

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

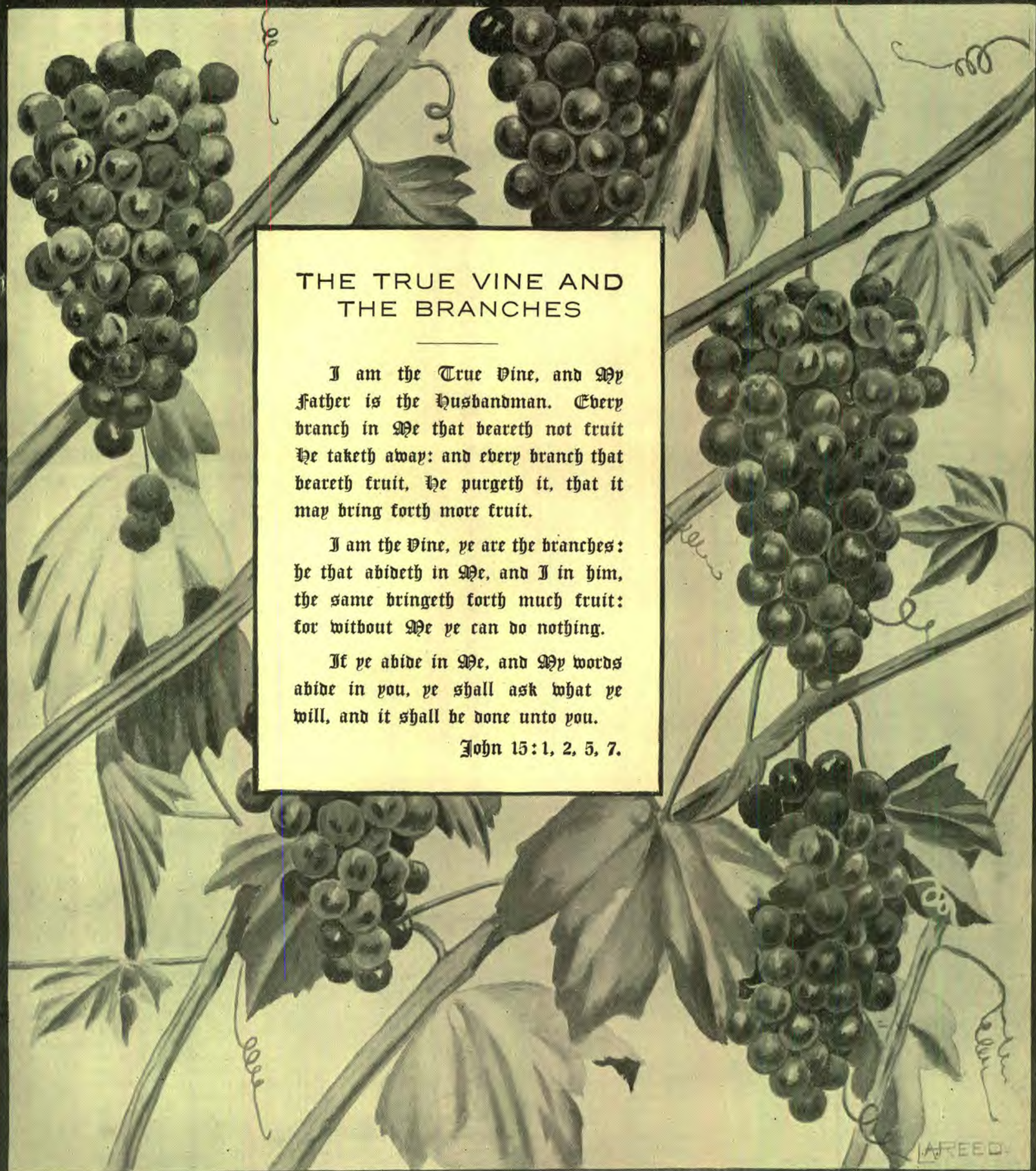
THE TRUE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

I am the True Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.

If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:1, 2, 5, 7.



Question Corner

"IF YE WILL INQUIRE, INQUIRE YE."

This Inquirers' Department is conducted for the purpose of helping those who are studying the Bible. The answers are oftentimes only suggestive. They are never to be considered infallible, only as they agree with the infallible Word. The writer who may answer them does not consider that his opinion is infallible. He will simply give the best that he has, and plead with the inquirer to search the Word. Such questions only will be answered as, to the editors, seem to minister to the good of the readers and to the mission of the paper. We can not answer repeatedly in the same volume questions upon the same scripture. The name and address must accompany question, not for publication, but as an evidence of good faith, and that answer may be made by letter if deemed advisable. No letters are answered which do not contain the name of the writer. It is well always to enclose stamp for reply.

3536 — The Law in Galatians

Will you give me a little light on a couple of passages in Galatians, chapter 3, verses 9 to 13, and chapter 4:24, 25?

A part of the passage in Galatians 3 was quite fully explained in a recent number of the SIGNS. We will therefore touch upon it lightly.

Verse 9 declares that they that are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. God counts them one in His family, because they have the same faith. Verse 10: "As many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." That is, those who are depending upon the law for salvation. Why? Because they are sinners, and the law condemns them to death because they are transgressors, and no law can save the man who is transgressing it. Consequently the justice of the conclusion in the 11th verse, "No man is justified by the law: . . . the righteous shall live by faith." That is always true; it has always been true; it was true before sin ever entered that the only way by which man could live was faith in God, with a heart open on the God-ward side, receiving life and blessing from Him, and pouring it out to others. And since man has sinned it is still true. The only hope for justification is by faith in Christ, and the only hope in right living is by the same faith. But the man who has that faith in God will live according to God's law. That law is the reflect of God, and faith will appropriate the power of God for the obedience to His law. But the law does not justify; it is the righteousness of God in Christ which justifies. If a man could do the law he would live by it, but he can do it only through Christ. Christ therefore redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. And He did that that upon every soul in this world, Gentiles as well as Jews, might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; and that blessing was that Abraham believed God, and God counted it to him for righteousness.

And the same faith brings also the Spirit of God. Now God made a covenant with Abraham to give him all that, and the law did not take away from the covenant. The law was not designed to take away from the covenant. The covenant was given in order that that law might be established in the heart, and that covenant abides in Christ Jesus.

The Seed of Abraham. Abraham had different posterities, but the blessing comes through one posterity—Christ—wholly and solely by promise. Why, then, was the law given?—In order that sin might be seen to be exceeding sinful, so that man might flee from the wrath and find refuge in Christ Jesus. See SIGNS of July 25, 1911, question No. 3516. Verses 24 and 25 of the 4th chapter emphasize this. Paul gives a parable of Abraham's two sons—the one by Hagar, the bondwoman; the other by Sarah, a freewoman. The one was born after the flesh, through the work of man wholly; the other was born after the Spirit, through promise and power of God, and man coöperating with that promise. God gave His promise to Abraham that through his seed all should be blessed. Abraham fixed it up in his own way, and in order to carry out his own way he had a son by Hagar, his bondmaid. God said, "This shall not be the seed." Abraham's plan brought sorrow and trouble only to his family. And that plan and scheme of Abraham's through Hagar was a type, or figure, of the covenant from Mt. Sinai that gendered, or bore, children to bondage. What the apostle means by the covenant at Sinai was Israel's promise to do God's will, promising by power which they possessed of themselves: "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." They felt that they could work it out of themselves (see Exodus 19). They left the Lord out of the question, save in the blessings. They wanted God's blessings, but they wanted to buy those blessings, or obtain them through their own works.

But the child which was born through Sarah is a type of the new covenant, in which God promises, if we will but receive the promise, if we will but coöperate with Him by yielding wholly and absolutely to His plan, to save us. So He brought the promised seed to Abraham by miraculous power through Sarah. And so God brings to all His children deliverance from sin when they yield wholly to His own plan. We can see what the results of the two are. If the first were successful, man would glory in himself. If Abraham had been successful in his scheme, he would have taken the glory to himself. But as there is no success in that, but

success lies wholly through God and His power, all the glory is given to God.

Hagar stands for that type of religion possessed by those who would work out their own salvation, not through God working in them, but through their own power. Sarah, or Isaac, stands for the mighty power and promise of God that is able to work above all appearance, and bring out of what seems to be utterly impossible that which is eternally true and will eternally abide. Therefore the comfort, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise."

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3537 — The Worm Shall Not Die

Will you kindly explain the last verse of Isaiah, chapter 66:24? It has been brought to me as an evidence of everlasting punishment, and we couldn't explain it.

A Subscriber.

Well, it is an evidence of everlasting punishment, but not an evidence of everlasting punishment. There is a difference between punishment, a completed process, and punishing, a process which goes on to all eternity, and is never completed. How could it be said that the wicked are punished, if that punishing never ceases? The Lord speaks of it as a finality. "The wages of sin is death," not dying. One could conceive that that dying would last a long time; but God does not speak of the process, but of the ultimate result. The dying results in death. It is the death, the deprivation of life, which is the punishment. This scripture is in harmony with that statement, "And they [the righteous] shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

Note, first, that it does not say that the righteous shall go forth and look upon living men, but upon the carcasses of men that have transgressed. The carcass is the dead body. The terms referring to the undying worm and to the unquenchable fire were very common to the Jews. The valley of Gehenna was just outside of Jerusalem. It was in that valley where all the refuse and offal of the city were cast. Upon this mass of refuse the worm constantly preyed, and what the worm did not consume was consumed by constant fires, which were kept burning, into which this was cast. The worm devoured what it preyed upon; the fire burned up what was cast into it. Consequently, to the Jew that was one of the strongest terms to denote everlasting destruction. See the prophet's use of it in another place, Isa. 51:8: "For the moth shall eat them up like a garment." The garment eaten up by the moth is destroyed; it is not eternally preserved. Jeremiah gives us the meaning of the fire. In the 17th chapter, the 27th verse, God declares by the prophet that if they will not harken, to hallow the Sabbath day, but not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, "then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." This is like the expression found in Isaiah. Is that fire still burning?—Not at all. What is meant by it?—It meant that no human power could prevent that fire from doing its work. Its fulfillment is recorded in 2 Chron. 36:19-21: "And they burned the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof: . . . to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths." This shows clearly that the figure of the worm, as also the figure of the fire, meant absolute and certain destruction.

We have another term, equally strong, in Jude 7. Referring to Sodom and Gomorrah, the apostle says that they "are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" but those cities are not now burning, and the fires which destroyed them have long since gone out. But what was the result?—That fire swept the cities out of existence, and just as long as they can not exist again they are under that sentence. Read Peter's explanation of it: "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." 2 Peter 2:6. The eternal fire of Jude was the fire which Peter declares turned the

cities into ashes. The fire that will prey upon the carcasses of the wicked will utterly sweep away sin, as declared by Malachi: "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and 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. 4:1. The root is Satan, the branch those who have identified themselves with him. The same thing is expressed in Matt. 3:12: "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

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3538 — Believing and Unbelieving Partners

Please explain 1 Cor. 7:15. J. R.

The scripture reads, "But 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." The connection will show that the apostle is talking of husband and wife. Sometimes the husband is unbelieving, sometimes the wife. He is explicit in his instruction that if the unbelieving desire to remain with the believer, let him remain, let her remain. That very thing might be the means of saving the unbeliever, as he or she beheld the faithful life of the Christian. But, on the other hand, if the unbeliever did not wish to remain, no coercion was to be used in keeping him or her. Let him depart. A man is not under bondage to hold an unbelieving wife, a woman is not under bondage to hold an unbelieving husband. God called us to peace; and if they are determined to break their marriage vows and leave, it is not for us to hold them.



Schedule for Week Ending September 2, 1911

Sunday	August 27	Zechariah	5-9
Monday	" 28	"	10-14
Tuesday	" 29	Nehemiah	1-4
Wednesday	" 30	"	5-7
Thursday	" 31	"	8-10
Friday	September 1	"	11-13
Sabbath	" 2	Psalms	73-77

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Our reading for this week is found in three books. We finish Zechariah, chapters 5 to 14, the first part of which pertains almost exclusively to the work that was then being wrought by God's people in Jerusalem, the latter part looking forward to the final restoration. It has been thought by some textual critics that from the 9th chapter of Zechariah to the close belongs to the book of Jeremiah; first, because of the passage which is quoted from Zechariah and attributed to Jeremiah in Matt. 27:9. This is not found in Jeremiah's prophecy, but in Zechariah. Also from the difference in style. Jeremiah uses "the burden of the Word of the Lord," with which Zechariah 9 opens, while the prophecies in the first part of Zechariah are introduced by the expression "the Word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah." This, however, does not affect the prophecy, altho it would give a different setting in its origin. There are some very hopeful outlooks, in the closing passages, for the people of God who will truly seek Him and grasp by faith the promises of the Spirit. There are also foretold the sad judgments which will come upon all those who reject Him.

The book of Nehemiah was probably written by Nehemiah himself. His name means "comfort of the Lord," or "aid of the Lord;" and truly he brought aid from the Lord to Israel. He evidently was born in Babylon, and was the chief cup-bearer of Artaxerxes. The fact that he presented wine to his royal master before the queen, would show that he was in high favor before the king; and tho in the court of an idolatrous master, he seems to have been a true worshiper of God. Hearing of the condition of things and the backsliding of Israel, gave him great concern and sadness, of which the king, noticing, asked him the cause. He told the king the cause of his sadness, and in response to prayer received permission to return to Jerusalem with a colony of Jews in 445 B.C. Here, as governor of Judea, he rebuilt the city walls, in spite of all the opposition of the Samaritans and others, organized the service of God, and returned to Persia in 430.

The last day of this week returns again to the Psalms—Psalms 73 to 77, the beginning of Book 3. These are all psalms of Asaph, a noted singer in Israel.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

"Even as we have been approved of God to be entrusted with the Gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, who proveth our hearts."

For Terms, See Page 15
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Growth in Christian Experience

By Mrs. E. G. White

JESUS had given the lesson concerning the sower and the seed. He had said, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places," and made a pretentious show of life, but "because they had no root, they withered away." And some fell among thorns and briers, and the rank growth of the thorns choked out the seed, and it yielded no fruit; but some fell upon soil prepared for its reception, and it sprang up and increased, and bore

For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

The Growth of Character Illustrated

This parable of the kingdom was designed to illustrate to the disciples the growth and progress of Christian character. The good seed of the Word falls into the heart, and at once the first development of Christian experience is made manifest. This experience is likened to the tender blade, and to the young child. The blade is beautiful, and the child is attractive; but should there

earliest love is full of simplicity and freshness; but as his opportunities multiply, his experience should enlarge, and his knowledge increase. He should become strong to bear responsibility, and his maturity should be in proportion to his privileges. But the young convert is not to worry or perplex his mind with questioning as regards his advancement and growth. He is to trust himself wholly to Jesus, and with fear and trembling work out that which God works in; for it is God that works in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Advancement in Christian experience can be accomplished only through coöperation with heavenly agencies, for it is a result of growth in grace. Feeling his helplessness, the young Christian is to place himself in the channel of light, and improve all the



"And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship. . . . And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow." Matt. 13: 2, 3.

fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

When the soil has been prepared for the reception of the seed, the sower casts it in; and by processes which men can not control or understand, the seed begins to grow, and advances to maturity. Jesus compared the growth of the kingdom of God to the sowing of seed; and to its development into the full measure of maturity. The seed is the Word of God; and the soul who receives it, is said to be born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, which lives and abides forever. "And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

be no further development, we would look upon the plant as stunted, and the child as dwarfed. The young convert is to advance in knowledge, to grow in grace. Christ looks upon His children, and He is not ignorant as to how the seed is developing. Temptations will come, and it will be only through constant trust in his Redeemer that perfection of Christian character can be attained. The convert is to look to the mighty Helper, lest he be surprised off guard, and seduced by the enemy. He is not to be ignorant of Satan's devices, nor rest satisfied with the knowledge he has attained; for "this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

The experience of the Christian in his

opportunities that are graciously bestowed upon him, that he may gain a deeper experience, and take deep root in Christ, as the plant roots in the soil. His faith must increase, his consecration be maintained, his love be made perfect, as is represented by the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. His zeal should be ardent and tireless; and with unwavering trust in Christ, his growth may be unmarred, for a genuine experience will result in the development of a Christlike character.

Our Dependence Must Be Constant

But unless there is an hourly dependence upon Christ, increasing knowledge and privileges will result in self-trust and self-righteousness. The young Christian is in

danger of forgetting that it is Christ that has begun the good work in him, and that it is Christ that must finish it. The soul must renounce all merit, and trust wholly in the merit of Him who is too wise to err. Man of himself can do no good thing. Said Jesus, "Without Me ye can do nothing." The soul is to stay itself upon God. In the gift of Christ all heaven was poured out, and through Christ the Holy Spirit is promised to the believer. Jesus said to His disciples, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Christ not only offers pardon to the believing, repenting soul, but He promises him the constant aid of the Holy Spirit.

Unseen Agencies Develop the Plant

In the growth of the seed in the soil, man can not see the working of unseen agencies that develop the plant to perfection, bring-

ing up first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. But the young in the faith, you may know that you have passed from death to life, if the fruits of the Spirit are made manifest in your life. If you are growing in faith and hope and love, you may know that your spiritual vision has been cleared. If you delight to dwell upon the plan of salvation, upon the glorious manifestations of the divine character,—if your heart, in contemplation of the love of God, glows with thankfulness and joy,—you may be sure that you have been illuminated by the beams of the Holy Spirit, and heavenly agencies are bringing your character up to maturity of Christian life. You may not realize that you are growing up into Christ, your living Head. Your part is simply to submit your ways and your will to God. You are to trust yourself fully to God, knowing you can not make yourself grow. A Paul may plant, and an Apollos may water; but it is God that gives the increase.

The New Creation and the Sabbath

By Roderick S. Owen

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. Ex. 20:11.



ERE the seventh day is set forth as a sign of the Creator's rest, a seal of creative power, vested only in Him; as a memorial of His distinguishing title, which is, Creator.

In Ps. 111:4 we read that God "hath made His wonderful works to be remembered." Just as this nation has made its independence to be remembered, by setting apart the fourth day of July as a memorial, so God has set apart the seventh day of the week as His memorial.

Just as the signing of the Declaration of Independence on the fourth of July fixed that day unchangeably as Independence Day, so God's resting on the seventh day fixed that day unchangeably as the Sabbath day.

Just as long as creation stands, just as long as God's wonderful works endure, His memorial should and will stand; and any new manifestation of creative power must only give the memorial, if possible, a surer footing.

When God undertook the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, Pharaoh denied the existence of the God of Israel as the Creator and supreme Ruler. He said: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Moses was teaching the people to observe the Sabbath, the memorial of God's name as Creator. Therefore Pharaoh charged Moses with making the people rest; and he not only laid more work upon them, in requiring them to gather stubble for straw, but also insisted that they deliver a certain number of bricks every day. This made it impossible for them to keep the Sabbath. Thus Pharaoh not only denied God as Creator, but also set aside the Sabbath, His memorial.

In Ex. 9:16 God says, "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power; and that My

name may be declared throughout all the earth." The issue being thus squarely set forth, God proceeds to vindicate His right as Creator and supreme Ruler. He gave exhibitions of the superiority of His power over all the gods of the Egyptians. He showed His power to control the elements, and cause them to do His bidding, as the hail, lightning, darkness, etc.

Creative Power Exercised

He exercised creative power in producing frogs, lice, flies, locusts, etc., and later by feeding the multitudes in the wilderness with quails and manna.

During all this, great prominence was given the Sabbath, that being the point of controversy before they left Egypt, being made the test of their obedience before they reached Mount Sinai, and finally receiving its place of prominence in the bosom of the law spoken by the voice of God amid the thunders of Sinai and afterward written with His finger on two tables of stone.

It is also worthy of notice that the Lord, in feeding the people with bread from heaven, followed the same course pursued by Him in creating the world; for He did not create manna on the seventh day.

The Promised Rest Remains

In Heb. 3:11-18; and 4:1-3, in reference to the experience of the children of Israel, we read: "So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest. . . . And to whom swear He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest." Also in Heb. 3:7-13 we read: "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, . . . in the wilderness. . . . But exhort one another daily, while it is called

To-day." And in Heb. 4:7: "He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Thus we find that God offered His rest to the people in the wilderness, and in David's day, and in the apostle's day; and by the Holy Ghost He is still offering it even in our day, saying that to-day, if you will hear His voice, you may enter into rest. We also learn by Heb. 4:2 that this rest is presented in the Gospel. Hence ever since the Gospel was first proclaimed in the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, even to the last lingering moment of probationary time, it has been and will be, "To-day." For now is the acceptable time; to-day is the day of salvation; and to-day, just as it has been in all the past, those who believe do enter into His rest, while others shut themselves out through unbelief. As stated in verse 9, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

How We May Enter into Rest

Verse 10 tells us that we must cease from our own work to enter this rest, even as God ceased from His. But our works are works of sin; hence to enter God's rest we must cease from sinning. The only way to do this, is in Christ Jesus. But "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," or creation, and can then enter into God's rest; for as God rested and was refreshed while He contemplated the work of a new creation, even so the one who can look into his own heart, and see the transforming power of the Spirit of God creating him anew in Christ Jesus, can and does rejoice in a new creation, and is thus entering into God's rest.

But altho this rest remains, and is an abiding, continual rest, excepting where it is broken by sin, God has set apart the seventh day as the outward sign of this rest; for the apostle says that God's works were finished from the foundation of the world. As proof of this he cites the fact that one "spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works."

Altho sin came in and disturbed this abiding rest, still God did not do away with the outward sign, but permitted it to remain, not only as a sign, but also as a pledge of the final restoration of all things. Hence He says of His people, "Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Eze. 20:12. Thus the Sabbath becomes at once the sign both of creative power in calling the world into existence at the first, and also of creative power manifested in redemption.

How Are You Related to God's Rest?

But the children of men are making many mistakes in this matter of God's rest. Some are ignoring both the rest and the sign; others are ignoring the rest and wearing the sign; while still others are seeking the rest but ignoring the sign. O that the first class would acknowledge God, and obtain His rest, and wear His sign! O that the second class would retain the sign, and allow God to flood the soul temple with His rest! and that the third class, accepting the fulness of His rest, may not be ashamed of His sign, lest in so doing they find themselves among those who are denying God's name.

A young Scotchman, being required to pass through territory belonging to a clan antagonistic to his own, removed from his person the badge by which his clan was identified, and by so doing he certainly denied his name.

Do Not Set Aside God's Rest

We are now in an enemy's land. Let us be very careful not to set aside the memorial of our Father's name, that which He has established to be the distinguishing sign of citizenship in His country. For when the last one has been found who will allow himself to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus; when Jesus shall come to set up His kingdom; when the work of re-creating shall be completed, and the earth shall stand forth in all its Edenic beauty,—then shall God, together with every loyal subject of His eternal kingdom, enter into the fulness of His rest, by rejoicing in this renewed and finished creation. Then shall the seventh day be observed by all the redeemed throng as the outward sign of their eternal, abiding rest; for we read in Isa. 66:22, 23: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord." There remains therefore a rest and the keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God.

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The Kingdom of Christ—No. 1

The First Place of Christ's Kingdom

IN the Word of God, Christ's kingdom is presented to us under three distinct phases. Under the third and last it is fully developed, and rounded out in completeness, and it will stand forever. The *subjects* of Christ's kingdom in this world are the members of His body, His church; and their names are written in heaven. Their King is a Priest-King on the throne of grace in heaven. The law of His kingdom is the Word of God. His ministers are the Holy Spirit and the holy angels.

Every subject of Christ's kingdom has become such by a deliverance from the power of darkness, the kingdom of Satan, and a translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Col. 1:13. This translation is a conversion, a regeneration, a transformation, which brings the kingdom of Christ into the heart and life of each individual subject. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as one, are said to abide in the true believer; and hence the principles of the kingdom of Christ, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, all abide in the soul. They have the mind of Christ. Their *thought* life is brought into obedience to Christ. Likewise their *word* life, their *deed* life, yea, their *whole life*, is brought into sweet harmony with the divine will.

Thus to such the kingdom of God *has come*, and the will of God is *done* by them on the earth. Every true child of God is a miniature kingdom of God on earth. Christ dwells within them, and rules over every desire, purpose, and aspiration of the heart, and over every member of the body, and faculty of the mind.

This first phase of Christ's kingdom is contemporary with the first phase of Satan's kingdom on the earth, and every subject

thereof is a constant target for the darts, snares, and temptations of the great adversary; and they can only hope to be overcomers, by setting their faces as flints Zionward, and drawing grace and strength every day, according to need, from the throne of grace, which is always and everywhere accessible.

The King of Grace has made ample provision for the triumphant life of all His

Nicodemus

By Mrs. Edith B. Goodrich.

When night had drawn her curtains about a sleeping world,
And all was hushed on hill, and lake, and lea,
'Twas then that Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews,
Went forth to meet the Lord in secrecy.

Chorus

O grand, impartial message inscribed on sacred page!
'Tis just as much a truth to-day as then,
Position wins no favors from Christ, the King of Kings;
"Ye must," said He, "ye must be born again!"

Afraid to meet the censure of bitter Pharisee
By seeking open counsel in the day,
Yet longing to unburden his anxious, troubled heart,
To meet the Lord by night he stole away.

With eagerness, yet trembling, he sought the secret spot
Where Jesus oft retired to pray and rest,
And there, before the Master, in that strange hour of night,
Unfolded all that lay upon his breast.

He deemed that his position might influence the Lord
To favor him, a ruler of the Jew;
To make salvation easy—to point some special way;
But Jesus read His questioner through and through.

Tho cultured was His caller, the Master did not shrink
From speaking truth that in his soul would ring;
He showed one common pathway—one road for all the world,
For pauper, peasant, Pharisee, or king!

As Nicodemus listened, he felt the forceful power
Of all the words the Saviour spoke to him;
He hid them in his bosom, and pondered on them much,
While walking homeward through the shadows dim.

And when the great Sanhedrin those officers despatched
To seize the Galilean ere His hour,
'Twas Nicodemus questioned, "To rashly judge a man
Before his trial—hath our law such power?"

'Twas Nicodemus, also, who, after Jesus' death,
Brought spices to anoint Him, very rare;
And I believe hereafter, in that fair world made new,
We'll meet this noble ruler over there.

Meadow Glade, Washington.

subjects. Exceeding many, great, and precious promises are given them, whereby they may become partakers of the divine nature, and escape all the corruptions that are in the world. They may fall in death, and be shut up in the prison-house of their great enemy. But their glorious King has the keys to the grave, and the gates of hell can not prevail against His subjects. When this first phase of Christ's kingdom shall end, there will come a day of deliverance and everlasting triumph over their last enemy.

H. A. ST. JOHN.

Theosophy

Is It Christian or Antichristian?

By C. H. Bliss



THEOSOLOGY is defined by theosophical writers as *the divine wisdom*. Its object is stated to be the "study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science;" also to "investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man."

The quotations in this article are largely from the writings of Annie Besant, the author of fourteen tracts and pamphlets out of twenty-four composing a reading course advertised by this sect. So she is considered good authority relative to the teachings of theosophy.

Now "theosophy," like its twin sister, "Christian Science," claims to be Christian. That is, it claims to be in harmony with the ethics of the Founder of the Christian faith.

Whether this claim is true or false can only be known by comparing the statements of the two. In a work published by that society, being a lecture by Annie Besant on theosophy, she says, "Theosophy appeals to the skeptic, those whose minds are bewildered by doubts—those who seek to hold to their ancient belief but find it slipping from their fingers."

But how does it propose to help these unbelieving souls? By facts demonstrating the truth of the Gospel? Let us see. "Theosophy, to the Christian world, is a representation of fundamental truths, clothed in that scientific garment which makes them more acceptable to the mind of the modern man, . . . unveiling unknown depths of thought, unveiling unknown heights of mystic interpretation."

Like Christian Science, it proposes to bring the teachings of the lowly Nazarene up to the comprehension of the wise men of this century. But let us follow this occult science, and see what some of these "deep mystic interpretations" are. They tell us that man is essentially an eternal spirit. The body is the form which this "eternal spirit" occupies. This eternal spirit which is in all men is divine. In speaking to the criminal in the slum it says, "You are divine as I," and, "You shall grow to the perfection of God Himself." Thus God is in all men, and all men are essentially a part of God. And as God will not and can not destroy a part of Himself, so He can not destroy us. Now reasoning logically from this basis, if God punishes men at all for sin, He punishes Himself.

How unlike the teachings of our divine Master, who said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again;" and, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life," that is, eternal life. Further He says, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not [eternal] life."

In these teachings, Christ emphatically makes faith in Him a condition to eternal life. But the "deep mystic interpretations" of theosophy are that all men are alike divine, and all will eventually evolve into that higher condition which angels enjoy, regardless of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Continued on page 8)



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Milton C. Wilcox

"Let the Revelation speak and tell what is truth. . . . Uplift Jesus as the center of all hope."

XXXIX. The Harvest—The Song of Triumph

Rev. 14:13 to 15:4

THE first five verses of the 14th chapter of the Revelation describe the character and triumph of that company saved at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The threefold message which develops these characters follows. This message is divided into three parts, the first containing great positive truth, the second a sad lament, the third a mighty, solemn protest and warning. And once again is described the character of those who embrace the message: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Then follows our lesson of to-day. Let us note—

The Answer of the Text

[The answers to the questions are from the American Revised Version. Omitting questions, and disregarding sometimes the capital at the beginning and the period at the close of an answer, the text may be read continuously. In notes and comments both versions are used without designation.]

1. What voice did John hear from heaven?

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them. Rev. 14:13.¹

2. What vision was next shown the prophet?

And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I saw One sitting like unto a Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. Verse 14.²

3. What was said to Him on the cloud?

And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Send forth Thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. Verse 15.³

4. What followed?

And He that sat on the cloud cast His sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped. Verse 16.⁴

5. What did the prophet next see?

And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. Verse 17.⁵

6. What was said to the angel?

And another angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. Verse 18.⁶

7. What was done with the harvest?

And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the wine-press, the great wine-press, of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the wine-press, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs. Verses 19 and 20.⁷

A Vision of Judgment

8. What was next shown to the prophet?

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God. Rev. 15:1.⁸

A Vision of Victories

9. What victorious company was shown John?

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God. Verse 2.⁹

10. What song of triumph did they sing?

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest. Verses 3 and 4.¹⁰

Note and Comment

1. "BLESSED ARE THE DEAD."—We are frequently told by those who seem to be spiritual that the faith of the Christian ought to take hold of healing just as strongly as it takes hold of forgiveness of sins, justification, and regeneration, and that faith is wanting unless it does this. But a scripture like this lies strongly against such a view. The Lord here declares that even in the very last days, so filled with blessing, and yet so full of trial, those who die in the Lord are blessed. This blessing may seem to lie in their being saved from the awful perils through which the remnant church must pass. We read in Isaiah 57, concerning this very time: "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He entereth into peace; they rest in their beds, each one that walketh in his uprightness." God saves aged and worn servants from additional trials. They have been tested and proved. Their works will follow after them. Being dead, they will yet speak, and yet will rest until the Lord shall come and call them.

2. "BEHOLD, A WHITE CLOUD."—John sees the culmination of the work to which the great threefold message pertained. "White" is indicative of purity. The "cloud" represents God's angels. When Jesus ascended to heaven, He was received by a great company of angels that had the appearance of a cloud; and when He comes again, He will come surrounded by hosts of angels, which will appear like a great cloud of glory. (See Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7; and other passages.) "Like unto a Son of Man" is the One sitting upon the cloud. This is the term that is used in Rev. 1:13, where our Lord is described as ministering for His people as Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Such is the term that is used in John 5:27, where we are told that God has given Jesus "authority to execute judgment, because He is a Son of Man." He is coming on the cloud to consummate His work. He comes as King, and on His head is a golden crown. This carries us back to the promise and prophecy of Ps. 21:3, "Thou settest a crown of fine gold on His head."

He has in His hand a sickle, showing Him to be a reaper. The harvest is at hand. And this harvest also is according to promise, as we learn from Matthew 13. He is coming to reap the results of the great threefold message. God sends this message to the world to save the world. Those who utterly reject

the message, will be as truly ripened by the message as those who accept it. The same sun that ripens the wheat, ripens the tares; that ripens the grain, ripens the weeds. Those who reject God's saving messages, are ripened in wickedness in a character unworthy of salvation, just as truly as those who accept it and walk in it are ripened for the heavenly garner. This passage does not represent a different message, as some have erroneously thought; it represents the result of the great threefold message already given.

3. ANOTHER ANGEL.—Another messenger from God, one who comes out from the temple where our Lord has finished His ministry. That ministry closed with the judgment, and that judgment demands that the harvest shall be gathered, that judgment shall be executed. Consequently the loud call to Him who sits upon the cloud, just as tho He were still lingering in mercy, to "send forth Thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." The great voice indicates that the time is at hand, that the action is urgent. This is said to Christ; it is the culmination of the appeals which have been made through all the centuries of the past, ever since sin entered, for the King to come to His own. It is the answer of the fourfold cry of the living creatures—"Come."

4. THE EARTH WAS REAPED.—"And He that sat on the cloud cast His sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped." It will be noted that there are two reapings. There are two different thoughts expressed in the reapings. We read of one reaping in Matt. 3:12: "He will gather His WHEAT into the garner." The reaping or the gathering of the righteous ones is represented by the gathering of the grain that can be stored up for the future. It is a reaping which pertains to eternity. The other reaping is that of the vineyard. The gathering of the vintage is the gathering of that which is temporary. Grapes do not keep; wheat does. Wheat can be preserved indefinitely; grapes soon perish. This gathering of the vintage is not of the good grapes, however; it is of those which are evil. But the reaping of the One who sat upon the cloud is the gathering of the wheat, the taking to Himself His own. "And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet" to the uttermost parts of the earth, and gather those who are His. Matt. 24:31. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. 13:43. This the parable of the wheat and the tares points out as the end of the age: "The harvest is the end of the world." Matt. 13:39.

5. ANOTHER ANGEL.—This angel comes out from the temple, or sanctuary (see margin), where our Lord has finished His ministry, where the judgment decisions have been rendered, when he that is filthy shall be filthy still, and he that is righteous shall be righteous still. Rev. 22:11. This angel has also a sharp sickle. He also is a reaper.

6. "ANOTHER ANGEL" from the altar comes forth, who has power over fire, and who calls to the angel with the sickle, saying, "Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe." Fire is indicative of judgment, for judgment in many cases is rendered with fire. He also comes from the altar. This carries us back to Rev. 6:9, where many of God's children are seen as slain underneath

the altar, the altar of sacrifice upon the earth. In chapter 8:3 we have the angel represented as offering incense upon the altar, with the prayers of the saints, before the throne; and when that ministry is finished, the angel takes the censer, and fills it with the fire of the altar, and casts it upon the earth, and there follow thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake, the great judgments of God upon a world which has rejected Him and identified itself in sin and rebellion. This is the angel that has power over fire that comes forth from the altar. The prayers of God's children for deliverance through all the ages will be answered, and judgment will be rendered against those great systems of earth that have plotted and planned and set themselves against God's work in the earth.

There is another thought in connection with these two harvests. It would seem as tho our Lord reserves to Himself the privilege of gathering His own children. The yearning of heart expressed in His prayer in John 17, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am," is now to be realized, and He Himself is the reaper. But in the judgment which is to be executed against the wicked of earth, the commission is given to the angel who presided at the altar, and the angel executes the judgment of God.

There is another thought, also, expressed in the call both to Christ and to the angel. The great voice tells our Lord to cast in His sickle and reap, for the time has come to reap. It is the great voice, like the voice of the Gospel angels, a voice of strength and triumph. But it is not so said in the original concerning the angel who calls to the angel with the sickle. He CRIES. It would seem as tho all the cries for justice and deliverance through all the ages had culminated in that one great cry of the angel in this last judgment.

7. "THE ANGEL CAST HIS SICKLE INTO THE EARTH."—The cry of all the ages is to be answered. The vintage of the earth, the ripeness of wickedness, is to be reaped, cast into the wine-press, the great wine-press of the wrath of God. Sin is to be ended. Not always will it curse the earth, or God's universe; it is not God's design, however misinformed theologians have represented it, that His fair universe shall be blasted forever by the sight of sin and persistent rebellion against God. The sin will be ended; the fruit will be reaped, and the wrath of God will end in its utter destruction.

The scene that is presented in the 20th verse, of the blood from the wine-press even unto the bridles of the horses, is variously interpreted. It may relate to the great battle of Armageddon, which will take place around Jerusalem, where the nations which have drunk of the wrath of God will be gathered, according to Jeremiah. If the battle of Armageddon is to be fought in the valley of Jehoshaphat, as some scriptures seem to indicate, where the great judgment will take place, as foretold by Joel, it would not be an astonishing thing at all, if the blood would flow in streams equal to what is here stated. It is also thought by some to refer to its final fulfilment, to the great judgment day, which will include not only one generation, but all the generations of earth, when the wicked will be gathered and come up around the city of God, as outlined in Revelation 20. And there the judgment of God will be visited upon them. However it may be, whether applying to the battle of Armageddon, before Christ comes, or to the thousand years, or both, we may leave all that safely with God. The great and important thing to us is to be ready for that harvest.

The prophet Joel, looking forward to that time, saw the great multitudes of earth deciding concerning the messages which God is sending out to the world. Said he, "Multi-

tudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! for the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision." Men are ranging themselves under one banner or under the other, yielding themselves to God and eternal truth, or yielding themselves to wickedness and eternal death. And when that time comes this also is true, that Joel declares in connection with the great battle which is to be fought: "Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the wine-press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great." Then God shall speak and the heavens and the earth shall shake. But in all the trial, the war, the battles, the calamities which shall be visited upon the earth, "Jehovah will be a refuge unto His people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel." See Joel 3:9-16.

8. "SEVEN ANGELS HAVING SEVEN PLAGUES."—The wrath of God is mentioned in the message of the third angel, verses 9 to 11 of the 14th chapter. The wrath of God is mentioned in the verses that we have just passed over in our lesson. Now we are told in what that wrath of God will be completed. John has shown seven angels, indicating fulness, completion, "having seven plagues, which are

The Bible

It has a self-perpetuating and multiplying power. Infidels have written books: where are they? Where is Porphyry, Julian? Fragments of them there are; but we are indebted even for this to Christian criticism. Where is Hume, Voltaire, Bolingbroke? It requires the world's reprieve to bring a copy out of the prison of their darkness. Where is the Bible? Wherever there is light. Speaking the language of heaven in sevenfold and three of the tongues of earth, and giving the Word of God by forty millions of voices to five times as many million ears, and in tongues spoken by six hundred millions of men, and having swept its path of storm through all time, it still walks triumphant, despite earth's dying malice and hell's eternal wrath; and like the apocalyptic angel, tho it wraps its mantle of cloud around it, calmly looks out upon the world with a face as it were the sun encircled with the rainbow.—Bishop Thomson.

the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God"—"in them is filled up the wrath of God." That is, all the wrath which will be visited upon a wicked world is filled up in those plagues. When those plagues are poured out, the beginning of the culmination of the wrath of God is reached; and those plagues will continue their work until sin is utterly blotted from God's universe. Of this we will learn more in our next.

9. THEY THAT COME OFF VICTORIOUS.—John sees another vision. Again and again, in the midst of all these calamities, the strife, the wickedness, the persecution, God brings before His children the glorious triumph. He would not have them discouraged by any of the lessons which are given, by any of the calamities which are foretold, by the persecutions which are sure to come. He ever holds out before them the glorious triumph which awaits those who are faithful. In the beginning of the 14th chapter, the triumphant remnant church is represented by those who have no guile in their character, without fault before the throne, and who have the Father's name written on their foreheads. The character of God has been transmuted into theirs. The same company is shown in the 15th chapter, showing that they not only have this character, but they have been victorious over evil. They are not a holy company who have not been tried, they are a righteous company who have stood the test of the severest temptations which have come upon any generation the world has ever known. They have had

against them the world-combined influence of the beast and his image. Before them has been placed peace and quiet and ease if they would but worship, or yield to the influence of, the beast power; but in their loyalty to God they have resisted this. They stand before the throne on that sea of glass mentioned in chapter 4, victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, having harps of God, showing that they are singing songs of triumph.

10. THEY SING A DOUBLE SONG: (1) The song of Moses, the servant of God. In Exodus, the 15th chapter, we have recorded the song of Moses. That song expressed deliverance from all earthly foes. The children of Israel were menaced by the strongest power on earth. God gave them glorious and complete deliverance from that power. The children of God in the last generation are menaced by all the powers of earth. God gives them glorious deliverance from all these persecuting, rebellious governments. They can truly sing the song of Moses, the servant of God. But the children of Israel who were saved from the power of Egypt were still slaves of sin, and the great mass of them died in the wilderness because of their bondage to sin. But this company sing not only the song of Moses, deliverance from Egyptian bondage, from the power of earthly enslavement, but they sing the song of the Lamb. Our Lord Jesus Christ won victory over sin—absolute and complete—and the song of the Lamb is the song of that victory over sin. Therefore this last generation are not only triumphant over all the powers of earth through the mercy of God, but are triumphant over all the power of sin. Therefore it is said in the 3d verse of the 14th chapter, that it is a "new song," which no man could learn save this company, because no other company have ever had the experience of this company. No other company have met the combined foes which this company have met, with all the world combined against them, and with all the power of evil combined to destroy their souls; and through God they have come off victorious from both. Therefore the new song.

There are some thoughts emphasized in this song: one, that God is worthy of all fear and reverence. "Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?" Note that these are the two points given in the first part of the great threefold message, "Fear God, and give glory to Him." This triumphant company have done this, and they have found Him worthy of all reverence, worthy of all honor, the only One who is holy.

Another point emphasized in that message is, "and WORSHIP Him that made the heaven and the earth." And so they sing, "All nations shall come and worship before Thee." Those who would not, have perished in their own corruption. Those who are saved, are those who count God worthy of all worship. They also declare that God is just. His righteous acts have been made manifest. The King of Ages has demonstrated that He is love. We read in Gen. 18:25 the question of Abraham, the father of the faithful, in connection with God's judgment upon Sodom, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Men have ranged themselves on both sides of that question ever since. Some have declared that God is not just. In their blind ignorance they see only one side of God's dealings. Some in simple faith say, "I know that He doeth all things well." But after the storm is cleared, and God's judgments have been rendered, then it will be said, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Ages."

Why may we not join in that song, with anticipation, now? And even tho we can not see all things clearly, God has given us enough evidence so that we may trust and be true.

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"BEWARE that no coldness creeps into your heart toward those who antagonize you."

Theosophy

(Continued from page 5)

Theosophy also teaches evolution of both body and spirit, also reincarnation. "What have you done," say they, "to earn the position and advantage in which you are now placed, unless you have lived in lives before the present?" To the doubting, discouraged soul theosophy says, "You shall climb to the perfection of God Himself."

Thus as the immortal spirit unfolds and passes from one body to another, the physical form also improves.

Like all other "deep mystic teachings," theosophy does not make clear at just what point in evolution the human is replaced or succeeded by the divine, or just where in the evolution of the spirit and the body the animal became human. In all the discoveries of evolutionary science, if it be proper to call it a science, there is still a missing link. Some mystic writers indicate that the higher order of the ape are akin to the human; but just where in this evolutionary development the immortal spirit is breathed into the animal form, seems to be a mystery. However, believers in the Bible record and the testimony of Christ are not troubled upon this point.

Plunging a little deeper into this mystic science, we find them teaching that the Christ of the Christian and Vishnu of the Hindu are the same. They say, "In every religion, worship is paid to the same being, tho different names are used." Unlike Paul, who exhorted his hearers to turn away from the worship of these gods, they advise all missionaries who visit so-called heathen lands, to identify the god there worshiped with the Christian's God. They say the name is the only difference. Yet theosophy claims to be Christian.

This reminds the reader of history of the times just prior to the Dark Ages, when millions of heathen embraced the Christian faith outwardly by accepting "Christian baptism" and giving Christian names to the gods they worshiped, still continuing all heathen forms and practises.

No Christian missionary, we are told, has a right to outrage the belief of other nations by denying the divine prophet at whose feet he bows. Indeed, we are told that "all religions grow from the same trunk."

Again we are told that in time "all men become christs," and when we have reached that degree of spiritual development within the reach of all, we may receive worship. Thus we may bow to all great beings under the name "Christ." Thus theosophy deifies men, making us all gods.

How different is the testimony of Jesus Christ! When John fell at the feet of the angel to worship him, the angel said, "Do it not: . . . worship God." To the Christian there is one God, and His Son Jesus Christ. Before Him the angels were commanded to bow. Thus theosophy, while claiming to be Christian, makes every man his own savior, and gives the same honor to the sinner that it does to the Messiah. In speaking of the atonement, it says it consists in inwardly developing—that is, by this divine power which is in every man—a good character, a character like Christ, who they acknowledge was a good man.

Now to me here is a very strange thing—a religion claiming to be Christian, speaking reverently of the Founder of the Chris-

tian faith, giving Him worship, yet according the same honor to the gods worshiped by the heathen, and presenting to the world teachings directly antagonistic to teachings of Christ. He told the people, while here among men, that He existed before the world was; that He represented the Father; that He should die for men, and be raised again; that remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations; that by believing on Him there is salvation; that there is no salvation for men only through faith in Him. Now if He told the truth, theosophy is false from beginning to end—it is anti-christ. If Christ did not speak the truth, then He was a hypocrite, and the greatest false prophet that ever visited this world.

Blessed Are the Dead

By Elizabeth Rosser

How safe are the innocent babes that we lay
In the grave's silent chamber to rest!
They quietly wait for the dawning of day.
How sweet is their slumber! how blest!

In anguish we watched while they struggled for
breath

All through the long hours of the night;
We wept when we yielded them over to death,
And hid them away from our sight.

We miss them—we miss them! Yet why should
we weep!

They are safe from all trouble and care;
And Jesus the Saviour Himself blessed their sleep.
They need not a tear nor a prayer.

Those dear little feet never strayed into sin;
Those sweet lips were guileless and pure;
They know naught of struggles without or within;
Their life is in Jesus secure.

Beneath the watchcare of His all-seeing eye
They rest, free from earthly alarms;
The angels have noted the place where they lie,
And will bear them again to our arms.

But, O, for the loved on the mountains astray
In the dark, in the storm, in the cold,
Who have no desire for the dawning of day,
Not a wish to come into the fold!

Their innocent babyhood days long have flown;
Their feet have strayed far from our side;
Their hands have slipped long ago out of our
own,—
Farther off than the children who died.

O, mother who sittest with sorrow-bowed head,—
With sad eyes, tear-laden and dim,
Weep not o'er the grave of thine innocent dead;
The living—O, sorrow for him.

St. Johns, Oregon.

There can be no compromise here. We can not worship both God and devils, neither can we follow truth and error. If Christ is from above, theosophy is from beneath. These teachings can not emanate from the same source.

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What Makes a Great Life

Do NOT try to do a great thing; you may waste all your life waiting for the opportunity which may never come. But since little things are always claiming your attention, do them as they come, from a great motive, for the glory of God, to win His smile of approval and do good to men. It is harder to plod on in obscurity, acting thus, than to stand on the high places of the field, within the view of all, and do deeds of valor at which rival armies stand still to gaze. But no such act goes without the swift recognition and the ultimate recompense of Christ.

To fulfil faithfully the duties of your

station; to use to the uttermost the gifts of your ministry; to bear chaffing and trivial irritations as martyrs bore the pillory and stake; to find the one noble trait in people who try to molest you; to put the kindest construction on unkind acts and words; to love with the love of God even the unthankful and evil; to be content to be a fountain in the midst of a wild valley of stones, nourishing a few lichens and wild flowers, or now and again a thirsty sheep; and to do this always, and not for the praise of man, but for the sake of God—this makes a great life.—F. B. Meyer.

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The Depth of Sin

By Clarence Santee



IN these days when crimes on every hand, even in high places, are excused and condoned by many, there is an equal disregard for the one standard of righteousness—right doing—that God has placed among men. Our ransom has been purchased at an infinite cost; yet men will boast of being saved, while no visible change appears in their obedience to that divine law. Contact with evil has made the heart reckless and unfeeling. A writer has given a vivid expression of the words of inspiration when comparing the days of Adam, even after he had fallen by sin, with the hardened, unfeeling heart of the present generation. I read: "As they witnessed, in drooping flower and falling leaf, the first signs of decay, Adam and his companion mourned more deeply than men now mourn over their dead."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," page 62.

God compares the unregenerate heart to a stone; yet in love He promises—through divine grace—to remove the stony heart and again give a heart of flesh. This promise is found in Eze. 36:26: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

As one stone in the clay will spoil the vessel in the hands of the potter, so the stony heart will make of no avail all the efforts of infinite love that otherwise would change the life into the Master's image.

It has been said that the Christian should show the love of Christ by willingly sacrificing to save the sinner. But the love of Christ goes farther. Another will say, He should sacrifice this present life for the salvation of the sinner if called upon to do so. This is also true. But he who would be like Christ must go farther. He must be willing to lose all these, and his hope of eternal life as well, if by this loss some sinner might be saved.

Hear Moses as in importunate prayer he pleads with God to spare the rebels, or to blot out his own name from the Book of Life (Ex. 32:31, 32); or Paul, who could appeal to the Holy Spirit of God as a witness to his truthfulness when he said, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Rom. 9:1-3. If today the church were imbued with such love for sinners, who could resist its pleading?

What has the introduction of sin cost?—The ruin of a bright and glorious world; the innocence of a race created for God's glory; mourning in the courts of heaven

over the death of the sinner; the test of the "everlasting love" of God (Jer. 31:3) in the gift of the only one who could save; and that love being manifested for one who had made choice of sin, and was still in sin. "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8.

The Dying Agonies of Christ

Christ died the sinner's death. As the Father's face was turned away from the terrible scene of the cross, every ray of hope was banished from the agonized heart of the dying Son of God; and crying out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" His last choice was made. It was that, looking out into total darkness, He would drink the cup, that the promise of God through His death might bring other sons of Adam back to God.

Sin has marred the face and form of the Son of God until in prophetic vision John saw Him as "a Lamb as it had been slain." Rev. 5:6. Christ, looking down the ages, upon His tried and doubting church, encourages them by saying, "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." Isa. 49:16. This evidently refers to the prints of the nails. It will be asked of Him in glory, "What are these wounds in Thine hands?" His answer will be, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends." Zech. 13:6.

The scars will forever remain upon Christ as the price—in part—of our salvation. But a deeper scar even than these, will ever remain in the heart of God. The yearning which causes a gift, must be deeper than the gift, else the gift would not be given. God assures the sinner that He has loved him "with an everlasting love;" and this scar will be caused by the loss of those for whom He willingly gave all, who yet turned away and were lost. Like the heart of the parent who, seeing the prodigal son or daughter turn away from all counsel that love would indite, leaving the home to return no more, ever has the aching void that no time can fully heal, so the heart of God will ever yearn for the rebellious who, going out from His presence, turning a deaf ear to His entreaties, return no more. No insults, no hard, unfeeling speeches, nor falls into ruin, can destroy the true parent's love. The name may never be mentioned; but there is a chamber in the heart that is dedicated to memory, and there the erring one is written. This is perhaps more nearly godlike and unselfish than any other heritage. Even so eternity itself will not remove the love of God for the lost ones. Sin has cost all this. When God decided the "struggle" and gave His Son to die, He knew the heart pangs that it cost. It was no imaginary, unreal conception. It cost blood and pain and tears. When Abraham had passed through the conflict between love and duty in offering his son Isaac, he was called "the friend of God." There was a bond of sympathy in their experience that caused him to place a truer estimate upon the love of God than ever before. He could appreciate in God that which he could not have understood before.

A Father's Heart Changed Him

A man was placed upon a jury, and upon evidence he quickly condemned as guilty a young man for his crime. As years passed by, he became a father; and as the son grew to manhood, he spurned parental control,

and was classed with criminals. The father's heart was bowed with grief, but he followed that son with prayers and a love that could not be cast off. How often he repeated the hope, "The day will come when he will see and return!" He was again placed upon a jury to decide upon the case of a young man; and upon his plea alone, the other jurors gave a different verdict from that intended, and by his personal effort the young man was saved to a better life. The difference was not that he was now older, but it was that he better understood the struggles of the boy, and his heart could say, In him I see my own boy sitting there alone, listening to the unfeeling testimony, seeing only the cruel eyes of condemnation, as he looks to the right and to the left for one tender face, one glance of sympathy.

When God gave His only Son to die, condemned, that Son looked for some to pity, but there were none. He heard His Son cry out for help, but none heeded. Now that father could better understand the heart of God. Not a new but a deeper vein of tenderness actuated him because of his own heart sorrow. With this thought, we can better understand the tender solicitude of God for His people, that will deepen His love and care for the saved, even because of the void caused by the lost.

O, sin has caused all this! Can we afford to carry it further? Shall I deepen the wound in the heart of God by adding another name to the list of lost ones? Shall you?

—★—

"If God's place in the soul is empty, nothing else can ever fill it."

Our Bible Reading

Religious Liberty

1. What statement of Christ forms a good basis for all the true religious freedom?

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Matt. 7:12.

2. How was the principle in the foregoing text recognized in the Constitution of the United States when this Government was formed?

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.—*Amendments to the Constitution, article 1.*

NOTE.—No one would desire to have some one else force his peculiar religion upon him. Hence we could not do to others as we would that they should do to us, if we attempted to force our religion upon them. And in declaring for the separation of religion from the affairs of the State, the United States Government placed itself in harmony with the "Golden Rule."

3. Has God "ordained" civil governments, and enjoined obedience to them?

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Rom. 13:1-7.

4. Was an attempt made to entangle the Master over this question of the prerogatives of the civil power?

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent out unto Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know

that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man: for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? Matt. 22:15.

NOTE.—The leading men of the Jewish nation in the time of Christ spent much of their time in trying to devise ways by which they could entrap the Master and thus get Him condemned either for heresy against the church or for sedition against the civil government. They exulted in the idea that they had devised the question in the foregoing scripture so cunningly that no matter how He would answer they would have Him in their trap. The Jews at that time held that Cæsar, or the civil power of Rome, was a usurper, and that it was an outrage for them to have to pay tribute. So if He should tell them it was lawful to pay tribute, they would bring Him before the bar of the church for heresy. On the other hand, if He should say that it was not lawful to pay tribute, they would have Him condemned for treason before the court of Cæsar. In either case they were sure they had Him in a corner, and could drive Him into their snare.

5. In replying to the Pharisees and the Herodians, how did Christ show that there was a legitimate and separate field for both the Church and the State?

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar [the civil power] the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Matt. 22:18-21.

NOTE.—In answering His wily questioners the Saviour showed that there was a respect as well as duty that we owe to civil authorities. He also showed that there were obligations that we owe to God. Each has a distinct and separate sphere. They are not to be confused. We are to render our homage to God direct, and because of our love for Him, and not because the State demands it. If we submit to State control in matters of religion, we permit the State to intervene between us and God. The State, of right, has only to do with this world. Our worship of God has to do with the world to come, and that is clear beyond the dominion of the State. Thus from every standpoint it may be seen that the State is a temporary arrangement for this present transitory world of sin. It has no right to attempt to enter the field of a man's religion, which has to do altogether with another world, that comes after and beyond this present one.



THE OUTLOOK

"Watchman,
what of
the night?"

Ultraextravagance in Domestic and Social Life

IN the February (1911) "Everybody's Magazine" Mr. Frederick T. Martin, himself a millionaire, says in part: "The miserable excesses of society are an open book. I can not blind my eyes, nor deafen my ears, nor close my nostrils, and forget them. That decay has set in, I know; that it has struck deep, as yet I can not bring myself to believe." Mr. Martin goes on to state what he believes to have been the immediate CAUSE of the mad extravagance so glaringly prevalent in the society of the idle rich. "It was the magic of gold; it was the poison of idle wealth," he declares. "It was the curse of gold," he repeats, "no more, no less — the same poison that blighted the glory of Athens, that ruined the splendor of Rome, that brought upon Bourbon France the terror of the Revolution." He adds this significant declaration: "It is a melancholy fact that the impetus toward extravagance, excess, idleness, debauchery, and shamelessness comes to us from the underworld."

Less than a year ago an Italian scholar visited America. He gave to the public his impressions, and some of them are significant. For instance, he found that the wife of one of our millionaires wears a necklace that cost more than \$600,000. Immediately following the birth of a son to this woman, a retinue of servants was formed for the sole benefit of the infant. Among those who made up this corps of retainers were four nurses and four high-priced physicians. The infant reposed in a ten thousand dollar cradle.

Embellishing a Five Million Dollar Palace

A money-king of the Middle West, wishing to make New York City his home, recently purchased for \$2,000,000 the palatial residence of a deceased friend. The original cost of the palace was almost \$5,000,000. The new owner expended \$85,000 in embellishing the walls and ceiling of his bedroom, with carvings, enamels, and gold. Over the windows were suspended ten pairs of curtains that cost \$2,000 a pair. The wardrobe in this famous room represents an outlay of \$150,000; the dressing-table, \$65,000;

the wash-stand, \$38,000; and the bed hangings cost fifty dollars a yard. The chimneypiece and the overhanging mantel and the four doors consumed a mere \$18,000.

Somewhat more than a year ago one of the popular magazines published an article on "Luxurious Newport," describing conditions not only disgraceful, but even alarming. It is well known that for years the ultrarich and wantonly extravagant people of the North Atlantic cities have made Newport their summer rendezvous. Hence Newport is to-day the center of social conditions which in many of their aspects remind us of the wild and senseless prodigality that marked the decadent days of ancient Babylon, Greece, and Rome. The treasures of money that are wickedly wasted in spectacular display, in riotous luxury, and in more or less refined debauchery, stagger one's credulity.

Forty Thousand a Year for Clothes

We are reliably told that the typical woman of the Newport "smart set" spends \$40,000 a year on her clothes, and that a "leading dress-maker declares that \$60,000 is not too high an estimate." Her dinner gowns represent \$5,000; her shoes and stockings, \$1,300; her hats and veils, \$1,200; her handkerchiefs, \$100 each; and so on. From \$1,000 to \$1,500 is frequently lavished on a single entertainment. One family owns fifteen automobiles, and spends \$50,000 yearly on yachting. The average yearly expenditure of this "set" is \$300,000 a family. Many a family, of course, spends far more.

The man "who can contrive some novel, stunning, and morally questionable means of enabling one rival, in this fierce competition, to outshine another, is richly rewarded." Invent something new in the way of food, costume, furniture, or equipage, which will stir these jaded prodigals with a new sensation,

and you can sell it at your own price. "And so," writes the editor of the San Jose "Mercury," "the carnival of extravagance, pride, luxury, self-indulgence, and sensuality goes on, ever rising higher, wilder, and more furious."

We all know, too, that these regrettable conditions are not peculiar to Newport. They are most deeply rooted there, but they have spread over all Europe and America, wherever the idle rich have multiplied.

Not long ago a Southern millionaire bought an imported motor-car. The original cost was \$12,000. He looked it over in scorn, and called in decorators. The car was completely refitted. It was equipped with a diminutive drawing-room, a sleeping-room, with hot and cold water fixtures, and space was found for even a small bath tub. A kitchen fully equipped with cooking utensils was added. And when the various mechanics completed their work, the car had been transmuted into a sumptuously furnished home on wheels. The first cost of \$12,000 had been brought up to \$30,000, and the owner was temporarily satisfied.

In the closing hour of an elaborate function in New York City, the guests leaned back languidly to listen to the singers. The cigarettes were



Photograph of a scene of rioting in Berlin, Germany, one of the strongest military countries in the world, and one of the best policed cities

"If something is not done to check the rising tide of discontent in this country, there will be the bloodiest struggle between the rich and the poor that ever drenched a continent with human blood."

passed around. Up to that moment there had been nothing exceptional about the banquet; and as the host was famous for the startling novelty of his dinners, many of the guests were disappointed. Soon their disappointment gave way to admiration. "Each cigaret was rolled, not in white paper, but in a one hundred dollar bill, and the initials of the host were engraved upon each in gold letters. This strange conceit was applauded until the voices of the singers struggled amid the uproar."

A young millionaire of the Middle West owns a unique hat; it is made of greenbacks. Its cost was exceptional, as twenty thousand dollars in bills were used in making it. It looks precisely like the white hats worn by gentlemen. The owner, we are told, lacks imagination, and for that reason more involved methods of "burning" his money did not occur to him. Another young Cræsus gave a banquet in honor of his small black and tan dog. The festivities were extremely gay. Of the invited friends, the men came in evening clothes, and the women bedecked in swishing silks and flashing jewels. In the midst of the gay festivities the host formally decorated his dog with a fifteen thousand dollar diamond collar. It was made up of seven hundred small brilliants. "The guests shouted their approval, and the dinner was regarded as a huge success."

As in the Latter Days of Rome

In the February (1911) "Scribner's Magazine," Prof. J. L. Laughlin tells his readers that during the past year diamonds to the value of \$48,000,000 were imported into the United States. He says, "What is going on amongst us is not new; it is an outcome of rapidly growing wealth, like that in later Rome." He reminds his readers that the danger is not confined to those who have abounding wealth to spend. The passion for social position is almost universal; and the example of the rich who have low ideals is avidly followed by those who have meager incomes.

A London despatch to the American press, of date April 15, 1911, contained this significant bit of information: "Wearing precious heirlooms, diamonds and pearls, set in the buckles of their shoes, is the latest craze among smart, up-to-date women. Harem and the fashionable narrow-line skirts show so much of the feet that buckles are in great and increasing demand at present, and the woman who can afford real gems in her buckles is not content with imitation. She either has her buckles set with diamonds which she buys for the purpose at a cost of \$250 to \$1,500 a pair, or else she has her ancestral diamonds or pearls turned into shoe ornaments. 'There is a steady demand for real gem-incrusted buckles just now,' the manager of a large London firm of jewelers said, 'and I think the fashion will grow as the coronation draws nearer.'"

Half Million for Cigarets for New York Women Alone

The New York "World" informs its readers that in 1909 New York women burned up half a million dollars in the form of cigarettes. That is a pretty snug sum for the women of one city to send up in smoke in a single year. These figures are furnished by dealers, who cater particularly to women. One of them seeks no other trade. The "World" states that the reason for the astonishing increase of the smoking vice among women is simply this: "They took it up because it looks 'smart,' in much the same way that a small boy takes his first smoke. In much the same way it has grown on them, until now they are wrecking their nerves with nicotine, to say nothing of squandering great sums of money." Smoking is no longer a fad with many of these women; they must have their after-meal "pull" just as much as they must have their meals.

Thousands of women in the metropolis

smoke fifteen to twenty cigarettes a day. We are told that in one of the fashionable shops which caters exclusively to feminine trade, the young woman who conducts the place sells to many a woman as many as ten thousand a year. The "World" correspondent gives the following estimate of what one fashionable woman will spend for smoking in a year: 10,000 cigarettes, with initial or monogram, at three dollars a hundred, \$300; inlaid tabouret, \$500; cigaret ring, \$100; cigaret holder, \$50; cigaret cases, \$300; total, \$1,250.

Thomas E. Watson, the noted writer on political and social questions, says that ten years ago the American people consumed three billion cigarettes a year, but that in 1909 they consumed eight billions. He says further, "In the rush for money, IN THE RUSH FOR PLEASURE, in the licentious indulgence of the lusts of the flesh, the whole nation seems to be plunging hellward."

Fifty Thousand to Save a Dog

The San Francisco "Chronicle," September 30, 1907, said editorially: "A widow, two maids, and a veterinary surgeon recently flew in a special train from Los Angeles to New York in the hope of prolonging for a short time the life of a dog which had already passed the allotted age of the cur tribe and was suffering from acute pneumonia. On arrival at New York the dog died, and is to have a monument." This trip involved an expenditure of \$50,000.

How do the idle rich live? Principally, of course, by what is called rent and interest; that is, by the fruits of the labor and the abstinence of others, for which they return no equivalent. In the words of Professor Laughlin: "Wealthy women of to-day have come to regard work as demeaning. They would be mortified to be caught doing ordinary work in their households, which their mothers before them very likely did as a matter of course. Idleness has come to be a mark of social eminence. Whether a woman is properly to be included or not in 'good' society is almost decided by the fact that she takes her breakfast and spends her mornings in bed."

Is there not something radically wrong with society when 75,000 children in New York City alone go hungry to school every morning, notwithstanding the fact that there are 1,500 millionaires in that city? There are 10,000,000 people in the United States to-day who are not adequately fed and sheltered; that is, who are in poverty. "By poverty," says Jack London, "is meant that condition in life in which, through lack of food and adequate shelter, the mere standard of working efficiency can not be maintained."

Nations Overthrown by Luxuriant Vices

The overwhelming testimony of history is to the effect that every nation that has died, has died of the vices which are bred of wealth and luxury. In short, it was the reign of sin that killed them. That is the one lesson of history which needs heeding to-day. It was the wild extravagance, unbridled luxury, and arrogance of the rich of old Babylon and Rome that stirred the poor to frenzy and drove them to plunder the rich. Thomas Watson is convinced that "if something is not done to check the rising tide of discontent in this country, there will be the bloodiest struggle between the rich and the poor that ever drenched a continent with human blood." But in opulent old England and in pleasure-loving France the outlook is equally ominous.

Altho Mr. Watson had no thought of Holy Writ when he uttered the foregoing dark words, yet there is abundant Scripture warrant for his prediction. In the last chapter of his epistle, the prophet James declares: "Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. . . . Ye have laid up your treasure in the LAST DAYS.

. . . Ye have LIVED DELICATELY on the earth, and TAKEN YOUR PLEASURE." Again, the inspired Paul predicts: "But know this, that IN THE LAST DAYS grievous times shall come. For men shall be LOVERS OF SELF, lovers of money, . . . without self-control, . . . LOVERS OF PLEASURE rather than lovers of God." 2 Tim. 3: 1-4.

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, FULNESS OF BREAD, and PROSPEROUS EASE was in her and in her daughters; NEITHER DID SHE STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THE POOR AND NEEDY. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good." Eze. 16: 49, 50. Sodom was in the days of Lot. Now note the prophecy of our Lord respecting our day: "Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold; . . . but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed." Luke 17: 28-30. Is not the evidence conclusive that society is to-day repeating the sins of ancient Sodom? Will the harvest be different?

G. W. RINE.

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War Prospects.—The little European flurry has aroused a great deal of interest, or at least the daily papers are endeavoring to arouse a great deal of interest over it. Germany has been feeling that France is getting too strong a hold in Morocco; therefore she sent her ships and seized Agadir. This has stirred France, who is putting her men on a war footing, and it has also stirred England. Some have in consequence been predicting war, and we have been asked what we thought regarding it. The SIGNS OF THE TIMES is not looking for war at this time. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." God has a work to do in the earth. That work is set forth in many places in the Scripture, Rev. 7:1-3 among others. God is gathering out of this last generation all those who have any desire to serve Him, and will yield themselves to His own perfect plan; and His mighty invisible intelligences are holding the winds of strife until His work is finished. He will permit, in His own providence, no wide-spread, desolating war until His work is done. There may be local disturbances, local conflicts, such as passed between Russia and Japan; but these will only serve to hasten His work. These will invariably mean open doors to His missionaries and His truth. For this God is working; for this He permits these conflicts to take place. But the great, world-wide conflict, the great war of Armageddon, will not occur until God's work is done. But the great war preparations among the world-blinded nations will go on just the same, even as His prophet of old told us that it would. Joel 3:14-16.

The World-Wide Sunday Law.—For years this journal has predicted that there would be not only a national Sunday law, but a world-wide Sunday law, in which all the nations of the earth would join, and out of which would grow persecution. This position was taken upon the prophecies of God's Word, before there was any indication whatever that the powers of the world would yield to it. It was pointed out that the great European powers were hostile, that the United States loved liberty, and that the great heathen nations, like China and Japan, would be wholly opposed to such a measure. But America is yielding step by step, the European powers are more or less in harmony with it, and a despatch dated May 11 from Peking, China, declares that an imperial edict declaring that beginning May 14 the Chinese shall observe Sunday as a day of rest, has been promulgated. Faith in the Word is becoming fact in history.

The "New York American" says that "some whisky is advertised without a headache, but no Munchausen goes so far as to advertise any without a heartache." In fact, every brand is full of it.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN

BY A YOUNG MAN

VIII. The Secret of Knowing— The Awfulness of Sin

MY DEAR ROBERT,—

The mystery of life will never be fully solved this side the grave. There is solemn truth in the scripture, "God is great, and we know Him not." But there is also truth in the noble saying of Paul, "I *know* whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." God in His infinity of glorious power we who are finite may not know; but God as our own loving heavenly Father, who knows and supplies all our wants, and who is willing and able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think,—such a God we may know most intimately, and in that knowledge be truly happy.

The secrets of the universe that some men trouble over, can best be solved in the secret of His presence. Men must *love* sacred things, at least in some degree, before they can *understand* them. They must assume a humble attitude, the attitude of a learner, if they would have a revelation from Him who dwells on high in the heavens, but also in the hearts of the lowly.

It can not be too strongly insisted upon, that the humble inquirer can not in the nature of things be turned away. There never yet lived man or woman who sincerely felt after God without in some degree finding Him out; and usually the more humble and persistent the search, the greater the illumination. The Bible puts the whole thing in one little verse: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." He "cried." That means something more than offering up a conventional prayer, that comes from the lips only. He was a "poor man," and *cried* out of the depths of his poverty; his heart went out in that prayer, the whole power of his being was wrapped up in it, and the *cry* was heard and answered. Verily the prayer of faith shall save the doubter far more than thousands of books or sermons on the evidences of Christianity or the inspiration of the Bible.

It is this earnest seeking after the things of the Spirit, that is so sadly lacking in the life of to-day. Men are not lifting up their hands to heaven; they are not asking, "What must I do to be saved?" Publicans are not offering the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Men are trying to forget that they are sinners; and in this their attitude of mild indifference,—"*broad-mindedness*" is the term some apply to it,—they are rapidly drifting into a condition of doubt as to the very existence of God.

The cure for such a condition lies in the blessed invitation, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." "Prove Me now," are the words of God Almighty. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

And, of course, back of this looking to the Lord for salvation, must lie some sense of what one is to be saved from, some sense, in other words, of the true character of sin. Next to his prayer for the divine favor, let the young man pray, and that most earnestly, that sin may appear to him exceed-

ing sinful, may stand out in all its dark, lurid colors, as the thing that leads to death.

The thought sometimes comes to the young man: "What matters it if I sow a few wild oats? Other men have done so in their youth, and they are good men now, and looked up to. A certain amount of dissipation belongs to the period of youth. A young man of spirit can not avoid it."

All such reasoning is wholly deceptive; it proceeds from elementary ignorance of the nature of sin and the consequences of sin. In the first place, it is of the nature of sin to defile, to separate from God and good, and to bind with chains that can be broken only with great difficulty, humanly speak-

She Was Very Commonplace

She was not "emancipated," and nobody termed her "new,"
And I'm really pained to mention that from clubs she quite withdrew.
She could hear the name of Browning with no sign of soulful sighs,
And that she had read her Shakespeare she would rarely advertise.

She had culture, but of "culchah" she was shy, I'm grieved to state;
And I've seen her wear a costume that was three weeks out of date.
"Bridge?" she said. "I think that gambling is a sin and a disgrace."
O, I may as well admit it,—she was very commonplace.

But you should have seen her children as they nestled by her side;
And you should have seen her husband as he gazed on her with pride;
And I have a little notion, as they looked on her dear face,
That they never once suspected she was very commonplace.

She was not "emancipated," but she toiled to bless her brood,
Quite forgetting sighs for Browning, as she labored for their good.
She was somewhat short on "culchah," but she was so long on home
That her husband and her children never cared from thence to roam—

Never cared for crimson blossoms that the primrose path supplies,
Since they found the greatest pleasure in the lovelight in her eyes.
Full content with humble duties unto which love added grace—
O, it must be quite apparent she was sadly commonplace.

Quite old-fashioned! Yet for love of one whose mem'ry we recall,
With a tear that half is starting and is half inclined to fall,
Let us thank our God, my brothers, of the morn we left behind,
That He gave to us dear mothers of the good old-fashioned kind.

—A. J. Waterhouse, in "California Weekly."

ing, often not at all. It is like descending into an underground palace, provided, no doubt, with many a gilded chamber, but also with gloomy dungeons that have bolts and bars. No, the young man may go into sin of his own free will; but he doesn't come out of it so easily. Coming out means a terrible conflict. Yes, and even when the conflict is successful, the marks of sin remain. "A cut limb may be cured," wrote Drummond, "but the scar remains forever. An earthquake is over in three minutes; but centuries after, the ground is still rent into gulfs and chasms which ages will never close. So the scars of sin on body and mind and soul live with us in silent retribution upon our past, and go with us to our graves."

One of the deeply sad things in life is that an evil act once committed can never really be recalled. An hour foolishly spent never comes back to be spent wisely. An opportunity neglected never presents itself a second time at the same door. Other opportunities may come, thank God, but never that identical one. And the wrong done in one moment of lightness and frivolity, or one moment of anger, may be lamented for many years thereafter, but not undone.

"Take my influence," cried a repentant sinner on his death-bed; "take my influence and bury it with me." But the thing was impossible. For centuries after a man dies, his influence lives on for good or for ill; yea, it never really dies. This is according to the laws of the universe, and it makes life wondrously solemn.

Because sin defiles the soul and is infinite in its evil consequences, the young man is urged everywhere in Holy Scripture to keep himself from it. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

And the best way to avoid the evil, is to do the good. Be a full-blooded Christian. Don't try Christianity of the half-and-half kind; there is no satisfaction in it. Put youthful enthusiasm into your service for Christ. Be in earnest about it. Follow hard after righteousness; it is the only way to attain it.

What infinite beauty in a life that is moment by moment in touch with the divine, a life that is molded after the heavenly pattern, one in which the very tones of the voice are under gentle restraint, that they may rightly represent the Master. Such a life breathes a heavenly influence, renewing itself daily from God, and flowing out in kindness to earth's needy children. Such a life is its own reason for existence, and it bears the most powerful testimony that can be borne to the wisdom and love of the Creator.

These, dear Robert, are some of the thoughts that come to me as I contemplate the dangers and the opportunities of the young man who is trying to be a Christian, and who wishes his life to tell for good. May you continue to be alive to your opportunities, and may you quickly turn aside from temptation, is the prayer of your friend,
L. P.

—★—

Do It Well

A JOB slighted because it is apparently unimportant leads to habitual neglect, so that men degenerate, insensibly, into bad workmen.

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Training the hand and eye to do work well leads individuals to form correct habits in other respects, and a good workman is, in most cases, a good citizen. No one need hope to rise above his present situation who

suffers small things to pass by unimproved, or who neglects, metaphorically speaking, to pick up a cent because it is not a dollar. Some of the wisest lawmakers, the best statesmen, the most gifted artists, the most merciful judges, the most ingenious mechanics, rose from the great mass.

A rival of a certain lawyer sought to humiliate him publicly by saying, "You blacked my father's boots once." "Yes," replied the lawyer, unabashed, "and I did it well." And because of his habit of doing even mean things well he rose to greater.

Take heart, all who toil! all youths in humble situations, all in adverse circumstances! If it be but to drive the plow, strive to do well; if only to cut bolts, make good ones; or to blow the bellows, keep the iron hot. It is attention to business that lifts the feet higher up on the ladder.—Anon.

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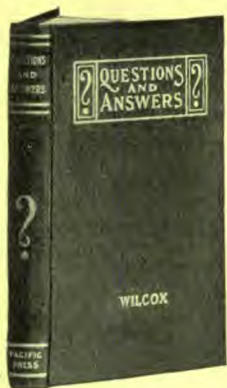
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"The new book 'Questions and Answers' came to my desk a few days ago. I have always been a very interested reader of the Question Corner of the 'Signs,' and receive this book with great pleasure. I am much pleased with the general make-up of the book and the way the questions are arranged by subjects."

" . . . My appreciation of the little book 'Questions and Answers,' which came to hand a few days ago. At the recent ministerial institute at Philadelphia, one of the most valuable features was the question box; and I have found in conducting conventions, that the question box was one of the most interesting and best appreciated parts of the program. I think that the idea of gathering and classifying the questions and answers that have been appearing in the 'Signs' is a splendid one, and I am sure that all will find such a book a very valuable help. There is danger that a writer, as well as a preacher, may say a great deal without really touching some vital point that may be troubling the people. 'Questions and Answers' is where they can ask for what is wanted and get it."

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Praise to God

By E. W. Clement

The moon and stars shine bright above;
They give their light by night.
The sun within its orbit moves
By day to give us light.

The earth with all its verdure green
Beneath our feet is spread;
The flowers shoot forth in early spring
From out their silent bed.

The trees put on their leafy garb,
The woods with music ring;
The birds their merry voices raise
In anthems to their King.

Let earth and sea and sky proclaim
Thy wondrous works and Word;
Let man his voice in praises raise
To glorify his Lord.

— ★ ★ —

What Christianity Has Done for Some Chinese

PHILOSOPHY, civilization, commerce,—none of these things regenerate the hearts of men or make them new creatures. Graduates from the best universities may still be heartless and reprobates; the children of the best citizens may stoop to do the meanest acts of avarice and crime; the richest tradesmen and the ablest financiers may possess all the qualities of the gambler and the spendthrift, the highway robber and the public defaulter; in none of these things is there any such thing as regeneration, a renewed conscience, a new heart.

But when you come to Christianity, the first thing the individual learns is the necessity of being "born again." He is taught that all his old ways are wicked, full of self and sin, and the only hope of his soul lies in his being made a new creature in Christ Jesus. True, all this talk of being born again is a mystery to the hearer, nor does he realize what it all means; but he places himself in the channel of the Spirit of God, and accepts the Word, and divine grace does the rest. Sorrow for sin comes in due time when the conscience is once aroused and the poor soul sees himself as compared to the Sinless One.

What God does for one soul, He can as easily and as readily do for all, would they

but come to Him and be saved. That Christianity is the means of bringing the heathen to a knowledge of sin, and awakening in them a consciousness of guilt, is a fact. Just as soon as a heathen accepts the Word of God as the rule of his life, and Christ as his Saviour, he finds peace with God. It was my privilege to be in a testimony meeting the other night where a large assembly of Chinese heathen and Christians were assembled. It was the regular prayer-meeting night, and two hundred heathen had come to hear what was said. After the minister in charge had talked for about twenty min-

utes, he turned the meeting into a testimony service; and I was never more surprised than to hear what God had done for some of these dear souls. No sooner had the pastor opened the meeting for any one who wished to witness for God, than a man from the middle of the congregation arose and hurried to the platform and began speaking. He had been a Christian but a short time, but he witnessed for the Lord in a most positive testimony. The speaker was from the famine-stricken district in the province of Anhwei. He said: "Last fall my only son was very sick. I had all the Chinese medicine-men in our section of the country doctor him, and they all told me that my son could not live. I bought his coffin and his burial clothes, and had everything ready for his expected death. During

my grief, which was very great, a Christian called on me, and told me that God could heal my son and restore him to health if I would only pray to Him. But I did not know how to pray. I at once set myself to seek God, so that I might have His help in this time of my great need. I confessed my sins, and promised the Lord my life if He would heal my son. The Lord in

heaven heard my prayer, and my son was healed, and recovered his health, and is alive to-night. The Lord raised him from the dead, for all hope of his living was gone. Friends, I know God hears prayer, and that His Word is true. I was a wicked man; but I found healing for all my sins from the same God who healed my son."

Liu Tien Bang, from Chow Kia Kow, said: "When I first heard the truth, I opposed it with all my might. I hated it, and hated all Christians and all foreigners. Then there came to our province a terrible famine, and I took the plague, and expected to die. All hopes of my recovery were given up, and I believed my end was near. In this condition, waiting for death to do its work, the words of the Gospel came to me with great force. A conviction came to me that I was a bad man, and needed help to die. I could not shake the conviction off that what I had heard about God and sin was true, but there was no help for me. I became so distressed in mind that I called



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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CAL., AUGUST 22, 1911

Our authority is the Bible, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. When the Common ("King James" or "Authorized") Version or the American Standard Revised Version is used, the version will not generally be designated in reference. Any Bible quotation in this paper, therefore, differing from the Common Version, unless otherwise indicated, will be almost invariably from the American Standard edition of the Revised Bible, copyright 1910, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

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We commend to our young men readers "Letters to a Young Man," on page 12. It offers some most excellent suggestions to one who may be in the doubting condition.

We wish that we could tell our readers the many good things we have in store for them, but we can not do it at present. In fact, it is impossible to do it at any time. There are always new, great things springing up which give opportunity for new views of Christianity, new conceptions of God's plans, new gratitude to Him who has thus revealed Himself. But this we hope to do,—to make every paper full of these good things for our readers.

To those who sometimes become hopeless over missions, we commend the article on missions on page 14, "What Christianity Has Done for Some Chinese." One of the great difficulties to-day in home lands as well as foreign lands is that the simple Gospel is not preached. The words of God are hidden under human theories, and human theories have no power. The Word of God is living; and when the living Word of God is received, it is able to change hearts.

We are sorry to record the death of James A. O'Connor, founder and pastor of Christ's Mission in New York City. He was the editor of *The Converted Catholic*, was born in Ireland in 1846, educated for the priesthood in Baltimore, and in Paris, France. He was ordained a priest in 1871. For eight years he continued a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, and then became a Protestant, and in 1879 founded Christ's Mission. It is said that in his thirty years of work he had induced 161 priests to become Protestants, and also thousands of men and women. While he told many facts regarding the Roman Catholic Church, yet the spirit in which they were told was, so far as we have observed, a kindly and Christian spirit. Referring to

his death, the *Western Watchman* calls him a "half-idiot," and concludes its note by saying, "We do not think him responsible, and hope he has found as favorable a judgment in the great bar above."

The pitiable foolishness of practical joking was shown in St. Louis not long ago when a mother pointed a pistol at her three-year-old and only child, called "Hands up," and pulled the trigger. Ten minutes later the little boy was dead. She thought that it was a toy or harmless. She knows better now. It was a poor sort of education to give the boy even if the pistol had been harmless. At its best, practical joking is foolishness. It demands very little brains.

John Warne Gates, the well-known and spectacular American financier, is dead. He died August 9 in the arms of his wife and son. He started, a barefoot boy, at Turner's Junction, now a part of Chicago, making his first money by shucking corn. With this he purchased an interest in a thrashing-machine, making \$1,200 the first year. He next entered the barbed wire business, which finally resulted in the ninety million steel wire trust, swallowed later by the United States Steel Corporation. He was a big plunger, or gambler, and hardly a fit example for young men.

Fruits of Intolerance.—A despatch from London dated August 3 declares that 20,000 Albanians have fled from their country to face death by starvation in Montenegro. High Albania is now a desolate wilderness. Many have been massacred and burned, it is stated, in their homes. Others are now near death from starvation. More than 20,000 crowd all Montenegro. The object of the Turks seems to be to expel the Catholics from the land. The Albanians declare that death is to be preferred to further Turkish horrors. No grain has been sown, nor can be sown, in the devastated district this year. Certainly conditions in Montenegro and Albania are anything but encouraging, and it all comes because of the intolerance of men who put themselves in the place of God, for this persecution is essentially religious. If men were willing to adopt the principle laid down by our Saviour, the giving to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and rendering to God the things that are God's, persecution would be wiped from the earth. All true civil liberty must grow out of a recognition of this principle. It is well, also, to keep constantly before us the words of the Master Himself, "If any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." Civil governments ought to be founded for one purpose only: to repress incivility; in other words, to keep order, and to see that equal justice was rendered to the weak and the unprotected, and those who might differ from the great mass religiously.

Not Ethics Alone, but Life.—It is not the ethics of Christianity which save. These are admirable; in fact, perfection. No other religion of the world has ethics superior; but man may believe in the ethical teaching of Christianity, and still die. He has no power in himself to meet the standard. This is where God, in His great goodness, meets us. He knows we are weak, knows that we are powerless to put away sin, or overcome it; and therefore He sends to us the very life of God in our Lord Jesus Christ; and as a demonstration of what that life can do we have the example of our Lord while here upon the earth, and His own words of encouragement to every seeking soul: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The world knows only the life of the flesh, the life that is fed on food and water and air and sunshine; the Christian knows the life direct from the heart of God, flowing out from the great Fountain of life and into the being of the Christian, in the channel of God's holy law, to which the heart of the Christian is subject. That is what the world needs to-day; it is not ethics, more ethics; not theories, more theories; not some new-fangled scheme by which Christianity can be remodeled; it needs the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He has placed in His Word for every child of faith.

The War Spirit.—The *Western Watchman*, that virile Roman Catholic paper, tells us some clear truths once in a while. Concerning the war spirit in the world, it has this to say, in its issue of August 3:

We can moralize over this [that is, the condition of things in Europe] as we may. The fact remains that men will kill each other for what they would not pay a month's wages. It is not the value of the Morocco land or bays that is the wage of war; it is the fixed determination that the power that depends on its armed men to make good its pretensions, will have to show the stuff which men are made of. There are millions and millions of people in France, Germany, and England now shouting for war who do not know where Agadir is. The fact is, the world is not ruled by reason, but by brute force, and we have not advanced much from the time and men who made the "middle C" the terror of the world's trade and navigation.

Then after telling us that neither Germany nor France has any right in Morocco, it says: "What a pity the pope is not arbitrator in the present crisis! Strange to say, Germany would be the first to welcome his intervention." "Will the world ever come to fully appreciate the wondrous influence for peace and international amity it possesses in the successor of St. Peter?" But it might be well to consider whether there would have been any such wars at all as have cursed Europe for centuries had it not been for the teachings of the so-called "successors of St. Peter."

A despatch from Berlin, August 4, declares that there have been over one thousand deaths in that city from sunstroke during the ten days of Germany's heat wave, and as many more from heart failure during bathing, and some from gastritis and typhus, caused from lack of water. In the Moselle Valley the fish died, seeming to suffer from a kind of scrofula owing to the overheated water. In the South German States almost all the governments have suspended work in the public departments at least for a few hours in the early morning, as sickness resulting from heat has desolated the staff. Schools will not be reopened until the middle of August, the doctors declaring that only strong children would be able to endure the work in the intense heat. The despatch is headed "Unparalleled." The Scripture tells us there will be a time when the sun will have power to scorch men with heat. It would seem as tho the beginning of it was reached, and yet we know from the Scriptures that this is not the beginning. When the time predicted comes, what we have hitherto had will be faint indeed compared with the fearful heat under the last plagues.

It must be a novel sight to see a swarm of grasshoppers which darkens the sun; but a despatch from Webster City, Iowa, August 4, states that an enormous cloud of them was passing over the city, which darkened everything for miles. They were flying about one hundred feet from the earth, and there was no way of estimating the thickness of the cloud except that it was dense enough to shut out the light. They were an hour and a half in passing over the city, and the stream was miles wide. It is not known whence they came, but there was great fear on the part of the farmers as to where they would light.

According to the president of the National Fire Protection Association, Mr. W. H. Merrill, in fifteen years fire has cost the country 20,000 lives and \$2,000,000,000 worth of property. He declared that his association was waging an educational campaign on Christmas decorations, Fourth of July celebrations, defective flues, the incendiary, or fire-bug, the fire danger and children, the cost of carelessness in stoves, and other things which menace the safety of life and property. Certainly it is an awful toll to pay for what is almost invariably the result of carelessness.

This is a poor, unbalanced world. There is poverty-stricken Portugal, for instance, sadly lacking in education; yet it is said she will spend \$150,000,000 on war-ships and forts.