would gladly destroy its authority. It stands the same old Bible, with the memory of the dead in it; with the warm loves of childhood in it; with the woe of our trials reverberating in its melancholy experiences, and with the joys of our better days ringing in its psalms and prophecies like chimes of musical bells above our lower life. It is always God's word. The better life of the people is in it. Its words are like choice music which we cannot forget; its promises are like faces that ever beam on us in their remembered expression; it is like a life within our life, warming and refreshing and invigorating us.—*Rev. Burdett Hart, D. D.*

PERSONALITIES AND ILL REPORTS.

KEEP clear of personalities in general conversation. Talk of things, objects, thoughts. The smallest minds occupy themselves with personalities. Personalities must sometimes be talked, because we have to learn and find out men's characteristics for legitimate objects; but it is to be with confidential persons. Do not heedlessly report ill of others. There are times when we are compelled to say, "I

do not think Bouncer a true and honest man." But where there is no need to express an opinion, let poor Bouncer swagger away. Others will take his measure, no doubt, and save you the trouble of analyzing him and instructing them. And as far as possible dwell on the good side of human beings. There are family boards where a constant process of depreciating, assigning motives and cutting up character goes forward. They are not pleasant places. One who is healthy does not wish to dine at a dissecting table. There is evil enough in man, God knows! but it is not the mission of every young man and woman to detail and report it all. Keep the atmosphere as pure as possible, and fragrant with gentleness and charity.—*Dr. John Hall.*

NECESSITY, INVIOIABILITY, AND SANCTION OF MORAL LAW.

If God be a moral being and a moral governor, there must be a moral law. We cannot suppose a moral governor without a moral law; in reason, the one implies the other.

As the Supreme Being is the moral governor of the universe, the moral law can be nothing else than an expression of his will; if, therefore, the character of the Divine Being be perfectly holy and immutable, the moral law must be so.

Like other laws, the moral law is inexorable—it cannot license or pardon transgression. To suppose that the law could permit sin, would be to say either that God is unholy, or that he permitted what is contrary to his own will, which is absurd.

Besides, if God is benevolent, he would not license sin, because, as we have seen, the transgression involves evil to the transgressor. God would not, therefore, as a benevolent being, permit sin, except as a part of a system where progress and compensation were introduced, that would in the end remove the evil or bring good out of it.

The characteristic inviolability in the law is adjusted to the moral convictions of the beings who are subject to it. No one can, without doing violence to his reason and conscience, affirm that God ought to make a law that would license a single sin. The holy inviolability of the law finds a sanction in the moral constitution of every intelligent subject of God's Government. No sane man will say, even in his own case, that God ought to make a law that would permit him to commit a single transgression.

Now, if God cannot, from the necessities of his nature, make a law that will permit sin; if he *ought not* to make such a law; and if he has so constituted man that, as a moral being, he cannot approve of such a law,—then, the force of all these considerations combined puts the truth beyond question, that the moral law of God, like all other laws, cannot permit a single transgression. And, while it allows of no sin, it makes no provision for pardon. The promise of life is on the one only condition of perfect and perpetual obedience. No law can proclaim pardon for the

transgression of its own requirements without annulling itself. It may provide, in some cases, for compensation—as for an injury inflicted a compensation may be rendered to the person injured; but to provide a pardon for the transgression of its own precept is not in the nature of law.

Besides, as in other laws, if pardon were offered to a sinner without obedience, the proposition would be preposterous, and the promise a nullity, because God has constituted the soul, as he has all things else, so that life is found only in obedience. To pardon a sinner, therefore, while he continues a sinner, is morally impossible, and were it possible, in any sense, under the divine government, it would be without benefit to man.

As in other instances, the first departure from obedience in man creates a tendency to continued departing. Any derangement, either in the physical or moral system, is self-aggravating and self-perpetuating, without aid from other parts. A single act of sin is a departure from rectitude, and the departure strengthens the depraved tendency. Sin enfeebles man's moral nature. The conservative or recuperative power of his moral constitution grows less by every act of transgression. Conscience becomes less potential, and the will more inclined to err; in other words, the strength of moral emotion is abated, and evil inclination strengthened by every act of transgression. As the exercise of any bodily member increases its strength, so the exercise of our moral faculties, whether in a good or bad direction, increases the inclination of the will to do good or evil. Thus sin begets sin. The power of sin over the soul increases by sinning. This is human experience, and it agrees with human observation in relation to the effect of transgression in all other cases. One sin puts the soul in the "road to ruin" as certainly as the first movement of a weight down an inclined plane tends to accelerate momentum and to prevent return. The death penalty exists in moral law by the same necessity that it does in physical and organic laws.

The moral law is universal in its application to moral beings. It binds all angels and all men to love God supremely, and their neighbor as themselves. Sin not only injures the moral character of the transgressor, but evil influence and evil example produce evil in other subjects of the same moral Government. If sin had no evil effect upon beings of a sphere higher than that of man, still it has the twofold effect of injuring the transgressor and of imparting injury to others of his own class in the moral world. But analogy teaches that all beings bound by the same laws are, or may be, affected by each other's transgressions; and likewise, that classes related in the same economy affect each other as individuals; and this relationship must continue so long as law exists, and so long as spirits continue free, whether in this world or the next. The death penalty, then, in moral law, is necessary, for the same reasons that exist in all other cases. Unless there can be restoration to obedience, and compensation

for the evil done, the good of the whole demands the destruction of the transgressor.

In addition to the reasons which have been mentioned, reasons connected with law in all departments of the universe, that the death penalty is necessary in order to the good of the whole system, there are *moral considerations*, which add their weight in cases where the *moral law* is transgressed. Everyone can see that an agent, knowing good and evil, is not only bound by moral obligations to benefit others, but when he does a moral act which he knows will produce injury to other beings, he is guilty for that moral injury as well as for the injury done to himself. In all unreasoning things there can be only a legal connection between transgression and its consequences. But human transgression has this necessary *legal* connection with its consequences; and besides this, a knowledge of the wrong adds moral guilt to transgression. The evil done to others, likewise, of which he has knowledge, is often numerically and morally greater than that which accrues to himself, as the interests of many are greater than the interests of one. In moral law, therefore, pardon and compensation to avert the consequences of evil done to others is especially necessary. The restoration must go further than the recovery of the individual transgressor, because the evil goes further. A sinner who has influenced others to evil is guilty, in part at least, for the evil in others as well as for that in himself. His own restoration, or return to obedience, covers only a portion of the evil growing out of his transgression.

The currents of evil and rebellion which the sinner, before repentance, originated or accelerated in other minds, do not cease with his death or repentance; they run on in the life-stream of others. A transgressor may be—he often is—restored to obedience himself, while those whom he influenced to sin continue in the ways of disobedience. As one may recover from a contagious disease while those die to whom he communicated his disorder, so one may repent from disobedience while those whom he influenced previously to his penitence continue disobedient subjects of the divine Government; and unless there be recuperative moral energy in the system to which the sinner, with his deranged moral nature, belongs, there can be no restoration of the offender, and therefore no pardon; and even if he be restored, the guilt which he caused in others continues, and restoration or compensation in their case is needed before the effects of his sin are removed or counteracted, and before he can be pardoned according to law.

The death penalty, then, accrues under the moral law with additional moral considerations enforcing its necessity. From this death penalty of moral law, for moral transgression, there can be no redemption, except by restoration of the transgressor to obedience, and compensation for the evil which his sin has occasioned in the moral Government of God.

Of the things which we have written this is the sum: Law and penalty are not chimeras,

nor incidental and mutable relations of things; they are necessities of the creation. Law is higher and holier than life; it is necessary to the existence of life. Penalty is a necessity of law; it is necessary to the existence of law; it is necessary to the good of the whole. Where transgression exists, pardon, or happiness, or safety is impossible. Law is inexorable. Ignorance of its provisions does not avert and only qualifies or graduates the penalty of moral law. The first transgression puts penalty in progress, and places the subject in the road to ruin. Restoration to order and obedience is possible within certain limits; but safety is impossible and pardon absurd, unless two conditions are complied with, viz.: *the restoration of the transgressor, and the restoration of those affected by his influence; or, restoration of the transgressor, and compensation which will counterwork and eventually remove the derangement from the system.* In cases of derangement, recovery or compensation cannot be accomplished by the deranged subject, but must arise from sources out of or above the derangement; but either restoration or destruction is necessary and certain.

In the application of these general principles to man, there are two classes of laws which apply—one to his organism as a corporeal being, the other to his spiritual nature. The penalties of organic sins are inflicted upon the body, and are, therefore, temporal and legal; spiritual penalties are inflicted upon the soul. . . . Pain that accompanies derangement is not the whole of penalty; it indicates that derangement exists, and accompanies it until restoration or destruction ensue. When recovery is not effected, the destruction of the subject is the natural and necessary penalty of transgression.

The moral law, in its application to man as a spiritual being, possesses the same characteristics as physical and organic laws. Its nature is inviolable and inexorable, and its penalties immutable. There may be pardon after obedience is restored, and compensation for evils made, which the transgressor himself cannot effect; but without these, "thou shalt surely die," is decreed by legal, natural, and moral necessity.—*Rev. James B. Walker.*

THE SAVIOUR'S PRAYER VS. SATAN'S PURPOSE.

THE sifting of Peter was very real and very effectual. The old version reads: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." From this, reading the natural inference is that the getting hold of Peter was a strong desire on the part of the adversary but would not be granted, for says Jesus: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Turning now to the new revision we get altogether a different view of the Saviour's words. He said: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat." Here we find that the desire of the adversary found expression in words; that he had actually made request to God for the privilege of testing the constancy of this

disciple. Now go a step farther and notice the margin of the revision. It reads: "Satan hath obtained you by asking, that he might sift you as wheat." The request made to God was granted. Peter had already, at this time, been placed in the fan of Satan and he was being sifted as wheat. And how terribly he was tossed about! During this ordeal, as the disciple stood crouching as a guilty culprit before that little *coterie* of low servants around the midnight fire, uttering with vile oaths his denial of his Master, how little pure grain there seemed in him? "But," the Lord had said, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." The prayer of Jesus had been set over against the prayer of Satan,—not that Peter should not be sifted, but that in the end his faith should be triumphant.—*Occident.*

GROWTH.

THE prophet Isaiah says, Thou wilt "keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." There are a great many excellent people who often wonder why they do not feel the "peace" the Lord has promised, forgetting meanwhile that their minds are not stayed on him. No need have they to expect peace unless they are resting on divine strength; peace does not come to drifting souls, only to those rooted in Jesus Christ. If firmly rooted there is growth. Someone has said: "We have the likenesses of our boys taken on every birthday, and twelve of the annual portraits are now framed in one picture, so that we see them at a glance from their babyhood to their youth. Suppose such photographic memorials of our own spiritual life had been taken and preserved, would there be a regular advance as in these boys, or should we still have been exhibited in the perambulator? Have not some grown awhile, and then suddenly dwarfed? Have not others gone back to babyhood? Here is a wide field for reflection." I hardly think there is one who would hesitate to answer these searching questions in the affirmative. If there is no growth in the branch, there is neither blossom nor fruit, but there certainly is separation from the Vine.

Bowes says: "The fruits Christians bear are not in every case, and at all times, the same. The plant of prosperity stands in the garden, and yields the rich fruit of thankfulness, whilst adversity brings forth sweet patience, suspense gently blossoms into hope, and service gradually ripens happiness. But every kind is beautiful in its season."

Another in commenting upon the art of planting grape-vines in the laboratory, out of sight of the passing observer, and applying chemicals to their roots, which make the vines luxuriant, and the fruit prolific in its season, remarks: "The root is concealed, but the vines climb out and the fruit spreads itself before men. Emblem of the Christian life. The Christian is 'rooted and built up in Christ,' out of sight of the world's gaze, but his fruit will reveal him."

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his

vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

Oh, the infinite patience of the Master of the vineyard! Year after year he comes looking for ripe fruit and for golden sheaves, and yet in many a professed worker's hands he finds nothing but leaves.

Ryle says of this class: "They grieve me to the heart, they make my blood run cold. For anything that man's eye can see, they make no progress. They never seem to get on. Years roll on, and they are just the same,—the same besetting sins, the same infirmities of disposition, the same weakness in trial, the same chilliness of heart, the same apathy, the same faint resemblance to Christ—but no new knowledge, no increased interest in the kingdom, no new strength, no new fruits, as if they grew. Are they not forgetting that growth is a proof of life—that even the yew tree grows, and the snail and the sloth move? Are they not forgetting how awfully far a man may go, and yet not be a true Christian? He may be like a wax-work figure, the very image of a believer, and yet not have within him the breath of God."

Karamsin, the Russian traveler, having observed Lavater's diligence in study, visiting the sick and relieving the poor, and greatly surprised at his activity, said to him: "Whence have you so much strength of mind and power of endurance?"

"My friend," replied he, "man rarely wants the power to work when he possesses the will; the more I labor in the discharge of my duties, so much the more ability and inclination to labor do I constantly find within myself."

Our wills must be submerged in the will of our Lord and Master to make us faithful workers in the great vineyard, it will retard our growth to forget that fact for even one moment.—*Earnest Gilmore, in Christian at Work.*

CONFESS YOUR FAULTS.

WHEN we find ourselves exhibiting some infirmity of temper, or guilty of some gross error in conduct which has made us ashamed of ourselves and has caused others to blush for us, how soon, instead of bravely and nobly acknowledging our fault, we begin an active and diligent search for some justification of ourselves. We generally manage to find it, somehow, even if the offense has been committed against those whom we really most love. If we have been selfish, is it not justly attributable to early indulgence, and not to any cultivation of selfishness by ourselves? If we have been untrue in word or deed, is it not because in our early lives we were taught untruthfulness by others? If we have been indifferent to the wants of others, we excuse ourselves, or try to do so, because we have never ourselves felt the pinchings of want. If we have been sour and envious, it is because we have suffered disappointments and poverty. And so we go on blindly grasping

for comfort, at all possible excuses, while we have, all the time, an abiding conviction that we have been mean, unjust, and despicable, and are without excuse before both God and man for being so. We exhibit a true manliness only when, discarding all such ragged excuses, we acknowledge our fault, and resolve by God's help to tear it up by the roots, even if the uprooting takes all our self-conceit with it.—*Interior.*

VINE AND BRANCH.

THE result aimed at in the ordinary grafting process is to give the engrafted branch the benefit of the vital energy of the stock of which it is made a member. From the time the graft takes effect, the stock is expected to abandon the production of the fruit proper to it, and to lend itself wholly to the production of the kind of fruit proper to the engrafted branch. Of the branch it is expected that it transmute the sap furnished it from the stock into juices like its own.

Under this process a stock whose natural fruit is valueless, becomes a vigorous agent in producing fruit that shall gladden the eye and delight the palate of the lover of good grapes. The whole energy of the stock is engrossed in helping the engrafted branch to be fruitful after the branch's own kind: and the work of the branch consists in so utilizing the vitalities yielded by the main stem as to furnish the husbandman with a new abundance of its own precious fruit.

But the Saviour says, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." The analogies intimated here are obvious and manifold and affluent of instruction. But it is curious to notice that one of the richest lessons is furnished at the point where the analogy completely breaks down. The real branch of the great Vine is in that Vine not by nature but by an act of engrafting. The Holy Spirit is the agent. Through his mighty power the soul becomes a member of the Christ-Vine.

But mark how the end, aim, and process are reversed. Not now is the Vine to stimulate the engrafted soul to a continuous and more abundant production of its own natural fruit. Not here is it the office of the engrafted soul-branch to transmute the life it receives from the Vine into its own original and proper fruit. The very reverse of all this is the law of action. The life in the Vine is to take entire possession of the organs of the branch, to drown out that old life, and enable and constrain the branch to say, "Nevertheless, drowned though I am, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Here, let us suppose, is a vine that bears small, wild, sour grapes, and a branch of it is engrafted upon a vigorous Catawba vine, and such is the force of vitality in that Catawba vine, that with its life it takes full possession of the organs of the engrafted stem and constrains it to hang itself full of luscious Catawbas. Such is the normal effect of the spiritual engrafting into Christ. The divine life in Christ the Vine seeks to take such possession of the believer's spiritual nature as to make

all their outgoings Christ-like; to hang the human branch full of those glorious grapes—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. But for sin hindering in the soul such would be the result.

The obvious duty of the believer is, then, to do what he may to rid his soul of obstacles to the play of the Christ-life introduced when he is born again, and to facilitate the flow of that life through his being. It is the effect of unbelief, worldliness, apathy, neglect of duty, indulgence of evil passion, and such like, to hang the engrafted branch over with small, sickly, unsightly fruit.—*The Rev. Dr. W. P. Breed, in Episcopal Recorder.*

WE should not murmur or repine at the chastisements of our heavenly Father. They may appear to us to be very grievous and hard to endure, but we should remember that he does not afflict willingly, or without cause, the children of men. The chastisements of his hand are designed for our profit. We are so much disposed to forget God, and place our affections on the world, that he sometimes finds it necessary to take away our dearest idols, and embitter our sweetest earthly joys, that he may show us the uncertainty of earthly things, and draw our hearts to himself, the great fountain of good. Instead of meekly submitting to his will, and learning wisdom by the things that we suffer, we may rebel against the divine providence, harden our hearts, and bring greater evils upon us. We should give heed to the inspired admonition, and in the day of adversity consider that "affliction cometh not from the east nor from the west"—does not come by chance. There is a God that governeth on the earth, and ruleth among the children of men. Let us meekly submit ourselves into his hand, be resigned to his will, and instead of placing our affections on creature good, place them on him who is the source of all true blessedness.—*Selected.*

THERE is much truth in the old adage, that as rust eats iron, so does care the heart. It is not work so much as worry that wears people out. Constant anxiety breaks down the spirit and destroys its energy. No wonder, then, that Christ exhorts us to take no thought for to-morrow—not to be anxious about the future. And to the same effect is the exhortation of the apostle, "Be careful for nothing." We do not understand this to mean that we are not to use proper exertions to bring about desired and worthy ends, but that having done our duty, we are confidently to commit all into the hand of God, and leave results with him. In this way we cast our burden and care upon the Lord, knowing that whatever the result may be, it will be for the best. With this assurance, the believing heart has no cause for anxiety or fear, for he knows that "all things shall work together for his good." What a consoling assurance is this.—*Selected.*

Don't wait until people are dead, to speak a good word for them.

The Signs of the Times.

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

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THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST. NO. 13.

In the preceding articles of this series, it has been shown that Spiritualism is essentially antichrist, because it is wholly of the devil, and directly opposed to Christianity. It has been shown by positive testimony that Spiritualism is based upon the theory that man is naturally immortal, and that death does not end his existence. This idea is, in fact, the whole of Spiritualism. But this, we have seen, naturally leads to a denial of God and his moral Government, and makes every man his own judge; in short, it assumes for every man the attributes and prerogatives that belong to God; and since human nature is fallen, and its tendency, when unrestrained by some power outside of itself, is downward, the doctrine of the natural immortality of man is the germ out of which has grown all the evil that has cursed this earth. The claim has been made that no person who holds to that doctrine has any warrant against becoming an avowed Spiritualist, and that however much a person may think himself opposed to Spiritualism, he is essentially a Spiritualist if he believes in the conscious existence of the dead. This claim has been substantiated by many Spiritualistic quotations taken from professedly evangelical publications. The argument, in short, is this: The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul inevitably leads to Spiritualism, and Spiritualism is from its very nature opposed to God and every vital principle of morality.

But Spiritualism as a distinct system is not the only exhibition of antichrist. By the expressions "that man of sin," and "the son of perdition" in 2 Thess. 2:3, the apostle makes undoubted reference to the Papacy. Now of that "man of sin" he says that it "opposeth and exalteth itself above all that is called God or that is worshiped." Then of course Roman Catholicism must also be a manifestation of the spirit of antichrist. It has already been shown that Catholicism is essentially Spiritualism, in that it teaches that the dead are conscious, and that the living can communicate with them, and that the living and the dead may render assistance to each other; therefore we shall notice only two points that are peculiar to Catholicism, which show it to be antichrist. Both of these points depend wholly on the doctrine of the conscious state of the dead.

The first dogma to be noticed is that of purgatory. In the "Catholic Christian Instructed," pages 150, 151, that doctrine is thus briefly stated:—

"Some there are, though I fear but few, that have before their death so fully cleared their accounts with the Divine Majesty, and washed away all their stains in the blood of the Lamb, as to go straight to Heaven after death; and such as those stand in no need of our prayers. Others there are, and their numbers are very great, who die in the guilt of deadly sin, and such as these go straight to hell, like the rich glutton in the gospel (St. Luke 16), and therefore cannot be bettered by our prayers. But, besides these two kinds, there are many Christians, who, when they die, are neither so perfectly pure and clean as to exempt them from the least spot or stain, nor yet so unhappy as to die under the spot of unrepented deadly sin. Now such as these the church believes to be, for a time, in a middle state, which we call purgatory, and these are they who are capable of receiving benefit by our prayers. For though we pray for all that die in the communion of the church, because we do not certainly know the particular state in which each one dies, yet we are sensible that our prayers are available for those only that are in this middle state."

This is a simple statement of the teachings of the Catholic Church concerning purgatory. That it is antichristian may be seen from the fact that it is diametrically opposed to the Bible doctrine that the dead are totally unconscious. But the greatest point

against it is that it leads directly to a depreciation of the sacrifice of Christ. Dr. Challoner, the author of the "Catholic Christian Instructed," states the following question and answer:—

"Q. What grounds have you for the belief of a purgatory from reason?"

"A. Because reason teaches these two things: 1. That every sin, be it ever so small, is an offense of God; and consequently deserves punishment from the justice of God; and therefore that every person that dies under the guilt of any such offense unrepented, must expect to be punished by the justice of God. 2. That there are small sins, in which a person may happen to die, that are so small, either through the levity of the matter, or for want of a full deliberation in the act, as not to deserve everlasting punishments. From whence it plainly follows that, besides the place of everlasting punishments, which we call hell, there must be also a place of temporal punishment for such as die in those lesser offenses, and this we call purgatory."

Now mark the following:—

"Q. But does not the blood of Christ sufficiently purify us from all our sins, without any other purgatory?"

"A. The blood of Christ purifies none that are once come to the use of reason, from any sin without repentance, and therefore such sins as have not been here recalled by repentance, must be punished hereafter, according to their gravity, by the divine justice, either in hell, if the sins be mortal, or if venial, in purgatory."

David prayed to be cleansed from secret faults. Ps. 19:12. By secret faults he meant those of which he had no knowledge. This is evident from the verse itself: "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." He prayed to be cleansed from sins which he committed in ignorance, and which had never come to his knowledge. He knew that he must be cleansed from every sin, if he would be saved. Now Peter testifies that besides the name of Christ there is none other name under Heaven whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12. Therefore to say that any person must work out, through punishment in a purgatory, some sins that Christ has not atoned for, and that afterwards he may enter Heaven, is to deny, to that extent, the virtue of Christ's sacrifice. Thus the doctrine of purgatory is directly opposed to Christ.

But read further what Dr. Challoner says of those who, having died in venial sin, are consigned to purgatory:—

"Q. Are they not, then, capable of relief in that state?"

"A. Yes, they are, but not from anything that they can do for themselves, but from the prayers, alms, and other suffrages offered to God for them by the faithful upon earth."

Thus it appears that the doctrine of purgatory, depending upon conscious existence in death, leads to prayer for the dead, and not only to that, but to indulgences, and the payment of money for the release of souls confined in purgatory. Thus: as the above quotation states, a man in purgatory may be released, and, of course, admitted to Heaven, if some of his friends give money to the church. Who cannot see that this is antichrist? It is allowing that money and good works will buy one's way into Heaven; it is teaching men to put their trust in Mammon, at least in part, instead of wholly in Christ. Read the scorching words of the apostle Peter, in Acts 8: 20-23, to one who thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money.

The doctrine of purgatory leads directly, as has been said, to the doctrine of indulgences. We have no space for lengthy quotations, and so present as a concise statement of this doctrine, the following quotation made in "McClintock and Strong's Cyclopaedia" from the "Treasury of the Church," by Alexander de Hales:—

"The sufferings and death of Christ not only made a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of men, but also acquired a superabundance of merit. The superfluous merit of Christ is conjoined with that of the martyrs and saints, which is similar in kind, though smaller in degree, for they likewise perform more than the divine law required of them. The sum of these supererogatory merits and good works forms a vast treasure, which is disjoined from the persons who won or performed them, exists objectively, and, having been accumulated by the head members of the church, and intended by them for its use, belongs to the church, and is necessarily placed under the

administration of its representatives, especially the Pope, who is supreme. It is therefore competent for the Pope, according to the measure of his insight at the time, to draw from this treasure, and bestow upon those who have no merit of their own, such supplies of it as they require. Indulgences and remissions are made from the supererogatory merits of Christ's members, but most of all from the superabundance of Christ's own, the two constituting the church's spiritual treasure."

This is the doctrine of indulgences in its best form. Primarily it probably does not contemplate such a thing as granting license for future sin, although this has always naturally followed. If men know that by doing penance, or by almsgiving, they can atone for certain sins, they will not be so careful to guard against those sins. So the doctrine of indulgences does lead directly to looseness of life. No matter what claims may be made, as a matter of fact no real humility is required by indulgences and penance, as there is in accepting Christ as the only Saviour. The individual trusts in himself and his own good works, and not in Christ. But without humility and self-abasement there can be no true godliness; for "his soul that is lifted up is not upright within him." Hab. 2:4. And the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is responsible for this doctrine which leads to trust in self instead of trust in Christ, and so it appears again as the doctrine of antichrist.

The first cry of the awakened sinner is, "What shall I do to be saved?" When he has been convinced of sin, and feels his utter helplessness, he instinctively looks for something to lean upon. The true minister of the gospel will point him to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Trusting wholly in him, the sinner can find both pardon and holiness,—cleansing from the guilt of sin, and from the love of it. But right there at that critical moment, the Catholic Church meets him, and turns his attention to some "saint" who has accomplished the impossible feat of being better than the Lord wanted him to be, whose extra good works he may get if he will pray or pay for them. Thus men are elevated to a level with Christ, and all in consequence of the theory that death is not an enemy, but a friend.

CHRISTMAS AND SUNDAY.

(Concluded.)

In one of its issues in 1884, the *Christian at Work* said:—

"It is now seen, as it is admitted, that we must go to later than apostolic times for the establishment of Sunday observance."

This classes it among the institutions of which Killen says that Peter and Paul knew nothing; and Dr. Scott in his comments on Acts 20:7 admits that it was one of the institutions which, Killen says, "crept silently into use, and then claimed the rank of divine institutions." He says:—

"The change from the seventh to the first day of the week appears to have been gradually and silently introduced, by example rather than by precept."

As Christmas, though under a different name, was observed as a festival by the heathen long before its adoption by the Christian church, so Sunday was from the earliest ages a heathen festival day. Webster's Unabridged Dictionary says of Sunday:—

"So called because this day was anciently dedicated to the sun, or to its worship."

The "Encyclopedia Britannica" (art. "Egypt"), says:—

"Sun worship was the primitive form of Egyptian religion; perhaps even pre-Egyptian."

The "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia" (art. "Sun") says:—

"The worship of the sun as the most prominent and powerful agent in the kingdom of nature, was widely diffused throughout the countries adjacent to Palestine. This worship was either direct, without the intervention of any statue or symbol, or indirect. Among the Egyptians the sun was worshiped under the title of Ra. . . . Among the Phœnicians the sun was worshiped under the title of Baal. At Tyre, Gaza, and Carthage human sacrifices were offered to him. Among the Chaldeans the sun was worshiped under the title of Tammuz; and that the

Arabians worshiped the sun, we know from Theophrastus. Still more propagated was the worship of the sun among the Syrians (Arameans). Famous temples were at Heliopolis, Emesa, Palmyra, Hierapolis. Sun worship there was very old, and direct from the beginning; and even in later times sun and moon were worshiped at Hierapolis without the intervention of any image. Among the pure Semites or Aryans, direct worship to the sun was paid from the beginning, and still later. Thus among the Assyrians, and afterwards among the Persians, whose sun worship is one and the same. . . . In later times the sun was worshiped among the Persians under the form of Mithras, which finally became the *Sol Deus invictus* [the invincible sun god] throughout the West, especially through the Romans."

In the *Old Testament Student* of January, 1886, Dr. Talbot W. Chambers has an article entitled, "Sun Images and the Sun of Righteousness," from which we make the following extracts concerning the prevalence of sun worship:—

"The universality of this form of idolatry is something remarkable. It seems to have prevailed everywhere. The chief object of worship among the Syrians was Baal—the sun, considered as the giver of light and life, the most active agent in all the operations of nature. But as he sometimes revealed himself as a destroyer, drying up the earth with summer heats, and turning gardens into deserts, he was in that view regarded with terror, and appeased with human sacrifices. . . . In Egypt the sun was the kernel of the State religion. In various forms he stood at the head of each hierarchy. At Memphis he was worshiped as Phtah, at Heliopolis as Tum, at Thebes as Amun Ra. Personified by Osiris, he became the foundation of the Egyptian metempsychosis. . . . In Babylon the same thing is observed as in Egypt. Men were struck by the various stages of the daily and yearly course of the sun, in which they saw the most imposing manifestation of Deity. But they soon came to confound the creature with the Creator, and the host of heaven became objects of worship, with the sun as chief. . . . In Persia the worship of Mithras or the sun is known to have been common from an early period. No idols were made, but the inscriptions show ever-recurring symbolic representations, usually a disk or orb with outstretched wings, with the addition sometimes of a human figure. The leading feature of the Magian rites, derived from ancient Media, was the worship of fire, performed on altars erected upon high mountains, where a perpetual flame, supposed to have been originally kindled from Heaven, was constantly watched, and where solemn services were daily rendered. The remnant of the ancient Persians who escaped subjugation by Islam, now known as Parsees, unite with their reverence for holy fire equal reverence for the sun as the emblem of Ormuzd. . . . Under the Roman emperors the Oriental solar worship was introduced with great pomp. . . . This god was proclaimed the chief deity in Rome, while all other gods were his servants. Of course this predominance of the sun worship did not continue, but the worship itself survived. For we find fifty years later, when Aurelian (274 A. D.) celebrated his triumph over the queen of the East, the temple of the sun received the gift of fifteen thousand pounds of gold. . . . So at the end of the second century, when Diocletian would take a very solemn oath in the face of the army, it was by the 'all-seeing deity of the sun.' He was still the universal object of worship, to the philosophic as an emblem, to the people at large as the deity himself. And curiously enough, this cult is found in an important sect of the ancient Christian heretics, the Manicheans. They sang hymns to the great principle of light, and addressed prayers to the sun, or at least, when praying, turned their faces to that tabernacle in which, as they supposed, Christ dwelt."

The *North British Review* (Vol. 18, p. 408), in an article defending Sunday observance, called Sunday "the wild solar holiday of all pagan times." This is in harmony with the statement by Webster, that Sunday is so called because it "was anciently dedicated to the sun, or to its worship." Remembering this, and also what has been said of the readiness with which the early church adopted heathen customs, the reader will be able, by the following quotations, to see how the Sunday festival became a "Christian" institution. Immediately following the statement concerning sun worship which we quoted from the "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia," we find the following under the article "Sunday":—

"Sunday (*Dies Solis* of the Roman calendar, day of the sun, because dedicated to the sun), the first day of the week, was adopted by the early Christians as a day of worship. The sun of Latin adoration they interpreted as the Sun of Righteousness. . . . No regulations for its observance are laid down in the New Testament, nor, indeed, is its observance even enjoined."

Of course no regulations for its observance are laid down in the New Testament, because it is a heathen institution. But from the above we can readily see how the heathen world so readily became nominally Christian. They did not have to give up anything; they simply worshiped the same thing under a different name. To the same effect is the following from Dr. T. W. Chambers, in the *Old Testament Student*, from which we have before quoted:—

"The Emperor Constantine, before his conversion, revered all the gods as mysterious powers, especially Apollo, the god of the sun, to whom, in the year 308, he presented munificent gifts; and when he became a monotheist, the god whom he worshiped was, as Uhlhorn says, rather the 'Unconquered Sun,' than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed, when he enjoined the observance of the Lord's day, it was not under the name of *Sabbatum* or *Dies Domini*, but under its old astronomical and heathen title, *Dies Solis*, so that the law was as applicable to the worshippers of Apollo and Mithras as to the Christians."

With this evidence we do not see how anybody can accept Sunday as a Christian institution, and reject Christmas as a heathen festival. The evidence that Sunday was adopted into the Christian church direct from heathenism is more positive and more abundant than the evidence showing that Christmas is a relic of paganism. At some future time we shall present evidence connecting Sunday directly with the Papacy; but that is unnecessary at present. We have shown that it comes from heathenism, and everybody knows that there is not a heathen custom or doctrine in the church to-day that did not come through the great apostasy that resulted in the Roman Catholic Church. The simple fact is that Sunday stands for Baal, and all heathen worship, just as the Sabbath is the sign of Jehovah. And so to all we would say, "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." w.

HISTORICAL NECESSITY OF THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE. NO. 3.

In 1560 Melancthon died, glad, as he said on his death-bed, to be freed from the contentions of theologians. After his death, many who wished to see these divisions and animosities healed, hoped to bring the contests to an end. After many vain attempts, in 1568 the elector of Saxony and the duke of Saxe-Weimar summoned the most eminent men of each party to meet at Altenburg, and there, in an amicable spirit, sought to reconcile their differences. But this effort came to naught. Then the dukes of Wirtemberg and Brunswick joined in the scheme, and James Andreas, professor at Tubingen, under their patronage traveled through all parts of Germany working in the interests of concord. At last, they were so far successful as to gather, after several conferences, a company of leading divines at Torgau in 1576, where a treatise, composed by Andreas, was examined, discussed, and corrected; and finally proposed to the deliberations of a select number, who met at Berg, near Magdeburg. There all points were fully and carefully weighed, and discussed anew; and as the result of all there was adopted the "Form of Concord." And now that the "Form of Concord" was adopted, discord was fully assured; for it was only a source of new tumults, and furnished matter for dissensions and contests as violent as any that had gone before. Besides this, the field was now widened, so that the Calvinists and Zwinglians were all included in the whirl of controversy.

When Calvin appeared upon the scene, the field was not only enlarged, but new material was supplied; for he differed from both Lutherans and Zwinglians, not only on the Lord's Supper, but his essential tenet of the *absolute decrees of God*, in the salvation of men, differed from these churches. This was also an entirely new element in the strife; and in the very nature of the case it propagated a multitude of new disputes. It is not necessary to enlarge upon these, nor to draw them out in their full numbers. It will be sufficient to merely name the *leading* subjects. Differing from both Lutherans and Zwinglians on the presence of Christ in the Supper, of course the controversy on that subject was re-

opened, and again canvassed through all its forms: 1. What is the nature of the institutions called sacraments? 2. What are the fruits of the same? 3. How great is the majesty and glory of Christ's human nature? 4. How are the divine perfections communicated to the human nature of Christ? 5. What is the inward frame of spirit that is required in the worship addressed to the Saviour?

Calvin's doctrine of the divine decrees was this:— "We assert that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God hath once for all determined both whom he would admit to salvation, and whom he would condemn to destruction. We affirm that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, but incomprehensible, judgment."

On this subject the controversy ran through the following scale:—

1. What is the nature of the divine attributes? 2. Particularly those of justice and goodness. 3. Fate and necessity. 4. What is the connection between human liberty and divine prescience? 5. What is the extent of God's love to mankind? 6. What are the benefits that arise from the merits of Christ as mediator? 7. What are the operations of the divine Spirit, in rectifying the will, and sanctifying the affections of men? 8. The final perseverance of the elect.

Other subjects of controversy were as follows: 1. What is the extent of external ceremonies in religious worship? 2. What are the special characteristics of things *indifferent*? 3. How far is it lawful to comply with the demands of an adversary in discussing things indifferent? 4. What is the extent of Christian liberty? 5. Is it lawful to retain, out of respect to the prejudices of the people, ancient rites and ceremonies which have a superstitious aspect, yet may be susceptible of a favorable and rational interpretation?

Bear in mind that these are only the leading subjects that lay between Calvinism on the one hand, and Lutheranism, and the Zwinglians on the other. Calvin had yet other controversies to conduct on his own account. Among these were: (1) The Immortality of the Soul; (2) the Trinity; (3) Predestination (against his opponents in Geneva); and above all, (4) in acquiring and maintaining his own absolute supremacy in Geneva.

It will be seen at the first glance that this last list is almost nothing in comparison with that which agitated the Lutheran Church, or with that which lay between the Calvinists and Lutherans. But there is an excellent reason for this; and that is, none but the most intrepid dared to question the doctrines of Calvin in Geneva. All opposers of Calvin there had to fairly take their lives in their hands. And some did not escape even that way. To give a proper view of affairs in Geneva, we quote a passage of the highest authority ("Encyclopedia Britannica," ninth edition, art. "Calvin"), written by W. L. Alexander, D. D., one of the Bible revisers, and which is *prima facie* favorable to him:—

"His system of church polity was essentially theocratic; it assumed that *every member of the State* was also under the discipline of the church; and he asserted that the right of exercising this discipline was vested *exclusively* in the consistory, or body of preachers and elders. His attempts to carry out these views brought him into collision both with the authorities and with the populace,—the latter being enraged at the restraints imposed upon the disorderly by the exercise of church discipline, and the former being inclined to retain in their own hands a portion of that power in things spiritual which Calvin was bent on placing *exclusively* in the hands of the church rulers. His dauntless courage, his perseverance, and his earnestness at length prevailed. . . . His work, as has been justly said, 'embraced everything;' he was consulted on every affair, *great and small*, that came before the council."

It is plain, therefore, that where "every member of the State" was subject to the discipline of the church, and where this discipline was exercised

"exclusively by the body of preachers and elders," with Calvin the head of that body, his power was practically unlimited. It is equally plain that opposition to his doctrines could have no chance at all to spread, if he should choose to exert his power; and that he did choose to exert it, needs no argument. I proceed to the controversies that arose in Geneva.

One of the first of his opponents was Gruet, who attacked him vigorously on his supremacy, and called him "bishop of Asculum," and "the new Pope." Amongst a good many other things he denied the immortality of the soul. He may have been an infidel; but at any rate he was brought before the council, and punished with death. Another opponent was Castalio, master of the public schools of Geneva, who attacked the doctrine of unconditional predestination. He was deposed from his office, and banished. Another was Jerome Bolsec, a monk who had been converted to Protestantism. He, too, attacked the doctrine of absolute decrees. He was thrown into prison, and after a two days' debate with Calvin before the council, was banished.

Out of this grew still another. Jacques de Bourgogne, a lineal descendant of the dukes of Burgundy and an intimate friend and patron of Calvin, had settled at Geneva solely to have the pleasure of his company. Bourgogne had employed Bolsec as his physician, and when Bolsec became involved in his difficulty with Calvin, Bourgogne came to his support, and tried to prevent his ruin. This so incensed Calvin that he turned his force against the nobleman (a noble man, too), who was obliged to leave Geneva, lest a worse thing should befall him.

Another, and the most notable opponent, was Servetus, who had opposed the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and also infant baptism; and had published a book entitled "Christianity Restored," in which he declared his sentiments. He had been condemned to death by the Catholics for heresy, but he escaped from their prison in Dauphiné, in France, and in making his way to Italy, passed through Geneva, and there remained a few days. He was just about to start for Zurich, when at the instigation of Calvin he was seized, and out of the book before mentioned, was accused of blasphemy. The result, as everybody knows, was that he was burned to death. Dr. Alexander says further: "The heresy of Servetus was not extirpated by his death; but none of his followers were visited with severer penalties than banishment from Geneva. The trials of several of these, with the conferences and controversies connected with them, occupied much of Calvin's time for several years."

From the foregoing it is very easy to see why the Calvinistical body was so much more exempt from divisions and tumults than was the Lutheran.

(To be continued.)

THE "DOWN-GRADE" CONTROVERSY.

THE Emperor Constantine became a patron of the church because he saw that Christianity was a growing power in the empire, the influence of which could not be ignored. Efforts to exterminate the church would weaken the empire by destroying a large class of its citizens, who were proving themselves heroes in their firmness to uphold principles which were dearer to them than their lives. His interest was that of a politician, anxious to turn everything to account in building up his empire; but he was disappointed in the result, because when Christianity was bound to the wheels of the State, the church soon ceased to be the exponent of heavenly principles, and the product was a set of factions, clamoring for worldly honors and emoluments.

The interest and welfare of society in any form, cannot be separated from the interest and welfare of its members. Looking to the far West, we have seen the influence of the church over the welfare of the nation. When the Methodist Church of the United States of America, in 1844, divided into the North and South churches, some of the ablest of their statesmen feared the influence of the movement on the perpetuity or the peace of the Union. One of

the strongest bonds of union between large bodies of people in the two sections of the Government was severed. The spirit of Christian unity was lost, and it was not difficult to see that the influence of such action must be felt in all branches of society.

This "down-grade" controversy which has sprung up in the Baptist Church in England, has become a subject of more than national interest. The denomination is a large and influential one, and it is vain to deny that the effects of this controversy will be felt wherever there are Baptist Churches. What the final result will be cannot yet be determined, for the controversy is by no means yet ended.

Mr. Spurgeon made charges of grave departures from the faith, which so far affected the standing of the Baptist Union that he sent in his resignation as a member of that body. After long deliberation, the Council of the Union accepted his resignation, and proceeded to deny the charges and censure Mr. Spurgeon for making them. This concludes the formal action on both sides, and with these facts all before us, we shall give our readers our views of the case as it stands.

Unions and associations are no necessary part of the organization of the Baptist denomination, and Baptist ministers may refuse to unite with them without disparaging their position in the church. Therefore the right of Mr. Spurgeon to withdraw from the Union is undisputed; and the Union could do no less than to accept his resignation. The offense, if any existed, was in charging that there were ministers in the Union who had departed from the faith, and were perverters of the gospel. And this, it is now claimed, was supplemented by another wrong, namely, that of censuring Mr. Spurgeon for the part he had acted. But this is open to a question. If Mr. Spurgeon was very clearly in the wrong in making such strong charges, and making them thus publicly, the Union was justified in censuring the action. Everything turns on this point, whether the charges made by him are true.

At the very outset of his "down-grade" article, Mr. Spurgeon used the following language:—

"What doctrine remains to be abandoned? What other truth to be the object of contempt? A new religion has been initiated, which is no more Christianity than chalk is cheese; and this religion being destitute of moral honesty, palms itself off as the old faith with slight improvements, and on this plea usurps pulpits which were erected for gospel preaching. The Atonement is scouted, the inspiration of Scripture is denied, the Holy Ghost is degraded into an influence, the punishment of sin is turned into fiction, and the resurrection into a myth; and yet these enemies of our faith expect us to call them brethren, and maintain a confederacy with them."

The claim that his charges were not specific will hardly hold on this count, for stronger or more specific language could hardly be framed. Close upon this is the following:—

"At the back of doctrinal falsehood comes a natural decline of spiritual life, evidenced by a taste for questionable amusements, and a weariness of devotional meetings. At a certain meeting of ministers and church-officers, one after another doubted the value of prayer-meetings; all confessed that they had a very small attendance, and several acknowledge without the slightest compunction that they had given them up. What means this?"

The third point is as follows:—

"As for questionable amusements—time was when a Non-conformist minister who was known to attend the play-house would soon have found himself without a church. And justly so; for no man can long possess the confidence, even of the most worldly, who is known to be a haunter of theaters. Yet at the present time it is a matter of notoriety that preachers of no mean repute defend the play-house, and do so because they have been seen there. Is it any wonder that church-members forget their vows of consecration, and run with the unholy in the ways of frivolity, when they hear that persons are tolerated in the pastorate who do the same? . . . The fact is that many would like to unite church and stage, cards and prayer, dancing and sacraments."

These three paragraphs contain the substance of Mr. Spurgeon's bill of complaints; and in regard to these, he produces some very pointed testimonies from brethren in various parts of the country, so many and so emphatic that it is difficult to see how

anyone can read his articles and then say that there is no ground for his charges.

Without regard to anything that Mr. Spurgeon has written, it must be, and is, acknowledged by all that the present is a time of great unrest. Whether in church or in State, in every nation, in every branch of society, there is a spirit of disquiet tending toward the breaking up of things which have long been considered settled. Nihilism, communism, or anarchy, never was so prevalent and so bold as now. That all Europe is trembling for the future, no one can possibly deny. And the disquiet is as great in the churches as in the States. Protestant Germany—not the people but the Government—furnishes the crown for the Pope to wear on his jubilee. And the highest courts of Prussia have decided that it is a public outrage to speak against the institutions of the Catholic Church. It is doubtful if a monk of the present day would find a German prince to stand by him if he should nail to the church door so stirring an indictment of the Papacy as did Luther. Protestant England's Queen furnishes the costly vessels for the Pope's service of the mass. Scarcely a nation on the face of the earth failed to do him honor, or to pay homage to him on the occasion of his jubilee, many sending their ambassadors to the Vatican as formally as if Italy had no other king. The honors coming from Protestant nations signify much more than they would if he were really a civil ruler; they are given to a church which has not long since issued a syllabus which declares that Protestantism is a schism, that Protestant churches are no churches, and that it is heresy to say that the civil power is anywhere superior to that of the church. Judging from the events of this jubilee year, it is not a severe saying of one of Switzerland's most earnest religious writers, that "Protestants there are, but Protestantism is dead."

The tendency of the Established Church of England is strongly toward ritualism, which is but another name for Romanism. We have been assured that there are many hundreds of church ministers who would go directly over to Catholicism if their livings were taken away by disestablishment. Proofs are abundant to justify the belief that this is true. In America, the Catholic Church is receiving honors and benefits which are accorded to no other religious bodies. The tide is everywhere setting toward a reversal of all the decisions and triumphs of the Reformation of three centuries ago.

And is it true that the Non-conformist churches are free from this spirit of unrest? Are they holding fast to all that was gained in the Reformation? We do not ask if all their ministers are sound in the faith; that were too much to expect; that has never been the case. But is it true, as Mr. Spurgeon claims, that ministers are tolerated, and held in high repute, who are deserting the old paths, and introducing fundamental errors into the pulpits?

These are questions that concern everyone who is interested in the cause of evangelical Christianity, and we shall hereafter examine the positions of the parties in this controversy, and try to ascertain who has the truth on the subject. J. H. W.

"THE DAY OF THE SABBATH; THE SEVENTH AND FIRST."

THE above is the title of a leaflet written by the editor of the *Vermont Baptist* and pastor of the First Baptist Church of Brockton, Mass. Our attention has been called to it with an urgent request for a reply through the columns of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The points taken are such as are usually assumed by defenders of first-day sacredness, and having been frequently noticed in these columns, would not need to be noticed again only that this journal is constantly reaching many readers to whom these things are new; and so the repetition of these ideas and their answers becomes proper at certain intervals. This will be done briefly as possible. The positions taken will be numbered in the order in which they are given in the tract.

1. "The first chapter of Genesis establishes six

days of work, followed by a seventh day of rest, as the great primal law of the Sabbath, but it does not fix any particular day as the starting point. . . . It may be added that the days of creation were undoubtedly long periods of time, and that we are living in God's seventh day of rest from creating. This seventh period is his time for working for the salvation and sanctification of mankind."

Let us put magnifying glasses on our imagination to discover, if possible, some reason in the above. Seven days are given us as containing the "primal law" of the Sabbath. But through the oversight of the Author of that law the essential point was left out. He did not tell us when to begin to count. So from this lack of wise forethought, the Sabbath is left in chaos, and each one may choose his own Sabbath.

What were these seven days? The *first* seven days, anyone will say, who has read the first chapter of Genesis. And all can see that God did his own counting, and blessed the seventh day, counting from the first. He did not bless a seventh day, nor one day in seven, but "the seventh day" upon which he *had* rested, and *because* he had rested in it. But if we are now living in the seventh day, or "period of time," then God has not yet rested the seventh day and blest it because he *had* rested in it. We are told directly what composed those first six days—"the evening and the morning," every time. "Science, falsely so-called" obscures God's clear word, and its fog affords great comfort to those who wish to evade the plain precepts of that word. Nor does the author hesitate to contradict God's own words by saying that this seventh day, or period, is God's time of working, etc., when God states that in it, the seventh day, he rested from all his work which he made.

2. "No one can tell on what day of the week Adam came into existence."

Anyone who believes the Bible can. And he kept the day which God sanctified for him to keep.

3. "No one-and-the-same period of twenty-four hours can by any possibility be kept the world around."

Right here let the reader glance forward in this article to the positions numbered 5 and onward, and mark the lack of consistency. It is surprising how the earth flattens out upon the first day of the week in the minds of those who do not want to admit the claims of God's law. This fancied objection is scarcely worth a moment's thought, since the facts abundantly prove that either Sabbath or Sunday can be kept, and are observed in every part of the world without any confusion. Each seven revolutions of the earth gives twenty-four hours of each day of the week, distinctly marked, to every portion of the earth; and the writer of this pamphlet knows it, and we all know it.

4. "The Jewish order of reckoning the days of the week appears to date from the Exodus."

No proof is given of this except a misleading reference to the fact that the Lord told the Israelites to reckon their *year* from that month in which the passover occurred. And yet this leaflet goes on to say: "Thus the particular day on which the Jews were to celebrate the Sabbath was determined for them by the passover." Any man who does not know that the Sabbath was determined by the withholding of manna, a miracle continued for forty years, should be presented with a Bible. And still there are plenty of people who will accept such teaching as the above for good gospel, in preference to the plain, unequivocal statements of the word of truth. It is stated also under this head that "in Deuteronomy 5:15, we find that God assigned this departure as the reason for keeping the Sabbath-day." Upon reading it we find no such thing. The Jews had long been deprived of their freedom and privileges, and now God had delivered them, "Therefore the Lord thy God *commandeth* thee to keep the Sabbath-day." The reason for keeping it was because it was the Sabbath, and the reason for commanding them to keep it was because he had placed them where they could do so.

5. "Christ's work . . . naturally requires that the Sabbath shall memorialize its great day of deliverance, when the true paschal Lamb, rising from

his tomb, signaled his victory and entered into his Sabbath."

Who ever before heard of "the paschal lamb rising from his tomb"? The paschal lamb prefigured the death of Christ, and not his resurrection. This type was fulfilled on Friday. All will acknowledge this. Do you also acknowledge the force of the argument? Then why keep Sunday?

The Saviour rose from his tomb a mighty conqueror, not to enter into a Sabbath but to become our Mediator and High Priest. He left in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper divinely appointed memorials of his death and resurrection which obviate all necessity of our removing the Sabbath from its honored place, and degrading it to the place of a common day, and exalting in its place a secular day. Let us remember that "obedience is better than sacrifice," lest we bring upon us the sin of Saul.

6. "Upon the eighth day and so forward," etc. Eze. 43:27.

The "eighth" day here is made to mean each first day, an evident perversion, since the prophet is describing a feast and services which were to continue for a number of days. He tells what shall be done upon the different days, as, the first seven days should the altar be purified, etc., and on the eighth day and so forward the priests shall make your burnt-offerings. He does not say upon "each eighth day," for that would destroy the weekly cycle, but upon each day from the eighth and forward.

In the paragraphs which are numbered 7, 8, 9 claim is laid to the idea that Christ and the apostles changed the Sabbath and established the observance of the first day of the week, and this in spite of the fact that the earth is round, and his claim that the same twenty-four hours cannot be observed in all places, as noticed above. Reference is given to the following passages: John. 20:1, 19, 26; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10.

The attempt is made to further support the Sunday institution by reference to Col. 2:16; Rom. 14:6, which do not apply to the weekly Sabbath at all, and if they did, their force would be as destructive to the observance of the first day as to that of any other day. We have not space to notice these texts separately but it may be said in candor and truth, that in any of them, or in all the Bible, there is not an intimation that either Christ or his apostles ever rested upon the first day of the week, or enjoined it upon anyone to do so. Jesus placed his peace upon his disciples (not upon the day) on the evening after his resurrection, and at the same time "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart" for not believing the fact of his resurrection. Mark 16:14. The circumstance of Acts 20:7, that Paul remained in Troas to hold another meeting on Saturday night, the dark part of the first day of the week, and then, the following day, Sunday, walked to Assos, is not a sufficient ground for altering one of the ten commandments. And if anyone wishes to know what was the custom of Christ and his apostles in reference to the Sabbath, let him read the following: Luke 4:16; 23:56; Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4, 11.

10. "Historically the first day of the week has become the Sabbath according to the prophecy."

Agreed upon that point. But as the pamphlet does not cite either history or prophecy we will look at the only prophecy of the change of the Sabbath given in the Bible. It is found in Daniel 7:25 where it is prophetically said of the Papacy, "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall *think to change times and laws*; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." The history referred to is the history of the establishment of the Catholic Church. Here do we find the only authority for such a Heaven-defying work. The world has long followed in the wake of this church, but the time of its domination over the law of God has passed, and now the Lord calls upon his people to take their feet from his Sabbath.

G. C. TENNEY.

"Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein."

The Missionary.

TASMANIA.

A LETTER, not intended for publication, has been received from G. Foster who has lately embraced the truth in Hobart, Tasmania. It is full of interest to those who are interested in the good cause, much of which cannot be shown by abridging the letter. Brother Foster was formerly associated with the Campbellites, but now walks at liberty with those who keep God's precepts. At first he felt opposed to the truth, but having read the evidences he says:—

"It will please you much to know that I stand fast in the truth. There are seven Sabbath-keepers in Hobart, and I am the first-fruit of the truth in this colony. We meet each Sabbath, and do all we can to strengthen each other. We had expected to have Brother Curtis this season but now will have to wait till next year.

"Brother Higgins and I have been doing missionary work and have been blest in our souls. Many are reading the papers carefully and I am anxious to give my whole time to the work. . . . There are many fields waiting for the good seed in these colonies, and I hope soon to see more preachers sowing the golden grains of truth. There is a Captain Robinson who bought 'Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation,' and when asked his opinion of it said, 'If there were but one other copy I would give one hundred pounds for it.' Many good testimonies come from those who are reading the SIGNS OF THE TIMES."

TRUST IN OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

OUR Lord having shown that whoever would serve God by the giving of alms, by prayer, and by fasting, must do so in no desire to win the praise of men, or to gain earthly rewards, now advances to the inculcation of a life of absolute and serene trust in our heavenly Father as the source of all good, and the undoubted provider for his children's wants. The disciple is required to exercise simple-minded and whole-hearted devotion to God. Indeed the alternative is sharply drawn, making it impossible for him to serve two masters.

The service here spoken of means—as the original Greek shows—that of a slave. And just as a slave's bodily strength, mental faculties, and entire time belonged to his owner, so the believer is conceived of as belonging to God, his Maker and Redeemer. And as a slave could not, from the nature of the case, obey somebody else, whose ideas, purposes, and commands were all in direct conflict with his master's, so the believer cannot follow Mammon, who is at every point opposed to God. He would be worth nothing to either if he tried to follow both. If the word "mammon" be from the Chaldee, it means "riches," if from the Aramic, it means "confidence in riches." Money in itself is not a bad thing, it is the love of it which is the root of all

The Commentary.

DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.

LESSON 12.—SABBATH, MARCH 24.

1. WHILE Abraham was pleading with the Lord for Sodom, what were the two angels who accompanied him doing?

"And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." Gen. 18:22.

2. At what time did the angels reach Sodom?

"And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground." Gen. 19:1.

3. How did Lot greet them?

4. What trait had Lot in common with Abraham?—*Hospitality.*

5. How did he exhibit it?

"And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." Gen. 19:2, 3.

6. What place of honor did Lot occupy in the city of Sodom? Verse 1.

7. Cite other instances that indicate that those who sat in the gate occupied an office of public trust. Dan. 2:49; Esther 2:19, 21, 22; 3:2, 3; Prov. 24:7; 31:23; Lam. 5:14.

8. What words of the Sodomites corroborate this?

"And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge; now will we deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door." Gen. 19:9.

9. Did Lot participate in the wickedness of the Sodomites?

"And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.)" 2 Peter 2:6-8.

10. What was the crying sin of Sodom and Gomorrah?

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Jude 7.

11. What marked contrast was there between the hospitality of Lot and the actions of the men of Sodom?

"But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter; and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly." Gen. 19:4-7, 9.

12. What did the angels say to Lot?

"And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place; for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." Verses 12, 13.

13. What did Lot do?

"And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." Verse 14.

14. How did his sons-in-law regard his appeal?

15. What did the angels say as soon as it was morning?

"And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city." Verse 15.

16. What steps did they take to hasten Lot and his family?

"And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." Verse 16.

17. What earnest charge did the angels give them?

"And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." Verse 17.

18. As soon as Lot had escaped, what did the Lord do?

"The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." Verses 23-25.

19. What happened to his wife because she disregarded the command of the angels?

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." Verse 26.

20. What warning is given to us, in view of such facts as this?

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" Heb. 2:1-3.

21. What did Jesus say of the condition of the world just before his second coming?

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:28-30.

22. What will he do when he is revealed?

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

23. Of what was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah an example?

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the Judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Jude 6, 7.

24. What charge is given to us who are living in these last days?

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:34-36.

25. What warning is given us?

"In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife." Luke 17:31, 32.

evil. When a man lives to accumulate wealth, making it the secret impulse of all his desires, plans, labors, sacrifices, dreams, and confiding in it as the only remedy against possible need, the only fountain of happiness, he de-thrones God and becomes an idolater. Hence the Bible denounces covetousness as idolatry, and Christ says it is hardly possible for the rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

The Greeks set up an image of Plutus, the god of wealth, and prostrated themselves before it; whether the Syrians worshiped an image of Mammon has been questioned. Their idolatry, however, like ours, may have been just as real, even though they went not down before an actual image. Jesus here insists that this absorbing love of the world is utterly irreconcilable with devotion to God. And he demands the undivided affection and obedience and trust of his disciples. From which it follows that the true child of God will not be anxious about his bodily wants.

The direction to take no thought for our life, does not mean that we are to be reckless, improvident, careless of to-morrow, floating down the stream of existence in a happy-go-lucky style. Religion nowhere encourages idleness or vagabondage. Paul says if a man will not work, neither shall he eat. He admonishes every man to labor with his own hands, so as both to earn his own bread and to have something to bestow in charities. If the Bible were obeyed, the tramp would vanish. But the teaching here is that we are not to be solicitous, anxious, full of worriment and fear lest we come to want. We are to do the duty of the hour in a cheerful, wise, industrious way, and then trust God with serene confidence for beneficent results, nay, trust him in affairs where we have had no opportunity to exert our own agency at all. Everywhere the Bible re-inforces the teaching of the psalmist, that they who trust in the Lord shall want no good thing; and everywhere also it guards us against the cares of this life, which, Christ says, choke the word and make it unfruitful.—*Prof. T. S. Doolittle, D. D., on Matt. 6:24-34.*

It is sometimes assumed that because Christ said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," he thereby partially released man from the obligation of its strict observance. Not so. Christ by these words reiterated the fundamental truth that the Sabbath was designed to secure to man this highest benefit, of elevating him, body, soul, and spirit, to the condition of a sweeter and holier walk with God. Thus the Sabbath was "made for man," that by means of it he might more surely maintain his proper standing as a child of God, and thus an heir of priceless blessings.—*Rev. David J. Burrell, in Interior.*

PERHAPS you are in darkness, have lost your roll and cannot find it; and you are more than miserable. Do not forget that, when Pilgrim lost his roll, he went right back to the place where he lost it, and found it.

A GOOD name is better than great riches.

NOTES.

In the destruction of Sodom we have an example of divine justice, and a sample of what will be the future of all the ungodly. The apostle Peter says that the Lord made the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah "an example unto those that after should live ungodly." 2. Peter 2: 6. This should serve to silence those who deny that God will ever actually burn up wicked men, and who claim that the fire that is spoken of for the wicked is simply the fire of remorse. It was not remorse that turned Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes. Remorse doesn't produce ashes, and besides this, the Sodomites did not feel any remorse. They gloried in their wickedness, until God rained fire and brimstone upon them.

THE student may also notice that the fire which doomed the cities of the plain is called "eternal fire." Jude 7. Yet it is not now burning. Then when the wicked, at the last day, shall be driven away into "everlasting fire" (Matt. 25: 41), we need not conclude that the fire will never cease to burn. But must it not continue to burn forever, if it is not quenched? Not by any means. The fire that consumed Sodom and Gomorrah was not quenched, and as a consequence it turned them into ashes. If it had been quenched, they would not have been turned completely to ashes, but some ruins would have been left standing. Well, we read that the wicked shall be burned up root and branch, and that "they shall be ashes." Mal. 4: 1, 3. Now when a thing has been reduced to ashes what becomes of the fire that did the work? It goes out for lack of combustible material to feed upon. So it was with the "eternal fire" that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah; so it will be with the "everlasting fire" that shall destroy those who are found wicked at the last day; and from that fire will come forth the renewed earth, purified from the curse, and restored to its Eden beauty. w..

NOTES ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

(April 1.—Matt. 22: 1-14.)

THIS parable was given immediately after the parable of the vineyard, upon the same day in which Jesus had cleansed the temple. He was spending the last day of his public ministry teaching in the temple, principally by parables. He was endeavoring to bring the sad condition of the Jews so forcibly before them that they would see their dangers. A vain endeavor it seemed to be, and yet, doubtless much of the seed sown afterward brought forth fruit to the glory of God, as it was developed by the preaching of the apostles, especially of Peter on the day of Pentecost.

THE parable is divided into two parts: the providing of the wedding with guests, and the examination of the guests prior to the feast. And in its scope it is very wide, embracing the results of the Mosaic and Christian economies, and the final Judgment. It is true of this parable, as of others, that it does not in

every particular fit the facts which it illustrates; but the existence of incongruities in matters of smaller importance, not especially under consideration, does not annul the force of the great truths taught.

THE wedding represents the privileges and blessings of the gospel, and the "marriage supper of the Lamb" is treated as a subsequent event. There are two great phases of the work of invitation. Those to whom invitations were first sent had been previously bidden. These were the Jews; and to them the blessings of the new covenant were freely offered. In many ways they had been especially favored and honored of God. They were the depositaries of his truth. To them the promises were made; and through them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, and salvation was thus offered to the world. The invitation to accept the provisions of divine grace was first sent to them. The Saviour, instructing his apostles, said to them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. 10: 5, 6. And after the crucifixion of Christ the cup of salvation was still presented to them until Peter received his vision, and Paul exclaimed to them: "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

IN pride and carelessness many of them dismissed the gracious call, and "the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." They not only refused the proffered blessing of such infinite value, but put to death its author, and those through whom it was offered. Oh, the sin of ingratitude! Its deepest wounds are inflicted upon its best friends. The day of retribution soon came and before that generation passed away the Roman armies "destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

THE attention of the messengers of salvation was turned into the highways of the world. The original word signifies "crossways," indicating the great centers of human life. The commission was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And under this commission the work has gone on until in every nation the sound has been heard; and many have been gathered in. The gospel net has gathered in "both bad and good." Very many have been called and have from various motives and with different degrees of sincerity accepted the call. Statistics tell us that in the United States alone there are over nineteen millions of people who in this generation belong to some church of professed Christianity. That is quite a pleasing view. But there is a closer examination coming before the feast is given. Then the question will not be, Do you belong to a church, do you profess religion? but, Has your religious experience been an elevating, purifying work? How many of these millions know by a daily experience, and communion with God that they are acceptable to Him?

It is a question for the most serious thought, not so much as to the standing of others, as to our own personal acceptance with God. We may pass along here on account of our social standing, or our appearance or reputation, as Christians; but let us ever remember it is the all-seeing eye of God that will in "that day" search us through, and carefully scan our words and inmost thoughts. It is "truth in the inward parts," purity of heart, and the precious graces which adorned the character of Christ, which alone will recommend us to our Lord.

BUT it will be asked, When does the King come in "to see the guests"? Is it after they have entered Heaven, and then some are rudely taken from those joys and plunged into outer darkness? Many so regard it; but no sin will ever enter Heaven. This brings to view an *Investigative* Judgment described in Daniel 7: 10 and Revelation 20: 11, 12. Here "the books are opened," "and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." And as each name of all those who have ever entered the service of God is read from the book of life, his record is carefully inspected. There is a perfect representation of the entire life, with every secret thing. There are his professions, his opportunities, his mistakes, and all his sins. There are the virtues, the faith, and the earnest efforts. Eternal consequences hang upon the decisions of that moment. Perhaps he has disgraced his profession, dishonored his Saviour, and carried sin in his heart or in his life, unconfessed. His faith has not grasped the idea of purity of heart, his sins have not been removed. The Saviour knows him not. The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness he has not obtained. His name is blotted out. He may have belonged to the church, but among the saved who have part in the first resurrection, he has no part.

PERHAPS, on the other hand, it appears that he has faithfully endeavored to live for God. He has confessed Christ before men in all his actions, and true repentance has covered all his sins. Then the blessed Mediator confesses his name before the Father and the holy angels. His sins are blotted out. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment [the wedding garment]; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Rev. 3: 5.

WHEN the work of *Investigative* Judgment is done, Christ's mediatorial work ceases. "The bride hath made herself ready," the wedding takes place, which is Christ's reception of his kingdom. See Daniel 7: 13, 14. He comes the second time to claim his people and give them everlasting life. And in that blessed home "he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Luke 12: 37. "Blessed" indeed "are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

G. C. TENNEY.

TRY to gain some knowledge every day.

The Home Circle.

MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND.

(Psalms 31:15.)

FATHER, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me;
And the changes that are sure to come
I do not fear to see;
But I ask Thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee.

I ask Thee for a thankful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And to wipe the weeping eyes,
And a heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize.

I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know;
I would be dealt with as a child,
And guided where to go.

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoever estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate;
And a work of holy love to do,
For the Lord on whom I wait.

—Selected.

WHICH WAS THE FOOL?

SUCCESS AND FAILURE.

"DOLLY, I think that husband of yours is a fool."

"I've heard you say something of this kind before, brother; but out with it, what is the nature of his latest offense?"

"I suppose it's none of my business if he wants to go to the poor-house and drag his family along with him; it's a free country, and a man can do what he will with his own."

"You are very mysterious. I hope Sam has not suddenly taken to drinking, nor anything of that nature?"

"Sam is a good fellow, in some respects a capital fellow; but no man in business can afford to give away all his money. Five dollars here, ten dollars there, and one hundred dollars to-morrow. I tell you what it is, Dolly, Sam has only what he has saved by hard work, and now he's giving it all away. In a few years he will not have a cent to his name, then he will come to those who have saved their money, to borrow a loaf of bread for his family."

"Are you not a little mistaken, John? I know Sam is quite liberal, but I never supposed he wasted his money."

"Waste? I'd like to know what waste means? He gave that Jim Summers who broke his leg five dollars, and no one else gave over one. He would have been thought just as much of if he had given what others did, and saved four dollars by the operation. He subscribed for our church this year—I know, I saw the paper—one hundred dollars! That is double as much as anyone else gave. So it goes; when he hasn't a dollar left he will have only himself to thank."

"Did you know, John, that Jim Summer's wife has a young babe, and that only last week Jim paid the last dollar he had on the debt he owed for the house that burned down?"

"Well, what if Jim is an honest, needy fellow, Sam don't have to support him, does he?"

And then, what right has Sam to give a hundred dollars to the church when he has a family to support?"

"Our duty, John, should be done, regardless of what the world may say. Sam does not give a second thought to what anyone says, so long as his own conscience approves. And I most sincerely wish that every man was as thoughtful concerning his family as Sam is."

"Oh, well, as I said, it's none of my business, but I tell you plainly it will be useless for you to come begging around me. I shall never have any more than enough for myself," and with this parting shot John took himself off.

Samuel Grand had established himself in business in a small Western town. He married Dolly Whiting, a sweet girl of strong common sense, who had unbounded faith in her husband, and when he told her his plans and gave his reasons for what he did, she, believing him right, like a sensible woman gave him her earnest support. Nor could the lugubrious prophecies of her only brother shake her confidence in the least. At the same time, she stored all these sayings in her heart, and watched and waited.

Ten years flew swiftly by. The Western town had grown to be a city and Samuel Grand was a successful man. He was interested in every enterprise calculated to be of use to his neighbors, and though he lived plainly, his home was a delightful spot to which he joyfully turned after the toils of the day were ended. Here, too, the needy were always sure of sympathy and assistance, and it was the wonder of many how one family could do so much for others without becoming impoverished thereby.

John Whiting, on the other hand, was little, if any, better off than when ten years before he complained to his sister that Sam was on the road to the poor-house. In fact John's rapidly increasing family taxed his resources to the utmost, and one day he was forced to call on Sam for a small loan, though it cost him an effort to do so.

"Oh, certainly," said Sam, "I have a little fund which I keep for just such purposes. Here is the money and when you are in need call again."

John was considerably overcome, but finally he said,—

"Sam, I don't know what to make of you."

"Why so, John?"

"Well, when you were first married you and I were worth just about the same. You were always spending your money freely—even worse, I thought, giving it away—while I saved every dollar, and yet you have plenty and to spare, and I am not as well off as I was then. I cannot account for it, for we both had an equal start, and you have worked no harder than I have."

"John, let me give you a little bit of history. You remember when I commenced business here I bought wheat and stored it to ship in the spring. It so happened I had about all of a certain kind of wheat the farmers at that time used for seed. When they had done their spring sowing a long rain came on and the seed rotted in the ground. Now, I rea-

soned, I can get double price for every bushel of wheat I have. The Sabbath day came, and while sitting at home I could not refrain from congratulating myself on my good luck to Dolly. I noticed she did not say much, and presently she took up the Bible, as she frequently did, and read aloud the eleventh chapter of Proverbs, closed the book, and said never a word. I could not tell, nor do I know to this day, if she intended to read me a lesson, but I took up my hat and went out for a walk. I thought of the thousand bushels of grain, really worth about one dollar, which I could sell for two if I should demand that price, and then, ringing in my ears, were the words Dolly had just read: 'He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him.'

"You see what it says, 'The people shall curse him.' I interpreted this to mean, it was not only their right but their religious duty to do so, because of the iniquity of the action. Was I, then, committing a crime? The next day I commenced selling my wheat at a dollar a bushel, which gave me a fair margin of profit. Men called me a fool. Dolly and my own conscience told me I had done right. About that time, you may remember, came up for discussion the question how much we ought to give to objects of charity and for the public good generally. I had long talks with Dolly about it, and she advised that we lay aside one-tenth of each year's income, to be devoted to such purposes as the occasion might warrant. The plan was adopted, and we have never missed the amounts thus expended. In fact it has seemed like good seed sown on good ground, or like bread cast upon the waters. Leaving out of the question our duty to God, which should be the ruling principle of our lives, there is sound wisdom from a business standpoint in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of that same chapter, which, you will remember, says: 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.'

"Such is the history of my success, for in the eyes of men I have been successful. I have merely followed my guide—the blessed Word—and my good wife has helped me to do so. I have been blessed beyond my most sanguine expectations, and I have realized that it is surely more blessed to give than to receive."

"Sam, ten years ago I told Dolly you were a fool, and on the way to the poor-house. I have had my eyes opened, and I am now convinced that yours is the right path, even though my predictions had been verified. My children shall be taught to give as they have opportunity, and to remember that we are only stewards of God's bounty."—*Oscar Bliss, in N. Y. Observer.*

THE warm sunshine and the gentle zephyr may melt the glacier which has bid defiance to the howling tempest; so the voice of kindness will touch the heart which no severity could subdue.

CONCERNING TRAVEL.

RECORD OF A HALF CENTURY.

THE advancement in the modes and rapidity of traveling has been very great. We are told that Winthrop, an early governor of Massachusetts, having lived two years in Boston, wanted to visit Plymouth of the same State, about fifty miles distant. After two days, we are told, he reached Plymouth, "having been conveyed over the fords of streams on the shoulders of Indians." Toward the close of the eighteenth century it was regarded as a remarkable journey if the traveler went from Edinburgh, Scotland, to London, England, in three days and three nights. It was said that several persons who had been so rash as to attempt it, had actually died from the rapidity of the motion.

In 1847 it took months to go from New England to Oregon. Now the trip can be made in six days. In 1760, the stage that was to carry the mail from Philadelphia to Boston was expected to make the trip in six days, leaving Philadelphia on Monday morning and arriving at Boston on Saturday night.

Said a distinguished editor of Washington, D. C., in 1831: "But for our part we have no desire ever to be carried by any mode of conveyance more rapidly than at the rate of thirteen miles the hour." This editor was as incredulous as to the rapidity with which people could go from place to place as Voltaire, who said of Sir Isaac Newton: "What do you think Sir Isaac Newton says? Why he actually predicts that the time will come when people will travel at the rate of forty miles an hour! Just see into what absurdities the studies of the Bible drive a great and gifted mind." Very few even among the far-seeing entertained the thoughts of Sir Isaac Newton. Many thought, with Voltaire, that such thoughts concerning travel were fanciful. Even those who assembled near Honesdale, Pa., to see the first locomotive that turned a wheel on a railroad track, had no conception of the part that steam was to play in the conveyance of passengers and freight. Fifty years ago two steam vessels arrived at New York the same day, having made the voyage in fourteen days. Now they make the voyage in half the time, and many vessels are required to meet the wants of the traveling public, and large numbers are coming and going from one country to another. The conveniences in traveling, both by rail and by water, are so many that the traveler can go around the world and not experience the discomforts and hardships encountered by a few miles of travel in other days.—*Robert H. Williams, D. D., in Christian at Work.*

THE month of February, 1886, was in one respect the most remarkable in the world's history. It had no full moon. January had two full moons, and so had March, but February had none. This had not occurred before since the creation of the world. And it will not occur again, according to the computations of astronomers, for two and a half millions of years.

Health and Temperance.

CIGARETTE SMOKING.

WHY do boys smoke cigarettes? Not because they like to smoke, for the fondness for tobacco in any shape is an acquired taste. They must begin by overcoming a downright dislike for the weed—and what motive can they have for undergoing positive misery in order to learn to like something that will in time ruin their nerves, stop their growth, injure their minds, and bind them with the chains that any bad habit twines around those that indulge in it? The motive usually is the same as that which induces boys to take the "first glass"—a desire to appear what they call "manly." It will be a glorious day for our boys when they can see how much *more* manly it is to have a clean mouth, a clear head, and strong nerves; to be able to say, *No*, to temptations; to have right principles and moral courage to live up to those principles.

Cigarette smoking is worse, if anything, than cigar smoking, and for the same reasons that a toy pistol is worse than a revolver. Cigarettes, like toy pistols, are small and cheap. For this reason small boys, who would have no wish to buy cigars or revolvers, buy cigarettes and smoke them. Their work is slower but scarcely less deadly than that of the toy pistol. Because cigarettes are small and cheap, those who smoke them use great numbers of them, absorbing more nicotine than a moderate cigar smoker would. And, besides this, the cigarette is often made of other things mixed with the tobacco that are even more injurious.

It was estimated that last year there were consumed in this country 2,400,000,000 cigarettes, not including 50,000,000 that were imported. These are awful figures, especially when we remember that the smokers of cigarettes are largely, if not principally, young men and boys who have not attained their growth, and who can never mature with the full amount of health and strength which would be theirs if they did not put this insidious enemy between their teeth, "to steal away," not only brains, but will-power, health, nerves, and strength.

It is not worth while, boys. You never will get enough pleasure out of cigarette smoking to pay you for what it will make you suffer, and if you never begin you will never have the longing for it which those have who have contracted the habit. Ten years ago I knew two boys who were at school together. They were great friends, and stood equally well, not only in their studies, but socially and in the gymnasium. They were both on the foot-ball team, and were strong, athletic-looking boys. One of them, whom we will call Harry, had promised his mother he would never smoke. George knew his parents did not wish him to smoke, but was bound by no promise, and under guise of smoking "cubebbs for catarrh" began using cigarettes.

The boys both graduated in course of time and with nearly equal honor. I had not seen

either of them for eight years, but chancing to meet Harry (now a skillful physician in a city near New York) at a lecture the other night, we had a long talk about mutual friends, in the course of which he asked: "Have you heard anything of George lately?"

Finding I had not, he told me a long story—much too long to repeat here. Having been called to attend George professionally, he found him at the hotel, having been taken ill while traveling. He was suffering with heart trouble, pale, thin, irritable, and weak. Tormented with sleepless nights, he would get up and smoke cigarettes "to while away the time." It was the first time Harry had seen him since graduation, and he said:—

"I should not have known him if I had met him on the street. A slight hereditary tendency to heart trouble, and cigarette smoking, have brought him where he is now. He seems to be so bound by the habit that he can't give it up, and yet to do so is his only hope of living. You may be sure I shall leave no stone unturned in trying to help the poor fellow, for I know if it had not been for my promise to my mother I might be where he is to-day. I wanted to smoke when he did; thought it was manly and all that, as boys do, you know. Sometimes I was almost tempted to smoke, anyway, but my promise held me; and since I've been practicing, I have seen thousands of cases that have made me thank God for the promise that prevented my forming a habit which causes more sickness and misery than most people would believe."

You may think this case is an extreme one, and I know it is. But cigarette smoking *always* does harm, and *may* be as injurious to you as it was to George. You never can tell, and, I repeat, *it isn't worth while* to run the risk.—*New York Christian Advocate.*

THE BEST VEHICLE.

A PHYSICIAN who was called to prescribe for a case of incipient consumption, wrote his directions: "One pill to be taken three times a day, in any convenient vehicle." The family looked in the dictionary to get the meaning of the word "vehicle." They found "cart, wagon, carriage, buggy, wheel-barrow." They came to the conclusion that the doctor meant the patient should ride out, and while in the vehicle take the pill. He followed the advice to the letter, and in a few weeks the fresh air and exercise secured the advantage, which otherwise might not have come.—*Selected.*

BEEF tea is so often employed as almost the sole form of nutriment for invalids, particularly for fever patients, that it is important that warnings against its use in this manner should be frequently uttered. All scientific authorities now agree that beef tea is practically useless as a nutriment. In cases in which beef tea has been customarily employed, milk, hot or cold, should generally be used.—*Good Health.*

"THE wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23,

News and Notes.

RELIGIOUS.

—The Mohammedan pilgrims to Mecca last year numbered not less than 350,000, the largest number that ever visited the sacred city.

—A Jewish-Christian movement has begun in Irkutek, Siberia, similar to the one in Southern Russia. Its author is a Jew who was banished to Siberia on false accusation, but before going had learned something of Jesus Christ.

—Judge Tuthill has decided in the Cook County Court of Illinois, that a distinctively Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum under the special control of the Roman Catholic Church, is not a sectarian school. A non-sectarian Roman Catholic school is a contradiction of terms in this part of the Republic.

—The Greek Church at Sitka, Alaska, is one of the wealthiest in the world, its treasure consisting for the greater part in old paintings of the saints, set in frames of gold and silver. One picture, a present from the Czar, is valued at \$40,000. The massive doors of the church are heavily inlaid with the precious metals.

—In his address at the opening of the Christian Conference in Washington, last fall, President W. E. Dodge said: "Probably one-half of our people never enter a church. When we send out missionaries to foreign countries, rum and licentiousness go out with or before them from our Christian land, and get to work before our ministers can learn the language."

—The American Tract Society has been organized sixty-three years, and during the time has handled over \$20,000,000. Every officer and agent is required to balance his account each month. During the past year its colporters report 139,163 visits; and 117,081 Bibles, Testaments and other books have been distributed, besides millions of pages of tracts and papers.

—Dr. Blodget, of China, reports from Peking that it has come to his knowledge that a society has been formed in Ceylon for the propagation of Buddhism throughout the world, and that this society has sent a letter, written in English, to Prince Chun, father of the Emperor of China, requesting permission for a commission from their own number to visit Thibet and the city of Lassa. This letter is in the hands of Marquis Tseng, to be forwarded to the prince.

SECULAR.

—Avalanches in Trentino Valley killed twenty persons.

—Nine suicides occurred in Chicago during the week ending March 9.

—The bodies of over 200 victims of the recent avalanches in the Italian Alps have been recovered.

—A. Bronson Alcott, the well-known author and philosopher, died near Boston, March 4, age 88 years.

—A sedition has occurred in Eastern Roumelia, and fifty officers were arrested charged with high treason.

—An avalanche has fallen upon the Hospice of St. Bernard, burying the church, but causing no loss of life.

—A violent sandstorm raged in Egypt for several days last week, stopping traffic on the Suez Canal.

—The Trust combinations are being investigated by a committee appointed by the House of Representatives.

—Ex-Governor St John will make California his home, and for this purpose has bought a tract of land near Chico.

—At Ishpeming, Mich., March 5, five men were literally torn to pieces by the premature discharge of a blast in an iron mine.

—In Louisiana, March 6, a cyclone devastated a portion of Opelonsas parish, killing two persons and wounding several.

—It is reported from the West Indies that 40 persons were killed near Cartagena by the explosion of the boiler of a pleasure-boat.

—The bark *Lanoma*, from Australia to London, laden with wool, was lately lost at sea. The captain and eleven men were drowned.

—Mayor Hewitt, of New York, has greatly exasperated his Irish constituents by very curtly refusing to review the St. Patrick's day parade.

—It is proposed to establish, in Brooklyn, N. Y., a bureau for the purpose of supplying needy children with proper clothing for attending school.

—A dispatch from St Paul, dated March 9, states that Minnesota and Dakota were being visited by another severe snow-storm, threatening a blizzard.

—Late news from China shows that the earthquake in the province of Yunnan was more severe than at first reported. It is now said that over 15,000 people perished.

—Germany and Italy have ordered the construction of two torpedo boats, and Russia has ordered the line of the Black Sea steamship boats to be prepared for war.

—The prevalence of crime in San Diego, Cal., has become unendurable, and the citizens have organized a vigilance committee and propose to see a different state of things.

—A bloody battle was fought at Suakim, March 4. The rebels left several hundred dead and wounded on the field. The British and Egyptians lost five killed, and fourteen wounded.

—The British ship *City of Corinth* was sunk by a collision with the *Tasmania* for San Francisco. It is believed that 28 lives were lost. The *Tasmania* returned to London the 10th instant.

—James R. Garfield, son of the late President, has finished a course at the Columbia Law School, and has applied for admission to the bar at the same tribunal which admitted his father thirty years ago.

—A fatal encounter took place on the Mexican border, March 4, between a sheriff's posse and some Mexican troops. The trouble was over an attempt of the latter to kidnap a deserter who had crossed to Texas.

—March 10, a foreman of the California Powder Works at Pinole, struck an empty nitro-glycerine tub with an ax. The result was that he was blown into a hundred pieces, as was also a Chinaman standing near.

—Neal Dow, the prohibition champion, has been defeated by a majority of 1,600 in the election of a mayor for Portland, Maine. He was supported by Prohibitionists and Democrats, and opposed by Republicans.

—A timber raft is being constructed in Nova Scotia, 650 feet long. It contains the largest timbers ever shipped from that country. The raft will be rigged with masts and bulkheads, and is intended to be floated to New York.

—Steps are being taken to organize throughout the country Frances Cleveland Marching Clubs, to be composed of Democratic young ladies, who will be uniformed and drilled to participate in public parades and processions.

—A dispatch, dated March 5, states that all railway traffic in Sweden and Denmark has been stopped by heavy snowfalls. Traffic on lines in Northwestern Germany is also interrupted. Dantzie is completely shut off from the world.

—Congressman Thomas, of Illinois, has introduced to Congress a bill making it a misdemeanor to display the picture of any American woman, dead or alive, without written permission, as an advertisement for any nostrum or other similar purpose.

—The half-breeds and Indians in the Northwest Territory are in a state of agitation, and are said to be ready to take up arms again, notwithstanding the disastrous results of Reil's rebellion. The present occasion of trouble is the withholding of supplies by the Government.

—A posse in pursuit of the Stein's Pass train robbers crossed into Mexico and captured their men. But they were met by a large company of Mexicans in the same pursuit, and, refusing to deliver the robbers, were all taken into custody, and closely confined without the privilege of bail or communication.

—Thos. J. Potter, vice-president and general manager of the Union Pacific Railroad, died in Washington, D. C., March 9. He was widely known, especially in the West, as a manager of great energy and executive ability, and in a little over twenty years arose from the position of lineman to the high place he filled with such ability.

—The change in agricultural methods in the South, is shown in the fact that last season's corn crop was of nearly the same value as the cotton produced, the two standing—cotton, \$264,852,000; corn, \$213,662,920. Adding oats, wheat, etc., it is probable that the cereals raised in 1887 were equal, if they did not exceed, in value "King Cotton."

—A fire destroyed the new office of the *Evening Union* at Springfield, Mass., the 7th inst. Six of the employes, including foreman Goulding, Mrs. Early, of the editorial staff, and Miss Thompson, proof-reader, were burned to death, and others of the injured may die. Many were obliged to jump from the fifth story to the stone sidewalk.

—Louisa M. Alcott, the celebrated author of books for young people, daughter of A. Bronson Alcott, died at Highland, near Boston, the 6th inst.

—Americans are suffering indignities and persecutions in Tangiers, and the protests of Minister Lewis are of no avail. A war vessel, the *Enterprise*, has been sent there after long delay, and her arrival is anxiously waited for by the few United States citizens who are there.

—An explosion of dynamite occurred at Williamsburg, Ind., the 6th inst., so terrific in its force that for many miles around it was taken for an earthquake. It took place in a storehouse of which not a brick or vestige can be found, nor of the one man who was present. An excavation twenty-one feet deep and fifty feet across, caused by the explosion, marks the spot.

—It is estimated that the strike of the Reading employes has cost \$3,620,000. It involved 2,500 railroad men, who were out forty-eight days, and whose wages averaged \$2 per day—total \$240,000. There were 20,000 miners, whose wages average not less than \$10 per week, who were out twenty-six days, making their total loss, \$1,400,000. The workmen at the furnace, who were thrown out of employment by the strike, lost \$280,000. The increase in price of coal caused a loss to the consumer of \$700,000, while the Reading Company is said to have lost in round numbers \$1,000,000.

Obituary.

SKINNER.—Died at Blue Lake, Humboldt Co., Cal., February 25, 1888, Charlie, infant son of Oliver and Mary Skinner, aged six months. Words of comfort at the burial place by the writer.

JASPER G. SMITH.

LOBDELL.—Died in Grangerville, Cal., March 1, after an illness of but a few hours, Chester, son of G. D. and E. M. Lobdell, aged eleven months. The destroying angel has taken our darling away, but we look for a glad reunion when Jesus shall call him from "the land of the enemy." Services by G. W. Buckner.

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(A CORPORATION.)

NOTICE is hereby given that a special meeting of the stockholders of the "Rural Health Retreat Association" (a corporation), will be held at the principal place of business of said corporation at the Rural Health Retreat Building at Crystal Springs, near St. Helena, Napa County, State of California, at the hour of nine o'clock, A. M., of the 6th (sixth) day of April, 1888, to consider the following propositions, viz. :-

First—To increase the capital stock of the "Rural Health Retreat Association" (a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of California), from the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

Second—To amend the Articles of Incorporation of the "Rural Health Retreat Association" (a corporation formed and existing under the laws of the State of California), by adding a subdivision to be known as Subdivision 6th of Article II of the original Articles of Incorporation. Said Article II reciting the purposes for which said incorporation was formed, said subdivision 6th to read as follows, viz. :-

Sixth—To purchase, acquire, collect, and convey, ten (10) inches of water out of what is known as "Bell's Canyon," on Howell Creek, from a point just below a hydraulic ram belonging to W. A. C. Smith; located in the N. W. 1/4 of the S. W. 1/4 of Sec. 6, T. 8 N., R. 5 W., M. D. M., or other available points in this section; and Sec. 1, T. 8 N., R. 6 W., M. D. M., to conduct the same along such route or routes as are deemed most feasible and practicable (according to careful surveys made by the Company's engineers) to the said Rural Health Retreat, and to supply said Rural Health Retreat with all necessary water for the purposes of consumption, manufacturing, and irrigation, and also to supply the inhabitants of said village of Crystal Springs and vicinity with water for irrigation and domestic purposes, and to sell the water, and collect rates for the sale and use of the same.

Dated, Crystal Springs, Napa Co., Jan. 30, 1888.

Signed, J. N. LOUGHBOROUGH, W. C. WHITE, J. D. RICE, W. A. PRATT, A. B. ATWOOD,

Directors of the Rural Health Retreat Association (a corporation).

Attest: J. FULTON, Sec'y.

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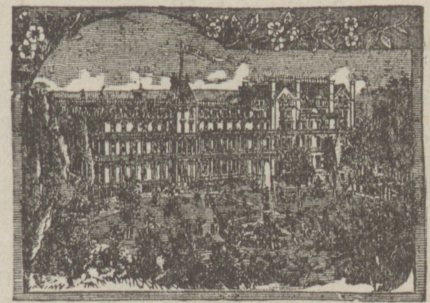
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The Signs of the Times.

OAKLAND, CAL., SIXTH-DAY, MARCH 16, 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.

We are forcibly reminded of the pertinency of the question, "What is in a name?" by reading that "Mrs. Bible" was one of the prominent speakers at the late meeting of the State Spiritualist Association of Michigan.

We are in receipt of the *Cape Times*, of February 1, published at Cape Town, S. Africa, which contains the advertisement of the tent-meetings then being conducted by Elders Robinson and Boyd. It contains also a very favorable editorial notice of the work.

It is hoped that everybody who attends prayer-meeting will ponder well the following words by the editor of the *Sunday School Times*:-

"If, indeed, a man really believes it to be his duty to bring a chill into a prayer-meeting, he could hardly do that duty more effectively than by taking a back seat, and sticking to it persistently."

The same thing applies to a woman also. Reader, are you a back seat church-member?

In one of the best equipped first-class theaters in New York City, a play was recently introduced that was so filthy that even hardened theater-goers were constrained to protest, and some of the most obscene portions of the play have been cut out. Of course the whole drift of the play is vile, but with the most obscene portions eliminated, it will be allowed to run. And yet people talk about the elevating character of the stage, and many clergymen are found among its defenders.

KAISER WILHELM, emperor of Germany, died in Berlin at 8:30 A. M., March 9, at the advanced age of ninety-one. He was crowned King of Prussia in 1861; and was proclaimed Emperor of all the Germanic States in January, 1871. His great prowess as a ruler has been ably seconded by the abilities and energies of the "Iron Prince," Bismarck. His private life was simple, and his genial character endeared him to his people.

The Crown Prince, Frederick William, succeeds him under the title of Frederick III. But his health is in such a precarious state as to render the succession of his son William, a young prince of twenty-nine years, an event very likely to occur within a few days.

THE following question has been handed to us for immediate answer through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES:

"Is it right, in hauling freight to the stores, to haul liquors and tobacco? When we haul our hay to town, we generally get back loads. We have hauled some whisky and beer to —, and the other night there was a man beaten to death with a club while under the influence of liquor. What shall we do when we get an order for a load of groceries, and in it there is liquor?"

We imagine that when the writer of the above sees his question in plain, cold print, he will be able to answer it for himself. We can give only one answer. Any argument which would justify him in hauling the liquor, would also justify him in selling it. The responsibility cannot be evaded by saying that men might injure themselves or others with anything that they might haul. People might kill themselves on flour and potatoes, but they don't do it very often, and the object of those things is to maintain life. But the sole object of liquor is to injure men, and to put them in a condition where they will injure others.

We don't usually give direct answers to questions that are asked on matters of conscience, as we pre-

fer to let people be conscience for themselves; but we have no hesitation in saying that the proper thing to do with whisky is, to let it alone. "But then we should not get any freight to haul." Well, if so, then live on the profits of your hay, and go home without any back loads. You will not starve to death. If you do, no matter. Remember that the martyrs might have lived a great deal longer than they did, if they had been willing to do wrong in order to live. When it is absolutely impossible for a man to get a living without committing crime, or aiding others to do so, that is an evidence that he has lived as long as the Lord wants him to.

PASSING by a cigar stand the other day, we saw in bold letters the following free advice: "Smoke Sanitary Cigars!" and straightway we began to wonder what kind of cigars Sanitary cigars could be. We could not think of anything that could make cigars healthful, except the absence of tobacco, and that evidently was not what the enterprising cigar vendor meant to suggest. Finally we concluded that Sanitary cigars are just the ordinary vile compounds that we meet on the cars and the ferry-boats, and that their sanitary property is the same as that of certain "disinfectants"—they smell so bad that people are forced to open the windows, and so they get a little fresh air. Even with that view, we think that "Sanitary cigars" are a failure, for they usually smell bad enough to vitiate all the air in the neighborhood. Ordinary air stands no show in the presence of a dozen men with cigars.

It is reported in the religious press that a great revival is progressing in Tokio, Japan, with no fewer than five hundred conversions in a single month. One religious journal, in noting the wonderful revival, and how recently the country was wholly pagan says: "Everybody is interested in Christianity, and nobody speaks against it." Well, then, we fear that Christianity is in a bad condition in Japan. Christ said: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets." When the Christians were only "a sect" that was everywhere spoken against, Christianity was pure and undefiled; but when Constantine elevated Christianity to the throne of the world, and nobody spoke against it, but men found that they gained popularity by accepting it, then real Christianity fled, and "that wicked" took its place. We do not believe Christ's words have any less application to-day than they had eighteen hundred years ago.

THE *Independent*, in its latest issue, has a short editorial on "Fraudulent or Disgusting Advertisements," in which it severely scores those religious newspapers "which lack the carnal wit to see that any advertiser who takes the public into his confidence and tells how \$100 a month is likely to be paid on an investment of \$350 is simply lying." It says:-

"We have heard of several cases in which women have been attracted by this advertisement, and have either sent, or been dissuaded from sending, their money to this fraudulent concern. We know a church in this neighborhood in which there were distributed three hundred copies of a religious paper in which the advertisement appeared. When no satisfaction was received to a protest against the appearance of the advertisement, that church canceled the whole subscription at once."

Good! Hundreds of people are disgusted by the nauseating patent medicine advertisements which many papers mix up with their religious items, and if they would express their disapproval in as decided a way as in the above-mentioned instance, that disgrace to the cause of religion might be stopped.

Nor long ago the religious journals of New York were very active in working for the Saturday half-holiday. Now the Bank Superintendent of the State, in his report to the Legislature, has recommended that the law be so amended as to be limited in its operations to July and August, during which months business in the cities is usually sus-

pended on Saturday afternoons; and the *Independent* says that "a better recommendation would have been a total repeal of the law altogether." It thoughtfully adds:-

"The truth is, that the law is really of no service to anybody. The design of the Legislature in passing it, was simply to humbug the working people, by seeming to do something for them, when in fact doing nothing except to their injury."

And that is just the case with all Sunday legislation. If the workmen allow the Sunday-law advocates to humbug them into thinking that the object of Sunday laws is to benefit them, they will find out the contrary to their sorrow when it is too late to remedy the matter.

IS IT SIN?

AN esteemed brother presents, in behalf of a friend, the following problem for solution: By the fourth commandment, we are required to rest upon the seventh day and are permitted, but not commanded, to work on the other six days; we may use them as we choose. In the event of a law requiring all to keep Sunday and permitting us to keep the Sabbath too, would it be sin in us to observe Sunday? The friend claims it would not be, and that we would incur sin only by keeping Sunday *instead* of the Sabbath. And so by keeping both days the commandments may be kept and persecution avoided.

This is such an apparent two-faced policy that its advocates are not satisfied with it, but its opponents do not always understand how to meet it. One way in which it is met is to hold that the expression, "Six days shalt thou labor," is a positive command, as much so as the requirement to rest upon the seventh day; so that resting on any of the six days becomes a sin. But that is not, in the minds of many, a tenable position. Confirmed laziness and shiftlessness is a sin, doubtless; but the resting upon a secular day, or its employment for diversion, or religious purposes, or relaxation from care, is nowhere so considered. And yet it would be sin under such an interpretation of the fourth commandment. It is, however, evident that the privilege of working six days in the week is a God-given right, of which the State should not deprive any citizen.

But while the occasional cessation from labor on the six days may not be a sin, the habitual observance of another day as a rest day beside and along with the one which God appointed would be a very different matter, and would be sin. It would be subversive of the principle upon which the Sabbath stands as a peculiar day. A man who would celebrate with equal zest the holidays of two opposing nations would not be regarded with favor by either. No man can have the sign of God's peculiar people and wear it legitimately while wearing the badge of the enemy of God's authority. It would be sin to place on an equality with the commands of high Heaven that which we know to be the mandates of antichristian power: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." And yet this is just what he tries to do who from respect to God's authority keeps the Sabbath day, and from fear of the law keeps the Papal Sunday. It is true he only keeps the latter for fear of consequences, but he who fears consequences should learn to commit them to the God of Daniel.

"THE Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." Ps. 103:8.

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