

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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ONE PENNY.

A Gigantic Evil.

Many of the streams from which civil governments of the present era reap enormous revenues, and with which they carry on the administration of public affairs, live, rule, and govern, come from undoubtedly deeply unhealthy sources as far as the general weal of the inhabitants is concerned. A government to accomplish the design of its existence from a principle of right, if it is any good at all, should aim to protect the interests of its subjects by a code of laws that would promote the best interests of the community at large, both in regard to the health and morality of its people. A government that lives and draws a stupendous revenue at the expense of the moral stamina, the life-blood, and health of its subjects is unworthy of the name of government, and subverts the power that is placed in its hands. The health of its people, both mentally and physically, should certainly be the just aim of a portion of its ambition at least; and anything of a harmful and deleterious influence should, by its jurisdiction, be prohibited.

This is certainly the only righteous view which any one of sober mind can have upon the subject. But is this the case?—No. Governments live to-day by the sacrifice of human life to a very large extent indeed, and their revenues are largely drawn from the importations and the dissemination through their territories of articles of trade, licensed evils which are eating out the manhood of the race both physically and morally, and which are

making a rapid and overwhelming wreck of the human family. The drink traffic is encouraged with its flood of extractions, its brews, and its prime brands; with its whiskies, its brandies, and its alcoholic compounds, which find their way into the make-up, or, rather the tear-down, of the constitution of our drinking millions. And why, in the face of all the evil which confronts us, is it permitted? Oh, the answer comes, Government wants the revenue. It is the source of our wealth, say they. It would make a hole in our national banking account,

and a deficiency in our budget should we legislate against the traffic. Our Customs house is there for the purpose, and it is a source of revenue. While within a short radius of their Parliament Houses are their crime-reeking penitentiaries and gaols, whose cells are annually filled with the victims whom they have licensed others to destroy. This is some of the legislation which stares thinking men in the face to-day. With one hand acts of legislation are signed and enacted, carrying heavy penalties against crime; and with the other hand almost

unlimited liberty is granted men to promote crime by the unlimited sale of their intoxicating drinks, the brands of which to-day are legion.

Government to-day is really a gigantic trust, which holds primarily a huge monopoly of the drink trade, and which reaps the first-fruits accruing from that vast traffic which is rapidly destroying millions both body and soul. Drink is the prevailing cry of the community, and every large centre of civilisation is crowded with



Paul Writing an Epistle.

licensed houses with a carte blanche to sell all grades of liquor, from a glass of beer to a bottle of cognac. But our parental governments take good care that their own rights have been protected in the matter by the quota which has found its way into the Treasury. Governments are living to-day in this matter at the expense of the demoralisation of millions of their subjects. That which goes to the upbuilding of a race, viz., a strong constitution and health, is wrecked by the wholesale extent of the drink traffic and other evils which are equally bad, which have undermined the constitution, physique, and mental strength of the present century.

Yet this question, although a serious one, is not without its ludicrous aspect. Winking at a traffic which is sending thousands to untimely graves, the paternal affection of our government manifests its interest in the public cause to a great extent. Great zeal is manifested in the promulgation of sanitary laws and the strict enforcing of them. When an epidemic has broken out, or a bubonic rat has been discovered by some clever expert, what a flutter there is in the camp. What a dissecting goes on, scrutinising, examining, and diagnosing, the end being that the rat, perhaps, is carefully cremated, and an acre or two of buildings in the vicinity of the capture are burned to the ground. What for?—Oh, the public health is jeopardised, and a host of government doctors fly around, intensity marking their actions. This is not a matter of revenue. No; therefore the plague must be stopped. No government can reap a revenue from a plague-stricken rat, or from millions of them. The health of the people under this circumstance must be zealously guarded, and their welfare secured. But these same governments will shut their eyes to the plague which is filling their gaols with criminals, their asylums with insane, their streets with paupers, a plague which is eating out the vitality of a nation, and turning the cities into great drinking and smoking depots, and making them presentable marks for the tempest that is soon to fall upon them.—J. B.

What Scholars Say.

By H. E. A. Minchin.

This is what scholars say about Sunday observance:—

MR. GLADSTONE.—“The seventh day of the week has been deposed from its title to obligatory religious observance, and its prerogative has been carried over to the first, under no direct precept of Scripture.”—“Church Monthly.”

DR. R. W. DALE.—“It is quite clear that however rigidly or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath.” “The Sabbath was founded on a specific divine command. We can plead no such command for the observance of Sunday.”

“There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday.”—“The Ten Commandments.”

SIR WILLIAM DOMVILLE.—“Centuries of the Christian era passed away before the Sunday was observed as a Sabbath.”—“Examination of Six Texts.”

CANON EYTON.—“There is no word, no hint, in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday.” “No commandment of God bids us do this, or not do that on Sunday; we are absolutely free as far as His law goes.”—“Ten Commandments.”

The foregoing is Protestant testimony. Now for some Catholic testimony.

“THE CATHOLIC MIRROR” (the official organ of Cardinal Gibbons).—“Of those who follow the Bible as their

guide, the Israelites and Seventh-day Adventists have the exclusive weight of evidence on their side, while the Biblical Protestant has not a word in self-defence for his substitution of Sunday for Saturday.”

“PLAIN TALK ABOUT THE PROTESTANTISM OF TO-DAY.”—“The observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage which they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the church.”

Reader, ponder well these words.

The observance of Sunday is the exaltation of a human custom above the precepts of the Bible. But the exaltation of custom and tradition to a level with the Bible, and even above it,—the substitution of the human for the divine,—is what constitutes the Papacy, and men ought to know it. The substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath, without any Scripture warrant, and in direct opposition to the commandment of God, is, therefore, the great distinguishing mark of the Papacy, or, using the words of the Bible itself, “the mark of the beast.”

Against those who shall, in the near future, worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark is pronounced the most awful curse to be found in all the Bible. Here it is:—

“If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” Rev. 14: 9-11.

But notice in connection with this movement there is seen a company who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Rev. 14: 12.

Reader, let us be on the right side.

The German government has made an attempt to restrict the development of departmental stores in the interests of the small retail traders by levying a tax on these huge concerns, which is increased in proportion as departments are added. Unfortunately for those whom this piece of legislation was intended to benefit, the effort has failed, for the monopolists have simply shifted the tax to the manufacturers from whom they get their supplies.

Scant sympathy was shown with the royal house of Russia in their most recent trouble, the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergius, the uncle of the Czar. By the populace he was regarded as one of the most prominent of the Czar's counsellors against the Reform movement, hence the lack of sympathy which developed in some quarters into almost open rejoicing at the success of the revolutionary party to despatch one of their strongest enemies. Such events are deplorable, not only because of the destruction of human life which they involve, but the perpetration of such a tragedy, with the tacit consent of large numbers of citizens who express their appreciation of the men who undertook the dark deed, is a strong testimony to the volume of pent-up hatred which lurks in the bosom of the nation.



A. W. ANDERSON, EDITOR.

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, MARCH 6, 1905.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ.—No. 10.

Revelation 5.

The Book with the Seven Seals.

As John beheld the majestic Being who sat upon the throne of the universe, he noticed "a book written within, and on the backside sealed with seven seals." Concerning the appearance of this book it is well to remember that the books of the ancients were not anything like the bound volumes of to-day. They were usually composed of long pieces of parchment rolled upon a stick. The accompanying illustration may convey some idea of this seven-sealed volume. With a loud voice a strong angel cried, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" This book contained the counsels of God. Who is worthy to open it? Not a created being in heaven, nor upon the earth, or under the earth was able to open the book. How futile are the attempts of men to fathom the eternal realities of the future; yea, we cannot tell even what a day may bring forth. Here was a challenge to the whole universe to unlock the secrets of the future which God had sealed from the vision of angels and men.

Thereupon the apostle, distressed beyond measure that the knowledge which lay concealed within that book should be lost to the church, "wept much." Of this ex-



perience of the seer one writer has truly said: "The Revelation was not written without tears, neither without tears will it be understood." Have you, dear reader, agonised in spirit to understand the mysteries of divine truth? Has the desire for knowledge concerning the things of God caused you to shed tears? So earnestly did the beloved disciple long for the counsels of God to be opened to his understanding that he wept much, yet many who profess to love the Lord Jesus pass these things by, declaring the book of Revelation to be an allegory, and freely confess their inability to understand the truths which it reveals. That they cannot understand the deep things of God causes them no remorse whatever. Should not everyone who takes upon himself the name of Jesus be as anxious as John to know and understand the blessed things which He alone can unfold?

The encouragement with which one of those four and twenty elders who surround the throne of God comforted the apostle may be experienced by all. He said:—

"Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Verse 5.

Then John beheld "in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the four elders, a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns

[symbols of power], and seven eyes [symbols of wisdom], which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." There stood the One who alone was worthy to open the book, the One who "endured the cross," the One who endured "the contradiction of sinners against Himself," "the Man of Sorrows," He who was "despised and rejected of men," He it is who by His meekness and gentleness, His lamb-like characteristics, "prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof," "and He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne."

What was revealed by the opening of this wonderful book will be the subject of our succeeding studies.

A New God.

Dr. Lyman Abbott is reported to have definitely dropped the theological idea of God, and accepted and proclaimed the God revealed by every advance of science in our age. He declares man's progress to be a progress upward, each day being better than the first. In a lecture to the students at Harvard, he said:—

"I wonder if you students in Harvard will understand me when I say that I no longer believe in a Great First Cause. My God is a great and ever-present force, which is manifest in all the activities of man and all the workings of Nature. I believe in a God who is in and through and of everything—not an absentee God, whom we have to reach through a Bible, or a priest, or some other outside aid, but a God who is close to us."

Unfortunately, Dr. Lyman Abbott is not alone in his opinion, his views being indorsed by many prominent theologians and writers. The development of what is called the "new pantheism" is going on at a marvellous pace. Those who have adopted this new creed deny that they reject God, claiming to have only enlarged the outlook by which the Deity is seen. But this new god

is not the God of the Bible. It is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The necessity of a vicarious sacri-

fice finds no place in this "new creed." Man, by merely intellectual development, is making daily progress, say they, "each day being better than the first."

The most superficial knowledge of the Bible is sufficient to show that such ideas are entirely opposed to teachings of Scripture. Those holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, all taught that man was created upright, but through sin lost his original innocence and perfection, and that without the provision of a Saviour he would be utterly and eternally lost. Adam believed this, the patriarchs believed it, inspired prophets wrote of it, poets immortalised it. Moses, the man of God, collated the facts concerning man's creation, his temptation, his fall, the merciful provision which God provided for his redemption, the gospel types or object lessons by which God taught His children the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the laws of God, and the penalties for their transgression. Jesus Christ, the Teacher sent from heaven, indorsed the Old Testament. To the unbelievers of His day He said:—

"Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" John 5: 46, 47.

Rejection of the Pentateuch is naturally followed by the rejection of all the teaching that is based upon it.

The writings of Moses contain the germ of all truth. Every writer of Holy Writ bases his teaching upon those first principles which were unfolded to men by the Spirit of God through Moses. The Bible, and the Bible alone, has been the rule of faith and the faithful guide of God's people through the ages. The Bible, the work of the Holy Spirit, is the revelation of God to man; but the wisdom of this perverse generation, like that of the Greeks in Paul's day, is leading men away from God. Worldly wisdom exalts self in the place of God, it gratifies the natural heart whose pride is wounded by the testimony which the Bible reveals concerning its inherent wickedness.

When "the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that believe which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." I Cor. I : 21-25.

For our part we prefer to stand with Jesus Christ and His apostles, prophets, and inspired teachers, holding to the "faith once delivered to the saints." By the wise of this world we may be despised, nay, our determination to hold fast by "the foolishness of preaching" may even bring us into ridicule, but while "science, literature, and history," may tell the teachers of the "new creed" that the Bible can no longer be accepted as the ultimate guide, we, like the apostle Paul, are not "ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Rom. I : 16. We need not be discouraged because the wise of this world are failing to grasp the truths of God's revelation to man, "for ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence." I Cor. I : 26-29.

How C. H. Spurgeon Got £20,000.

The following anecdote was told by the Rev. Thos. Champness at Central Hall, Manchester: "You know the wet blanket gentleman who will say, 'It is a good deal of money you need.' Spurgeon, very early on in his career, came in contact with these people. He said, 'God Almighty has given me a commission to preach His gospel in London, and there is no building large enough to hold the people who come to hear me. I cannot help that; I must put up a building, and we will have the largest building in London in which the gospel shall be preached.' So he called his principal people together. You cannot keep these wet blankets off committees; they are always there. So he said, 'You know it will cost £20,000, and I must have that £20,000 in my hands somehow or other before I begin. I want you brethren to join with me in borrowing £20,000. Put your names to it; I will put mine; let us raise £20,000.'

They looked at him, and all voted against him but one man; so he said, 'Good night, brethren,' but to the one man he said, 'You stop.' They all went but the one man, and Mr. Spurgeon said, 'Now I will put it to the meeting.' And the meeting carried the resolution to spend £20,000. The next day Charles Spurgeon went to preach at a little Baptist chapel at Harrow-on-the-Hill. When he got out of the station there was a man with a fine horse. 'Now, Mr. Spurgeon, you are going up the hill.' 'Yes.' 'Well, get up, and I'll drive you.' And away they went. How that horse did go! 'You said you want £20,000, didn't you, Mr. Spurgeon?' said the stranger. 'Well, I will let you have it.' 'I thought,' said Spurgeon, 'that he had got out of the asylum, and I was glad when we pulled up at the chapel door.' Next morning, however, the £20,000 came, without any note of hand, without anybody signing a paper."

Sincerity is the basis of every virtue.

"All history, and particularly that of religions, teaches that coercion may make martyrs, but never proselytes."



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GENERAL ARTICLES

FROM OUR CONTRIBUTORS

God is Near.

Though the way be dark and dreary,
 God is near;
 Near to bless, and guide, and keep thee,
 Do not fear.
 'Tis a sweet thought, comfort-giving,
 What betide,
 He is present, ever-living,
 At thy side.

What though cloud and storm o'ertake thee
 In the night?
 He'll not leave thee nor forsake thee;
 He is light!
 Like a child, thyself confiding
 In His care.
 Follow Him, in Him abiding,
 All is cheer.

Give thyself entirely to Him,
 Do His will;
 And thy life the highest mission
 Will fulfil.
 Then pursue thy journey onward
 At His call.
 'Tis the path that leads thee homeward
 After all!

—“Christian Intelligencer.”

Is the World Growing Old?—No. 1.

By R. Hare.

All things terrestrial grow old. The loveliest forms that live fade and die, and time, with its restless feet, tramples the fairest ideals of human ambition in the dust. Only the celestial is eternal. The Divine alone is immortal, and man must, therefore, reach out after something beyond the limits of this world if he would shine as the “stars forever.” All earthly things pass away, and even the man of the earth must at last disappear. But is the world itself growing old? Does the hand of time press so heavily upon its high places that the foundations are made to tremble, and the perpetual hills to bow? Has the beauty of its splendours grown dim, or the days of its youth passed by forever? Let us read and see.

When man sinned he became subject to death. According to the sentence pronounced by Jehovah, the being made of dust, the candidate for immortality, must die. But in His wonderful mercy, God gave to man a probationary life,—a short span of years,—in order that he might, if he so desired, prepare himself for the future immortal life. Then it was that the Creator, in His sympathy for man, determined that the creation itself should be brought down to the same level with dying humanity. “For nature had to submit to imperfection—not by its own choice, but owing to Him who made it submit,—yet not without hope that some day Nature itself, also, will be freed from its enslavement to corruption, and attain to the freedom which will mark the

glory of God's children.” Rom. 8:20. Twentieth Century New Testament.

It might not be that a dying man should dwell in an immortal land, and so in divine sympathy “creation was made subject to frailty” (Campbell's Trans.), and in that frailty it has continued to groan until now. Touched by mortality its fairest flowers have continued to wither, and the throbbing of its great heart has brought pain. There was but one part of the inheritance left untouched by the “frailty” that bids everything die—the Paradise home. That portion was removed from earth to heaven, so that it might be reserved “undefiled” for the people of God. 1 Peter 1:4.

As the ages have passed by the frailty of the terrestrial has become more marked. Death and decay have touched the very springs of life, and now, overburdened with the weight of centuries, and enfeebled by the wreck of earthquakes, tempests, and tornadoes, the old earth awaits the renewing that will again link it with the divine. This is the one hope, and the only hope, that now lies before the earth as it groans under its mantle of pain. “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” Rom. 8:22. As it has shared in human pain and human frailty, so creation is yet to share in “the glorious liberty of the sons of God.”

Then and Now.

When forming the earth, the Creator placed a great portion of the water in the heart of the globe, and there, bounded on every side by barriers that it could not pass, the mighty tide waited in silence the command that would open its prison-house. Wickedness multiplied, and the time finally came that the earth must be cleansed. Then the “fountains of the great deep were broken up,” and God brought forth the hidden waters, and their surging billows covered the earth. Now the waters are no longer “gathered into one place,” for they cover a large portion of the surface of the earth, and roll their billows over the plains and hills that once blossomed with Eden glories. Another cleansing agent now occupies the deep prison-house where the silent waters once slumbered. The fire, the everlasting fire, prepared against the day of final cleansing, now burns behind the adamant barriers that lie under the mountains. The volcanoes that lift their fiery hands heavenward have long borne testimony to the existence of the cleansing agent that is already prepared for its work, but men have been slow to believe.

The Unbeliever's Denial.

The Scriptures tell that in the “last days” scoffers will appear claiming that “all things continue as they were since the beginning of the creation.” 2 Peter 3:3, 4. Now it is true that the mind, blinded by unbelief, will doubt with the clearest evidence before it. “Though one rose from the dead they would not believe.” Hence it is that those who scoff at the signs of Christ's second coming most readily repudiate all evidence of change that would in any way indicate the approach of that supreme event.

It is surely evident that all things terrestrial do not continue as they were. What mean those ocean shells on top of yonder mountain?—They tell of changes wrought when the “fountains of the great deep were broken up.” What mean those fifty-two volcanic islands (nineteen of which have again disappeared, while ten are now inhabited) that rose from the ocean's

bed during the last century?—They also speak of change, mighty and evident change, and yet the scoffer cannot find the evidence that would convince him of any change.

Before the deluge the average life of man was about 900 years, but now it is only about thirty-four years, with only one in 12,000 who lives to be 100 years old. Here, again, it is self-evident that all things do not continue as they were.

In 1759 a plain in Mexico was filled up by a volcano, and transformed into a mountain over 1,000 feet high. The Scandinavian peninsula of North-Western Europe is rising on the eastern coast at the rate of four feet in a century; while Holland, Belgium, and the south shore of the Baltic are gradually sinking. Here we find change in even the rock barriers that bound the mighty deep.

Oh, yes; everything on this mundane sphere is subject to change. If we are to find that which is changeless, we must look for a country by sin undefiled—a land where Satanic influences have never held control. The stars shine forever and ever, for the touch of mortality has not dimmed their glory, nor has the "frailty" that weakened all terrestrial energies cast over them its garment of pain.

Reality.

By J. Gibson.

The great evil with which our Saviour had to contend was the evil of hypocrisy, the unspeakable falsehood of seeming and not being. The Pharisees and scribes who arrayed themselves against Him were hypocrites, actors, men who feigned to be true followers of God. The Saviour told them that they were but whited sepulchres, outwardly appearing pure and clean, but inwardly full of wickedness.

The psalmist David says: "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts." Ps. 51:6. Our Lord emphasised the absolute need of having truth in the "inward parts." He came to call men to sincerity of life, to purity of heart, to nobility of motive. The golden thread that ran through all His teaching was, "Blessed are the pure in heart."

The difference between the true man and the false man is a difference of heart. Their actions may be much the same, but not so their hearts. The heart of the good man is always better than his life; whereas the heart of the false man is always worse than his life. The Pharisee prayed; the publican prayed. But one was proud and self-righteous, the other humble and conscious of his nothingness.

Duncan Matheson, a Scottish evangelist, said a little before his death: "Reality is the great thing; I have always sought to be real." Reality is the great thing in your life and mine. God desires truth in our inward parts. The question is, How can I be true?—Live your life unto God, and not unto men.

The Bible is of none effect except as God's word.

The Lord sends His people where the light is needed. The eternal riches, souls saved from sin, are worth all that they cost.—Selected.

The Enduring Word.

By F. W. Paap.

Among the many almost overwhelming multiplicity of books of this day and age the Bible, undoubtedly, occupies the foremost place. From the very inception of rebellion there has been a constant effort, on the part of the disaffected, to destroy this Book of books, "but the word of the Lord endureth forever."

It is a hard thing for mortals to learn that their safety and eternal happiness are to be found in an implicit confidence and acceptance of this treasure. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." There is to be found in Holy Writ a remedy for every earthly woe. Its promises are numberless, and not one of them will He forget.

Unfortunately, even among those who profess His name, there are many who seem to find greater delight in digesting some questionable volume. These volumes are, generally speaking, in comparison to the word, as "vomit from the pit." They are utterly powerless to supply a remedy for even one mortal woe. O fellow mortal, "Come, taste, and see that the Lord is good." "His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace." "Great peace have all they that love Thy law."

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. . . . The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is Thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." Ps. 19:7-11.

Read these wonderful words again and again. Treasure them. What a book! By hiding it in our hearts we are enabled to accomplish "all things." This word will do for us, each of us,—for there is no respect of persons with God,—"exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." Study it prayerfully. Heed its entreaties. Come. Oh, every one that thirsteth, come. All ye that are weary and heavy laden, come. "Though your sins be as scarlet," come, for "they shall be as white as snow." "Though they be red like crimson," come, for "they shall be as wool." Isa. 1:18. "Whosoever will, may come." Rev. 22:17. "The word of the Lord is quick [living] and powerful." "All His biddings are enablings." This is so because the very germinating principle of life is in the word. "To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on His name." John 1:12.

Comprehending, in a measure, anew the boundless resources of Omnipotence, all available through an entire surrender and full acceptance of every word of this blessed enduring word, shall we not leave the murky waters of the valley and scale Lebanon's heights for the sparkling, life-giving streams that make glad the city of God?

"Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life; Let me more of their beauty see, wonderful words of life; All so freely given, wooing us to heaven, beautiful words, Wonderful words, wonderful words of life."

World-Wide Field

The Missionary's Call.—No. 3.

By R. W. Munson, Padang, Sumatra.

It is a fatal mistake for a man to wait until he reaches the field before he discovers his unfitness for the place he has chosen. It is worse than a waste of time and money; it is a great injury to the cause of Christ. This is particularly true in the foreign field, where one is far removed from the base of supplies, and where the correction of such an error means great delay in time and a wicked waste of precious treasure. I might give some illustrations of this. For example, John Mark turned back after having gone so far as Perga in Pamphylia with Paul and Barnabas, and returned to Jerusalem. On the second journey Paul had such a sharp contention with Barnabas that they separated. Paul declared that John Mark was no fit person to take on such a responsible mission because he forsook them at Perga.

We are not told what the cause of John's retreat was, but it was no doubt fear of the dangers that he heard awaited them in the highlands of Asia Minor. His faith in God was too weak, or else he had made a mistake in his call. Whichever or whatever may have been the cause, he played the coward, and no doubt he bitterly repented of it, and desired to redeem himself by attempting a second journey, but Paul refused to take any risks, and so Barnabas, his uncle, took him, and returned to Cyprus his native land, and there is reason to believe that John Mark succeeded better this last time, for Paul subsequently asks that John Mark be sent to his assistance, "for he is profitable unto me," said the apostle. Nothing but genuine merit would have won such a confession from the stern apostle to the Gentiles.

It is comforting to know that we can redeem our mistakes, but it is far better not to make them. And we can avoid doing so by taking care that we are, indeed, not only called, but fitted for the work. By way of illustrating this thought I will relate an incident that I heard while yet at college more than four and twenty years ago.

A rude, uncultured farmer, who was at the same time a carpenter, was soundly converted in one of the revivals that swept over the American continent early in the nineteenth century, heard the call to go and preach the gospel to the nations sitting in darkness. He took his kit of carpenter's tools and secured passage aboard a sailing ship bound for the Levant, and, in course of time, appeared at the home of a veteran missionary in Constantinople. He introduced himself, and informed the reverend servant of God that he had come to preach the gospel to the Turks. The old missionary was a discerning man, and he quickly perceived that he had a diamond in the rough to deal with, and proceeded wisely to turn his talents to the best possible advantage. But he did not begin by throwing cold water on his enthusiasm, or by cooling his ardour.

He cordially welcomed the good man, and by judicious questioning developed the fact that he was but indifferently educated, and wholly unprepared for such a difficult task as the conquest of the Turkish tongue, or the contest of arms with Mohammedan casuists. He assured him that he was glad to see him, and that a great work was waiting to be done, but that skilled workmen were needed.

The man soon perceived that he had made a mistake, and was wise enough to ask for counsel. "What would you do," said the veteran of many years, "if you were to go into the forest to fell trees, and you found your axe very dull, would you exert an additional amount of strength, and thus make up for the lack of edge on your axe, or would you find some better and more effective way?"

His visitor replied promptly, and with energy, "Sir, I would grind my axe." "Exactly, my friend. Go home, and do it."

He went home, managing to get there partly by the price of his kit of tools, and partly by working his passage, and at once set about the important task before him. He entered a college, and pursued his course with rare enthusiasm; and, finally, after five or six years, he reappeared on the Bosphorus, and this time he was gladly set to work, and he never ran away, nor failed in his undertaking. He became one of the honoured and eminently successful agents of his church in the foreign mission field.

The prospective missionary must "grind his axe" if he would succeed, no matter what his particular work may be.

When his preparation is complete, the candidate for missionary service may most properly ask for divine guidance in choosing the field he is to enter. God has promised, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye." "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering."

This call of God sometimes expresses itself in an intense longing to share in the work of carrying the light to those in darkness. Whenever the work or the field in view is brought to mind, there is a sudden, unusual tenderness of heart felt, and tears start unbidden to the eyes. One so affected will feel that nothing which this world contains is worth a moment's consideration, if he cannot be permitted to realise the holy ambition of obeying the Saviour's command, "Go, and preach the gospel to all nations," or to some one of them at least.

He will feel this desire like fire in his bones, and even life itself will possess no charms for him if he is hindered in the carrying out of the one great desire of his heart. Such a consuming desire as this is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is infallible proof of the genuineness of the call.

News has reached us from Pastor G. A. Irwin, who has been travelling in the Malaysian Archipelago. His impressions concerning the importance and extent of that field for missionary enterprise have been greatly enlarged since visiting those densely populated seaports—Singapore, Hong-Kong, and Manila. In the matter of tonnage Singapore and Hong-Kong occupy positions in the seven greatest seaports of the world.

HOME AND HEALTH

The Guest of Every Day.

Homely work is mine to-day,
Floors to sweep, and fires to lay,
Plates to wash, and clothes to mend;
Work which never seems to end,
Yet I pray,
Jesus, be my Guest to-day.
Not as One to dwell apart
In the spare room of my heart,
But as One to whom my prayer
May confide the smallest care,
Thus I pray,
Lord, be Thou my Guest to-day! —Selected.

Deterioration of Human Race.

Dr. D. H. Kress, editor of the "Australasian Good Health" and medical superintendent of the Sydney Medical and Surgical Sanitarium, gave an interesting lecture to an appreciative audience in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Gisborne, N.Z., the following report of which is taken from the "Poverty Bay Herald"—

"It is observed with considerable alarm by thinking and observing men that the human race is rapidly deteriorating. The recognition of this fact is responsible for the many sanitary, temperance, and health associations, physical culture societies, and gymnastic clubs. All these have for their aim the improvement of the race. By the aid of sanitary organisations we have succeeded in lowering, by a small percentage, our death rate. For a nation to prolong the lives of her frail scrofulous infants a few years, or to keep alive her weaklings and feeble old men a few extra years, may increase the average age of life, but it does not add to the racial vigour, or prevent degeneracy. A nation's greatness and vitality may be determined by her fertility, by her power to fill the vacancies made by death with healthy, robust infants. Here is where all civilised nations are failing. Our birth rate is decreasing, and those that are born survive but a short time. This has led to the appointments of commissions in various civilised countries for the purpose of ascertaining the causes of this degeneracy.

"In France the physical decadence has been so rapid in the last few decades that the Government has repeatedly found it necessary to lessen the standard of height for military enlistment. The standard has been lowered nearly an inch within the last ten years. Yet the French people were once a race of giants. France is no longer able to fill the vacancies made by death. Her death rate exceeds her birth rate. And those that are born give evidence of constitutional feebleness. Recently Professor Budin made a report at the Academy of Medicine on the incomprehensible number of deaths in the large cities of the north of France, and he has verified the fact, that of 100 children born, but twenty-five live after the second-year. Professor Bergeron has made the statement that the little French subject coming into the world has less chance of living one week than an old person of ninety years, and less chance of living a year than a man of eighty. Dr. Lagneau, a noted French authority, has predicted that if matters go on as at present, there will not be a single Frenchman in existence less than five centuries hence, and that without the aid of wars and epidemics. That England, as well as France, is becoming a degenerate nation is evidenced by facts too obvious to be ignored. No observ-

ing person who has spent a day strolling through the busy streets of London, or riding through its crowded thoroughfares on an omnibus top, could ever fail to be impressed by the numerous evidences of physical degeneration apparent in the forms and faces of the passing multitudes. The weakened figures, weak and unsymmetrical faces, and general look of feebleness of a large share of the dwellers in English towns, and particularly in the rising generation, are unmistakable evidences of the same physical deterioration going on in England which has for many years been recognised as a condition in France. During the past year, out of 11,896 men who offered to enlist, only 3,076 were able to pass the physical examination; the remainder were so "ill-developed and poor in physique," yet the standard of efficiency is lower than it has ever been, a minimum chest measurement at full expansion of 33½ inches, and a minimum height 5ft. 3in. were considered sufficient. Most of those rejected were suffering with evidences of heart disease. If the 9,000 that were rejected were unfit for military service, they are certainly unfit to assume the responsibilities of the home. Our strong young men are called to the front either to be shot or to return with ruined constitutions, while the unfits, or degenerate, are kept at home to propagate the race. This in itself must bring about the condition we are striving so earnestly to avoid.

"In olden times there were whole races of giants; now men of gigantic stature are so rare that they are carried about as curiosities. The most civilised nations are rapidly lessening in stature. Tall men, like big trees and mammoth beasts, belong to the olden times. We find authentic men more than eight feet high who lived during the two or three centuries prior to the present. In 1555 three brothers, surnamed Og, Gog, and Magog, who were each over eight feet in height, guarded the Tower of London. The Duke of Hanover had in his court in the seventeenth century a yeoman who measured eight feet six inches in height. The famous commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, measured a man who was eight feet six inches tall. O'Brien, the Irish giant, whose skeleton stands in the museum in the Royal College of Surgery in London, measured eight feet four inches in height. It is not probable that there could be collected at the present time from the whole world such a company of men as Frederick the Great's regiment, one of whom, the Scotch giant, measured eight feet three inches. Mammoth skeletons of men who evidently lived before the flood have been unearthed from time to time, which corroborate this record of Scripture. In Russia, a few years ago, skeletons measuring ten and eleven feet were found.

"There can be no doubt that many of the habits of civilisation shorten life and are disease-producing. Much is said about alcohol, but tobacco is probably doing a greater injury than alcohol. Tea-drinking has also much to do in producing nervous wrecks and causing physical degeneracy. Tea is taken for the same reason that the beer drinker takes beer, because it exhilarates; but all such exhilaration is intoxication. Three cups of tea, as ordinarily made, contain about 7½ grains of theine, the action poison. This quantity injected into a cat will cause death in less than three minutes, in spite of the proverbial nine lives. Professor Eli Metchnikoff, the world's most famous scientist, and successor to Pasteur, says man should live to the age of one hundred and forty; he should be in his prime at eighty, and still vigorous and active at one hundred and twenty. Dr. Haigh, one of England's noted medical authorities, says: 'Those who consider that poor blood, mental and bodily lethargy, and a life of almost constant pain and disease terminating in the forties or fifties, represent the sum total of human existence, can no doubt get the little that they ask for, but it will soon be no longer possible for them to say nothing better was known or obtainable. A stronger, more active, and more noble life, lived for 100 years, and ending in a natural death, which will be as painless and as unconscious as birth, is what a knowledge of the truth promises to-day to all who dare to follow it.'"

If you cannot pray over a thing, and cannot ask God to bless you in it, don't do that thing. A secret that you would keep from God is a secret that you should keep from your own heart.

Towser's Failing.

"The poor dog is tired out," said Mary, as the wagon drove into the yard, and Towser, covered with the dust of the road, dropped lolling and panting upon the grass.

"'Tisn't the journey he had to take that's tired him," laughed the farmer. "He's used himself up by zig-zagging from one side of the road to the other, and tendin' to everything that didn't concern him. He couldn't pass a gate without runnin' through it to see what was on the other side, nor see a hen anywhere along the road without feelin' called on to chase her. Every dog that barked started him to barkin', and everything that moved took him out of his way to find out what it was and where it was goin'. No wonder he's tired! But you'll find plenty of human bein's that are travellin' their lives through in just that same way. They ain't satisfied with the bit of road that's marked out for their neighbour's goin's and doin's, and take charge of no end of the things that they can't either help or hinder. They're like old Towser; it wears 'em out. If they'd follow straight after the Master, and not invent so many extra cares for themselves, the road wouldn't be nigh so long nor hard."—Selected.

A Wholesome Medicine.

"A wholesome medicine is Cheer,
And Hope a tonic strong;
He conquers all who conquers fear,
And shall his days prolong.

"A happy heart, a cheerful lip,
Contagious health bestow
As honey-bees their sweetness sip
From fragrant flowers that blow.

"Let cheerful thoughts prevail among
The sons of men alway,
And sighs shall change to Love's sweet song,
And night to golden day."

The Smart Steer.

Sam Jones was talking to a man of weak faith one day. The doubter asked if Mr. Jones could not give him a demonstration of religion.

"None," was the reply, "you must get inside the fold, and the demonstration will come of itself. Humble yourself, have faith, and you shall know the truth."

"In other words, I must believe, accept it before it is proved, and believe it without proof."

"Now, hold on right here. Out west they have a place for watering cattle. The cattle have to mount a platform to reach the trough. As they step on a platform their weight presses a lever, and this throws the water into the troughs. They have to get on the platform through faith, and this act provides the water and leads them to it. You are like a smart steer that slips around to the barnyard and peeps into the trough, without getting on the platform. He finds the trough dry, of course, for it needs his weight on the platform to force the water up. He turns away disgusted, and tells everybody there is no water in the trough. Another steer, not so smart, but with more faith, steps on the

platform; the water springs into the trough, and he marches up and drinks. That's the way with religion. You've got to get on the platform. You can't even examine it intelligently until you are on the platform. If you slide around the back way, you'll find the trough dry. But step on the platform, and the water and the faith come together without any trouble—certain and sure and abundant."—"Detroit Free Press."

Jefferson's Ten Rules.

Never put off until to-morrow what you can do to-day.

Never trouble another for what you can do yourself.

Never spend money before you have earned it.

Never buy what you don't want because it is cheap.

Pride costs more than hunger, thirst, and cold.

We seldom repent of having eaten too little.

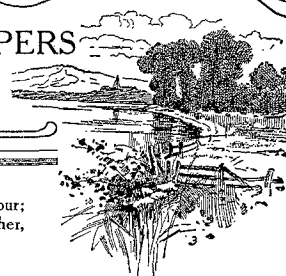
Nothing is troublesome that we do willingly.

How much pain the evils have cost us that never happened.

Take things always by the smooth handle.

When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, count a hundred.—"Young American."

WILLING HELPERS CORNER



"They helped every one his neighbour;
and every one said to his brother,
Be of good courage."

Many of our faithful missionary workers would gladly use much larger clubs of the "Signs of the Times" than they are now circulating if they could afford to do so, while there are others who would be just as glad to pay for such clubs if they knew who needed them.

For these reasons we have opened the "Willing Helpers Corner." It will contain requests for clubs of papers for use in various fields, acknowledgments of money received, and such other information as will bring together those who can use papers but can not pay for them, and those who can pay for papers but are not so situated that they can use them.

§ §

An able and experienced worker will gladly continue to give his time to the free distribution of literature among the ships calling at Melbourne, Victoria. He has already spent about twenty years in this line of work. He is anxious to obtain a club of 72 copies of the "Signs of the Times" each week. Are there not some who would like to assist in this missionary effort? The amount required to pay for this number of "Signs" for six months is £5 4 0.

Send all donations to SIGNS OF THE TIMES,
North Fitzroy, Victoria.



Keep Busy.

Make some endeavour every day,
No matter what the idlers say;
Go forth, and meet the strong.
Be sure, my boy, no matter who
Finds fault, finds little work to do—
Keep busily along.

Keep on, no matter whom you meet
Upon the road in full retreat;
Yours is the better way.
Keep on; let every effort tell—
Beginning well, and ending well—
Keep busy every day.

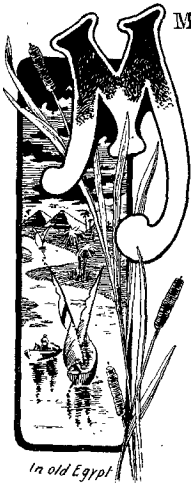
—Frank Walcott Hutt.



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By the Author of "Uncle Ben's Cobblestones."

Chapter X.



MARY told us many more things that surprised us about the writings of old Egypt and China.

"Now, Tom," she said, "don't you see how wonderful it is that with our little collection of twenty-six letters we can write down anything we want to say?"

"In China and Egypt they had to use hundreds of symbols, and even then their writing was very hard to understand.

"For instance, how could we tell that a round ring meant the sun? Why could it not mean the earth, or a ball, or an apple?"

"In Egypt, two legs and feet meant 'movement,' and the way the feet pointed meant the *direction* of the movement. How many other things you can think of that these symbols might be taken to mean.

"A roll of papyrus (that's the Egyptian paper, you know) meant 'knowledge,' and an ostrich feathers meant 'justice.' (This was because all ostrich feathers were supposed to be of the same length, and justice is the giving of equal rights to all.)

"But how many other things *these* symbols could be taken to mean. And this was the trouble with the old kind of writing," continued Mary.

"Even with all their signs they had the hardest job to say just what they meant.

"Now I'll let you see how hard it really was. In the old Assyrian writing they had a sign something like a cross that was used a great deal everywhere their writing was found.

"This cross would sometimes mean 'earth,' another time it would mean 'mountain,' and at different times it was found to stand for the words, 'sun-rise,' 'furnace,' 'seizing,' 'going,' and 'dying.'

"Some other signs were found to have as many as six meanings; while very many of the characters meant three or four different things.

"Just fancy how hard your reading lesson would be, Tom, if you had words like these! What funny things you would read sometimes, instead of what the writer meant.

"There was one sign," said Mary, "that I thought was very good indeed. When a man was made standing with his hand placed on his mouth, it meant 'obedience.'

"When we go to God's house to worship, we should keep in mind this beautiful symbol, and then remember what the word of God says, 'The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.'"

Well, boys and girls, Uncle Ben thinks that is splendid advice; for don't you know that *obedience* is the kind of worship that is most acceptable to the great and good God, and we know that we should always be silent when in God's house.

Somewhat these old Egyptians, don't you see, put the thought of silence and obedience together; and I think they were just right.

Now, my dear little friends, when papa or mamma tells you to do something that you do not like, and you begin to say—"But ———" Just remember how the old Egyptian writers used to



BUT —



What our dear Father speaks
through His Word.

make the word "obedience," and see if you can't imitate their beautiful symbol. Will you try?

And then when our dear Father speaks through His holy word, let us remember that our duty is to *silently obey*, not to question the commands of the great King.



When we go to God's House.

If we would all do this, what happy lives we would have to be sure.

Well, Mary went on to tell us that the people of those old times thought that their gods of wood and stone gave them their knowledge of writing, and everything else that was good.

But we know something a lot better than that, don't you think so, little friends? UNCLE BEN.

A True Story.

Old Mrs. Greatheart lives in a cosy old home, which has been added to so many times that strangers hardly know how to find their way about. The place is bright and cheery, and seems like its mistress, holding out its hospitable arms to receive every one. Visitors find it a delightful place to stay in, as they are made very welcome, and soon feel at home.

The three front rooms have French windows, which are always open. From them one can step out on to a broad verandah, where there is a table, chairs, and comfortable sofa. A creeper gives a cool, refreshing shade; beautiful pot plants and two birds' cages add a charm to the place where the family love to sit, breathing in the fresh air of heaven.

The house stands far back from the road, and is surrounded by a dear old garden, in which children love to play. Figs, mulberries, grapes, apricots, peaches, apples, pears, almonds, all ripen in their season.

At the back is a vegetable garden, where the old lady

likes to work, and very pleased is she to supply the table with the products which are the reward of her faithful labour. Her daughters often tell her that she is getting old and needs a rest, but she laughingly tells them that she does not intend to rust out.

Just before Christmas she went to visit a home for orphan boys, and found they were in need of some pants.

Mrs. Greatheart made up her mind that she would get them, so she went round to her neighbours, begged old clothes, money, or materials, just as they felt inclined to give, and set herself to work to make thirty-eight pairs of pants. When she had finished her task she sent them to the delighted matron, who almost cried when she saw them.

A kind friend gave the boys a trip to the seaside, where our old lady had the pleasure of seeing them playing on the beach, comfortably clothed in the garments which she had worked so hard to procure.

I must not forget to tell you about the birds. One is a dear little canary called "Sweetie;" it sings all day long as if it were thanking God for the joy of being alive. It is a little peacemaker, and never speaks any unkind words; every now and again it stops in its song and says, "dear Joey."

Joey is a parrot, and I am sorry to say not very good-tempered. If he thinks it is time he was fed, he calls, "Be quick, be quick," till one is quite tired of hearing him. He belongs to Miss Dora, and if anyone else presumes to feed him, he takes what they offer him, and throws it down to the bottom of his cage. He reminds me of what Paul says of the children in the last days, "Unthankful, unholy." Joey has one good point, however, he is fond of Sweetie, and likes his cage to be near. He will watch patiently while Sweetie is being fed, and quietly wait his turn.

No matter how cross Joe is, the little canary still says, "Dear Joey," and sometimes when he wants to be very loving, "Dear, dear Joey." Does he know that the Lord has told us that a soft answer turns away wrath? I wish we could always remember that.

A large black and tan sheep dog, called "Boss," also belongs to the home. He tries to be useful, and has been taught to bring the daily newspaper in, and keep the birds off the fruit.

I have no doubt if any robbers came he would soon scare them away, but these people have no fear of robbers; their doors are open night and day. They trust in the promise, "There shall no evil happen unto thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."—Auntie Lou.

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We would call the attention of our readers to our "Willing Helpers' Corner," on page 121. Here is an excellent opportunity for all who have an interest in missionary work, and a desire to do their part, but are so situated that they are unable to devote any of their time to the circulation of our literature. Make a habit of carefully reading the notices and requests which will appear in this "Corner" from time to time, and be a "willing helper" whenever possible. The department is also yours if you desire to make requests for missionary aid.

Radiant, the New Wizard Fuel.

A new fuel called "radiant," to be used in connection with gas and other fires, has been invented by two young engineers of Southend, and, if the promises are to be believed, it will cause as great a revolution in the present system of gas-heating as did the introduction of the Welsbach mantle in gas lighting. The five points of wonder in the claims are that it gives treble the heat with the same gas consumption as an ordinary gas fire, takes up the carbonic oxide from the air, and purifies the atmosphere, does away with the unpleasant smell given off by gas fires, burns brightly like a coal fire, and is as cheap as fire-clay, and is inexhaustible. The two young inventors are connected with one of the largest firms of gas engineers in the country, and have been experimenting for years with a view to producing a fuel such as radiant, which will take the place of the asbestos or fire-clay balls, and will, it is said, give out an intense heat. It is made from materials that are now waste products of chemical works. The new fuel captures the blue flame, which at present is lost, and converts it into intense heat.—"Week's Progress."

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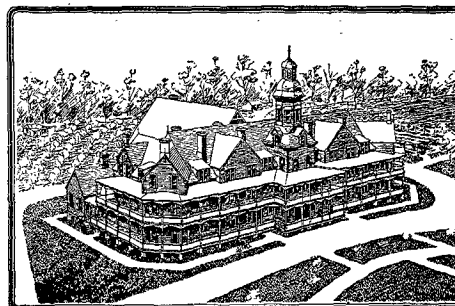
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