

PRESENT TRUTH

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth”

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ONE PENNY.



THE OLD WATER MILL.

Resurrection.

LITTLE brown buds on the tips of the trees,
Swaying about in the icy-cold breeze,
Wrapped up so tightly you scarcely can freeze,
Are ye the heralds of spring?

Little brown bulbs buried deep in the ground,
Sending your leaves through the clods that surround,
Quietly working, with never a sound,
Blossoms to perfection to bring.

Little brown chrysalides, hidden from sight,
Waiting for sunshine's beneficent might,
Soon to burst forth into radiance bright,
Gladsome as bird on the wing!

Dearly loved sleepers, laid down in the earth!
Buried with you all our light-hearted mirth!
Ye, too, are waiting a glorious birth,
Christ's resurrection to sing.

Bright Sun of righteousness, shine through our
gloom!
Teach us that Life only sleeps in the tomb,
Soon to awake in more glorious bloom,
Since Thou hast vanquished death's sting.

Shine in our hearts, blessed Sunlight of love;
Lighten our darkness, as earth lights remove,
Waiting Thy promise to come from above,
Joyfullest springtime to bring!

—A. M. L., in *Christian*.

The Kingdom of Christ.

"WHEREUNTO shall we liken the kingdom of God?" said Christ, "or with what comparison shall we compare it?" Christ found the kingdoms of the world corrupt. After Satan was expelled from heaven, he erected his standard of rebellion on this earth, and sought by every means to win men to it. In order the more successfully to gain the allegiance of the world he put on the garb of religion. By familiar intercourse, through his agents, with the inhabitants of the world, he worked to extend his power, that the contagion of evil might be widespread. His purpose was to establish a kingdom which would be governed by his own laws and carried on with his own resources, independent of God; and so well did he succeed that when Christ came to the world to establish a kingdom, He looked upon the governments of men, and said: "Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God?" Nothing in civil society afforded Him a comparison. The poor and needy, instead of being protected, were oppressed. The world had cast aside that class of people most needing care and attention; even the most earnest religionists among the Jews, filled with pride and prejudice, neglected them, and some among them even frowned upon their existence.

In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practised were the mission and work of Christ. Earthly kingdoms are established and upheld by physical force, but this was not to be the foundation of the Messiah's kingdom. In the establishment of His government no carnal weapons were to be used, no coercion practised; no attempt would be made to force the consciences

of men. These are the principles used by the prince of darkness for the government of his kingdom. His agents are actively at work, seeking in their human independence to enact laws which are in direct contrast to Christ's mercy and loving-kindness.

Prophecy has plainly stated the nature of Christ's kingdom: He planned a government which would use no force; His subjects would know no oppression. The symbols of earthly governments are wild beasts, but in the kingdom of Christ men are called upon to behold, not a ferocious beast, but the Lamb of God. Not as a fierce tyrant did He come, but as the Son of man; not to conquer the nations by His iron power, but "to preach good tidings unto the meek;" "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" "to comfort all that mourn." He came as the divine Restorer, bringing to oppressed and down-trodden humanity the rich and abundant grace of Heaven, that by the power of His righteousness, man, fallen and degraded though he was, might be a partaker of divinity.

In the eyes of the world, Christ was peculiar in some things. Ever a Friend of those who most needed His protection, He comforted the needy, and befriended those shunned by the proud and exclusive Jews. The forsaken ones felt His protection, and the convicted, repentant soul was clothed with His salvation. And He required of His subjects that they give aid and protection to the oppressed. No soul that bears the image of God is to be placed at the footstool of human power. The greatest possible kindness and freedom are to be granted to the purchase of the blood of Christ. Over and over again in His teaching Christ presented the value of true humility, showing how necessary it is that we exercise helpfulness, compassion, and love toward one another.

Professed Christians of to-day have the example of Christ before them, but do they follow it? Often, by the hardness of their hearts, they make it manifest that they do not belong to the kingdom of Christ. Too many educate themselves to censure and condemn, repulsing with harsh, stinging words those who may seek their help. But cold-hearted worldliness excludes the love of Jesus from the heart. We can co-operate with Christ in the upbuilding of His kingdom only by being sanctified by His Spirit. We must use no force, take up no weapons, to compel obedience; for to do this would be to exhibit the same spirit revealed by the enemies of Christ.

Christ taught that His Church is a spiritual kingdom. He Himself, "the Prince of peace," is the Head of His Church. In His person humanity, inhabited by divinity, was represented to the world.

The great end of His mission was to be, a sin-offering for the world, that by the shedding of blood an atonement might be made for the whole race of men. With a heart ever touched with the feelings of our infirmities, an ear ever open to the cry of suffering humanity, a hand ever ready to save the discouraged and despairing, Jesus, our Saviour, "went about doing good." His words inspired hope; His precepts awakened men to faith, and caused them to put their trust in Him.

Before man can belong to the kingdom of Christ, his character must be purified from sin and sanctified by the grace of Christ. He must become a member of Christ's body, receiving nourishment from Him as the branches of the vine derive their strength from the parent stalk. And all who are members of the kingdom of Christ will represent Him in character and disposition. Who are thus working out their lives in the service of Christ? All such will sit with Him on His throne. But all who exalt themselves, all who oppress their fellow-men in any wise, do this to Jesus Christ; for every soul has been purchased at an infinite price, and through faith in Christ is capable of receiving immortality, to live through the eternal ages.

How long God will bear with the heartless indifference shown in the treatment of men toward their fellow men we cannot determine. But "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If men sow deeds of love and compassion, words of comfort, hope, and encouragement, they will reap that which they have sown.

Christ came to put down wickedness and oppression, and establish a kingdom of righteousness in this world. And His purpose will yet be carried out. The prophet says of Him: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth." Then "a King shall reign in righteousness." His kingdom will embrace the whole earth, "and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun."

MRS. E. G. WHITE.

The Resurrection of Christ.

IT is as the prelude of our own resurrection that Christ's is to us the object of the greatest satisfaction and joy. In these cast-off grave-clothes, in that linen shroud and napkin, there is more to draw our eyes and fix our interest and move our admiration than in the jewelled robes or royal purple of the greatest monarch of earth. That empty tomb, roughly hewn in the rock, is a greater sight than Egypt's mighty pyramids, or the costliest sepulchres that have received the ashes of the proudest kings. How full of meaning is its

very emptiness! What good news to us in Mary's disappointment! What joys flow to us in these women's tears! Thanks be to God, they could not find Him. He is not there. No, Mary, they have not taken away your Lord; no robber has rifled that sacred tomb. See, the dew lies sparkling on the grass, no feet have brushed it but those of One Who has left the grave. He is risen; and, as the first-fruits of them that sleep, as the first ripe sheaf that was offered to the Lord, His resurrection is the pledge and promise of a coming harvest. Henceforth the grave holds but a lease of the saints. Because He rose, we shall rise also.—
Thomas Guthrie, D.D.

The Place of Recompense.

MEN recognize it as a fitting thing that a criminal should receive punishment at the scene of his crime. The reward of any deed, whether good or ill, is most fittingly bestowed at the place where the deed was done. This fitness is recognized in God's plan of reward for both the righteous and the wicked. "Behold," He says, "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner." Prov. xi. 31.

When the wicked receive their final reward, God will not remove them to some other planet to punish them there. Nor will He prepare some new place of punishment not now in existence off in some unknown corner of the universe. The wicked will receive the reward of their deeds right here on this earth, where their ungodly acts have been committed. And so likewise will the righteous be rewarded on the planet where they have lived. God placed Adam on this earth at the first, intending that he and his posterity should rule over it, and He will not allow His plan to be defeated. Sin has intervened for a time, but in the end God's original plan will be carried out.

There are plain Scripture texts which state that this will be so. The last that is seen of the wicked, looking forward into the revelation of the future which inspired prophecy gives us, is that they come up around the New Jerusalem after it descends from heaven on to the earth. The record states:—

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Rev. xx. 9.

This takes place at the close of the millennium, or period of one thousand years, during which Satan has been "bound" by being confined on this earth after it has been reduced to a chaotic state by the judgments of the day of God, so as to be fittingly termed the "bottomless pit." Upon the wicked God will rain "fire and brimstone, and an

horrible tempest." Ps. xi. 6. Peter adds to the description by stating that this tempest of fire which comes down from God will cause the earth itself to melt. "The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Pet. iii. 10.

This is the last seen of the wicked. There is no further mention of them. They go into this tempest of fire, which melts and burns up the earth, and there they for ever disappear. And at the same time the righteous are also on the earth, but inside the holy city, the New Jerusalem, which of course is not destroyed. Remember that when fire descends from God upon the wicked, the New Jerusalem is on this earth, and there is no record that it is removed to any other place. But the same New Jerusalem is also the capital of the new earth. The prophet John saw "a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." Rev. xxi. 1. The New Jerusalem remains where it came down upon the earth, while the earth is melted and destroyed, floating upon the fiery ocean as did the ark upon the waters which destroyed the antediluvian world. The new earth comes forth out of the ashes of the old, with the New Jerusalem upon it.

But this leaves no place for the doctrine that somewhere in the universe the wicked will exist for ever in a burning hell. And let us be thankful that it is so. The final hell into which the wicked are cast is the "lake of fire" which consumes the earth. Finally the earth passes away, ceases to exist, and the new earth comes forth, with sin and sinners for ever annihilated. These are the plain statements of God's Word, and any texts which seem to teach an eternally burning place of torment must be understood in the light of the scriptures we have quoted; for the Bible does not contradict itself. The wicked and the just will both be recompensed in the earth. God is a God of justice, and when justice has been satisfied upon the wicked, they will go out of existence, and will be as though they had never been.

L. A. SMITH.

Expediency.

LAW in the form of commandment is a revelation or declaration of that course which is expedient. It is expediency revealed, as in the case of the decalogue, and the same is true of every precept of the Bible; it reveals to us what is expedient. A revealed law or commandment is never to be set aside by our views of expediency. We may know with certainty that what is required is expedient. The command is the expressed judgment of God in the case, and reveals with unerring certainty the true path of expediency.—*Rev. Chas. G. Finney.*



Family Missionaries.

"Please explain through PRESENT TRUTH 1 Cor. vii. 14. In what way is an unbelieving wife or husband sanctified?"

THERE is certainly, according to the apostle's words, a certain kind of sanctification attaching to the family of a believer, but we must remember that the epistle to the Corinthians was written to recent converts from heathenism. There are two interpretations of the words of Paul which are plainly not permissible.

First, the unbelieving husband is not sanctified by a believing wife in such a way that he is thereby made fit to receive eternal life. The soul that sinneth must die, no matter what earthly ties may connect him with the Church of Christ.

Second, no Christian is justified by Paul's words in being married to an unbeliever. Such a union as this, plainly forbidden in the Bible, does not confer sanctification on the unbelieving partner, but rather has a tendency to destroy the sanctification of the one who has transgressed the command, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

In what way, then, and under what conditions, is the unbelieving husband or wife sanctified. The words of Paul apply in the case of one who, married in a condition of heathenism, later accepts the Gospel and is converted. Such an one may believe that it is his or her privilege to win the other members of the family. Her faith may claim the Lord's promises in this matter, and may thus sanctify the, as yet, unconverted members of the family. If this were not so, Paul reasons, the young children who do not know the Gospel yet would be unclean; but the believing mother sanctifies the children, so that they are counted as clean. Of course, if the children grow up to years of accountability, and then for themselves definitely reject the Gospel, they are no longer sanctified by the mother. In the same way, when the husband comes, sooner or later, to the point of personal decision, if he turns from the Gospel, he is no longer sanctified by the wife. Such sanctification does not apply except where there is some disposition, imperfectly developed, in the unbelieving partner toward the acceptance of the Gospel.

That this is Paul's position seems clear from the words that follow. If an unbelieving husband so utterly rejects the Gospel that he drives his wife away, or abandons her, he is certainly not sancti-

fied by his believing wife. She is free from him in such a case; not that she is free to marry another, but a brother or a sister is not in bondage to the servants of the evil one in such a case; they need not feel under obligation to put up with his ill-treatment for the sake of saving his soul. It may be that he cannot be saved. "If the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?"

Then Paul goes on to counsel that each abide in that relation in which the Gospel found him, showing that the believing husband or wife whom he has in mind in this instruction is one that has been recently converted from heathenism. Such an one must be content to live with a heathen partner, surrounding him with a Christian atmosphere, and claiming God's promises in his behalf in such a way that he, though himself as yet a heathen, will be sanctified by his believing wife.

Stubble.

MAN is frequently represented in the Scriptures by a plant, a tree, a vine, or some other member of the vegetable world. Jesus speaks of His disciples as branches of the true Vine. As long as the branches abide in the vine they bear fruit, but separated from the root they become worthless, good for nothing but to be burned. The tree or plant, cut off from the root, may look just the same as before, but an all-important change has taken place. The form may be the same, but the life is gone. Never again will the branch bear fruit. It can but dry up until it is manifestly fit only for fuel.

This illustrates the end of all who lose their connexion with Christ. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John v. 12. "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." John xv. 6. To human eyes there may be no change in the outer appearance of one who has ceased to abide in Christ. But in reality a great change has taken place. The life will bear no more fruit. That which once was alive, which gave forth the abundant life of the root, is now only stubble, fuel for burning.

So the heathen and the backslider are represented again and again as stubble, as dry branches, fit only for fuel. "What do ye imagine against the Lord? He will make an utter end: . . . for while they be folden together as thorns, . . . they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry." Nahum i. 9, 10.

The wicked are not preserved for ever in suffering by virtue of some indestructible quality with

which they are endowed. That which can alone make humanity valuable is the possession of the life of Christ. With that goes fruitfulness. Apart from that, men are only stubble. For such the lake of fire means quick and utter destruction. "All that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. iv. 1.

A Parallel.

IN an article dealing with the second advent of Jesus Christ, the "Independent" of New York scorns the idea of a personal return of the Saviour, and says:—

No considerable body of people will ever again anticipate the personal return of Jesus to the earth. The pervading of society by His Spirit, which is actually taking place, is something a great deal better.

Even if it were true that society was being actually pervaded by the Spirit of Christ, that should not lead to an undervaluing of the blessed hope. In the same conversation in which Jesus told His disciples that it was expedient for them that He go away, in order that the Comforter might come. He said also: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John xiv. 3.

It may be true that, so far as mere numbers are concerned, "no considerable body of people" will ever again cherish the hope that they will see the Saviour come back to gather His saints. But there was a time when it was true that no considerable body of people was ever likely to believe the extraordinary tidings preached by Noah, that the world was about to be destroyed by a flood; yet the flood came, and the scoffing world perished, while the one believing family escaped.

The coming of the Lord has been preached now for a good many years, so that almost everywhere people have heard the message. But as the years have gone by, and the day of the Lord has not come, men and women who once trembled and halted in their career have felt reassured, and have turned to their old ways again. As we walk through the busy streets, and look on young and old pursuing their various paths, with never a thought about the great day of the Lord, it seems hard to realize that the world is actually on the brink of the final crisis. Men and women are not ready for any such event. To them it is unthinkable, and it is easy even for the believer in the Word of God, while his gaze is turned upon the world, to fall into the same way of thinking.

But the Saviour knew how strong the current of doubt would be, and how impossible it would seem to men in the twentieth century that the old words,

spoken two thousand years before in Judea, could ever be fulfilled. So He lays a tremendous emphasis upon the statement that when the promised signs have been given we may know that His second coming is near, "even at the doors." Very definitely and positively He adds: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Here are words of solemn import. Those who find themselves living in that age when the promised signs are in the past, may know of a certainty that their generation will last until all is accomplished.

The last sign, the falling of the stars, was given in 1833, seventy-five years ago. So old and near its end is the generation that is to see the Lord come. Yet, so powerful and successful are the influences that make for unbelief in these closing hours of time, that a representative Christian journal can say: "No considerable body of people will ever again anticipate the personal return of Jesus to the earth." The Saviour foresaw these conditions, and desiring to strengthen the souls of His servants, so that they might not be carried away with the flood of unbelief, and lose the blessed hope, He added to His positive assurance these thrilling words: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Matt. xxiv. 35.

On this unshakeable foundation rests the advent faith. Standing here, the believer in Christ's promise can view the indifference of the multitudes without being weakened by it. The apparent unreadiness of the world for such a crisis, the utterances of false prophets, the general expectation of future continued progress, the scoffing of those who ridicule the promise—none of these things move him. He does not know what may happen, but he knows this, that heaven and earth are transitory things beside the steadfast words of Christ. On those words he builds his all.

It should not surprise any that business men and people of all ranks and classes ridicule the idea that the end is at hand. They did the same on the very eve of the flood. Farmers saw no trouble ahead, and planted just as usual. Builders were not putting up less massive and enduring structures because of anything Noah had said. The buyers and the sellers were just as keen and as absorbed in their commerce. Courtships went on as before; no one saw any reason why it should be otherwise; the wedding festivities were not intercepted or clouded because of the building of the ark. The antediluvian world had with almost entire unanimity decided in their minds that Noah's preaching was preposterous; its novelty had worn off, and men no longer paid any regard to it. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. "So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Verses 37-39.

A Prayer.

I DO not ask my path shall be all clear
From stones that bruise and thorns that pierce
my feet;
I ask not that the goal be brought more near,
Nor fewer dangers on my way to meet.
But this I ask, O Father, if the road
Be rough and rugged, Thou wilt give me strength
To journey forward, bearing all my load,
Till at Thy feet I lay it down at length!

I would not that the skies which arch above
My little span of life be always bright.
The stormiest sky may yet the bluest prove,
And day seems ever gladder after night.
But this, O Father, if the storms do come,
Abiding the wild shock, help me to stand.
If dark the night be, still amid the gloom,
Oh, let me reach and take Thy guiding hand.

I do not ask that every haunting fear—
Although they be a ghostly, gloomy train—
And every doubt, so dismal and so drear,
Be lifted from my life, nor come again;
I only ask that when the shadows fall,
And darker mists close round me as of night,
That I may feel Thy presence through it all,
And know that Thou art leading to the light.

And then, O Father, when the toil is ended,
And all life's cares and burdens put away,
When all the darkness of the past is blended,
Lost in the dawning of a new, glad day.
May I, no more a wanderer, faint and blind,
No more with doubt or weariness oppressed,
May I at last a shelter safely find,
My Father, where the weary are at rest!

—Selected



A Divine Revelation.

Rev. vi. 12-17; vii. 1-8.

The Sixth Seal.

THERE is an entire change in the picture presented to John when the sixth seal is opened. He has been looking upon scene after scene of apostasy and the apparent triumph of worldliness and error. He has listened to the cry that ascends from the blood of the martyrs, "How long, O Lord!" It almost seems as though God has grown unmindful of His cause in the earth, and left things to go as they will. But now Heaven intervenes, and brings the story of sin to a sudden close.

First comes a great earthquake, fit proclamation from Heaven to men that earthly conditions do not endure for ever, and that God is well able to abase the pride of man and to bring his works to nought.

Then the sun becomes black, indicating the coming of that long night which has no morning for the wicked, the final setting of the sun of opportunity; the moon becomes as blood; and the stars of heaven fall to the earth as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken by a mighty wind. These signs combine to utter their solemn warning that the great day is at hand, foretold by prophets, when not only earth but heaven also is to be shaken: "And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come." Hag. ii. 7.

As John gazes on the troubled scene spread out before him, he beholds the great shaking of heaven and earth and peoples, followed by the coming of the Desire of nations. He sees the heaven depart as a scroll when it is rolled together, revealing to the eyes of men the majesty and glory of the God Whom they have rejected. Every mountain chain is heaving as though it were a wave on the surface of the deep. The islands are moved out of their places, like ships driven by the storm from their anchorage. Terror seizes upon the people of the earth. One and all, rich and poor, great and small, free and bond, they seek to hide themselves from that dazzling glory which is more terrible than the wrath of the tempestuous ocean or the blind fury of the earthquake. One universal cry of anguish and despair rises in vain appeal, a wild and fearful cry to the quivering mountains: "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

At last the King of heaven is disclosed to the eyes of men. Those who have scoffed at His Word, and, in spirit at least, have spit upon Him and crucified Him, now see His unendurable majesty. Those who have persecuted and slain His people must answer to Him for their deeds of cruelty and blood. Those who have professed His service while their covetousness and hypocrisy have dishonoured His name now see themselves before Him in their true character. Men had thought that it was safe to contemn and deride the Lamb of God, but find Him, too late, to be the Lion of Judah. He had not been careless or indifferent about the welfare of His Church in the long years of her earthly experience. In all the affliction of His people He was afflicted. Now He rides forth in terrible majesty to tread His enemies in the winepress of the wrath of God. "The day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come." Is. lxiii. 1-6.

But before the day of wrath could dawn, a work of preparation had to be done for the people of God, that they too might not perish with the wicked. As Israel, under the shelter of the blood, had escaped the destroying angel in Egypt, so God's

people in the last day must be marked with a sign that would effectively distinguish them from the mass of the ungodly. Ere the storm of wrath could burst in fury, John saw the servants of God being sealed. His eyes were directed to four angels, standing one at each corner of the earth, whose work it was to restrain the tempest. Another angel, bearing the seal of the living God, cries to these four angels, bidding them continue to restrain the four winds until the servants of God have been sealed in their foreheads.

Then John hears the number who are thus sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand, comprised of twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

Here is information of deep interest. In that volume, sealed with seven seals, which was being opened to John, were contained the names of the tribes and the names of those who constituted the tribes. On earth the records of the fleshly children of Israel are lost, but the tribal connexions of every member of the Israel of God are entered in the books of heaven. What determines the divisions we do not know, but it is evident that, at the present time, the tribes are kept distinct in the records above. The Church had not been forgotten by its Lord during the many centuries of its earthly sojourn. Neither had God cast away His people which He foreknew. Rom. xi. 2. True, they are not all Israel which are born such by fleshly generation. It is the election of grace, the call of the Gospel, that maintains the tribes (verse 5), and when the work of the Gospel is completed, the tabernacle of David that had been broken down will be fully restored and perfectly completed. Acts xv. 14-17.

Where, in the course of this sixth seal, do we stand at the present time? We know that the day of wrath has not yet come; have the signs that foretell the great shaking been yet given?

The fifth seal brings us to the time when martyrdom seems to have ceased. The martyrs themselves are represented as complaining that the Lord is slow to execute vengeance on the destroyers of His Church. They are bidden to be patient yet a little longer, and in the meantime white robes are given to them. They appear before men in a more favourable aspect.

Persecution did not cease with the Reformation. It raged with great fury for centuries after, largely through the efforts of the Jesuits. But in the eighteenth century the Inquisition ceased to torture heretics, and the deaths for heresy fell to two or three in the year. Individuals were here and there put to death well on into the nineteenth century, but the bloody persecutions that marked the period of papal supremacy practically ceased about the middle of the eighteenth century. It is to

that time, then, that we must look for the ending of the fifth seal and the beginning of the sixth. We do not have to look long before we find an earthquake great enough to justify the terms employed by John. That mighty earthquake, which is still known popularly as "the great earthquake of Lisbon," took place on November 1, 1755. Its full extent and destructiveness are not certainly known, but 90,000 persons perished. The city of Lisbon, the centre of the convulsion, was completely wrecked. The earthquake was felt all over Western Europe, and in North Africa, and even as far away as America. For extent, the Lisbon earthquake is unsurpassed by any recorded disaster of a similar nature. It was emphatically a "great" earthquake.

A few years later the sun was miraculously darkened. This time the sign appeared in the Western Hemisphere. Webster's Dictionary speaks thus of the event:—

The Dark Day, May 19, 1780, so-called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day, extending over all New England. In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known.

Of the same time Herchel, the astronomer, wrote:—

The Dark Day in Northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be read with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain.

When authorities like Herschel and Webster give the title "the dark day" to the same date, it is clear that the occurrence is notorious and unquestionable enough to be a sign given in fulfilment of prophecy. The dark day was regarded as such a fulfilment by those who felt its influence at the time. The next night witnessed also the fulfilment of the sign to be given in the moon. One eye-witness said:—

The darkness of the following evening or night was probably as gross as has ever been observed since the Almighty first gave birth to light . . . The darkness could not have been more complete.

When the moon did appear on that night, it was of the colour of blood.

The last sign, the falling of the stars, has also been witnessed, in the year 1833. Burritt's "Geography of the Heavens" speaks thus of the occurrence:—

The most sublime phenomenon of shooting stars of which the world has furnished any record was witnessed throughout the United States on the morning of the 13th of November, 1833. . . . The whole heavens seemed in motion, and suggested to some the awful grandeur of the image employed in the Apocalypse, upon the opening of the sixth seal, when "the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."

These events do not need to be magnified or distorted to make them seem to fulfil the prophecy. Each one of them is acknowledged to be supreme

and unparalleled of its kind. Nor does any one of them come in the wrong order, or at an ill-fitting time. There is nothing whatever about the phenomena to justify anyone in objecting to them as inadequate to satisfy the specifications of the prophecy. They cannot be set aside. Where, then, do they show us to be in the progress of events under the sixth seal?

The answer is a startling one. At the present time we are three quarters of a century beyond the last of the promised signs, and by that same length of time on our way to meet that which comes next—the departing of the heaven as a scroll. The next event in the brief record of the sixth seal is the coming of the day of wrath and the revelation in the heavens of earth's rejected King. He Whom John saw in His resurrection glory is soon to be manifested to every eye. In infinite mercy He has caused the seals to be removed from "the scripture of truth," that we may know beforehand the course of events, and flee from the wrath to come. He Who has unfolded that wrath is able to avert it from those who turn to Him for salvation: He is worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, because He has been slain, and has redeemed men to God by His blood out of every kingdom and tongue and people and nation. In these lingering hours of probation, while mercy still pleads, let the sinner turn from his wickedness to serve the living God.



Only a Little Thing.

'Twas only a little thing for Nell
To brighten the kitchen fire,
To spread the cloth, to draw the tea,
As her mother might desire—
A little thing, but her mother smiled,
And banished all her care.
And a day that was sad
Closed bright and glad,
With a song of praise and prayer.

'Twas only a little thing to do
For a sturdy boy like Ned,
To groom the horse, to milk the cow,
And bring the wood from the shed;
But his father was glad to find at night
The errands were all well done.
"I am thankful," said he,
"As I can be,
For the gift of such a son."

Only small things, but they brighten the life,
Or shadow it with care;
But little things, yet they mould a life
For joy or sad despair;
But little things, yet life's best prize,
The reward which labour brings,
Comes to him who uses,
And not abuses,
The power of little things. —Selected.

Birds at the Singing School.

IT was Edith's birthday—her tenth, if I remember rightly—and so when Uncle John came home from work in the city, he brought as a present the sweetest little living creature you ever saw in your life.

It was a little canary of the brightest golden yellow, and its voice was as clear as a silver bell. It sang, it trilled, and it warbled almost before the wrappings were taken from the little wooden cage in which it came. The little girl laughed and clapped her hands for joy, for though she had seen many canaries and heard them sing, surely there was never one like hers.

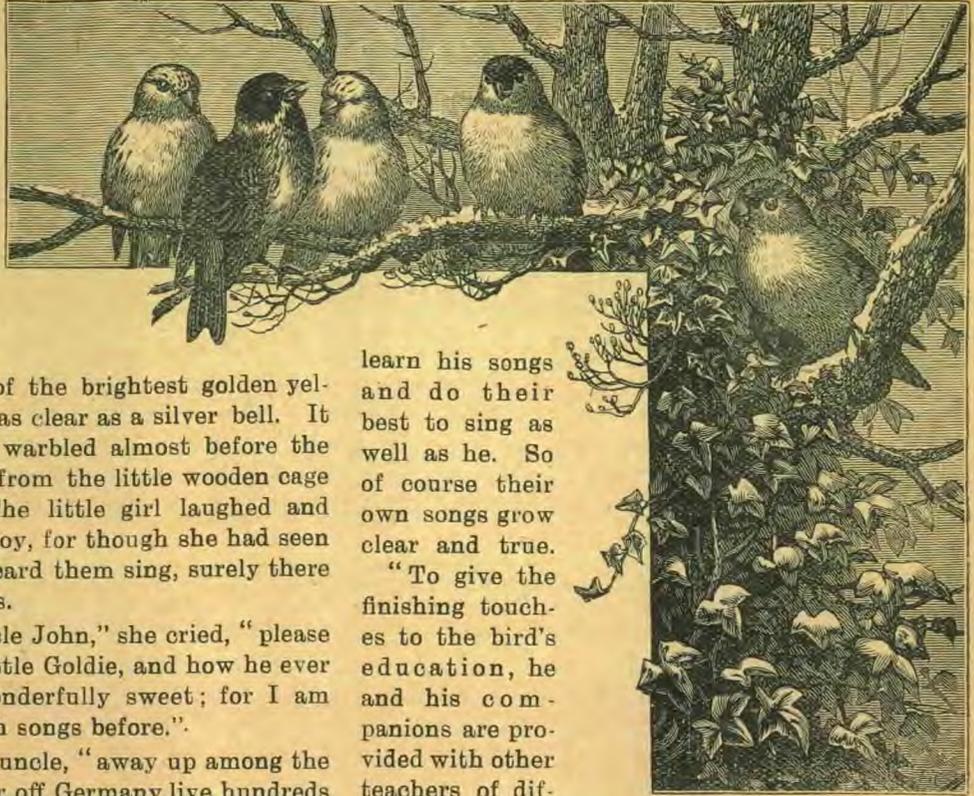
"Please tell me, Uncle John," she cried, "please tell me all about my little Goldie, and how he ever learned to sing so wonderfully sweet; for I am sure I never heard such songs before."

"Well," replied her uncle, "away up among the Hartz Mountains of far off Germany live hundreds of industrious people, whose work in life is to raise singing-birds for the whole wide world. Their fathers and grandfathers, and even their great-great-grandfathers raised birds, and as the years passed by and they all watched and studied and cared for their birds, they learned strange things about them and how they might be trained and taught to sing the sweetest songs. So the best singing canaries we can buy come from these German people.

"Many of the little songsters live their early lives in the homes of poor people on the rugged mountain-sides. Dozens and scores of cages hang about the walls, where the poor folks care for them faithfully, looking forward eagerly to the market time, when they can sell their birds and so buy the little clothing and food that they must have in order to live.

"But while these poor people raise and train many really excellent birds, the very best of all are those which come from the 'bird schools,' where thousands of young canaries are 'going to school,' and learning lessons from their teachers, just as really and truly as ever a boy or girl in this country learned writing or reading or spelling.

"About the walls of sunny rooms stand banks of cages containing the 'pupils,' while somewhere near, perhaps on a table by the window, stands the cage of the 'master'—the finest singer that money can buy. As the little birds listen to him day after day for weeks and even months, they



learn his songs and do their best to sing as well as he. So of course their own songs grow clear and true.

"To give the finishing touches to the bird's education, he and his companions are provided with other teachers of different kinds. Little music boxes with flute-like reeds and silver-toned bells play hour after hour, and the listeners love the sweet sounds so dearly that they learn at last to imitate them with their own voices. From human teachers they learn the notes of the flute and the flageolet, and the bullfinch, who is a cousin of the canary, soon learns to whistle whole tunes, like 'Home, Sweet Home,' so that you would recognize them anywhere.

"Finally, the birds' education being finished, thousands of cages of them are corded up on vessels bound for all parts of the world, a man going with each lot of birds to give them their daily food and water. And so, finally, they safely reach their journey's end, and we find them here in our own land, happy and bright, still remembering and joyfully warbling the old songs of their German home."

EDISON DRIVER.

Shoeing Geese in Poland.

IN Poland the rearing of tame geese has long attained enormous proportions. Warsaw is a great centre of the business, and at the annual goose fair held there tens of thousands of birds are exposed for sale. These geese are driven long distances—as much as from sixty to a hundred and fifty miles—to market, and to enable their feet to stand the wear and tear of such a march on hard roads, they are shod after a very curious and ingenious fashion. The birds are first driven to and fro in melted tar. They are then made to walk through fine sand. In this way they are supplied with a rough-and-ready footgear, which serves them in good stead.—*Country Life*.

NOTES & COMMENTS

THE military and naval authorities are finding it necessary to put a stop compulsorily to the practice of tattooing. Many men have been suffering from a mysterious disease, which has been proved to be cuticular tuberculosis, contracted from tattooing, and others have suffered from other ailments contracted in the same way. The naval authorities in Germany have also decided to prohibit tattooing, on the ground that the process transmits diseases of the most virulent type.

A NUMBER of Baptist ministers have been discussing the methods in vogue in modern revivals. One well-known minister of long experience regards these methods as responsible for the fewness of real, lasting conversions; thousands of pounds, he says, have been thrown away on such methods. Principal Blomfield also regards the modern evangelistic mission as exceedingly disappointing in actual results. A Liverpool pastor goes so far as to say: "I have unwillingly come to the conclusion that professional evangelism is a gigantic money-making machine, sometimes manipulated by the astute statesmen of great religious organizations to enrich the common coffers. If any man thinks this statement too sweeping, I advise him to try and arrange a great mission and secure the services of a great missionary, and he will find such services arranged on a sort of preferential tariff system."

"The greatest and most successful 'United' mission—conducted by one of the most gifted and charming evangelists—with which I have ever been associated, cost hundreds of pounds, exclusive of the huge 'lecture' collections sent to headquarters. There were 250 converts, not twenty of whom could be traced two years later." Others who do not go so far in condemning the modern revival are of opinion that the healthiest kind of mission is that which the pastor conducts in his own church.

THE decree of the major excommunication which has been pronounced by the Inquisition against Abbé Loisy is said to be the first occurrence of the kind since the days of Napoleon, a century ago. The Roman Catholic correspondent of the "Church Times" says: "The principal feeling of the general public is one of amusement, mingled with some indignation, at the attempt of the Pope to inflict a boycott on M. Loisy. The 'consequences' mentioned in the decree of the Inquisition would not be amusing if Rome had the power to enforce them. Nobody would be allowed to hold any communication of any sort with M. Loisy, to supply him with food, drink, firing, or shelter, or to perform any service for him. If the Pope's writ ran in France, M. Loisy would starve by the wayside unless he submitted. The fact that this will not happen in twentieth-century France does not diminish the significance of the amiable and Christian intentions of this decree 'by express command of our Holy Father.' There is no longer any doubt that it is not lack of the will, but merely lack of the power, to persecute that restrains Pius X from resorting to the remedies for heresy that flourished in the palmy days of the Inquisition. It is a fact for reflection."

"Even among those who would regard the infliction on M. Loisy of the spiritual penalties of excommunication as justifiable, there are many—for the credit of Christianity one may hope that they are a majority—who feel something more than uneasiness at this gratuitous and futile revelation of the spirit of the papacy. It is a very long time since any excommunicated person was sentenced to the full penalties of a *vitandus*.

"I am not sure whether Lamennais was in like case; if so, he must have been the last; some say that there has been no instance since Napoleon I, but I have not looked up the point. Even Victor Emmanuel was *toleratus*, though under sentence of the greater excommunication; that is to say, Catholics were not bound to boycott him. I understand that any Catholic who does not boycott M. Loisy will be, *ipso facto*, excommunicated. The situation is likely to become complicated now that *ipso facto* excommunications can be so easily incurred."

RELIGION is often credited by those who do not know it aught with causing insanity, but Dr. A. B. Richardson, in charge of the United States Hospital for the Insane, gives his experience thus: "I have tested that matter thoroughly. There are only two patients in this hospital whose insanity has any relation to religion, and I think, from their predisposition to insanity, that they would probably have become insane on some other subject if they had not on religion. Now if you had asked me how many people in Ohio are kept by religion from insanity and out of these hospitals, you would have given me a question hard to answer, for they are a multitude. The good cheer, bright hopes, rich consolations, good tempers, regular habits, and glad songs of religion are such an antidote for the causes of insanity that thousands of people in Ohio are preserved from insanity by them. But for the beneficent influence of religion, Ohio would have to double the capacity of her hospitals in order to accommodate her insane patients."

CONSIDERABLE concern is being expressed over the lack of growth in some of the Free Churches. The Congregational Union reports a total increase for 1907 of thirty-seven members, while the Baptist Union showed a decrease, on account of conditions in Wales, of 4,864. The Rev. J. C. Carlile, in the "Baptist Times," explains the fall in numbers by the fact that young men "have come to the conclusion that the churches are the servants of vested interest in social unrighteousness, rather than the promoters of any real justice and brotherhood." He goes on to say: "It may seriously be asked what the churches are doing which could not be done by the Ethical Societies or the branches of the I.L.P. An inquiry might show that in many quarters the main enterprise is the administration of charity and the provision of wholesome amusement, plus the more or less intelligent advocacy of social reform. These are good and desirable, but they are not the works for which the Church was instituted, nor are they the means of the churches' growth. . . . Passion is fed by conviction. Are we as sure of our Gospel as our fathers were? If we may judge by the sermons which find their way into print, it would seem that there is great haziness as to what constitutes the Gospel. Theological speculation does not produce assurance. Preachers of unsettled convictions gain no converts; they may attract a crowd and gain a following by their zeal for economic reform, but they fail in the very thing which justifies the continuation of the Christian ministry. The periods of theological speculation have not been times of revival. Men who do not know God in the New Testament sense may do well in politics or literature, but they are out of place in the pulpit."

In a paper read before the Free Church Council, entitled "The Modern Passion for Pleasure," the Rev. W. Bradfield spoke of some pleasures which do not degrade or dwarf the spiritual nature. Acknowledging the force of the demand for relaxation in these days of strenuous living, he said: "One relief and remedy ought to be much more cultivated than it is—the child in the midst. If we would associate our recreations and amusements more with the children, and seek to brighten their lives and share their fun, we should at the same time heighten our own pleasures, take the poison out of them, and bless the little ones. And our Lord's advice, 'When thou makest a feast, call the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind,' deserves much more literal obedience from us than is mostly given to it. Much of the danger of the inordinate love of pleasure is entirely removed where the search for pleasure is associated with the children, the weak, and the poor. And the higher pleasures must, in like manner, be associated with the love of God. Music, art, poetry—all are ennobled by being devoted to His service. The alabaster box of ointment finds its right use when it is poured on the head of the Lord. After all, the poison of pleasure is self-love, and the pleasures that mean love to God and love to man will be ennobled and cleansed from all defilement."

"There is work for the churches to do here. We have been very busy finding amusements respectable enough to be tolerated for our young men and women in the glory of their strength and beauty. We would do better to teach them to find their joy in giving delight to the poor and the maimed and the blind, and in making friends with the children, who would grow and thrive in the sunlight of their friendship, and pay back with very worship the kindness shown them."

A REMARKABLE letter has been written by a representative of the brewing interests to the Archbishop of Canterbury. In it he says: "It is notorious that 'the trade' as a whole are very generous subscribers to religious charities, and that the majority of them are members of the Church of England. Should this Bill become law by the aid of your Grace and the Episcopal Bench, I venture to predict that the religious charities throughout the land will become great sufferers by a large falling off in income represented by annual subscriptions, donations, and legacies. . . . It is self-evident that should this Bill receive the support of your Grace and the Episcopal Bench in the House of Lords, the Church must not look for the support of the vast number of people engaged in the brewing and allied trades, or from shareholders in breweries, distilleries, etc., when the question of the Disestablishment of the Church comes before the nation, which I, as a Churchman, should deeply deplore." The Archbishop ought to be glad of the opportunity of showing to such people that the Church repudiates with scorn the suggestion that it is capable of selling its convictions of right for financial support. The Apostle Peter knew how to answer those who vainly supposed that their wealth entitled them to control the operations of the Spirit of God: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." The Church has paid too dearly for the support of the world if the result of such support is to render possible the conceptions embodied in this letter.

singing and efficient pulmonary respiration necessarily promote. The suggestion that singing may be used in the fight against pulmonary tuberculosis is an interesting one, and is a further instance of the therapeutic value of hygienic measures."

Nose-Breathing.

IT is undeniable that the nose is the true breathing channel. The lower animals offer us an apt object-lesson in this respect, seeing that they habitually use the nose for breathing purposes. We have only to think of the spectacle of an over-driven horse to see that in such a case the natural action of the nostrils, used as breathing apertures, has become largely intensified. No doubt, in the case of a man, who may be defined as a speaking animal, the mouth assumes an importance which it lacks in lower life, and therefore it may be regarded as impossible to lay down a fixed rule that we should continually breathe through the nose. At the same time it would be well if nose-breathing were more frequently practised, for the plain reason that the nostrils form channels which, being well supplied with blood-vessels, warm the air as it passes through them on its way to the lungs, a result which is not attained when we breathe air directly through the mouth.

Mr. George Catlin, who lived amongst the North American Indians for many years, noticed that Indian mothers were careful to close the mouths of their infants when by chance the mouths were opened during sleep. These semi-savages had somehow or other learned the advantage of nose breathing, and the author alluded to contrasts in a very effective way the statuesque appearance of a sleeping Indian breathing quietly through his nose, and the appearance of his civilized brother, sleeping with mouth open and snoring loudly. It might be well if mothers imitated the North American women in respect of endeavouring to cultivate nose-breathing in children when they are young. Persons who are troubled with lung complaints, and who are forced to wear respirators, might dispense with the latter appliance altogether if they reflected that the nose itself is an efficient natural respirator, and that it possesses also the advantage already mentioned which no respirator can exhibit—namely, the functions of a stove in warming the air which passes through it.—*Dr. Andrew Wilson.*



The Song Cure.

THE exercise given to the lungs in singing is valuable in the prevention and cure of diseases of those organs. A writer in "The Hospital" quotes different physicians on this point, and says: "They consider that increased professional recognition should be extended to this special therapeutic agency, and they contend that it may be advised in (1) persons in whom, either from family predisposition or from individual weakness or abnormality of the chest, the onset of pulmonary consumption is to be feared; (2) early cases of consumption as soon as the disease becomes quiescent; (3) certain more advanced cases where no active disease or ulceration is in progress. The beneficial influence of singing is exerted in several different directions. First it involves correct nasal breathing, and this means that the air admitted to the lungs is practically germ-free, and also the adequate development of the upper portions of the respiratory passages. A second effect is seen in the maintenance of the elasticity and proper expansion of the chest. The necessary breathing exercises mean increased functional activity of all parts of the lungs, including the apices, where, as is well known, tuberculosis commonly commences—a fact which is doubtless due, at least in part, to the limited expansion which occurs in these regions in ordinary circumstances. Lastly may be mentioned the improved oxygenation of the blood which

"THE whole Bible is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Received, believed, obeyed, it is the great instrumentality in the transformation of character. It is the grand stimulus, the constraining force, that quickens the physical, mental, and spiritual powers, and directs the life into right channels."



The Miracle of Spring.

It was winter in all the world,
The meadows were in miniver,
When I leaned my ear to a south hill-side
And heard the rootlets stir;
All earth was thrilling and murmuring
Like the shell-song of the sea,
And I heard the breathing and whispering
Of things beginning to be.
And the million voices of the grass
Saying: "We, too, shall be coming to pass."

Softly I stole to the elm-tree's bole,
Lo, the sap was shouting within,
And the tree a-tremble from root to soul
Of each tip with the coming green;
And listening low to the garden bed,
Up through the stiffened mould
The bulbs were dreaming aloud in red
And purple and cloth of gold;
With the soft little snowdrop's maiden dress
Weaving itself out of earthliness.

Then down I knelt by a frost-bound stream,
As still as a dead bird's wings,
And the water was laughing under the ice
A million musical things,
Mad Midsummer murmurings!
And when in the graveyard a face ice-set
I sought, where dead faces be,
Lo, under the sod and the icy wet
The lips were smiling in violet
And the eyes in anemone,
Where the mortal dust was visibly
Putting on immortality.

—Grace Ellery Channing.

The Mother's Burdens.

DURING the first six or seven years of a child's life, the parents, especially the mother, should be the only teachers. This will make it necessary that she make continual advancement in her own life, that she may lead her children to higher and still higher attainments. Children will ask questions about the things they see and hear, and should be instructed patiently in the things of nature.

Even before the children can go to school, they can be learning to help with the duties at home. The mother must give this instruction. Small children may be taught to do many things to lighten the mother's burdens. These small duties, faithfully done in the home in early life, help to develop a sense of responsibility.

The mother is responsible for the morals of her children. She should know the children with whom she allows them to associate, and should teach her children to confide in her. She must not repulse them when they tell her things they hear, but listen patiently, and then tell the true side of it, and if it is mere gossip discourage their participation in it.

A mother's burden is no light task, as she is called upon to give up many ambitions and pleasures; but "the position of a woman in her family is more sacred than that of the king upon his throne." Hers is not a work of time alone, but it is her privilege to enjoy through eternity the work and sacrifice of time here.

MRS. N. A. JOHNSON.

THE following beautiful invocation was written by Carmen Sylva, Queen of Roumania: "Keep with me always a mother's heart. Take not from me a mother's tenderness, and let my forgiveness of injustice be equal to hers. Have with me her power of defence. Let my intuitions be as keen as her divination. Take from me much if it be Thy will, but spare me the mother's heart."

Too Busy to Be Kind.

"I THINK of innumerable nice things to do," said a man, "but I do not have time for them. I know how much they would please people, and each one of them alone is only a little thing, so that it would seem that one could do it; but because I think of so many, I don't seem to be able to push out and do any of them. I wish I had leisure to do such things."

But it is not leisure that enables people to do such things. It is the readiness to do them, even without leisure. No one ever had a heavier burden or had more cares resting upon him than Lincoln, in the Civil War, but he found time for just such fine, beautiful little acts. On November 21, 1864, for example, he wrote this letter to Mrs. Bixby:—

"DEAR MADAM, I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the adjutant-general of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

Such a letter took only a few minutes to write. It must have been a treasure beyond all value to the mother who received it. If we had been in Mr. Lincoln's place, we should have been too busy to do such a thing; and yet such things are our business, and we could better neglect something else than the cup of cold water, or the token of love.—*Selected.*

The Daughter's Turn.

LAY the book down, Isabel, before the story's done;
Leave your picture, Marion, though the piece be just begun;
Come from dreamland, Miriam, however sweet the dream,
Wash the dishes, bake the bread, sew the waiting seam.
School is over; hasten another task to learn:
Mother's worn and weary; it is now the daughter's turn.

Watch lest you be wanting in what her heart most needs—
Earnest, thoughtful service, gentle, loving deeds.
As her footsteps falter, oh, may she never miss
A daughter's strength to lean on, a daughter's tender kiss!
A lifetime is not long enough your filial debt to learn:
Mother's worn and weary; it is now the daughter's turn.
—*The Round Table.*

Echoes from Japan—Compulsory House-Cleaning.

I THINK our good house-keepers would be much surprised if, on a fine October morning, a police officer in uniform, and with a sword dangling at his side, and a pair of white gloves slung to the hilt by a cord, should appear at the side door of her castle, and with a bow address her as follows:—

"Madam, by order of the police department, you will clean house next Wednesday."

"Clean house! Next Wednesday! Go to! I will clean house when I please," she would exclaim, amazed at the impudence of such a suggestion.

Whereupon the officer would bow, and say with great calmness and dignity: "Madam, by order of the police department you will clean house next Wednesday. You will clean out all your furniture from cellar to attic into the garden or the street; you will take up and beat your carpets, and turn your closets inside out, and sweep and scrub your house from top to bottom. And when you have

made everything clean, and before you have replaced your furniture, an inspector will come to see if you have done it well."

Mrs. Housekeeper will feel like saying, even if she does not say it: "Indeed! Do you suppose I am going to have any police inspector, or any other kind of inspector, look into my closets, and tell me whether or not I know how to clean house? Not if I can help it! I would have you know that when I clean my house I am well able to find all the dirt!"

Of course, this will not happen in England, but it does take place in Japan. Every year once, in some quarters twice, the order goes out to clean house. The city is divided into small districts, and all the residents of any one district are notified to clean house on the same day. If the weather proves bad, the game is called off, and a second notice is served.

There are degrees of strictness in the enforcement of the rule, according to the place and the conditions. When a house has been recently built, and the mats are therefore fresh and new, it is often passed over. Foreign houses, with solid floors and foundations and no mats, are exempt. And we have found that though we live in a Japanese house, the police are very lenient in applying the rule to us, permitting us to choose our own time, and generally omitting the inspection altogether. But the rule is strictly enforced in the congested districts. In smaller cities the officials are more actuated by curiosity than by a sense of duty, and by their curiosity they are impelled to take advantage of their official position to see what is inside of a foreigner's house.

An Englishman's house is his castle; but not so with the Japanese. They bow to authority, and ask no questions. And so it happens that on a certain day all the dwellers on both sides of a street will, in response to official orders, set all their household goods into the street with philosophic cheerfulness, and, in full view of all the passers-by, give the house a thorough cleaning. After the furniture is out and piled up in the street, the mats are carried out and set up in the sun preparatory to beating, and by this time the highway is fairly blocked. The loose floor boards are taken up and cleaned, and the ground underneath swept, and both are plentifully sprinkled with air-slaked lime.

At last the house is clean from foundation to ceiling, and ready for inspection. At a certain hour two or three officers are seen moving from house to house and noting the result. After the revolution comes the restoration. Out in the street are left great heaps of rubbish to be taken away by the dust-cart; and as we pick our way along, we wonder how so much trash could ac-

accumulate in houses which are thoroughly overhauled twice a year. Compulsory house-cleaning is an admirable measure in Japan. And this year especially, when the cholera is on the increase, there is an added reason for keeping things as sweet and clean as possible.—*Selected.*

Miscellaneous.

Obedience to Law.

UNNECESSARY legislation is invalid legislation. Unnecessary government is tyranny. It can in no case be founded on right. It should, however, be observed that it is often, and in the government of God universally, true that the sovereign, and not the subject, is to be the judge of what is necessary legislation and government. Under no government, therefore, are laws to be despised or rejected because we are unable to see at once their necessity, and hence their wisdom. Unless they are palpably unnecessary, and therefore unwise and unjust, they are to be respected and obeyed as a less evil than contempt and disobedience, though at present we are unable to see their wisdom. Under the government of God there can never be any doubt nor, of course, any ground for distrust and hesitancy as it respects the duty of obedience.—*Rev. Chas. G. Finney.*

The First Place.

THE place which the Son of God occupies in the administration of the divine government is thus stated: "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." This is not by arbitrary appointment, but is the outgrowth of the very nature and being of the Son, and of His relationship to the eternal Father. As the Son was one with the Father, as He was the only begotten, and as He was thus able to enter into the counsels of His Father as no created being could possibly do, so He was necessarily the One through Whom the Father made every revelation of Himself. Christ was the beginning of His way, the Mediator between the Father and all created things and all created beings. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made." As it was in creation, so it was in revelation. "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father," said Jesus, "and no one knoweth the Son, save the

Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."

It was in harmony with the plan of the divine government, and in harmony with the very constitution of things, that the eternal Son should be accorded this first place by all created intelligences, who would thus show themselves to be submissive to the will of God, loyal to the government of heaven. It was the unholy ambition of Lucifer, a "covering cherub," to seek for and to demand for himself the place which belonged to, and could be filled by only, the Son; and it was this same unholy ambition for self-exaltation, which, transferred to this earth, brought sin and death and all the train of evils upon the human family. The root out of which every sin has grown, and the very essence of every sin, is the dethronement of the Son of God and the putting of the creature in the place of the Creator. Lucifer made no concealment of this purpose: "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; . . . I will make myself like the Most High." The "man of sin," the personified "mystery of iniquity," "exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped," and claims for himself the title, "the vicegerent of the Son of God."

The same principle is wrought out in the experience of every one who does not yield to the claims which Christ has upon him, and become a Christian. He is denying to Christ the place which belongs to Him. To accept Christ is to give to Him the place of power in our lives, to crown Him as King, and to yield obedience to His rule. The whole question centres in the kingship of Christ, and that not merely in outward things, like an earthly ruler, but His spiritual rule in the heart through the submission of the whole being unto Him. It is the "Gospel of the kingdom" which is to be proclaimed in all the world for a witness. Now the King sits as a Priest on His throne, but soon He will reveal Himself as the King of those who reign as kings and the Lord of those who rule as lords. We must acknowledge His kingship now, although He is despised and rejected by many, if we desire Him to acknowledge us as His subjects in the "crowning day." Listen to the words of the King: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Who can refuse to give the first place to Jesus, the Son of man and the Son of God?

W. W. PRESCOTT.

"WITH all empty and selfish pretences away!
By your actions you're judged, be your speech what it may."

Foreign Missions.

Japan.

AFTER our general meeting at Kobe I made a visit to my parents. I am so thankful that my father no longer opposes the truth, but is willing to listen. One morning I saw him standing with clasped hands, praying as he used to do. I asked him why he did so. He replied: "I prayed for your God to bless your work." He is not yet converted, but he has believed in the true God since the time I was delivered from the military service during the recent war.

Next day I went to see a friend with whom I had been corresponding. Here I met Brother Suzuki, who had come to assist me in the work. At every meeting we had good attendance, and some were led to ask: "What shall I do to be saved?" Two families were converted, and are now giving the light to their neighbours. They asked me to stay and study the Bible with them for a month, so that they might teach the truth to others. I agreed to do so; but soon an invitation came from the next town: "Come and teach us about the true God." Though I wished to remain for the sake of the believers, I sent the word: "I will come." This word was like a signal gun; for soon invitations came from all directions, so that I could not answer them all.

Day after day, from early in the morning till midnight, I continued to teach. Often I hardly had time to eat or rest. It was like throwing a piece of bread into a pond among hungry fishes. They did not seem to think that I might be tired; but one after another came to me with questions. The Lord blessed me by giving strength for the work. Praise His name!

One family who kindly entertained us for a week were all converted, and began to observe the Sabbath. The aged father in this family was a Shinto priest. He and his wife were much opposed when their son and daughter were converted. But through the paper partitions of the house they could hear all that was said while we studied the Bible. One morning he beckoned me into his room. I entered, and asked him what he wanted. He replied: "I want to be a Christian from this time." I was surprised, and asked him: "Then shall I help you to remove these images?" But he said that he wished first to tell his wife of his decision. So I went on with the Bible study with the others, and soon the old lady appeared, and bowing down with her eyes full of tears, confessed her sinfulness, and asked us to pray for her. We thanked God and praised His name for His wonderful way of saving souls.

H. KUNIYA.

Prophetic Lights. By E. J. Waggoner. In a masterly manner this book treats of some of the leading prophecies, both of the Old and New Testaments, showing the exact fulfilment of the predictions of the Bible concerning Egypt, Tyre, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, also of the prophecies concerning the first advent of Christ, which prove the inspiration of the Bible, and give assurance that other prophecies which are noted will as surely and as exactly be fulfilled. Nearly all the illustrations of this book were designed and engraved especially for the book at great expense, and are a study in themselves. The book contains nearly 200 large octavo pages, and is printed on an extra quality of heavy calendered paper. Bound in cloth, gilt edges; cloth, plain edges; and paper covers.

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Self-Lifting Not Yet Possible.

NO man can get higher than himself by depending upon himself alone. And the man has not yet lived who is, or who ever could be in this world, satisfied with himself at his best. Yet some still preach the gospel of "ethical culture," and urge that we offer to the "other half," in city and neighbourhood settlement work, the opportunity simply to do their best, helping them to be clean and thrifty, but rigorously keeping from them any suggestion of religion or of a Christ Who is a Saviour. Such effort is like attempting to lift ourselves by our boot-straps. The art of self-lifting has not yet been discovered. Men want some one who will lift them out of themselves. Christ is the only One Who enables men to do better than their best.—*Sunday-School Times.*

An Age of Deception.

IF ever there was a time when the devil was loose, active, and potent in human affairs, that time is now, in the days in which we live. The devil's dominion is the enthronement of error, falsehood, deception, lies, and moral rottenness; and when was this dominion ever more potent than in these years of the existing generation?

We look abroad upon society in general, and what do we see?—Reverence, that great balance-wheel in the economies of life, scarcely exists any more; oaths are nothing; good faith is as scarce as grapes after the vintage; and all moral bonds are trampled down without compunction under the heels of greed and lust and deified selfishness. Falsities and treacheries confront us unblushingly at every point. People not only make falsehoods, speak falsehoods, print falsehoods, and believe falsehoods, but they eat them, and live them, and drink them, and make them one of the great elements of their being. One-half, at least, of all the eye can see, or the ear hear, or the hands touch, or the tongue taste, is bogus, counterfeit, pinch-beck, shoddy, or some hash or other of untruth. A man cannot move or open his eyes without encountering falsehood and lies.

In business, in politics, in social life, in professions, and even in what passes for religion, such

untruthfulness reigns that he who would be true scarcely knows any more whom to trust, what to believe, how to move, or by what means to keep his footing, amid the ever-increasing flood of unreality and deception.

The existence of a devil is not a myth, but an awful reality, and to his doings and destiny we have other relations than that of mere spectators. His dread power over those who will not have Christ as their Saviour is not a nightmare fancy, or the dream of disordered mental digestion, but a thing of living fact.—*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*

An Object-Lesson.

AT the summit of one of the passes of the Alps stands a church. It is built in circular form, like the Pantheon in Rome. As you enter, you notice suspended from the centre a huge crucifix, while all round the building are statues of apostles and prophets, all alike pointing to the central figure on the cross—Christ. At the feet of each statue is a text. Here is John the Baptist; and, while with crook he points to Christ, the text reads: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Then you see Isaiah, whose finger guides your eye to the "Man of Sorrows," and whose text declares: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Here stands the rugged fisherman Peter, who, with outstretched hands, points also to the lone Saviour, and you look to read his testimony in the quotation from his epistle: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." Near Peter stands Jeremiah, and the weeping prophet leans toward and points straight to the suffering Saviour, as the words at his feet ask: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow!"

Space fails to mention many others here represented, but Paul is seen, as Raphael loves to depict him, with both his hands outstretched towards Christ, while also with eyes and gesture he seeks to draw attention to the Lord, and at his feet may be read the text: "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

You turn to leave the building, and over the archway of the door stands the comprehensive text: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."—*Charles Cook.*

GOOD works, of faith the fruit,
Should ripen year by year,
Of health and soundness at the root
An evidence sincere.

Dear Saviour! grant Thy blessing free,
And make our faith no barren tree.

—*Lydia H. Sigourney.*