

PRESENT TRUTH

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.

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STUDENT POPULATION IN INDIA.

WHEN the real nature of idolatry is considered, one must see that mere intellectual education can never smite down the world-old idolatrous systems. Some of the pioneers in educational work in India thought to see caste and superstition vanish before an intellectual awakening. But year after year for two generations, it has become increasingly evident that the higher education is not of itself a missionary factor of great importance. It must not be forgotten that much that is studied as a part of that higher educational system which has obtained in Europe and America, the classics and the philosophy, is the product of the idolatrous schools of Greece and Rome. How then could these be expected to down idolatry in India?

I have been told that many a man going up to the University for the M.A. examination does worship to the little image of the elephant-headed god, Ganesa, who is supposed to preside over learning.

Ganesa lost his head in infancy, and Brahma sent the father out to bring in the head of the first creature found with the head northward. An elephant happened to be the first so discovered, and its head was fixed upon the infant god. It is apparent that education is but a thin veneer over the native superstition when a full course in the sciences without God leaves the mind in such bondage. Every

day one may see educated Indians, men engaged in government service and large commercial affairs, making the gestures of reverence as they pass the shrine of some god.

Education with God in it, the true education of heart and mind, alone can set men free. Educational systems, even in some famous mission institutions, leave

argument leaned toward the side of the professed though indifferent Christians, though, personally, I must say, one feels more drawn toward the frank Hindu than the indifferent professor of Christianity who has not got the life.

In the student communities of India there are to be found the coming men of India. With minds awakened and on the



A PARSEE FAMILY.

much to be desired. As a consequence there seems to be a dearth of educated Christian teachers even after many years. One such institution was the other day advertising for a teacher in one department, "Christian preferred." In the organ of one of the oldest missions some time ago was a discussion as to whether it was better to have on the staff indifferent Christians or out-and-out heathen. The

alert, they are in just the place where, as much as at any time in life, the seeds of truth may be sown in their hearts. But too often a science falsely so called is taught them, and they are further than ever from Bible truth. The European or American may allow false teachings to undermine his confidence in the integrity of the Word of God, and still social customs and tradition hold him in the groove of

nominal Christianity. Not so the Hindu; everything in custom and tradition pulls him the other way, back under the shadow of superstition.

Principal Wordsworth, a leading Indian educationalist, once said that he formerly hoped to see the educated classes, who were patterning after English political ideas and receiving an English education, using their influence against infant marriage and other debasing social customs. "I have no such delusion now," he wrote. "I find some of them employing all the resources of the theological sophistry and cant, not simply to palliate but to vindicate what is plainly one of the most cruel, blighting, and selfish forms of superstition and tyranny." "Collegiate impressions," says another Anglo-Indian publicist, "are at present like a tinselled outdoor decoration, discarded by their professor as a superfluity in private." Education in Europe and America does not set men free from some of the most blighting ecclesiastical superstitions; how can it be expected to solve the problem in India?

It is a fact, however, that the young man who goes through the Indian substitute for the English college course, must have his confidence shaken in the integrity of his own sacred literature. All learning in India was incorporated in the *shastras*; and, as Macaulay said, they taught an "astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding-school, history abounding in kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long, and geography made of seas of treacle and oceans of butter."

But Hinduism is independent of sacred books. It is the deification of social customs and the ways that have been from of old, and it doesn't fall with its old ideas of natural science.

The mission field among the student populations alone is a great one. The Student Volunteer Movement has gathered statistics showing that there are in India more collegiate students than in Great Britain. There are nearly 20,000 of them in the educational centres. About 2,000 are graduated each year from institutions conferring degrees. Including those attending schools which fit only for the colleges, the majority of whom turn to some occupation, the number of wide-awake young men gathered in the cities of India is enormous.

Many in the student towns live with friends or relatives, many by themselves in hired rooms, and numbers find lodging in the student hotels, where numbers mess

together, thus reducing the expenses. It is with an odd sensation at first that one sees young Hindu men clad in strange costumes, faring schoolward along the streets with the familiar English school-books in their hands. Education is made easy for them, too easy a good many think. Professor Ladd, of Yale, who went through India on a lecture tour recently, expressed himself thus:—

"I confess to a prejudice in favour of self-help and hard work. . . . In a word, I do not believe in giving away the higher education, or in making it so cheap that almost any boy, irrespective of a determined character and a strong and worthy ambition, can have a try at it. . . . Moreover, it seems to me that the missionary colleges might wisely combine with the government to change, as rapidly as possible, the character of the university education, so as to fit more of those taking the examinations for other and sturdier ways of earning a livelihood."

As he says, "the government does not know what to do with so large a multitude of 'babooes'; too often they do not know what to do with themselves; for it is a well-known fact that only a small proportion develop any 'initiative,' or are ready to tolerate the notion of doing what would be called 'hard work' in the United States or in England."

This repugnance to manual work on the part of the educated is due to that terrible caste idea. But the Christian principles strike straight and lustily at every custom that would hold a man back from being the man that God wants every son of His to be. In these student communities the mission worker can find multitudes who have a mind to think about principles, and every collegiate town is a grand field for work for the young men of India.

W. A. SPICER.

"Preach the Word."—It is not an enemy that gives this account of the ordinary preacher's methods, in the *Methodist Times*, but one of their number, who is stating his own experience:—

When a preacher is young—I illustrate from the life of a preacher because it is the life best known to me—he will take his text and then go hunting through all the commentaries he has and through all the sermons; after that he will look up his note books and his poetry, every little writer that has ever written on any subject remotely connected with his text he will feel compelled to consult, and so he will overload his own thought and stifle his own imagination. I remember that period well.

Sad to say, he does not deprecate the plan of going everywhere except to the Bible for the message, but only the use of so many books instead of the preacher's

own imagination. But to every preacher and teacher who reads PRESENT TRUTH, and there are many, we would say: "Preach the Word," and that only, rigidly and conscientiously avoiding man's opinions and your own imagination. The Scriptures are an inexhaustible mine, a never-failing well, and the variety of subjects and wonders of truth far transcend the highest flights of human imagination.

MEN AS SIGNS.

(Acts ix. 32-43.) †

AND it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord."

One of the first things to do in reading this portion of our lesson is to take a little lesson in etymology, by comparing the two Versions. In the old Version, as we have just read, it says, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." In the Revision we have it, "Jesus Christ healeth thee." This suggests the truth that *to heal is to make whole*. The words "heal," "whole," and "holy," have one common root, and are in reality the same word. The prophet exclaims, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed." Jer. xvii. 14. When Jesus healed a deaf and dumb man, the multitude exclaimed, "He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." Mark vii. 37. God never slights a job. He is in very deed "a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed." He never does any half-way work; but whatever He does is well and thoroughly done. Therefore whenever He heals a man He makes him *whole*. As Peter said of another notable case of a man being made to walk through his instrumentality: "His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong; yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." Acts iii. 16.

Some one will say, "This surely is not always the case; for there are thousands of people who recover from some special disease, who are nevertheless never perfectly well. Some other ailment will re-

† International Sunday-School lesson for April 11.

main, or the very disease from which they recover may leave another as its sequel."

Nevertheless it is strictly and absolutely true that when God heals He does perfect work, and that the man whom He heals is given perfect soundness; and whoever believes and grasps this truth will experience it. And it is also true that there is no healing in this world except by the Lord. He is the only Healer. How is this apparent contradiction explained?

Very simply. Note carefully the words of Peter to the palsied man: "Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." These words were spoken while the man still lay helpless on his bed, but even then he was made whole. Peter was simply the Lord's messenger to him, to let him know the truth.

Take another instance. Jesus was teaching in a synagogue one Sabbath day, and there was a woman present who was bent together so that she could by no means raise herself up; and she had been in that condition for eighteen years. Jesus said to her, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity;" and "immediately she was made straight." Luke xiii. 10-13. The words, "Thou art loosed," were spoken to her while she was still bowed together, and unable to lift up her head. She was as firmly bound as she had ever been; yet the words of Jesus were absolutely true: she was loosed, and had really been so all the time.

The explanation lies in the words of the prophet Isaiah, which Christ quoted in the synagogue at Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isa. lxi. 1. The prison doors are open for all the captives of Satan; every hand is already loosed, and each slave of sin and Satan might say, if he only knew the truth, "Thou hast loosed my bonds." Jesus Christ was sent to declare this to the people; to let every bondservant of sin know that his chains are already loosed, and that all he has to do is to arise and shake them off. The prison doors are open, and all that the prisoners have to do is to go forth. Whoever remains in bondage does so either through ignorance of the truth, or else through love of slavery.

Death and disease came by sin; and as Christ has by Himself "made purification of sins," it follows that He has brought healing to every diseased person. He took

part of the same flesh and blood as His brethren, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14, 15. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19), and this reconciliation is so actual a fact that "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Rom. v. 10. "By His stripes we are healed." Isa. liii. 5.

God has "commanded the blessing, even life for evermore," for all mankind; for "by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. v. 18. So if a man is not perfectly whole both in soul and body it is only because he does not know the gift of God. The business of Christians, who have learned of the Lord, is to proclaim this good news to the world. God has done the work, and finished it from the foundation of the world; our part is "to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom;" to say to all, "O taste, and see that the Lord is good."

The next thing we are to learn from the portion of Scripture first quoted is the effect of the miracle. Read it again, and then read the words of Christ to His disciples, including us: "Ye shall receive power after that [literally, when] the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts i. 8.

Then with these two texts, read the following words of Christ: "Behold, I and the children whom Thou hast given Me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Zion." Isa. viii. 18.

Most people on reading these passages think of power that they are to receive to perform miracles; they think of themselves as signs and wonders through the performance of prodigies, somewhat as Simon the sorcerer gave out "that himself was some great one." But this is a mistake. Read the verses of our lesson again. "All that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord." Saw whom? Peter, who performed this wonderful miracle of raising the palsied man?—Oh, no; they saw the man who was healed, and then they turned to the Lord. Æneas was a sign and a wonder to the people, not because he had done a wonderful work, but

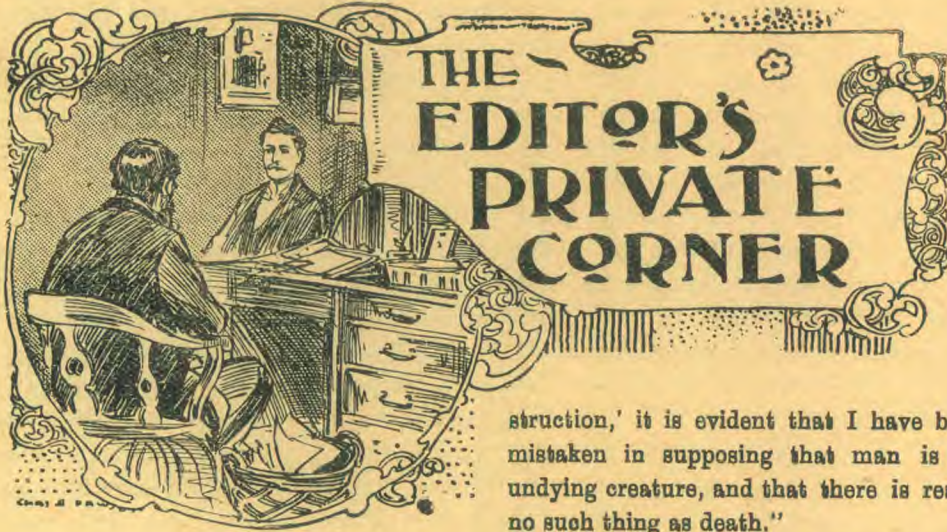
because he had had a wonderful work done for him and in him.

The psalmist wrote, "I am as a wonder unto many" (Ps. lxxi. 7); and of the men whose sins were forgiven God said, "They are men wondered at." Zech. iii. 8. When Jesus came to Bethany, just before the crucifixion, the people flocked to that place as they always did wherever He went; but "they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead." And the chief priests, who were plotting the destruction of Jesus, planned to put Lazarus to death also, "because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." John xii. 9-11.

When Jesus healed the demoniac in the tombs, He Himself immediately went away from that country; but when the healed man wished to accompany Him, "Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel." Mark v. 18-20.

So it is not the power to act for the Lord, but the willingness to be acted upon by Him, that makes men a sign of the coming of the Lord. It is not power that we exert, but power working in us, that is to make Christians men wondered at in the world. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

"The Lord hath done great things for us!" Do you know it? and are you glad? "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" He has done such things as human language cannot express, and human thought cannot grasp, but only the Spirit of the Lord can make us understand; yet for the most part we are unconscious of them, and therefore do not take them. This is the sole cause of the dearth of conversions in the world. Let Christians but be wise, and consider and observe, and "understand the loving-kindness of the Lord," and then it will be said even among the heathen, "The Lord hath done great things for them."



CAN THE SOUL OF MAN DIE?

"ON reading the article regarding the eternal punishment of the wicked, it struck me that as the soul of man is undying, how is it that death will be the punishment of the wicked, since although dead, the soul is yet alive and conscious? Please explain in your next issue, as it seems perplexing."

TRULY it does seem perplexing; but the difficulty will speedily disappear if we go about it in the right way. There is no difficulty whatever in the Scriptures; the difficulty comes in the attempt to reconcile the truth of the Bible with an impossible theory of human invention.

This question affords us an excellent opportunity to contrast the right and the wrong way of dealing with the Bible. The wrong way is to assume a certain thing, and then to become perplexed because the Bible does not agree with our assumption. Thus, the disciples had settled it in their minds that Christ would immediately overthrow the Roman dominion, and establish His own everlasting kingdom on this earth, and therefore when He spoke about His resurrection from the dead, they wondered what that expression could mean. They were perplexed, and were overwhelmed by the event; but they would have had no difficulty, and would not have been taken by surprise, if they had said: "He says that He is to die, and rise again the third day; therefore it is evident that we have not understood the Scriptures, and are mistaken in our ideas."

So in the question before us. The Bible says that "the wages of sin is death," and that the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting destruction." But you say, "How can this be, since the soul of man cannot die?" That is the wrong way. The right way would be to say: "Since the punishment of the wicked is death, and is to be eternal, even 'everlasting de-

struction,' it is evident that I have been mistaken in supposing that man is an undying creature, and that there is really no such thing as death."

You say that "the soul of man is undying." God says: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Eze. xviii. 18. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" Ps. lxxxix. 48. The answer comes: "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches: none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious [costly], and it ceaseth [must be let alone] for ever." "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for He shall receive me." Ps. xlix. 6-8, 15.

Here we have your question completely answered. The difficulty is solved, and the perplexity ought now to cease. The only trouble was, that you assumed something that is contrary to the truth.

How is it possible for anybody to say that there is no death? Surely one's own observation ought to convince him, even without the testimony of the Scriptures. That man is mortal, that death has come into the world by sin, is declared throughout the Bible; and we see it everywhere on earth.

To say that there is no death, is to deny the necessity for Christ's sacrifice; for we are told that He partook of man's nature, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14, 15. He tasted death for every man (verse 9); and "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. xv. 26. He says, "The Bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." John vi. 33. And again: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John x. 10. To the unbelieving Jews He

uttered this sorrowful reproach: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me; and ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." John v. 39, 40.

Christ did not come into this world for nothing. It was terrible need that called for so wondrous a sacrifice. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Without Christ, all men would perish. The fact that He came for the sole purpose of giving life, shows that without Him there is nothing but death for man.

Death is not the same thing as life. To say that the dead are alive and conscious is as absurd as to say that the blind see, that the dumb speak, or that the deaf hear. It is even worse than absurd; it is wicked; for it is not only a direct contradiction of the Bible, but it virtually teaches that there is no such thing as death, and that what is called sin is really righteousness. For it is declared that sin brought death. Rom. v. 12. Being sinners we were dead (Eph. ii. 1), since death had passed upon all men: but if it were true that death is the same thing as life, it would be evident that what the Bible calls sin is really the same as righteousness. Thus we see that it is not a light thing to say that there is no death, since it really denies the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

"These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. xxv. 46. The punishment we have already seen to be death—everlasting destruction. Now see how the statement that there is no death makes nonsense of the Scriptures: it would have Christ say that the wicked shall go away into everlasting life; but the righteous into everlasting life. It would make Rom. vi. 23 say that the wages of sin is life, but the gift of God is eternal life. Of course professed Christians never think of the consequences of the false idea that they have imbibed concerning death; for they could have no respect for the Scriptures, if they really thought that they contain such absurdities.

What does the Bible say about death, and the condition of the dead? Let us read a few statements.

"The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything." Eccl. ix. 5. "Whosoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no

work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." Verse 10.

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4.

"In death there is no remembrance of Thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks." Ps. vi. 5.

"Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back. For the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known Thy truth." Isa. xxxviii. 17-19.

The case is very simple. Christ is "our life." Col. iii. 4. In God "we live, and move, and have our being." Acts xvii. 28. Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life." John xiv. 6. "In Him all things consist." Col. i. 17. In the beginning "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Gen. ii. 7. So we read, "The Spirit of God hath made me; and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job xxxiii. 4.

In Christ we live; without Him there is no existence. All mankind live by the same means by which the first man lived—by the breath of God. God is constantly doing for each one of us what He did for Adam in the beginning—breathing into our nostrils the breath of life; thus only is it that we are living souls.

In the things that God has made, and which are for our use, the everlasting power and Divinity of God are clearly seen (Rom. i. 20); and "His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." 2 Peter i. 3. God gives Himself to us in His gifts. "God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and He that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John v. 11, 12.

Now all men have the Son, the Word of life, whether they know Him and accept Him, or not; for the free gift has come upon all men unto justification of life (Rom. v. 18), and the Word of life is in the mouth and heart of all men, in order that they may do it. Deut. xxx. 11-14; Rom.

x. 6-9. Thus all are without excuse; for they have not to go in search of eternal life, but only to lay hold of and keep that which has been committed to them.

But not all will accept Christ, and yield to His control, even when they know Him. They say, "We will not have this Man to rule over us." Nevertheless He is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, and therefore He does not immediately take them at their word, and leave them to themselves. Patiently and long He suffers their manners, drawing them to Himself by the cords of His everlasting love. Still many are obdurate, and will resist the Holy Ghost unto the end. Then at the last, when all God's ways have been made plain to all mankind, and it still appears that men choose their own ways, instead of His, God gives them over wholly to their own choice. They choose to live apart from the Lord; but Christ "ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 10); and when that is accomplished there will be no place in the universe for those who have fully and finally rejected Him. They will not have God to dwell in them, nor are they willing to abide in Him; therefore they will be left to themselves, and the result will be that they will cease to be, and will "be as though they had not been." The breath that, joined to the body, made man a living soul, will depart, and then the soul will no longer live.

Can you not see that the Scriptural view shows the supremacy of God, while the idea that even the wicked who reject Him can have life independently of Him, makes them gods, self-existent beings the same as He is? But there is but one God,—the living God,—He alone is our dwelling place in all generations. We must either live in Him, or else not live at all. Just as apart from Christ we can do nothing, even so apart from Christ we cannot live. Righteousness is life, and both come from God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY and a friend once travelled among the Alps. The friend heard only the tramp of the mules' hoofs on the hard mountain road, Huxley only the hum of insects which filled the summer air with its mellow melody. There are ears that catch only the dull sounds of the lower ranges of life; others that lose these coarser sounds in the music of a higher sphere. "Speak not in the ears of a fool," says the wise man, "for he will despise the wisdom of thy words,"



THE SACREDNESS OF OPPORTUNITY.

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." John ix. 4.

THE one thing that comes and goes with time is opportunity. Every moment of time marks the birth of an opportunity; it also marks the decline of another; and perhaps the death of still another. Opportunities are coming and going perpetually. When time has passed, the opportunities are gone, and gone for ever. We can no more recall a lost opportunity than past time. So the passing of time, under any and all circumstances and conditions, must mean at least this much to every one of us—the passing of opportunity. It may only be possible to seize the seed of an opportunity in a passing moment; but in that seed there are concealed untold possibilities, which may bud, blossom, and bear fruit in the future. But if the seed is lost, all the possibilities of that opportunity have passed with the passing of time.

The only possible good that can come from lost opportunity is its reflex action when we discover the value of that which we have lost. This realisation of lost opportunity may arouse us to seize with greater alacrity those which are now before us, and which are to come in the future—to produce such a real regret and remorse on our part that we shall ever be more on the alert to grasp opportunities during their lifetime, just while they are before us, ere they pass on to leave only a trail of sadness behind.

See how our Saviour looked upon the sacredness of human opportunity. In the closing part of the eighth chapter of John we see Him driven from the temple court by an angry mob, with stones in their hands, ready to cast at Him. It would seem that He almost miraculously took Himself from their midst. The blind man, a beggar, is sitting by the wayside; Jesus is passing by, with an angry mob not far away; His disciples are hurriedly fleeing with Him; all is excitement, but the Master sees a blind man, and that is enough. He recognised the afflicted man's need. Human souls, spiritually blind, morally crippled,—how many such have we passed by, without so much as seeing them? But Jesus saw a man who was blind from his birth. His disciples might have paid no attention to this blind beggar. But the procession is suddenly brought to

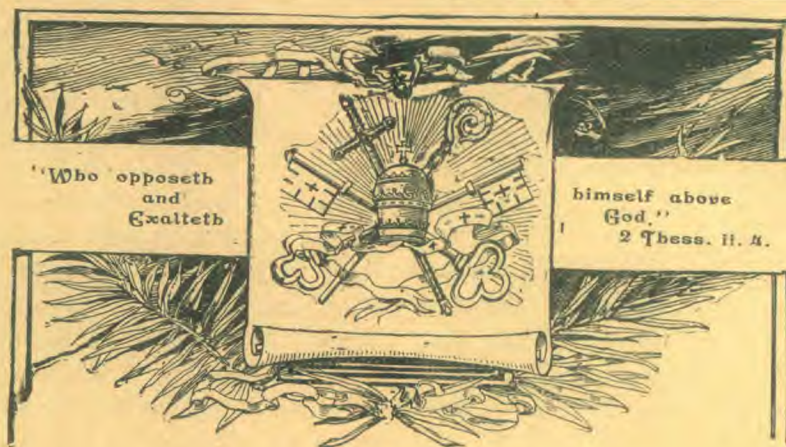
a standstill. There Christ stands before the blind man. The sightless man cannot see Him, but He can see the blind man. Let us remember this case when the hours are dark, and things look discouraging. We may not be able to see Jesus, but we have the assurance that Jesus sees us.

Jesus had seen an opportunity, and it was the most sacred thing in all the world to Him. Ah, yes, the eye that could see the blind man is the eye that recognised the opportunity of the hour. He must seize it now, right now; He must strike while the iron is hot. So we hear Him say, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." Jesus says to His disciples, "I must work." It is not enough for Me to teach. It is not enough to send you out to work, etc.; but "I must work." Jesus recognised the individual responsibility to do something. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me." There is a certain kind of work I must do. I recognise it, and I recognise it in this blind man. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." The Saviour recognised that the noontime of His opportunity had arrived for this blind man. And with the mob at His heels, and His disciples asking idle questions, the Master keeps His thoughts centred on one thing, and that is the opportunity. For many years divine Providence has designed to bring about this occasion. It is now or never with Jesus. Perhaps if the blind man had been passed by on this occasion, he would never again have met the Master, and one of the most remarkable miracles on record would not have been worked, and so its lessons would have been untaught.

As surely as the night-time of this world's history is drawing on, and we may even already have entered its eventime; just as truly as this world's probation will one day be closed, and its day of opportunity be for ever past; so the day whereon we can help any soul, heal any broken heart, find the blind man, and anoint the blind eyes of the soul, comes and goes. It may even now be passing. The Lord may choose you or me as the instrument to be brought around in the last tick of time just before the sun sets, that we may feed a hungry soul, that we may point the dying soul to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" that we may say, "Daughter, brother, thou art loosed from the spirit of thine infirmity." Let us study the life of Jesus, and learn how carefully He recognised opportunities. As we see Him on the cross. He recognises the thief. He listens to his cry, and forgives his sins; and in the last moment of his life, the thief is given the promise of eternal existence. The Saviour recognised the opportunity. He saw that the last moment had arrived; and He was there

to improve it. Shall we be quick to recognise the dawn of an opportunity? If we seize it as a dawn, we can march on with

it and gain a fulness of experience in the good things that are stored for us in every opportunity. W. S. SADLER.



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IMAGE WORSHIP.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

I AM the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments."

From the days of Constantine to the end of the sixth century image worship had become universally established in the Catholic Church. Thus stood Catholic idolatry when, early in the seventh century, the Mohammedans swarmed up from the deserts of Arabia, executing judgment upon the "idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk." Rev. ix 20.

"The triumphant Musselmans, who reigned at Damascus and threatened Constantinople, cast into the scale of reproach the accumulated weight of truth and victory. The cities of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt had been fortified with the images of Christ, His mother, and His saints; and each city presumed on the hope or promise of miraculous defence.

"In the rapid contest of ten years, the Arabs subdued those cities and these images; and, in their opinion, the Lord of hosts pronounced a decisive judgment between the adoration and contempt of these mute and inanimate idols. In this season of distress and dismay the eloquence of the monks was exercised in the defence of images."—Gibbon.

Under the influence of the charge of idolatry, which the Mohammedans incessantly urged against the Catholics, some began to awake to the thought that perhaps the charge was true, and strongly desired the reformation of the Church. Besides these there were scattered throughout Christendom true Christians who constantly opposed, with the Word of God and the example of primitive times, the worship of images.

In a hundred years these influences had become so strong that Emperor Leo the Isaurian, in 727 took his stand, and issued an edict against the worship of images. Opposition to this movement of the emperor's caused the famous Iconoclastic Controversy, between the worshippers and the breakers of the images, which continued with bloody and unabated fury for one hundred and twenty years,—726-846,—and which finally resulted in the triumph of the worship of images, and the "religion of Constantine."

The Emperor Leo ordered the images to be broken to pieces, the walls of the churches to be whitewashed, and prosecuted with honest but imprudent vigour his design of extirpating idolatry. But a fierce dissension at once raged throughout all Christendom: the monks and the people arose in defence of their images and pictures, and the emperor, even in his own capital, was denounced as a heretic and a tyrant.

There was an image of the Saviour, renowned for its miraculous powers, over the gate of the imperial palace called the Brazen Gate, from the rich tiles of gilt bronze that covered its magnificent vestibule. The emperor ordered the sacred figure to be taken down and broken to pieces. But the people from all parts of the city flew to the defence of their favourite idol, fell upon the officers, and put many of them to death.

"The women were even more violent than the men. Like furies they rushed to the spot, and, finding one of the soldiers engaged in the untallowed labour at the

top of the ladder, they pulled it down, and tore him to pieces as he lay bruised upon the ground. 'Thus,' exclaims the pious annalist, 'did the minister of the emperor's injustice fall at once from the top of the ladder to the bottom of hell.'

"The women next flew to the great church, and finding the iconoclastic patriarch officiating at the altar, overwhelmed him with a shower of stones and a thousand opprobrious names. He escaped, bruised and fainting, from the building. The guards were now called out, and the female insurrection was suppressed; but not until several of the women had perished in the fray."

"The execution of the imperial edicts was resisted by frequent tumults in Constantinople and the provinces; the person of Leo was endangered, his officers were massacred, and the popular enthusiasm was quelled by the strongest efforts of the civil and military power."

In 728 the edict of the Eastern emperor abolishing the worship of images was published in Italy. The pope defended the images, of course, and "the Italians swore to live and die in defence of the pope and the holy images." And thus there was begun a war which, in its nature and consequences, was in every sense characteristic of the papacy. It established the worship of images, as an article of Catholic faith; it developed the supremacy of the pope in temporal affairs.

When Leo's decree against the worship of images was published in the West, "the images of Christ and the Virgin, of the angels, martyrs, and saints, were abolished in all the churches in Italy;" and the emperor threatened the pope that if he did not comply with the decree, he should be degraded and sent into exile. But the pope—Gregory II—stood firmly for the worship of images, and sent pastoral letters throughout Italy, exhorting the faithful to do the same.

"At this signal, Ravenna, Venice, and the cities of the exarchate and Pentapolis adhered to the cause of religious images; their military force by sea and land consisted, for the most part, of the natives; and the spirit of patriotism and zeal was transfused into the mercenary strangers. The Italians swore to live and die in the defence of the pope and the holy images. . . . The Greeks were overthrown and massacred, their leaders suffered an ignominious death, and the popes, however inclined to mercy, refused to intercede for these guilty victims."

At Ravenna, A. D. 729, the riot and bloody strife was so great that even the exarch, the personal representative of the emperor, was slain. "To punish this flagitious deed, and restore his dominion in Italy, the emperor sent a fleet and army into the Adriatic Gulf. After suffering from the winds and the waves much loss and delay, the Greeks made their descent

in the neighbourhood of Ravenna. . . . In a hard-fought day, as the two armies alternately yielded and advanced, a phantom was seen, a voice was heard, and Ravenna was victorious by the assurance of victory. The strangers retreated to their ships, but the populous seacoast poured forth a multitude of boats; the waters of the Po were so deeply infected with blood, that during six years the public prejudices abstained from the fish of the river; and the institution of an annual feast perpetuated the worship of images, and the abhorrence of the Greek tyrant. Amidst the triumph of the Catholic arms, the Roman pontiff convened a synod of ninety-three bishops against the heresy of the Iconoclasts. With their consent he pronounced a general excommunication against all who by word or deed should attack the traditions of the Fathers and the images of the saints."

A. T. JONES

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

THE coming of the Lord and the end of the world are inseparably connected.

"What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world." Matt. xxiv. 3.

A definite work is to be done as the preparation for these events.

"This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. xxiv. 14.

This is the Gospel of personal experience.

"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke xvii. 20, 21.

It involves the doing of God's will.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Matt. vi. 10.

It gives to God His rightful place.

"But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God, and an everlasting King; at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation." Jer. x. 10.

It recognises the exalted position of Christ.

"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." 1 Peter iii. 22. See also Heb. i. 2-4.

It sets forth true humility as the basis of its citizenship.

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. 3.

It makes service to be true worship.

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Matt. iv. 10.

It shows upon what the dominion is based ("The sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." Heb. i. 8) and the worthy objects of man's desire.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. vi. 33.

There is only one Gospel.

"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. i. 8.

This Gospel was preached to Abraham.

"The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Gal. iii. 8.

It involved the coming of Christ in the flesh as his seed.

"He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to Thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. i. 16.

Whenever the Gospel is mentioned, therefore, it is this same Gospel of the kingdom, the Gospel of righteousness by faith, the Gospel of the gift of the Son of God to the human family. See Rom. i. 1-4.

Just before the coming of the Lord, this Gospel is to be preached to all the world, in a three-fold message, directing all to the worship of the Creator; setting forth the result of turning from this true worship; warning against the worship of the beast and his image, and showing the result of accepting this Gospel message.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come. And worship Him that made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen. . . . And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 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. . . . Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."—Rev. xiv. 6-12.

When the Gospel of the kingdom as set forth in these verses has been preached in all the world the Lord will come.

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle." Verse 14.

Then the harvest of the earth will be reaped.

"And He that sat upon the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." Verse 16.

"The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels." Matt. xiii. 39.

W. W. PRESCOTT,



MY TRUST.

A SONG was born in my heart one day;
But warm and sweet on my lips there lay
A baby mouth, so dear, so dear,
I could not wish it away:
And the song was lost in the void again,
The song that had stirred the souls of men,
In the deeps of their despair.

A thought as sweet as the summer rain,
Rest for the weary—hearts' ease for pain,
From God's own heart sought out my own,
And fain would I share its gain.
But little hands clung to me all day long;
At night, though its blessing had made me
strong,
The white-winged dove had flown.

And what was the loss, and what the gain?
Long years passed—in a nobler strain
My song was sung,—the listening world
Was hushed at its glad refrain.
And into a matchless word was wrought
The balm and blessing of my lost thought,—
My dove with its pinions furled.

The dear God knoweth His own time best;
His deep love searcheth the world's unrest:
He chooseth aright,—the seed is sown,
And safe in its own place pressed.
By whom, what matter? Full well I know,
My baby's touch and the sweet lips' glow
God gave to my trust alone.

—Rebecca Linley Tripp.

THE WRONG WAY AND
THE RIGHT WAY.

IN a popular journal not long since a father related the following incident for the benefit of other parents:—

"What was the 'ginning of the world?' asked my six-year hopeful at breakfast. 'That's a long story that we will talk about after supper,' I replied—for my children usually have a story read or told them all together before bedtime. So that evening, in simple language that the youngest could comprehend, and that therefore was interesting to the older children, the various theories of the world's formation were briefly described. The Bible story, the teachings of geology, the ether rings as the origin of atoms,—all this was set forth in simple language with-

out bias, concluding (as we had begun) with the remark that after all but little was actually known, though many theories were entertained.

"The way in which the story was received, from the youngest up, their questions, comprehension and various opinions, were a revelation that charmed and benefited their father even more than the talk had helped them. Children never forget such talks, and their attitude of mind on these occasions is treasured in the father's heart more and more as his sons and daughters become older and too soon grow away from him."

"Pity 'tis, 'tis true," that "children never forget such talks," and consequently loose habits of thought are implanted in them. They are taught human opinions and speculations instead of truth, and so do not acquire the habit of distinguishing sharply between truth and error. In this case the children were no wiser when the father had finished his talk than when he began; and what was still worse, the impression was conveyed that the Bible narrative is on a level with the conjectures of men, and so they were deprived of any standard by which to judge. Equally bad was the fact that they were left with the idea that they really knew a great deal, because they had heard a lot of words, and had learned to express their "opinions," which were based upon nothing.

Contrast with this the account, given by Mr. Egerton R. Young, missionary to the Cree Indians, of the way in which those simple children of the forest received the truth in its purity. After telling of the lesson he had given them in reading, he proceeds:—

"Then we opened our bundle of Bibles, and, passing them around as far as they would go, I had them all turn to the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis. After some explanation of a few additional signs which they there saw upon the printed page, and which give some variation to the sound of the syllabic character to which they are attached, we began the study of the verse. Of course our progress at first was slow. It could not be otherwise under such circumstances. But we patiently persevered, and it was not very long ere

they were able to read in their own language: 'Mawache Nistum Kaesamane-to Keosetou Kesik Mena Askee, (In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.)'

"When they had acquired the ability to read this verse for themselves, and had grasped a little of its meaning, there was another burst of delight. That first verse of Genesis is very suggestive and full of meaning to anyone, no matter how learned, who strives to investigate it. It is in itself the first chapter of God's revelation of Himself to man, and has long occupied the attention and study of the most godly and profound. Here, for the first time, it was being read by a company of poor Indians just emerging from paganism. But they were sharp and keen, and able to grasp a new truth, and so when the first verse opened before them with its wondrous meaning, great was their delight and amazement.

"Now we know all about it!" some of them shouted. 'The Kaesa-Maneto (the great God) made all these things, the heaven and the earth.'

"Others said: 'Our fathers talked about it in their wigwams, and wondered how all these things came as they are; but they had to confess that they were in darkness, and knew nothing. But now we know it! We know it!'

"Over and over again they read the verse until they had thoroughly committed it to memory. And in after days, at many a camp fire and in many a hunting lodge, it was repeated to those who had not heard it, but who, on hearing it, were also filled with gratification and delight at the answer which it gave to what had long been a subject of perplexity and awe."

Who cannot see that the Indians had by far the advantage of the white children? They *knew* the exact truth, and moreover did not have their minds cumbered with a lot of rubbish. "We know it! We know it!" they exclaimed in their simple joy; and they did indeed know it. The reception of real truth from the mouth of the Lord gives a joy that can never be known by those who are filled with the pride of their own opinions. And it gives equal joy to the unlettered barbarian and the cultured philosopher. The *Bible Society Reporter* tells how a learned Brahman, who became a Christian minister, had his first lesson in Christianity.

While waiting to see a gentleman at whose house he had called, he took up a book lying on the table, and opened at the first page. There he read: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "Being familiar with the Hindu Cosmogony, so prolonged, abstruse, and wearisome, the brevity, dignity, and self-evident truth of this assertion so impressed

him that he at once procured a Bible and read it carefully, with the ultimate result that he became a whole-hearted and avowed believer both in the written and the living Word."

Some parents are afraid of prejudicing the minds of their children, and so refrain from giving them positive knowledge. This is a sin. Truth should have the first place. No Christian parent should allow a child to grow to the age of six years without knowing the beginning of all things. But do not make the mistake of trying to "simplify the words of Scripture." That is like trying to make sunlight clear. Do not give the Bible narratives in your own language. Read them from the Bible, and when you have read a story once, the children will want to hear it again; and you can read the stories one after another again and again, until the truths are indelibly impressed on the young minds in the very words which the Spirit teaches. Thus even the babes may become possessed of wisdom that is hidden from the wise and prudent, and which will be an effectual safeguard against all forms of infidelity; for the vagaries of human conjecture will always be insipid to one who has acquired a taste for simple, solid truth.

W.

SKIMMING IT.

IF you are going to give a pan of milk, don't skim it first," the old grandmother used to say, meaning: If you are going to do a favour don't spoil it by an ungracious word or manner. Have you not noticed that much of this "skimming" goes on in ordinary family intercourse? asks the *Christian Uplook*.

"Another errand? I never can go down town without half a dozen commissions!" complains Robert, when his sister asks him to bring a book from the library. He never refuses to oblige her, he does not really count it an inconvenience, he only takes the cream off his kindness.

"Those gloves ripped again!" exclaims Mary, when John wants her to take a few stitches. "It seems to me they always need mending when I am in a hurry with something else." She would be shocked at his going shabby, and distressed if any one thought her unwilling to render such offices; but she makes it a little unpleasant to ask the favour.

The children follow the fashion. Tommy shuts the door at Bridget's request, but he grumbles at having to leave his top. Susie goes to the door when she is sent, but she departs with a protest that "it is Tommy's turn." Thus all day long people who love one another, and who at

heart are glad to serve one another, skim the sweetness from every service they render.

SPRING AGAIN.

WE felt no mighty shaking,
And we heard no startling sound;
We did not mark its waking,
But the Spring is all around.
In gentleness and silence
Its loving footsteps glide,
And we turn with sudden gladness
To the crocus at our side.

Now the sunlight groweth stronger,
In its warm, life-giving ray;
And the daylight lingers longer,
Just a little every day;
And we find the welcome violets,
Though we scarce believe them there,
Till they woo us down to seek them,
By their sweetness in the air.

Very often comes the saying,
From the weary bed of pain,
"I shall get a little better
When the spring-time comes again."
And we say, "It soon is coming,"
For of that we have no fear,
Since God's goodness never falseth,
And again 'tis surely here.

Oh, how wondrous is the kindness
Of the everlasting God;
And how great His tender mercies
Over all His works abroad.
Let us thankfully adore Him,
For His seasons as they roll;
Praying for the greater blessing,
Of His spring-tide in the soul.
—Caroline Tickner, in the *Christian*.

READ ONLY THE BEST BOOKS.

THERE is no use in thinking we can sow one kind of seed and reap another. I am glad that an old saying I used to hear once I do not often hear nowadays. They used to say when they wanted to excuse someone who was not doing right, "He is only sowing his wild oats; he will come out all right." And somehow they gave me the impression he would be all the better for the wild oats he had sown. It was false! If you sow wild oats you need not look for wheat in the harvest time.

I see so many girls frittering away their time in reading trash, and I feel that it would be folly to say, "Oh, when they are women they will choose better books." For the probability is they will do no such thing; they will have spoiled their minds for any other kind of reading. No, no! Let me tell you, they are spoiling their taste for good books. They will not relish the best books when they grow older.

I shall never forget a homely illustration of Mr. Moody's. Someone asked him if he had read a certain book. He replied,

"No, I believe there is poison in it; at least I have heard so on good authority." The friend said, "But wouldn't it be well for you to read it for yourself?" "No," said Mr. Moody; "if I take poison in my stomach the doctor has to come with a stomach-pump to take it out. Why should I take poison in my mind? I might never be able to get it out." It is very easy to give the imagination a picture that in after years you would give anything if you could have removed; but there it stays on the walls of memory.

Dear girls! let me beseech you, read the books that will help you to the highest type of Christian womanhood. You cannot remain thoughtless girls. Womanhood will soon overtake you, and a simple thought I once read, or heard, has remained with me so many years: "Fifteen is the bud of what the flower will be at thirty."—*Margaret Bottome*.

"VANITY OF VANITIES."

A YOUNG person once mentioned to Dr. Franklin his surprise that the possession of riches should be attended with undue solicitude, and instanced a merchant who, in possession of unbounded wealth, was as busy, and much more anxious than the most industrious clerk in his counting house. The doctor, in reply, took an apple from a basket and presented it to a child in the room, who could hardly grasp it in his hand. He then gave him a second, which filled the other; then choosing a third, remarkable for its size, he offered that also. The child after many ineffectual attempts to hold the three apples, dropped the last on the carpet and burst into tears. "See," said the doctor, "there is a little man with more riches than he can enjoy."—*Selected*.

"TELEPHONE: use your head to save your legs," one lawyer recently advised another. "Oh," was the reply, "I use my legs to save my head. If I walk and get the papers into my own hands, I shall not be worrying the next three hours lest they are not delivered in time, or are wrong when they are delivered. Incidentally, I shall walk off a headache, and derive all the benefits of an expensive gymnasium without going there."—*Selected*.

WHO BIDES HIS TIME.

WHO bides his time—he tastes the sweet
Of honey in the saltest tear;
And though he fares with slowest feet,
Joy runs to meet him, drawing near;
The birds are heralds of his cause,
And, like a never-ending rhyme,
The road-sides bloom in his applause—
Who bides his time.

—James Whitcomb Riley,



THE BEGINNING.

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. i. 1

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John i. 1-3.

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him . . . who is the Beginning." Col. i. 16.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning, and the ending, the first and the last." Rev. i. 8

THIS is the first lesson written for us in the Book of God. If we would learn anything rightly, we must begin at the beginning. So God takes us right to the beginning,—“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.”

He who thus created all things is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One “whose name is called the Word of God,”—the Word who was in the beginning with God, and without whom was not anything made that was made.

Jesus called Himself, “the Beginning of the creation of God.” Everything that has ever been created, in heaven, in earth, in all the worlds, had its beginning in Him, and came forth from Him. So when we read, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” we know that it was in *Jesus*, for “God created all things by Jesus Christ.”

“Alpha and Omega” are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. So when Jesus says that He is the Alpha and Omega, He means that He is the Alphabet of God. All words are made up of the letters of the alphabet, put together in

different ways; so this is but another way of saying that Jesus is the beginning and the ending of the Word of God.

Before we can learn to read, we must know the alphabet. So if we would learn to read aright the books of God, the great book of nature, as well as His Holy Word that we call the Bible,—we must know God's Alphabet, Jesus Christ.

A word is a spoken thought. God's words are the expression of God's thoughts. It is through Jesus that God makes known all His thoughts; this is why He is called the Word of God.

In what we call the book of nature, Jesus the Word has written out the thoughts of God. In this beautiful earth, with its green flower-decked carpet, the home of millions of living creatures—



A Page in God's Book.

insects, birds, animals, and human beings; the sea, “wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts; the blue heaven, with its floating, fleecy clouds, and countless host of stars;—in all His works, we see God's thoughts unfolding. And the first lesson in this great, beautiful book, as well as in the Bible, is that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

If we would know the truth about all the living things on the earth, the plants and the animals, we must remember that all their life and power and wisdom and beauty comes from Christ. He is the beginning and the ending of all things: so now, just as at the beginning of the creation, every blade of grass, every plant and animal, has its beginning in Jesus. When we learn this we shall know that “in Him *we* live, and move, and have our being.” Thus everything that we see will remind us that God is with us, and this will give us power to do the things that please Him.

E E A.

“PRAISE God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below.”

FILLED WITH LIFE.

HOW full the world is of life! From the time we are born till we die, there is scarcely a waking moment in which our eyes do not rest upon some living thing, or upon things which were once alive.

Even in our rooms, the wood of our furniture and our doors could never have been, without the action of life. The paper on our walls, the clothes on our backs, the cloth upon the table, are all made of materials which life has produced for us. Nay, the very marble of our mantel-pieces is the remains of once living animals, and is largely composed of their broken shells.

In the crowded city there is scarcely a street or alley where some blade of grass or common weed does not push its way through chinks in the pavement or the wall. There is no spot from which we cannot see some insect creeping, or flying, or spinning its web.

And in the country, how active life is, covering every inch of the ground with tiny plants, rearing tall trees in the forest, filling the stagnant pools with eager, restless

beings. Anywhere, everywhere, there is life.

Look at the little water beetles skimming over the surface of the wayside pools; watch the snails feeding on the muddy bank; notice the newts putting their heads above water to take breath.

Then remember, that besides these and other animals visible on the surface, the fairy shrimp and the water flea are darting across the pond; while the very scum that floats upon it is made up of plants and animals too small for our eyes to see.

Then, as we pass over plain, and valley, and mountain, we find living things hidden in the moss or the thick grass, rolled up in the leaves, boring into the trunks of trees, and eating their way under ground or into the strongest rock. Then others, such as the lion, tiger, and the elephant, roam over tropical regions, ruling a world of their own. In our own country, rabbits multiply by thousands in their burrows, and come out to frolic in the dusk of evening. The field mice, land and water rats, squirrels, weasels, and badgers, have their houses above and below ground, while countless insects swarm everywhere.

Not content, moreover, with filling the water and covering the land, the same

silent power peoples the atmosphere, where bats, butterflies, bees, and winged insects of all forms, shapes, and colours, fight their way through the ocean of air; while birds, large and small, sail among its invisible waves.

And when, by and by, we reach the sea, we find there masses of sea-weed the plants of the salt water, while all along the shores myriads of living creatures are left by the receding tide. Thousands of acorn shells, many of them no larger than a pin's head, cover the rocks, and wave their delicate fringes in search of food.

Small crabs scramble along, or swim across the pools; and sand-skippers dart through the water, feeding on the delicate, green sea-weed which in its turn is covered with minute shells, each containing a living thing.

If we search in the silent ocean, there again we find abundance of life; from the large fish and other monsters—lords of the ocean—which glide noiselessly along, down to the jellylike masses floating on the surface, and the banks of coral built by tiny creatures in the midst of the dashing waves.

There is no spot on the surface of the earth, in the depths of the ocean, or in the lower currents of the air, which is not filled with life.—*Selected.*

THE VISITOR THAT CAME TO STAY.

WHEN Gordon Deems first got out to the country, early in June, he was too happy for anything. "I hope our old town house will burn down," he cried, "so we need never go back to town to live, never—never—never!"

But as the summer drew to a close, Gordon looked at the trees and grass and flowers and butterflies and birds with very different eyes: he was tired of the country. If there had been another little child in the family, perhaps it would have been different, but Gordon was the only child the family owned.

"I wish we had some company in this house," Gordon said, discontentedly, pulling his dog's tail for lack of something better to do; "over at the Cullen's they have two little girls and a boy for company."

"I found out to-day that we have a guest," said Gordon's mother; "one that came without any invitation, and evidently intends to spend the summer."

"Really, mamma?"

"Yes, really," said mamma.

"Is the visitor old or young, mamma?"

"She is a young member of an old family."

"Then it's a girl," said Gordon, somewhat disappointed.

"She wears a white lace bonnet," said Mrs. Deems.

"Where does she stay?"

"I see her oftenest in the back garden."

"The back garden!" cried Gordon; "that is a very strange place for company to stay."

"Suppose you go and look for her," suggested Mrs. Deems.

The little boy was gone an hour; and when he came in again, he was so full of chatter about an ant-hill he had found, that his visitor in a lace bonnet seemed forgotten.

"Did you find my summer company?" asked his mother, presently.

"Oh-h! I forgot. No, mother, but I'm going to look for her again to-morrow. Will she be here to-morrow?"

"Didn't I tell you she had come to stay all the summer?"

"I'll find her to-morrow, then," said Gordon.

But while looking for this mysterious

guest the next day, the little boy found a wren's nest, and for several days he was intensely interested to see how many worms it took to feed those tiny birds. "They eat as much as elephants!" he declared, when he had counted *thirty-nine* meals in one day that the hard-working birds had carried to the nest.

Finally his mother had to introduce him to her company. In a far corner of the back garden, quite in the shade of the hedge, grew a tall and graceful plant of wild carrot, with finely branched foliage and delicate clusters of lace-like blossoms.

"How Miss *Daucus Carota* got here is her own secret," said Mrs. Deems; "I did not invite her, nor send for her, nor see her come; but here she is, and very welcome, I'm sure."

"What did you call her, mamma?"

"Her company name is *Daucus Carota*,

EASY STEPS FOR LITTLE FEET.



LOOK into the golden heart of a rose, or notice the golden sceptre or star that the queenly lily bears. In almost every flower you will see something like this. When the flower is full blown, just before its petals fall, its tiny yellow grains fall in a golden shower.

Did you know that this gold dust you have seen upon the flowers is of far more value than the gold dust that is dug from the mine? For without this flower dust, that is called pollen, the seeds would be of no use at all.

A little grain of pollen must find its way into the heart of each little seed that is being formed in the pod, or else it will never come to anything. It is the pollen that makes the seeds fruitful—that is, able to bring forth new plants.

So even these tiny grains of dust that we can scarcely see, have their place in God's plan.

The best and strongest plants come from seeds that have been made fruitful by the pollen from another flower. So in many plants it is not possible for the flower dust to fall upon its own seed. How then does the pollen get from one flower to another, to make the seeds perfect? This wonderful story will next be told.



but her nickname, or home name, is 'Wild Carrot;' besides that, she is called 'Birds' Nest' and 'Queen Anne's Lace.'"

"Why did you say she belonged to an old family?" asked the inquisitive small boy.

"Because nearly two thousand years ago, Pliny says, the carrot was brought to Rome from Candia; and from another writer we learn that ladies in Queen Anne's day wore it in their hair."

"And how about the 'bird-nest' name?" asked Gordon.

"Ah, my little questioner," said Mrs. Deems, "that you can find out for yourself by watching our guest until she is ready to leave."

Gordon closely watched the wild-carrot plant in the corner of his back garden. Which one of my little readers has seen her flower stems get dry and brown, and then rise in close curves to form a nest, in which eggs *might* be laid, but never are?—*Sunday School Times.*



A BIRD VISITOR AND HIS COSTUMES.

WHAT little birds come to eat the seeds on my trumpet honeysuckle? They are greyish-olive, perhaps a little yellow, and so confiding." This query came from a friend, and before I found time to reply was answered by the same person in a hurried little missive: "I have found out that the little feathered rogues who steel all sorts of flower seeds from the garden, are gold-finches. My brother knew the moment he saw them, yes, before his eye rested on them, for when I called him to come and look at them hanging, head down, on a disk of sunflower seeds, he said, 'Goldfinches, probably; I just heard several pass by the window.' Now was it not strange I had never before noticed the way they go singing and flitting along? *Co pe cho pe, co pe cho pe*, up and down, up and down, they flit, as if they were as light of heart as of wing and needed only a bit of exertion now and then to sail like thistledown. Why have I never seen them before? Have they any other name, and to what birds are they related?"

My friend had so good a start toward knowing this little visitor that I could but tell her how near she had come to another of his names when she likened him to

thistledown. Yellow bird, thistle bird, thistle finch, wild canary, all of these names are mentioned in the books, and one writer is of the opinion that he delays his nest building till the silky down of the thistle flowers can be had for its lining. Nuttall, however, after speaking of their particular fondness, for thistle seeds, says, as to their habit of not breeding till July or



Goldfinch

August, that "this procrastination appears to be occasioned by the lack of sufficiently nutritive diet, the seeds on which they principally feed not ripening usually before July."

I had to tell my friend that, though her visitors in the honeysuckle may have been late arrivals, it was more than probable that there had been goldfinches about her garden not infrequently through the summer. But as the male did not then wear his business suit of olive and grey, but like any bridegroom in gala attire, appeared in all the splendour of his dress suit, no wonder the change of garments made him unrecognisable. In summer she would have called him a wild canary, seeing his bright yellow form enlivened with black wings and tail a little trimmed with white, and supplemented by the jauntiest little black velvet cap, worn tilted far forward. To have heard his lively, canary-like song would have confirmed the suitability of the name. Wherever there are seeds to eat—and how many unsightly tangles of coarse weeds he helps to keep from overmuch self-sowing!—there, when fare is plentiful, is the goldfinch at home.

Lastly, I had to tell my friend that her new acquaintance was a member of that large and varied family, the *Fringillidæ*, or finches and sparrows, and that if she would have no mistakes as to his identity, she might look for him in the books of *Spinus tristis*. But my friend insists that she cares for birds and not for Latin. "Even though he is so small and keeps his wife always so plainly dressed," she adds, "a bird who has six names and two suits of clothes is rather worth knowing." In song or flight or dainty home he is fascinating, and a useful friend to the gardener, as well; a visitor whose acquaintance is well worth cultivating.—*A. M. Tuttle.*

FAMILY SECRETS.

In the long, bright summer, dear to bird and bee,
When the woods are standing in liveries green
and gay,
Merry little voices sound from every tree,
And they whisper secrets all the day.

If we knew the language, we should hear strange things;

Mrs. Chirry, Mrs. Flurry, deep in private chat,
"How are all your nestlings, dear? Do they use their wings?"

What was that sad tale about a cat?"

"Where is your new cottage?" "Hush! I pray you, hush!

Please speak very softly, dear, and make no noise.

It is on the lowest bough of the lilac bush,
And I am so dreadfully afraid of boys.

"Mr. Chirry chose the spot without consulting me;

Such a very public place, and insecure for it.
I can scarcely sleep at night for nervousness;
but he

Says I am a silly thing and doesn't mind a bit."

"So the Bluebirds have contracted, have they, for a house?

And a nest is under way for little Mrs. Wren?
Hush, dear, hush! Be quiet, dear; quiet as a mouse.

These are weighty secrets, and we must whisper them."

Close the downy dowagers nestle on the bough,
While the timorous voices soften low with dread;

And we, walking underneath, little reckon how
Mysteries are crouching in the tree-tops overhead.

—Susan Coolidge.

TO ATTRACT SINGING BIRDS ABOUT OUR HOMES

IT is a well known fact that more singing birds are found near human dwellings than in the lonely forest. Yet there is much that can be done to make them our close and familiar neighbours. One chief source of attraction is planting clumps of shrubbery near the house, where they can build their nests with a feeling of security. Robins, song sparrows, and all of the thrush family, except the hermit thrush, prefer to place their domicile in a thick clump of lilacs and syringas or mock orange, than upon tall trees. If protected they will return to these nests year after year.

One of the pleasantest memories of my childhood in our old country home was the intimacy established with many families of birds, who were our regular summer visitors. There was a row of white and purple lilacs, extending from the wing of our house to the front piazza, having the shelter behind and a southwestern exposure in front. In the bush next to the wing, close by one of our large dining room windows, a pair of robins had their nest for years. I am not sure whether it was the same pair, or their descendants, but our first joyous harbinger of spring was the robin's sweet song heard early some sunny morning in March. With what delight as a child I stood by that window and watched the birds repairing

their nest with sticks, and often bits of rags and downy chicken feathers we threw on the ground for their use.

Then every morning I was allowed to scatter bread crumbs, and often grass seed from the barn upon the broad window sill outside, especially when some late snow storm made other food difficult to secure. At first these birds were shy of approaching if anyone was observing them, but in time they became so tame that they would seek the crumbs, and even remain eating their breakfast, with their bright eyes watching equally closely the little girl the other side of the glass sash. Finally with eager interest I saw the flitting of the first brood when the lilac was in full leaf and fragrant with its white blossoms.

As another instance how birds appreciate any care shown for their comfort, one very hot summer I noticed in our little garden a robin sitting upon her nest on the limb of an oak tree. She seemed gasping with the heat. I procured a large earthen dish about five inches deep, placed it in the sand under the tree and filled it with cold water, then moved some distance off to watch results. In a few moments the bird flew down to drink, and finally stepped into the dish, splashing in the water and enjoying a delightful bath. She had hardly returned to her nest before a pair of song sparrows were there for a drink and bath. From that day all summer, when the air was hot and dry, I kept the dish filled, and many happy hours I spent in a hammock under some oaks close by, watching sometimes half a dozen birds—robins, sparrows, chewinks and martins—waiting to take their turn for a splash in the cool water; and I found fully as much pleasure in their enjoyment as I did observing human bathers upon the ocean beach.—*Good Housekeeping.*

OVEREATING A CAUSE OF CANCER.

THE theory was advanced by Sir William Banks, in a series of lectures delivered before the British Medical Society, that overeating, or even a "high standard of general nutrition," may predispose to cancer, which he believes to be eminently a disease of the healthy and robust. Thus, abundance of food, which is a result of national prosperity, and on the whole a powerful factor in the improvement of public health, is not without its drawbacks. "More than one hygienic prophet," says the *British Medical Journal*, in a note on the subject, "has lately uplifted his voice in warning as to the evils of overfeeding," and Sir William but adds one more reason for deploring and discouraging it. The writer of the note just quoted says:—

"The theory is not altogether new, but it undoubtedly acquires new strength from the adhesion of a surgeon of his experience and sagacity. He

points out that the increase of cancer coincides with an increase of food throughout the country. Ever since the passing of the Corn Laws, he says, bread has been cheap and plentiful, while during the last twenty years the importation of animal food from other countries has been enormous. The increased wages and emoluments of all classes in this country have enabled them to purchase freely of the best there is to be had in the whole world of things to eat and drink. Our working classes fare admirably. Our better classes eat infinitely too much, especially of animal food partaken of at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. But for the athletic tendency of the age and the general passion for games and exercises which prevades all classes, this overstuffing must have proved very dangerous.

"Sir William Banks is pretty well convinced that, when a man is over forty-five, excess in food is perhaps worse for him than excess in drink, and believes that one of the results of too much nourishing food is the production of a widely spread, second-rate kind of gout, of a different type from the acute and furious attacks produced in former days by the copious drinking of beer and port wine. Sir William Banks is distinctly of the opinion that it has also to do with the increase of the constitutional tendency to cancer. The theory is supported by the fact that the increase of cancer in males has been more rapid than in females; and it is precisely the male population that eats heavy food in ever-increasing quantities, whereas the female remains much as she was before in this respect."—*Literary Digest.*



VERY striking is a remark by Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., in an article on "Parliament at Work," in the *Christian World*, of March 13. Speaking of the criticism of the Army Estimates by one of the members he says: "The subject is serious in truth. It is nothing less than the military defence of Great Britain and her Empire against a world in arms."

A WIDOW who kept a small shop in Paris was found dead the other day, with a letter in her hand, announcing that she had won £5,000 in a lottery. Her death was caused by the violent emotion produced by the sudden news of her fortune, which certainly was to her anything but "good fortune." What a comment on the inability of earthly riches to give life and happiness! The good news of the gift of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" was never known to have any ill effect upon anybody. On the contrary, it always gives life and peace.

ACCORDING to Dr. Wutzdorf, of the German Imperial Board of Health, the spread of cancer is generally on the increase in that country, much in excess of the growth of the population. The younger classes of the population are suffering from cancer to a much greater extent than formerly.

REGARDLESS of their estimate of the character of Mr. Rhodes, whose death was announced last week, all would do well to heed the following axiom, which reveals the secret of the strength of that remarkable man: "If you have an idea, and it is a good idea, if you will only stick to it, you will come out all right." For "idea" substitute "principle of truth," and follow the advice given; the result will be the most perfect success in the end, even though it leads one through fire and water and the mire of contempt and abuse.

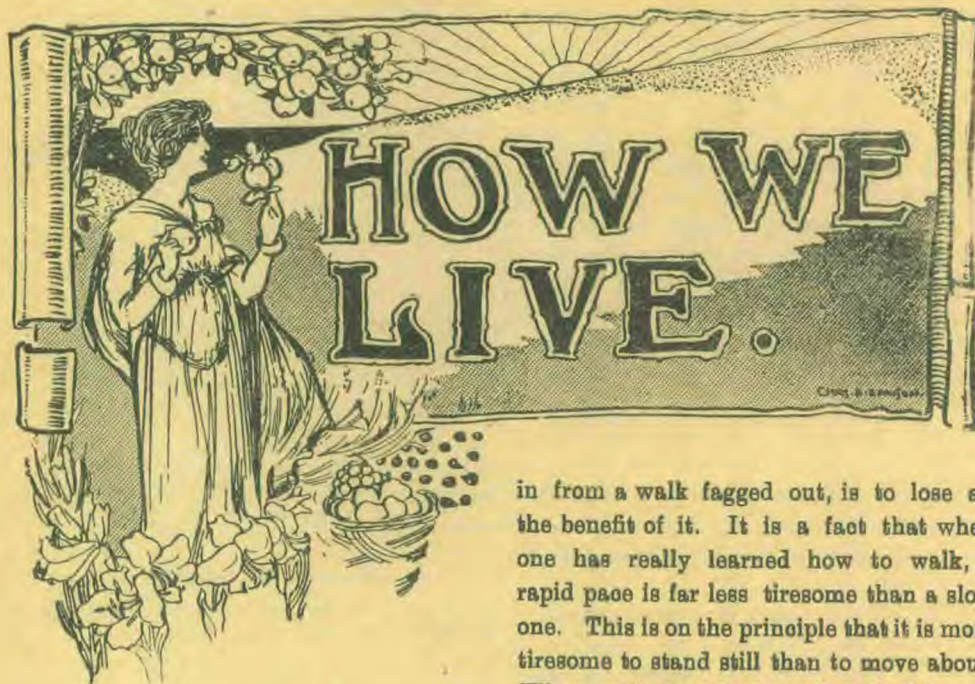
A NEW feature in wireless telegraphy was reported by the steamship *Campania* on its arrival in New York last week. In mid-ocean the *Campania* tried to communicate by wireless telegraphy with the *Lucania*, which was passing towards England. The signals failed to reach the *Lucania*, however, being caught by the steamship *Philadelphia*, which passed them on, thus acting as intermediary between the two Cunarders. Thus it is demonstrated that no scheme of wireless telegraphy has yet been invented, which will ensure the privacy of the messages sent; and this lack renders it impracticable either for war or business. Business men are likely to be very cautious about committing the details of their affairs to the winds.

THE *Catholic Times* quotes approvingly the following from the *American Ecclesiastical Review* concerning the Papal Commission on the Holy Scriptures:—

"Catholic scholars, therefore, have now a permanent information bureau where they may find out whether they have swerved from the path of truth in their views as to the identity of the Bible, or its authority, or again its exegesis."

But this "information bureau" is composed of men who are like other men, no more learned than the scholars who are expected to appeal to them as final authority, and just as liable to err. Who will ensure that they do not wander from the truth? How much better to accept God's own Interpreter, the Holy Spirit, who is given freely to all, to make us know the things that are freely given us of God, and to lead us into all truth.

THE Marquis of Allesbury has given notice of a question which he proposes to ask the Under Secretary for India, namely, whether the attention of the Viceroy of India has been drawn to the public statement that part of the equipment of the New Imperial Cadet Corps is to consist of a saddle cloth made from the skin of the snow leopard. He says that the snow leopard is not only rare, but practically harmless, and therefore asks that instruction be given to prevent its extermination. But the *Chronicle* says that "his harmlessness is not above question," for "travellers assert that he hunts in couples, and kills, mainly ibex, for the sake of killing." If that is a reason why he should be exterminated what shall be said of men, who rise from a hearty meal, and slaughter pheasants and pigeons, as well as other game, by the hundred, merely for the sake of killing?



SOME HINTS ON WALKING.

LAST week we made some suggestions about how to warm the feet, and how to treat them so as to prevent that habitual coldness from which so many suffer. It will be remembered that walking was recommended as altogether the best thing for cold feet; but it was stated that it makes a vast difference how one walks.

When walking, whether in the discharge of one's duties, or purely as an exercise, one should get the most possible good from it. Even though we take a walk for the purpose of warming our feet, the good effects should not be confined to our feet. Indeed, the feet will profit by the exercise in proportion as the entire system is benefited.

It will be taken for granted that the feet are clothed in the most comfortable manner possible. When we say this, it must be understood as meaning the most comfortable manner consistent with the barbarous fashion that civilisation imposes on us. Until we get courage to defy custom sufficiently to wear sandals, so adjusted as to leave the foot room to move and breathe, they will necessarily suffer to some extent. But let us have them as comfortable as the shoemaker can make them.

One of the first requisites to deriving benefit from walking is that it be done briskly and not in a listless, loafing manner. A rapid walk of half a mile gives one more exercise than twice as far at a slow pace.

Then, too, one should walk in such a way as not to become exhausted. To come

in from a walk fagged out, is to lose all the benefit of it. It is a fact that when one has really learned how to walk, a rapid pace is far less tiresome than a slow one. This is on the principle that it is more tiresome to stand still than to move about. When one's legs begin to feel tired from a long walk, relief will often be experienced by breaking into a run.

In walking, the body should be erect, head up, chest thrown forward, and hips back. This is the only way to secure an erect position. Pay no attention to the shoulders. The directions so often given to children, "Throw your shoulders back," is calculated to produce deformity, rather than otherwise. The shoulders must necessarily fall into line if the chest and hips take the right position. One will then be able to balance easily on the balls of the feet.

Then it should be understood that the feet and legs are for walking with, and that the rest of the body is to be carried. If the muscles of the legs are regularly exercised in the manner suggested last week, it will not be difficult to walk with the legs alone, instead of with the entire body, as so many do. It is to the ignorance of how to make proper use of the legs, that so much of the fatigue of climbing stairs is due. Neither walking nor stair-climbing, if properly done, will ever have the tendency to injure the internal organs of any woman, or to cause the back to ache.

The feet and legs are composed of a series of levers and springs, all calculated for one purpose. The sole of the foot is arched, so that one may spring, and thus walk lightly; for it should be understood that the more lightly one walks the more is one benefited. Many people come down on their feet with all their weight, as though their legs were jointless, wooden pegs, and their feet clubs. Their tread across the floor is elephantine. This is most ungraceful, and at the same time in-

jurious to the body, if one does much of it; for all the organs are jolted and shaken up.

If in walking one steps as nearly as possible on the ball of the foot, leaving it on the ground just long enough to get purchase for a quick spring ahead, the motion will be a gliding one, instead of a series of forward falls from which one is saved by throwing out the leg. By this means one can run across the floor or up stairs with far less disturbance to the inmates than by walking slowly by the falling, stiff-legged method. And the benefit derived from the exercise is incalculably greater. One gets exercise of the muscles, and accelerated circulation of the blood, without fatigue. In climbing stairs, instead of coming down heavily on the steps, one should set the foot down lightly, and let the muscles of the leg lift the body up with a spring.

At another time we shall have something more to say about exercises for strength and warmth, that can be taken at any time, and by the feeblest persons. EDITOR.

HOW TO RESIST DISEASE.

IT is important to keep away from disease germs, but it is no less important to have a barrier in your system to keep the germs away from you. More people escape disease by having this barrier against disease, than escape it by keeping away from places where disease breeds. The fact is that disease germs of nearly every kind are floating in the air, and no person can expect to keep entirely clear of them.

When the system is run down from starvation or disease, or the mucous membranes of the lungs or intestines are inflamed or in an unhealthy state from whatever cause, the person's condition is one which invites the disease to fasten upon him. The germs which are always present in the air find a weak spot where the conditions are favourable to their propagation, they fasten upon it and begin to multiply, and ere long the victim finds himself on the road to a consumptive's grave, without having been near any particular source of infection. In a healthy system the conditions are never favourable to the propagation of disease germs; the vitality of the body resists them; and while this might not be sufficient to ward off the most contagious diseases, it is undoubtedly the best safeguard one can have against many of the diseases which are recognised as due to the presence of a specific organism or "germ."

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THE JOY OF THE CROSS.

GOD draws a cloud over each gleaming morn;
Would we ask why?
It is because all noblest things are born
In agony.

Only upon some cross of pain or woe
God's Son may lie;
Each soul redeemed from self and sin must
know
Its Calvary.

Yet we must crave for neither joy nor grief,
God chooses best:
He only knows our sick soul's best relief,
And gives us rest.

For neither life, nor death, nor things below,
Nor things above,
Shall ever sever us, that we should go
From His great love. —Selected.

Priesthood and Confession.—There has been much comment over the "Round-Table Conference" at Lambeth, presided over by the Bishop of London, concerning confession and priesthood in the church. Seemingly no conclusion was arrived at, which is not strange; for the fact that a body of learned theologians should deem it necessary to hold a conference over so simple a matter, makes it very certain that they will not come to an understanding of it thereby. The reason is, that they ignore the only real instruction on the subject, which is so plain that a child cannot mistake it. Two texts of Scripture are sufficient. The first treats of

THE PRIESTHOOD: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." 1 Peter ii. 9. This is to all who have come to Christ, the Living Stone, and thus "as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Verses 4, 5.

Then we have this rule concerning

CONFESSION: "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for

another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." James v. 16.

With these two texts as a basis, one need never be at a loss to know the truth. The difficulty arises only when a determined attempt is made to limit the priesthood to a special class, whose business it shall be to hear the confessions of all the others.

God's Mercy in Judgment.—In the midst of the plagues upon Egypt, which increased in severity only as Pharaoh's stubborn resistance increased, God said to him: "In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up [made thee to stand], for to show in thee My power; and that My name may be declared throughout the earth." Ex. ix. 16. Turn to Ex. xxxiv. 5-7, and we there learn that God's name is "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." So it is evident that God wished to show His mercy to Pharaoh, and to forgive his sins; for His name is mercy and forgiveness. And, indeed, the Lord did again and again show mercy to Pharaoh. The king had only to say, "It is enough; entreat the Lord for me," and the plague ceased. This is always the case. "Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies." Lam. iii. 32. In wrath He remembers mercy.

Our Way and God's Way.—"The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." Ps. cxlv. 17. "As for God, His way is perfect." Ps. xvlii. 30.

That is the character of God's way; what about our way? Here is God's answer: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways." Isa. lv. 9.

Since God's way is right, and our way is infinitely below it, it is plain that our way is all wrong, no matter how perfect it seems to us. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. xvi. 25.

It is clear enough, therefore, that the worst thing that can happen to us is to have our own way. If we do, we are sure to go wrong. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

Jer. x. 23. If we attempt to regulate anything, and try to direct affairs, so as to have them according to our ideas, the result will surely be failure. Therefore we need to pray:—

"Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths." Ps. xxv. 4.

Then comes the promise:—

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye." Ps. xxxii. 8.

And the result is this: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways." Ps. cxix. 1-3.

At a meeting of the English Church Union a few days ago, reported in the *Church Times* of March 21, the question of Sunday observance occupied the whole of the time. There was very much discussion, but the gist of the matter is summed up in the following extract from the published report. The Rev. Canon Brooke said:—

"He did not think we could base our claim for the duty and privilege of Sunday observance on the fourth commandment alone. (Hear, hear.) The fourth commandment commemorated a certain event on a certain day; whereas the Christian Church commemorates another event on another day. (Hear, hear.)"

Thus it is evident that it is a case of the Church against the commandment. But this is not all. The *Church Times* in its report says:—

"What constitutes an ideal observance of Sunday is admittedly a debatable point with numbers of pious Christians, and it would be difficult to find any considerable body of persons whose ideals exactly coincide."

But those who follow the Bible are not left to the uncertainty of human ideals; for the same Lord who tells us that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and who declares Himself to be its Lord, has given us in His own life an example of how it should be kept. "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." As "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it," He taught that it was to be a blessing not simply to those who observed it, but, through them, to all with whom they might come in contact. The life of Christ affords a perfect example of Sabbath keeping, both as regards the day itself, and the manner of its observance. And that is perfectly in harmony with the fourth commandment; for the law was in His heart, and He said, "I have kept My Father's commandments."