

# PRESENT TRUTH



PEACE

ON EARTH

AND

IN HEAVEN

AMEN

1923

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GLORY

TO

THE

FATHER

AND

THE

SON

IN

GLORY

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# The Manger and the Cross.



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Tell me more about Jesus."

FOR hundreds of years men have been talking about Him, and the story of His life has been proclaimed in thousands of pulpits, and repeated in millions of homes; yet it is not worn out. It is as fresh and new as when first told, not only because man's needs are the same now as then, and because

"Some have never heard  
The message of salvation,  
From God's own holy Word;"

but because however familiar it is to us, we are always finding in it greater depths and heights than we ever dreamed of. Our intellect and understanding enlarge with our growth; but the story of Jesus and His love, which we heard as little children, has unfolded and expanded faster

than our minds, so that still it must be told to us simply,

"As to a little child."

The Manger and the Cross are the revelation of the eternal, infinite God, with whom we never cease to be children. Even to old age and grey hairs He carries us in His arms, and soothes us with His "still, small voice," comforting us "as one whom his mother comforteth." The grey-haired sage is to God but the lisping infant; and he who would excel in science must come as an artless child, and listen with attentive ear to the voice of Him in whom are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

## "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST."

"THUS saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me." Jer. ix. 23, 24. Yet "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. vi. 14. We are to glory only in the knowledge of God, and only in the cross. So we see that the cross is that which by revealing His glory, teaches us to know God; and since the announcement of the birth of Christ was "Glory to God in the highest," it is evident that the Manger was identical with the Cross, which is the revelation of the glory of God to man.

## INFINITE STRENGTH IN ABSOLUTE HELPLESSNESS.

WHAT is the evidence that even the professed Christian world has not yet learned the full meaning of the story of the birth of Christ? This: That it is no uncommon thing for Christians to become discouraged because of their weakness and the difficulties they have to contend with. In the birth of Christ

God has shown us that there is no ground for discouragement. If we rightly read the story, we shall know without referring to Rom. viii. 35-47, that in tribulation, and distress, and persecution, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword, "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

In Christ all extremes meet—the height and depth, the length and breadth. Infinite strength in absolute helplessness; eternal glory in shame and disgrace; perfect peace in raging conflict; the day-star and the sun of righteousness in the midnight darkness of sin; life springing from the pit of corruption,—all these appear in Him, and inspire the believer with lively hope and courage.

No king riding in pomp at the head of victorious legions ever had such heralds as proclaimed the coming of the Prince of peace; yet when shepherds and wise men sought Him, they found only a tiny, helpless infant, unconscious of the adoration which they paid Him. That Babe resting in the manger, or in its mother's arms, careless and unconscious of the turmoil of earth, and of the plots to take its life, represents the peace which God gives His trusting children on this earth. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him." As safe as Jesus was from the murderous Herod, so safe from sin that crouches at the door, and from all assaults, are those who put their trust in Him. "He is our peace," and therefore we may rest in peace, not knowing nor caring to know what dangers may threaten us, or what troubles and difficulties lie in wait for us.

## THE REVELATION OF THE GLORY.

JESUS CHRIST in the manger with the cattle for His companions, was as surely "the power of God and the wisdom of God," as He will be when He comes in the glory of the Father, attended by all the holy angels. He had the same angel attendants then, and was the revelation of the same glory to all who had spiritual eyesight. "The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

What could be weaker than a helpless babe, made still more helpless by being bound in swaddling clothes? Yet that represented the measure of the power which He had in Himself when He performed the mightiest miracles. Faint with fasting, He resisted the temptations of the devil; and by the same power He cast out devils. He said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing;" it was "the fulness of the Godhead bodily" dwelling in Him, and not His human flesh, that did the works. His name is "God with us," and He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" and therefore the weakness of our flesh is no bar to the manifestation of His strength in us. The power that does "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" is "the power that worketh in us." Eph. iii. 20. The trouble is that we do not get our eyes open to know what is "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

## THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY.

"THAT was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Why walk in darkness, when Christ is "God with us," and "in Him is no darkness at all"? "The night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike" to Him. From the Manger in Bethlehem shine the rays that shall fill the earth with the glory of the Lord; and that coming glory will be hastened as the Manger is multiplied by the repetition of the mystery of the birth of Christ in all who receive Him. E. J. W.





### "PEACE ON THE EARTH, GOOD WILL."

FAR o'er the silence of the stars,  
Faint, sweet, from vast above,  
Again I hear the tenderest bars  
That ever breathed of love.  
Above the din of woe, they thrill,  
"Peace to the earth, to men good will."

Earth's centuries of wrong and pain—  
Greed, flood, oppression, loss,—  
Sink for a moment 'neath that strain  
That sweeps its love across.  
Hush! o'er the earth it lingers still,  
"Peace, peace to earth, to all good will."

Who wakes to hear the song? men sleep;  
The strain is still afar.  
The shepherds, watching o'er their sheep,  
Rise now to see the star.  
A blazing angel lights the gloom;  
The hosts of heaven like lilies bloom.

"To you is born in Bethlehem,  
The Saviour and the Christ.  
Peace to the earth, good will to men.  
Haste now, and keep the tryst.  
God in the flesh to you is given  
To woo and win you back to heaven."

Long, long that suffering Love hath borne  
His rebel children's woe;  
Now through the cross and crown of thorn  
He comes His grief to show.  
With bleeding brow and arms stretched wide  
He'll win His loved ones to His side.

The infant's brow hath heavenly awe,  
Of diadem bereft;  
For from the shadow of the straw,  
The thorn-crown shade is left.  
And from the beams a cross is pressed,  
In shadowy sorrow on His breast.

O wonder! that from Bethlehem  
To Calvary He trod,  
Hunted and pierced by rebel men,  
Bearing the peace of God.  
E'en unto death His love was true,  
"Forgive! they know not what they do."

Far up to that high Majesty,  
He knew o'er worlds were framed,  
He passed to make His ministry  
More sure for those He claimed.  
And sends the angels where men rove,  
To win them still by deathless love.

The lilies bloom, the roses sway,  
The fragrance lingers long,  
The stars still shine when ends the day,  
All nature sings His song:  
"Come unto Me, O troubled breast,  
Peace unto thee, and love, and rest."

Yet wars wage on, and nations hate,  
And choose not Him; but death,  
And yet to earth comes certain fate,—  
"Peace," as the sure word saith.  
The hosts of sin shall find sin's doom,  
And from their dust shall roses bloom.

Once more the heavens will part in twain,  
The firmament be bright,  
And vast will sweep the heavenly train,—  
Christ and His hosts of light,—  
To war, to triumph over sin,  
To bring His loved as conquerors in.

The children of His gentleness,  
Whose will to men was good,  
Who loved and longed, like Him  
to bless,  
Who by His love were moved,  
From lowly grove and sad-  
dened doom,  
Will rise transfigured and in bloom.

Caught up to Christ, they'll hear the strain,  
And know its infinite scope,  
"Peace, peace to earth, to men good will."  
At last they'll feast their hope,  
And see the earth, redeemed from doom,  
Enrobed, like them, in deathless bloom.  
Then every sphere will join the note,  
And every creature sing,  
And out through space the praise will float  
To Christ the love-proved King.  
And age on age anew, will thrill,  
In God's sweet peace, in God's good will.

FANNIE E. BOLTON.

### GRACE AND TRUTH IN HUMAN FLESH.



EACH of the four Gospels gives us a different view of the birth of Christ. In the Gospel of John we are shown not only the birth of the Son of God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, but the same birth in all who receive Him. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." John i. 12

Our share in this birth was not made dependent upon our own will or choice, for those who receive power to become the sons of God are born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Verse 13. God has predestinated all to be conformed to the image of His Son. Rom. viii. 29. We do not need to consider here why some will be lost. This is not necessary in any case. "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Matt. xviii. 14. Whoever is content with God's will and accepts His gift, will become a son of God. The man who wills not to receive power to become a son of God is finally set free to accept his own choice. He is permitted to sever the family tie, which is a yoke of bondage to him, and to go to "his own place."

The flesh has no part in making us sons of God, and neither can the flesh direct or help the life of the sons of God. Their power to live as sons comes in continuing to receive Christ in His fulness. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." Verse 14. "Of His fulness have all we received." And His fulness comes freely. It is "grace for grace;" grace procuring more grace. "To every one that hath is given." It is God's way; to give all that will be accepted, to every one that will take.

"The law was given by Moses. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." To Moses, the servant in God's house, might be entrusted the declaring of the law. Only to "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father," could be committed the revealing of His love. God would run no risk of any soul misunderstanding His meaning. He put the fulness of grace and truth into the common language of an every-day life. The Son of God Himself would show, in our sinful flesh, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

God had tried through Moses to teach His people, but they put Moses in the place of the truth, and so every year was increasing the distance between them and the Word of God given through Moses. To Israel the law was only a form. They made their boast of the law, but in their breaking of it, they dishonoured the Law-giver. Rom. ii. 23. They had "the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law." Verse 20; but the truth itself came by Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ came simply that He might be received. In Him came grace and truth, that in Him they might be received. And the test of whether we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, or whether, like Moses with the Jews, He is one year farther from us every time we join in remembering His birth, is the question of whether grace and truth have come into us by Jesus Christ. We may be confident that we are a guide to the blind, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, and yet through it all, cause the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. Rom. ii. 12-24. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and whoever is not filled with grace and truth,—grace in all its sweet helpfulness, truth in all its honest sincerity, grace and truth as they are understood in heaven,—whoever is not filled full with these, is not able to say that he has received Jesus Christ. But as many as receive Him to them He gives power to be like Him.

And just as the flesh cannot give life to the believer, or the will of man add anything to the will of God, so it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those that love Him. In Jesus Christ was seen the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father. God has only one Son, and so there are no degrees in His fatherly love. Whoever comes to Him is accepted in the Beloved, and is esteemed as an only-begotten son. So we may know that God's plan for our Christian experience is the life of His only-begotten Son, as set forth in the gospels. In them we read what is God's will for us in the line of Christian service and achievement, and gain some idea of the greatness of the power to become the sons of God which is to usward who believe.

W. T. BARTLETT.





### THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND THE BIBLE.

**T**HIS is an age of research. The student of archeology has entered the field with the determination that the past shall reveal the secrets so long hidden from the knowledge of men. The greatest success has rewarded his labours, and the uncertainty and vague theories which were offered us a few years ago, with their unsatisfactory results, have been practically overcome, so that the languages of the nations of the ancient world have been reduced to a grammatical certainty. The past has become as yesterday. The monuments and tablets telling of kings and subjects, wars and treaties, laws and customs, the news of the market and the gossip of the day, and even the prescription of the family doctor, force us to admit that "there is no new thing under the sun."

The one who has most gladly welcomed these discoveries, and, I believe, has profited most largely by them, is the student of the Holy Scriptures. For as these records of the forgotten past rise from their dusty graves, and live again to speak after the silence of ages, it is only to add their testimony to the great multitude of those of all times who bear witness that "the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever." And while the carefully wrought tablets of cuneiform in the baked clay of Babylonia and Assyria, or the hieroglyphics inscribed on shaft of granite or temple of sandstone in the land of the Nile fell away long centuries ago, to be covered by the same dust that entombed their makers; or, if standing, are but the headstone of the lost nation at its base, and tell us not of life, but of death, not of the reward of righteousness, but of the penalty of making the "gods of the nations" their strength, God's Word has proved as everlasting as Himself, for "the Word was God."

The sacred books of other nations have been written by their wise men and guarded by kings of universal power, but they were like unto those who made them, and perished with them. But God cared for His Word, and though written on the frail papyrus, rather than on sandstone or granite, yet like that slender plant it has scattered its living seed beside many waters and multiplied its leaves a thousandfold. The people to whom the Word of God was first confided were small in number, and not counted among the nations, yet the Word was given them which, if followed, would make of them a great people, even a wise and understanding nation above all nations, and their kingdom an everlasting kingdom. But because they "cast away the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel," they perished as a nation and were scattered as a people. In the terrible destruction and desolation which befell the people to whom God had entrusted the keeping of the holy oracles, He preserved the Word, and handed it, a most precious legacy, to the infant Christian church; and from a page unsullied by the theories and traditions of men, its light is still shining "more and more unto the perfect day," with a clear and certain beam, that those who are wise may be guided to Bethlehem, to see, as all must see who will be guided by it,—the Word made flesh.

Now that scholars are giving us the results of their splendid work, we read anew the story of Chedorlaomer, the empire builder; of Ramesses, the oppressor; of Hiram, the friend and ally of Solomon; of Sargon, who equalled, if he did not surpass, a Tsar of Russia as a deporter of political offenders. We learn more details concerning the luxury and splendour of the golden kingdom of the great Nebuchadnezzar, reading with delight his terse description of the tower of Babel, and how he finished it after it had been abandoned long years before, by a people not understanding each other. And from all these

records we are able better to comprehend that Omnipotent decree "that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."

Because the story of the ancient monuments agrees so fully and accurately with the Bible narrative, that does not make the Scriptures any more sure. They are sure because they are God's promises to us, which are always yea and amen. He has caused the buried history of the past to speak to us at this time to strengthen those of faltering faith, to check the insidious growth of infidelity now masquerading in the scholarly cloak of German rationalism. It will bring joy and, above all, confidence to the honest seeker after truth who is now confused and bewildered by the learned sophistry and subtle theories of those who, standing as teachers of the Word, have questioned its Divine origin. These teachers have, by their interpretation, destroyed its simplicity, and separated the life from the body by casting the sacred Word into the balances of human reason, themselves presuming to judge of its merits and demerits. So faith is destroyed, human reason exalted, and men are taught to forget that "prophecy came not at any time [margin] by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

H. R. SALISBURY.

### "GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN."



**T**HAT was a marvellous expression which was used by the multitude of the heavenly host over the fields of Bethlehem, on the night when Jesus was born. Those angels brought a loving message from the courts of heaven in order that all doubts and fears of mankind might be dissolved by the blessed assurance of God's unlimited love. Whatever doubts may have existed up to that time, the fact of the Incarnation would dispel from every trusting heart, as the rising sun dispels the morning mists.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," and that gift to humanity was never to be withdrawn. Joyfully we echo the words of the ancient prophet, "Unto us a Son is given," for He who identified Himself with our human nature on that memorable occasion will never dissociate Himself from it. Throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity He will still be "the Man Christ Jesus," although He is the Son of the Highest. No wonder the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Let us briefly notice, first, the basis of His good will; and secondly, the fact of His good will.



## I.—THE BASIS OF HIS GOOD WILL.

God is love. Whatever He does must be done in love. His will, therefore, which is behind all His actions, must be a good will because its basis is love. Oh, that all who read these words could realise this! Then there would be no murmuring or complaining of the events that are daily taking place round about us. We should never regard any event of life as a chance circumstance. We should recognise everything that occurs as being either by the direct appointment or permission of His good will. And whether God sends a thing direct into our lives or permits it to come, it becomes God's will for us as soon as it reaches us; so we can settle down on that eternal, unchangeable basis of His everlasting love.

This is what the apostle meant when he said: "Giving thanks *always* for *all things* unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. v. 20. The Father will never allow anything to happen to the child that is not on the basis of His good will; so that thanks can be given to Him always, and therefore there never will be a time in life in which we cannot return thanks to Him. But while many will acknowledge that this is true, very few are prepared to give thanks always for all things. This is the difference that obtains among Christians at the present time. One class force themselves to give thanks to the Father *in spite of* their circumstances, while the other class maintain a continuous restless life by thanking the Father constantly *for* their circumstances. The first class are continually in a state of disquietude, trying to escape from those things which are constantly coming upon them; while the others recognise that "all things work together for good to them that love God," and like the Master they can say of apparently adverse circumstances: "The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?" That cup may come from the hands of Satan through Judas, but the Father's good will can be seen in each transaction in permitting it to come.

I have stood in one of the large buildings of one of our naval dockyards, and have seen the large number of wheels whirling round in different directions. At first sight it appears nothing but confusion; but after a while you realise that one ponderous engine is working the whole, and that all parts get their motive power from the same source, and although the wheels appear to be going in different directions, sometimes cog in cog entirely reverse, yet all are working together to bring about one result. So when our eyes are opened to see that God is love, and that God is nothing else but love, we have found a basis for His good will that no event in life can ever rob us of, and we join in the angels' song by giving "glory to God in the highest" for every event of life.

## II.—THE FACT OF HIS GOOD WILL.

The Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ is set forth in the Scriptures as the stupendous fact that in giving Jesus, the Father gave everything. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." That fulness was manifested in the little babe who was born at Bethlehem. Could the love of God have conceived a more wonderful plan of redemption than this: that the fulness of divinity could be compressed into the narrow limits of humanity? The angels looked with wondering eyes when the fact was demonstrated to the universe that divinity could find a congenial home in humanity. Here there was no room for any speculation as to how much God loved humanity. He demonstrated it by giving His all.

It has been for ever demonstrated that Christ in humanity is stronger than the devil. "As He is so are we in this world." The power that He has He holds in trust for each one who will receive it, and when He abides in the heart He brings His almighty power to bear upon and subdue the flesh. Those who let Him do this can repeat the angels' song: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN." H. CHAMPNESS.

## "WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR."



WHEN the time drew nigh that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem of Judea, the light of God had almost become extinguished in the earth. Even among those who were professedly His own people, unto whom had been committed as a sacred trust the lively oracles of the law, the light and knowledge of God had become dim. The people of God were no longer a beacon light to the nations, and "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people."

Men and women, sad and disconsolate, had become weary of the cold, formal service of the Rabbi. The dry, spiritless reading of the sacred law had become a burden, and out of the darkness of their despair and sorrow, they looked and waited for the Consolation of Israel—their promised Messiah. There were also some outside of Israel's camp, who were waiting for the Morning Star to appear. These Gentile philosophers, having failed to see the light of God in His people, had been attracted by the glory of God in the heavens; and as they followed by day and by night the harmonious course of the heavenly bodies, their hearts had been drawn out to adore Him who "bringeth out their host by number." As they saw the revelation of Him who is "strong in power" they felt their own need of a Saviour, and it was in answer to this need that Jesus came.

When the angel of the Lord was sent to announce the birth of Christ, he passed over both priest and rabbi, Pharisee and scribe, and appeared unto the humble shepherds, who were keeping their flocks by night on the hills of Bethlehem.

As the silvery pinioned angel like a luminous star appeared in the heavens announcing the birth of the infant Jesus, the wise men in the east saw in that angelic light a fulfilment of the prophetic word, which says, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." With joyful confidence they hastened their steps to enquire of the people of God who dwelt in Jerusalem concerning the Messiah's birth. They had expected to find Jerusalem exultant over the birth of their Messiah king, but as they drew near to the city and entered through its gates, they saw no sign that would indicate that the Daystar from on high had visited His people. Even on enquiry at the Synagogue they were met by the proud Rabbi, who had no place for their joy in his heart. Still on they went to the temple, and there face to face with the priests who minister in holy things, they again earnestly enquire, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His Star in the east, and are come to worship Him."

Ah, what an intensity of desire burned in the hearts of these men who were looking for the Lord's Christ. With their souls full of passionate love and joy, they sound the note that should have been sounded by the faithless watchmen who slumbered in the watch-towers. "We have seen His star," said they, and though their proclamation was disregarded by the rulers, there were those who were hungering and thirsting after God, who received the glad tidings with joy, and sounded far and wide the news of the birth of Israel's future King.

Led on by the Divine light of that star, they journeyed until Bethlehem came in sight. As the children of Israel were guided out of Egypt by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, so these wise men were guided to the very house where the infant Jesus lay. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." They had not taken their long journey out of idle curiosity to find Jesus. "We are come to worship Him," they said, and when they had found Him they presented unto Him first, the acceptable offering of their thankful hearts, and then out of their abundance they poured their wealth of costliest treasure at His feet. Such is the worship of those who worship Him in spirit and in truth; and to-day, as ever, the Father seeketh such to worship Him. HARRY ARMSTRONG.



## MARTIN LUTHER.

HIS CHARACTER AND  
EARLY LIFE.

Through the ages of papal darkness and oppression, God's care was over His cause and His people. Amid opposition, conflict, and persecution, an all-wise providence was still at work in the

upbuilding of Christ's kingdom. Satan exercised his power to hinder the work of God, by destroying the workmen; but as soon as one labourer was imprisoned, or slain, another was raised up to fill the vacancy. Despite all the opposing powers of evil, angels of God were doing their work, heavenly messengers were searching out men to stand as light-bearers amid the darkness. Notwithstanding the widespread apostasy, there were honest souls who had given heed to all the light which shone upon them. In their ignorance of God's Word they had received the doctrines and traditions of men, but when the Word was placed within their reach, they earnestly studied its pages, and in humility of heart they wept and prayed for a knowledge of God's will. With great joy they accepted the light of truth, and eagerly sought to impart light to their fellow-men.

Through the labours of Wycliffe, Huss, and kindred workers, thousands of noble witnesses had borne testimony to the truth; yet at the beginning of the sixteenth century the darkness of ignorance and superstition still rested like a pall upon the church and the world. Religion was made to consist of a round of ceremonies, many of them borrowed from heathenism, and all devised by Satan to lead the minds of the people away from God and the truth. The worship of images and relics was still maintained. The Scriptural ordinance of

the Lord's Supper was supplanted by the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass. Popes and priests claimed the power to forgive sins, and to open and close the gates of heaven to all mankind. Senseless superstitions and rigorous exactions had taken the place of the true worship of God. The lives of popes and clergy were so corrupt, their proud pretensions so blasphemous, that good men trembled for the morality of the rising generation. With iniquity prevailing in the high places of the church, it seemed inevitable that the world would

power. Hence it was his studied effort to shut the Scriptures away from the people, and to prevent their minds from becoming enlightened by the truths of the Gospel. But a day of religious light and freedom was about to dawn upon the world, and all the efforts of Satan and his hosts were powerless to prevent its coming.

Foremost among those who were called of God to break the chains of popery, and lead the church into the light of a purer faith, stood Martin Luther. Though, like others in his time, he did not see every truth as clearly as we see it to-day, yet he earnestly desired to know the will of God, and joyfully received the truth as it was made plain to his understanding. Zealous, ardent, devoted, knowing no fear but the fear of God, and acknowledging no foundation for religious faith but the Scriptures of truth, Luther was the man for his time; and through him God accomplished a great work for the emancipation of the church, and the enlightenment of the world.

Like the early disciples, Luther came from the ranks of poverty. His father earned by daily toil as a miner the means to educate his son. He intended him for a lawyer; but God designed to make him a builder upon the great temple rising so slowly through the centuries.

Luther's father was a man of strong and active mind, and great force of character, honest, resolute and straightforward. His life was characterised by stern integrity; he was true to his convictions of duty, let the consequences be what they might.

His sterling good sense led him to regard the monastic system with distrust. He was highly displeased when Luther, without his consent, entered a monastery; and it was two years before the father was reconciled to his son, and even then his opinions remained the same.

The life of Luther from his earliest years was one of privation, hardship, and severe discipline. The effect of this train-



LUTHER SINGING IN THE STREETS.

soon become as wicked as were the antediluvians or the inhabitants of Sodom.

The Gospel was withheld from the people. It was regarded as a crime to own or read the Scriptures. Even the higher classes found it difficult to obtain a glimpse of the Word of God. Satan well knew that if the people were permitted to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, his deceptions would speedily lose their



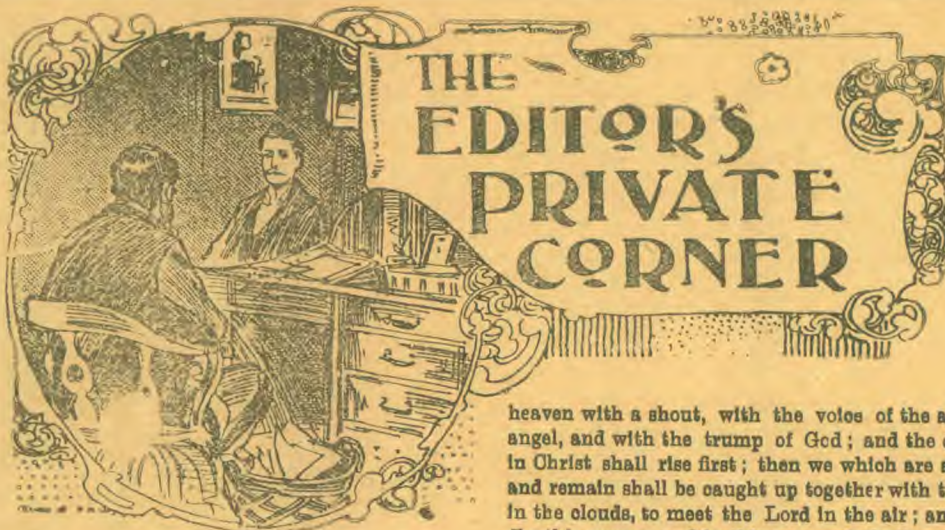
ing was seen in his religious character throughout his life. Luther himself, though conscious that in some respects his parents had erred, found in their discipline much more to approve than to condemn.

The prevailing sin of parents at the present day lies in the indulgence of their children. The youth are weak and inefficient, with little physical stamina or moral power, because of the neglect of parents to train them in childhood to habits of obedience and industry. The foundation of character is laid at home: no after influence from any earthly source can wholly counteract the effect of parental discipline. If firmness and decision were mingled with love and tenderness in the training of the young, we should see youth coming up, like Luther, qualified for lives of usefulness and honour.

At an early age Luther was sent to school, where he was treated with a harshness and even violence that he had not been subject to at home. So great was the poverty of his parents that he was obliged to obtain his food by singing from door to door, and he often suffered from hunger. The gloomy, superstitious ideas of religion then prevailing filled him with fear. He would lie down at night with a sorrowful heart, looking forward with trembling to the dark future, and in constant terror at the thought of God as a stern, unrelenting judge, a cruel tyrant, rather than a kind, heavenly Father. There are few youths who would not have become disheartened under so many and so great discouragements; but Luther perseveringly pressed forward toward the high standard of moral and intellectual excellence which he had determined to attain.

He thirsted for knowledge, and the earnest and practical character of his mind led him to desire the solid and useful rather than the showy and superficial. At the age of eighteen he entered the University of Erfurth. His situation was now more favourable and his prospects brighter than in his earlier years. His parents having by thrift and industry acquired a competence, were able to render him all needed assistance. And the influence of judicious friends had somewhat lessened the gloomy effects of his former training. He now diligently applied himself to the study of the best authors, enriching his understanding with their most weighty thoughts, and making the wisdom of the wise his own. A retentive memory, a vivid imagination, strong reasoning powers, and energetic application to study, soon won for him the foremost rank among his associates. MRS. E. G. WHITE.

If your heart is in what you have to do, no matter how small the undertaking, the greater things are certain to come to you, and in rich reward.—Theodore Roosevelt.



ALL communications intended for publication, and all questions, whether an answer is desired by letter or through the paper, should be addressed to the Editor of PRESENT TRUTH, and not to the International Tract Society. Correspondents are requested in all cases to give the name and address, and to take pains to write them legibly. All questions are regarded as strictly confidential, and nobody but the Editor ever has any knowledge of the questioner's identity; but the Editor wishes always to be able to communicate with his correspondents.

E. J. WAGGONER, Editor.

### THE CROWNING GLORY OF THE FIRST ADVENT.

"THE PRESENT TRUTH often refers to the Second Coming of Christ. Will you not tell me what relation, if any, that coming has to the first advent of Christ, and what is the real necessity of it if the saints, as we are taught, go to be with the Lord in heaven at death?"



LET us consider the last part of the question first. We are not taught that the saints go to be with the Lord when they die. That is, we are not taught it in the Bible, and this is the only authority. We are taught that "the dead know not anything" (Eccl. ix. 5); that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (verse 10); that the dead shall "live again," coming forth from their graves at the call of Christ (John v. 28, 29); and that they "wait" in the grave the "appointed time" for their "change" at the call of the Lord. Job. xiv. 14, 15. What this change is, and how and when it will be effected, is told in these words:—

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. xv. 51-54.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from

heaven with a shout, with the voices of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so [by this means, and in this manner] shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

When Jesus was about to depart from this world, and go to the Father, He said to His sorrowing disciples: "Let not your heart be troubled: . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John xiv. 1-3. The word "again," means once more, and so, according to His promise, "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. ix. 28. He went away to prepare a place for His disciples, which indicates that the place was not then ready for them. He said that as surely as He went to prepare the place, He would come again, to take them to Himself. And, further, He said that His coming again to take them to Himself would be in order that where He is, there they might be also; which proves conclusively that without Christ's second coming His disciples could never be with Him; and thus we learn the importance of the second advent. It is the "blessed hope" of the Christian, the consummation of all his hopes.

This really explains the relation of the second advent to the first. The second is the completion of the first. Without the second coming, the first would have been in vain. The shame and suffering of the cross finds its justification in the glory of the second coming of Christ. Only then will the suffering of the cross really have an end; for Jesus still bears the world with all its sin and woe. Heb. i. 3. At His first advent He had not where to lay His head; but the earth belongs to Him by right, and so He will come the second time to claim it.

The first advent was only a preparation for the second, in which culminate all the promises of God, and all the hopes of all



the saints of all ages; for He came to make it very plain to men how they must live in order to be ready for His coming in glory. He came to give the fullest revelation of God's love to man, and to demonstrate the possibility of the perfect manifestation of the life of God in human flesh.

The Son of Mary is her Saviour; the Seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent that seduced her; and the formation of Christ in His disciples so completely that He is brought forth in their lives, is their salvation. When He shall have been reproduced in men of every tribe and nation, then will all the world have the complete witness of the Gospel of the kingdom, and then will the end come. Thus will the first advent, which was the seed sowing, blossom into the perfect fruitage of the ingathering.

### THE FUTURE ABODE OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

"I NOTICE that you often refer to 'the new earth' as the future dwelling-place of the saints; yet it seems to be the commonly-accepted idea among Christians that heaven will be the home of the redeemed. Will you kindly give in the 'Editor's Private Corner,' to which I always look forward with interest, the Scriptural ground for your belief on this subject?"

ALL the Scripture evidence could not be presented in one or even two entire numbers of PRESENT TRUTH; yet a single short paragraph will suffice to set forth positive and convincing proof that this earth is to be made new for the eternal abode of mankind. Thus: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," the sea and all that in them is; "and God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." Gen. i. 1, 31. Now "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God doeth it, that man should fear before Him." Eccl. iii. 14. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." Eccl. i. 9.

There you have the groundwork of the case. When the earth was created, when it was new, God gave it to man. He made man king, crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of His hands, putting all things in subjection under his feet. "For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him." Gen. i. 26-28; Ps. viii. 5-7; Heb. ii. 6-8. God has never withdrawn His gift of the earth to man; He has never changed His

plan; therefore if that plan should not be carried out, God would be defeated; and that is impossible.

The case is not helped by saying that God saves man, giving him an eternal inheritance in heaven; defeat can be avoided only by establishing man as king to all eternity, over the earth in as good condition as when God made it. God cannot afford to have it said that He began a thing which He could not carry through.

You will doubtless ask, "Isn't God really defeated anyhow, since man does not have the earth, and all things on the earth and in the sea, in complete subjection to him, and the earth is not now as it was in the beginning?"

The reply is, No; for though it is true, as the Scripture says when telling us about man's rightful dominion, that "now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. ii. 8), that does not prove that we shall never see it. An enemy has come in and usurped man's dominion, and challenged God's authority, and the controversy over the matter is now going on; but as surely as God is stronger than Satan, so surely will God's original grant stand unchanged. "The first dominion" will surely come to "the daughter of Zion." Micah iv. 8. If two parties of equal power were contending over the possession of the earth, or if we did not know which was the stronger, the issue would be doubtful; but there is no doubt, because Satan has no power whatever against God.

But you will ask, "Even allowing that man will finally be in full possession of the earth made new, does not the fact that he fell, and lost the dominion, contradict or disprove the statement that whatsoever God does shall be for ever?"

Not in the least. It is true that we see not now all things put under man; "but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Heb. ii. 9. Jesus Christ, "the Man Christ Jesus," the link between heaven and earth, between God and man, has "spoiled principalities and powers," and, "crowned with glory and honour," as man was in the beginning, has the right to Adam's original dominion; and He is even now as man, the second Adam, exalted to a higher position than the first Adam occupied. Risen from the dead a glorious Conqueror, He is only waiting in the heavens "until the times of the restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which

have been since the world began." Acts iii. 21.

When men receive Christ by faith they become new creatures, and receive the right, and the power, to become the sons of God; and when a complete race shall have thus been made new, the earth will be given them to rule over. You can see that since the earth is corrupt because man is corrupt (Gen. vi. 12), and "is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant" (Isa. xxiv. 5), it would be useless to make it new until man has been made new; for in that case it would immediately be defiled again. But as soon as man is ready for it, it will be made ready for him.

God has never forsaken man. Looking at the spot where man fell, and lost the dominion, we see Jesus in his place, bearing the curse, thus demonstrating man's lordship in spite of it; and thus it is that the dominion has really continued unbroken, and what God did at first is and will be for ever. So "we, according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

When Christ comes, "the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Dan. vii. 27. They will sit with Christ on thrones of judgment, judging the ungodly for a thousand years (Rev. xx. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3), and "execute upon them the judgment written." Ps. cxlix. 5-9.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." Then will the voice from heaven say, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, . . . and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;" for all things will be made new. Rev. xxi. 1-5. Then will Abraham, to whom it was promised that he, together with his seed, "should be the heir of the world" (Rom. iv. 13), have found the "better country" for which he sought. "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Ps. xxxvii. 10, 11. And that will be the fulness of the "peace on earth," which the angels sang at the birth of Jesus. Thus will His mission to earth be crowned, and the ways of God to men will be justified.





HEAVEN IN THE HOME.



**H**AVEN in the home: it is possible to have it there. Heaven belongs on the earth, and of all places on the earth, surely most of all in the home.

The Lord Jesus came to this earth to bring heaven to the people as much as He did to take the people to heaven. Indeed, in a sense, He came for the purpose of bringing heaven to the people; for heaven must be brought to the people on earth and they must become acquainted with it, and desire it, and be made fit for it, before they can possibly be taken to it. And even when the glad throng of every kindred, tongue, people and nation, have reached heaven, it is with joyous anticipation that they exclaim, "We shall reign on the earth" (Rev. v. 10). That will be when "The new heaven and the new earth" shall have taken the place of this old one; and the great voice from heaven announces, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away" (Rev. xxi. 3, 4). Thus of very truth, heaven belongs on the earth.

But it is only Christ who has brought heaven to the earth; and only in Him can it be found on earth. So it is written that we give "thanks to the Father, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. xii. 13); and that kingdom is "the kingdom of heaven,"

## THE HOME.

The word of God is "the word of the kingdom" (Matt. xiii. 11-19), and the object of the Word of God is to cause that the days of men on the earth shall be as the days of heaven upon earth. For so is it written; "Therefore shall ye lay up these, my words in your heart and in your soul, . . . and ye shall teach them to your children that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children . . . as the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut. xi. 18-21).

The Word of God laid up in the heart and in the soul, and taught diligently to the children, makes the days of parents and children as the days of heaven upon the earth. And the Word of God, and the truth as it is in Jesus, if allowed to prevail in the home, makes heaven in the home.

God wants it so, and God has planned it so, that all who go to heaven, shall, as they go, have heaven within and all around to go to heaven in. And as the home is the one place on earth where all the life most centres, God has fixed it so that, of all places on earth, there shall most of heaven be in the home.

A. T. JONES.

## THE SECRET OF CHRISTMAS HAPPINESS.



**H**EAR the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old milliar carols play,  
And mild and sweet  
The words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men."

It is a positive pleasure to pass along the streets the day before Christmas, and notice the smiling faces one meets at every turn. Though the weather be thick and foggy, and the air stinging cold, yet there is everywhere an atmosphere of smiles and sunshine. In country and city, yes, even in the pestilential slums, life is tuned to a cheerful air on the day before Christmas.

Whence so much of joy and merriment

at this season? One word explains it, and that is, *Brotherhood*. Family reunions, the renewing of old ties of friendship, kind remembrances of absent loved ones, cessation from toil, Christmas fare—these are all well marked features of the Christmas festival; but they fall to wholly account for the happiness which is so generally manifest on that day.

Christmas would not be what it is if a brotherly spirit did not suddenly reveal itself on that day. Men and women who have been thoughtless of the needs and sufferings of the poor all through the year feel their sympathies strangely drawn upon at Christmas. Then childhood memories come into mind. The man is a boy again, with a boy's big, generous heart. His fellow-men seem bound to him by closer ties than at other times. Their happiness really concerns him. He gives of his hoarded wealth or of his humble savings to help provide good Christmas cheer for those in want, and in doing so vastly increases his own enjoyment.

The mainspring of Christmas happiness is the almost universal desire on that day to give pleasure to somebody else. Parents plan a pleasant day for their children. Brothers and sisters exchange little love tokens, some of which may have cost the giver much patient toil. Thus hearts are united more closely than ever, and the atmosphere of the home is fragrant with love and good cheer.

"Peace, and good-will to men," sang the angels; the sweet melody of their voices floating out on the still night air, while their radiant forms illumined earth's darkness for a moment. What Divine beauty and fitness in the scene. Heaven cannot contain its joy. The angel choir must share with humanity the momentous secret of that little Babe in the manger. Hence the glorious manifestation which will be ever treasured in the hearts of men. Were we but alive to spiritual realities to-day, we should know that the attitude of God and the angels is still the same. Heaven is all astir with activity on man's behalf; the angels are ever carrying messages of love and peace to this earth; "for are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them which shall be heirs of salvation?"

God is not merely willing to save us; it is in His very nature to long to do it. "Look unto Me," is the gracious invitation, "and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." And the very fact that we live testifies to the same thing; for without the Divine sustaining power we should all have perished. May Christmas, then, be a reminder to us of God's infinite love and goodness, and may we determine not to let this thought slip from us as soon as the festival is over, but treasure it as a golden thread that may be woven into the fabric of our daily lives. Yea, let us tell it to somebody else.

M. ELLEWORTH OLSEN.



## FATHER CHRISTMAS ON A FERRY-BOAT.



HIS story, which speaks of the common ground of peace and good-will among men at Christmas-time, is given as related in the *Youth's Companion*, by an eye-witness of the graceful deed.

It was the night before Christmas. I had gone to Oakland in the afternoon with some bundles for my small nephews, and was returning to San Francisco on the half-past seven boat. Going over, the steamer had been crowded with tired shoppers, their arms full of boxes and bundles of all sizes and descriptions, the gleaming of the city shops; but on the return trip the assemblage was different altogether—one of beautiful women, successful business men, merry girls and gay collegians, all going to spend the evening in the great city whose illuminated hills rose skyward along the horizon, and whose lights rivalled the twinkling stars.

The passengers were all well dressed and in high spirits. The atmosphere of Christmas was everywhere—a California Christmas full of flowers and plenty. All over the great boat were the sounds of laughter and merriment.

I took a seat well forward and began to watch the throng about me. To the left a chattering flock of girls came to rest, like so many birds. Their fresh faces, their dainty clothes, and their laughing voices made a pretty picture. Opposite them sat a richly dressed woman with grey hair; she was alone, and there was a hungry look in her eyes as she watched the gay group, which made me remember that the richest are sometimes the loneliest at Christmas-time.

Along the deck to join the others came another girl, who attracted my attention at once. She was tall and slight, with a poise to her figure that told of perfect health. Her eyes were clear and fearless; her hair was brown, with a glint of gold, and curled softly around her face, which was all alight with merriment. Her dress, rich but in perfect taste, stamped her as the daughter of a refined and cultivated home. In her hands she carried a great bunch of brilliant manzanita berries.

Just as the boat was starting, a little boy entered the cabin and took a seat opposite mine. He was evidently an errand-boy, and carried a covered basket, which he placed at his feet. His suit was worn and old and too small for him, his shoes were parting company, and at his wrists showed the sleeves of a ragged shirt.

The child, for he was little more, was red out; the cabin was warm, the boat

rocked softly, and presently his head fell back against the seat and he was asleep.

There was a sudden silence in the laughing group of girls; some one said, "Poor little chap!" in a low voice, and then the girl with the manzanita berries crossed the deck and sat down softly at his side. She had an open box of sweetmeats in her hand, and she began deftly slipping caramels and creams in their paper covers into the boy's ragged pockets.

The lad roused once at the sound of the steamer's whistle signalling, and looked sleepily round him; but the girl swiftly hid the box beneath her berries and gazed calmly out at the lights on the water, and he never connected the smiles on the faces around with himself, nor dreamed that the elegant creature beside him was even conscious of his existence.

When he fell asleep again the girl quietly finished, then bent and gently lifted the cover of the basket at his feet. It was empty, and after a moment's thought she laid the red bunches of manzanita in it. Then she returned to her companions. I heard her say, "Girls, you don't need that second box," and she went back with an unopened case of French chocolate. By this time all the passengers in that end of the boat were interested, and when the girl rose to her feet, after placing the box with the berries, a man came softly forward with a package in his hand.

"It's skates," he said, as he gave it to her. "I'll tell my boy about it, and he won't mind waiting."

Then a motherly-looking woman at the end of my seat passed a book, and from somewhere behind me came a wonderful Chinese top. One of the college students took a knife from his pocket, another a whistle, and presented them with low bows to the girl.

The girl paused again beside the sleeping boy, and placed the bundles one by one in the basket. As she softly closed the lid, the lonely lady beckoned to her with a sudden eager light in her eyes.

"I have no toys to give," she said in a low tone, "nothing but this." There was a sound of money, and a shining gold-piece made its way to the girl's outstretched hand. The girl wrapped it carefully in a bit of paper and tucked it in the messenger's inner pocket.

The boy woke again at the steamer's warning signal as she entered her slip, and felt mechanically for his ticket. He drew out his hand again suddenly, staring in amazement at the sweets.

His surprised face was the target of many eyes, but without noticing them he searched one pocket after another, his bewilderment deepening at every moment. Then, as the boat struck against the swinging piles and was made fast, he crammed the sweets hastily back and took up his basket—and as hastily sat down again to investigate the reason of its unexpected weight. Then the surging crowd hid him from my view.

## BEN HAZZARD'S GUESTS.

BEN HAZZARD's hut was smoky and cold, Ben Hazzard, half blind, was black and old, And he cobbled shoes for his scanty gold. Sometimes he sighed for a larger store Wherewith to bless the wandering poor; For he was not wise in worldly lore; The poor were Christ's; he knew no more. One night a cry from the window came— Ben Hazzard was sleepy and tired and lame— "Ben Hazzard, open," it seemed to say, "Give shelter and food, I humbly pray." Ben Hazzard lifted his woolly head To listen "Tis awful cold," he said, And his old bones shook in his ragged bed, "But the wanderer must be comforted," "Come in, in the name of the Lord," he cried.

As he opened the door, and held it wide. A milk-white kitten was all he spied.

Ben Hazzard, amazed, stared up and down; The stout house-doors were carefully shut, Safe bolted were all but old Ben's hut. "I thought that somebody called," he said, "Some dream or other got into my head! Come then, poor pussy, and share my bed." Then out from the storm, the wind, and the sleet,

Puss joyfully lay at old Ben's feet.

Truly, it was a terrible storm, Ben feared that he nevermore should be warm. But just as he began to be dozy, And puss was purring soft and cozy, A voice called faintly before his door: "Ben Hazzard, Ben Hazzard, help, I implore! Give drink and a crust from out your store."

Out from his bed he stumbled again:

"Come in, in the name of the Lord," he said; "With such as I have, thou shalt be fed." Only a little black dog he saw, Whining and shaking a broken paw. "Well, well," he cried, "I must have dreamed; But verily like a voice it seemed. "Poor creature," he added, with husky tone, "Thou shalt have the whole of my marrow bone." He went to the cupboard, and took from the shelf

The bone he had saved for his very self.

Then, after binding the broken paw, Half dead with cold he went back to his straw. Under the ancient blue bed-quilt he crept, His conscience was white and again he slept. But again a voice called both loud and clear: "Ben Hazzard, for Christ's sweet sake, come here!"

Once more he stood at the open door, And looked abroad, as he looked before, This time, full sure 'twas a voice he heard; But all that he saw was a storm-tossed bird. "Come in, in the name of the Lord," he said, Tenderly raising the drooping head, And, tearing his tattered robe apart, Laid the cold bird on his own warm heart.

The sunrise flashed on the snowy thatch,

As an angel lifted the wooden latch. Ben woke in a flood of golden light, And knew the voice that had called all night. "Thrice happy is he that blesteth the poor. The humblest creatures that sought thy door, For Christ's sweet sake thou hast comforted." "Nay, 'twas not much," Ben humbly said, With a rueful shake of his old gray head.

"Who giveth all of his scanty store In Christ's dear name, can do no more, Behold the Master who waiteth for thee, Saith: 'GIVING to them thou hast given to Me.' " Then, with heaven's light on his face, "Amen. I come in the name of the Lord," said Ben. "Frozen to death," the watchman said, When at last he found him in his bed, With a smile on his face so strange and bright: He wondered what old Ben saw that night.

—Selected.



## FOR THE CHILDREN.



"God make my life a little light  
Within this world to glow;  
A little beam that shineth bright  
Wherever I may go."

## CHRISTMAS CANDLES.



AMONG the many gifts and treasures that you receive at this happy season, you usually have some pretty coloured "Christmas Candles." I wonder if you have ever thought of the meaning

of this custom, and what connection there is between Christmas and candles.

Perhaps you do not know that the twenty-fifth of December is not the real birthday of Jesus Christ. Christmas was fixed on that day by the Roman church, because of the heathen feasts that took place about that time; and most of the Christmas celebrations are old heathen practices which were taken into the church and given a Christian meaning.

One of the heathen goddesses was Ceres, the goddess of seed and harvest. It was supposed that her daughter Proserpine had been carried off by the god of the lower world, and that therefore Ceres spent her time wandering over the earth looking for her lost child. The lighting of candles was thought to refer to the candles lighted by her in her search for Proserpine. But when this custom was taken into the church, it was, of course, given a different meaning, and made to refer instead to the coming into the world of "the true Light that lighteth every man."

The church festival which takes place a few weeks after Christmas to celebrate the dedication of the infant Saviour, is called Candlemas, because many candles are then lighted, and in the Roman church

the candles that are to be used during the year are then consecrated.

Do you remember what took place at the dedication of Jesus? There was in the temple an old prophet named Simeon, who took the infant in his arms, and said that He was "a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people." This is what the lighting of candles at Candlemas is thought to represent.

Now, do you think that this is the way in which the Saviour would have us celebrate His coming into the world? Let us see what is the light that He came to bring, and then we shall know what He would have us do.

It was not the light that we can see with our eyes that men wanted; for the flaming sun of day lights up the whole world with his beams.

What, then, was the light He came to bring?

The Apostle John tells us: "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." It was His own pure life coming into our sinful human flesh, that shed the light of heaven over the dark world, and made the little Christ Child "a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people."

Did this light, then, go out of the world when He ascended to heaven after His resurrection? No; the light of His life still shone, and still shines, in the earth. How does it now shine?

Look through the window in our picture, and you will see the moon and stars shining in the darkness of night. They shine, and

they give light; and yet the moon and the planets have no light of their own, any more than our earth has. Where do they get their brightness?

It is the reflection of the rays of the sun, which, though it has passed for a time out of our sight, is still shining in the heavens, and giving us light by night as well as by day. So every time we see the radiant moon, we know that the sun is still shining; for all its brightness is but the reflection of the sun's rays. The moon is but a bearer of the sun's light.

Even so, though Jesus has passed into the heavens out of our sight, He, the great Sun of righteousness, still sheds His bright beams over the earth. Many bearers of His light, shining in the world's darkness, tell of this beautiful Sun, the true and only Light of the world. Who are these light-bearers?

Every one who receives the pure and holy life of Jesus by believing that He has



"A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE GENTILES."

come to dwell in our flesh, has the light of the world within him; for "the life was the light of men." This light will shine through him and light up the little corner where God has placed him.

A young Christian was once told that



Christianity was "all moonshine," meaning that there was no reality to it. He replied that it was true that the religion of Jesus was as moonshine; for just as the moon reflects the rays of the sun, so Christians catch the rays of the Sun of righteousness, and shed them over the world.

"Jesus bids us shine, with a pure clear light,  
Like a little candle, shining in the night;  
In the world is darkness, so we must shine,  
You in your small corner, and I in mine."

Now do you see how Jesus wants us to celebrate His birth? Not by lighting candles one day in the year, but by letting Him put the light of His life within us so that we shall be little "Christmas candles" every day in the year.

And remember that God, who put the moon and stars in the heavens, and guides them in their appointed path, places His little lights just where He wants them. Wherever you are, God put you there to shine for Him. Is it a dark place? Then there is all the more need of a bright light to shine for Jesus, to keep others from stumbling and being lost in the darkness. He came, and He still comes into the world in everyone who will receive Him, to "give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide their feet into the way of peace."

"Then we'll ask Him to help us  
At our work, at our play,  
And we'll shine, helping others  
In the rough upward way."

"Shine like the stars above  
Clear and bright, through the night;  
Tell of a Saviour's love,  
Shine by doing right."

EDITH ADAMS.

#### WHO ATE THE DOLLIE'S DINNER?

**W**HY can't dollies have a Christmas dinner just as well as real folks, mamma?" asked Polly Pine.

"I don't know why," said mamma, laughing; "go and dress them in their very best clothes, get the doll's house swept and dusted, and the table ready; then I'll get their dinner before we go downstairs."

"Oh, how lovely!" cried Polly Pine.

The dollies' house stood in the nursery. It was very big and very beautiful. It was painted red, it had tall chimneys and a fine front door with "R. Bliss" on a brass plate. There were lace curtains at the windows, and two steps led up to the little piazza. Polly Pine swept the rooms with her tiny broom, and dusted them, then she set the table in the dining room, with the very best dishes and finest silver. She set a tiny vase in the middle of the table, with two violets in it, and she put dolly table-napkins at each plate. When the house was all nice and clean she dressed Lavinia

in her pink muslin, and Dora Ann in her grey velvet and Hannah Winch in her yellow silk, then she seated them around the table, each one in her own chair. Polly was just telling them about company manners, how they must not eat with their knives, or leave their teaspoons in their cups, when the nursery door opened and in came mamma with a real Christmas dinner. There was a chicken leg to put on the platter before Hannah Winch, for Polly always made her carve. There were little dishes of mashed potato and some celery

in a tiny tumbler, and a little Christmas pudding with a tiny spray of holly.

Polly Pine just hopped up and down with delight when she saw it. She set everything on the table, then she ran away to put on her best muslin frock with the pink ribbons and go down to dinner. There were gentlemen there to dinner, and one of them could change his table napkin into a white rabbit. She forgot all about the dollies' Christmas till they were eating the nuts and raisins. When Polly did remember, she jumped down from her chair



**C**AN you think how surprised you would be, if you had always lived in a hot country and never seen any ice, to be told that the water could become solid, and as hard as glass? You would not think that you could ever run, play, and jump on the water, just as on the land.

This wonderful change in the water is made by God for His own wise, loving purpose. "By the breath of the Lord frost is given."

Ice is not so heavy as water; so instead of sinking to the bottom, it floats on the top. "The waters are hidden, as with stone," and only "the face of the deep is frozen." The ice makes a cover for the water, which keeps it warm enough for the fish and water animals to live in.

If the ice were not lighter than the water, it would sink to the bottom. Then the water at the top would freeze and sink down also, until all the water was frozen. Then all the creatures that live in the water would die, and there would be a mass of ice that the summer sun could never melt.

When the warmer weather comes, the waters do not need this icy covering. Then God "sendeth out His Word and melteth them; He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow."



and asked mamma if she might go upstairs and see if the dollies had eaten their dinner. When mamma told about the doll-house Christmas, all the gentlemen wanted to go, too, to find out if the dollies had enjoyed their dinner.

The front door of the house was open, but Polly opened it all out and there sat the dollies just as their little mamma had left them, only they had eaten up nearly all the dinner. Everything was gone except the potatoes. The chicken leg was picked bare, the bread was nibbled, and the pudding bitten all round.

"Well, this is funny!" said papa.

Just then they heard a funny scratchy noise in the doll house and a little grey mouse jumped out from under the dining table. He ran out at the front door down the steps, and before you could say "Jack Robinson" he had gone, nobody could tell where. There was another tiny mouse under the sofa in the doll house parlour, and a third one under the bed, with a poor, frightened, trembling little tail sticking out. They all got away safe. Papa would not allow mamma to go for the cat. He said: "Why can't a poor little mouse have a Christmas dinner as well as we can?"—*Adapted.*



### WHITE AS SNOW.

SUNLIGHT passed through a prism divides into its rainbow colours; re-passed through a convex lens, or reversed prism, it is recombined into white light. You may take red, blue, or green glass, and pound it fine. The red, blue or green disappears, and the pounded glass looks only white. This is because the tiny particles reflect all the prismatic colours of light. "The white colour of snow is the result of the combination of the different prismatic rays issuing from the minute snow-crystals. Pounded glass and foam are analogous cases of the prismatic colours blending together, and forming the white light out of which they had been originally formed."—*Encyclopædia.*

When we look closely at the flake of snow, we see reflected from its many angles every colour of the rainbow; but when we let all these colours from a further distance blend and strike the eye, the snow looks only white. God has said, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." "Out of white all the colours spring, and to it they return. All summer hues are gathered into the uniform radiance of the snow. . . . Nature's coat of

many colours gives place to the white raiment with which we clothe the infant in its innocence, the bride in her purity. . . . Washed by the waves of the world, and refined by the fires of God, the landscape, like a gigantic lily, unfolds its white petals to the sun, and reflects the light in all its integrity and chastity; and thus, clothed in the vestal humility of winter, it is prepared for the many-hued splendours of summer." All the colours of the summer lie hidden in the beautiful white of the snow. Summer reveals light even as the prism revealed it,—by its wealth and magnificence of colour. But these colours, passed through the convex lens, appeared again as merely white light. So the snow gives us the many-coloured light of the sun as the one pure bright light.



God has said our souls should be like the snow; and this is so because God's character is like light. Light, analysed, has its different colours; united and blended, it is only white; and the whiteness of the snow is due to the reflected rays of prismatic colour,—the whiteness of the snow is the whiteness of the light.

And the character God gives is white, too, like the snow; for it is all the graces, or prismatic colours, of the soul combined; its whiteness is due to the reflected prismatic colours, or graces; its whiteness is the whiteness of God's glory.

There is a contrast of colours called harmony; and in summer any field will teach it to us, any flower give us revelations; but in the winter we see this harmony revealed in the complete blending and unifying of the colours into white. Thus in the Christian there is a harmony of graces like the harmony of the flowers of summer; and there is also the complete blending into the colour of the winter, till the soul is "whiter than the snow."

L. A. REED.

### SPIDERS SET THE STYLE.

Two centuries ago missionaries taught the natives of Paraguay to make lace by hand. The art has been handed down from generation to generation, and in some of the towns lace-making is the chief occupation. Almost all the women and children and many of the men are engaged in it. A singular fact about the Paraguayan laces is that the designs are borrowed from the curious webs spun by the semi-tropical spiders which abound in that country. For this reason the lace is called by the natives *nanduti*, an Indian word that means "spider-web."



### "BY THE GRACE OF GOD."

ONE of the later English Reformers, John Bradford, I believe, was one day preaching by the wayside when the officers of the law came by, leading a criminal to the place of execution. Pointing toward the sad procession as it passed on, the preacher cried out, "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford."

We shall keep in closer and more sympathetic touch with sinful men and women if we bear in mind continually the fact that the sins of even the most reckless or indifferent are natural to our own flesh, and that only by the grace of God are we saved from seeing the evil tendencies break out in our lives.

So, too, as we meet opposers of the truth, it is needful to remember that but for the grace of God we ourselves would be in the ranks of the opposition, instead of having the blessed privilege of being workers together with God. The more vivid our consciousness of dependence upon God's grace, the more patiently and lovingly we can deal with the erring and sinful.

This was one of the secrets of Paul's soul-winning ministry. He knew that he, the chiefest of sinners, had been saved by the chiefest of Saviours. Facing the infuriated mob, as he stood on the steps of the Roman castle in Jerusalem, he reminded those who sought his life of the time when he himself was "zealous toward God, as ye all are this day;" and when he wrote to the church in Corinth of the days when he "persecuted the church of God," he added, "But by the grace of God I am what I am."

These remembrances of his own past, and the sense of his present dependence upon the grace of Christ, helped him to feel for those who persecuted and reviled him. When he was stoned at Lystra, how vividly it must have brought to his mind the part he had acted in the stoning of Stephen. And the knowledge that he himself had "obtained help of God," enabled him to work with all courage for the most violent.

In all our labours for those stumbling in darkness, let us remember that we also were bondmen in the land of Egypt. Too many old believers have too little patience with beginners in the way. Too many parents have forgotten how children feel and think. He who has the keenest sense of the evil from which grace delivers his soul will get closest to sinners, and will be of greatest courage in pursuing those who may seem most helpless, with the loving ministry of the word.



John G. Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, tells the short story of a native teacher who accompanied him to dark Tanna. The teacher had narrowly escaped death at the hands of a native priest. Mr. Paton urged him to remain at the mission house for a time, instead of venturing into the remote parts of the islands: but he replied:—

"Missi, when I see them thirsting for my blood, I just see myself when the missionary first came to my island; I desired to murder him, as they now desire to kill me. Had he stayed away for such danger I would have remained heathen; but he came, and continued coming to teach us, till, by the grace of God, I was changed to what I am. Now the same God that changed me to this can change these poor Tannese to love and serve Him. I cannot stay away from 'Shem,' but I will sleep at the mission house, and do all I can by day to bring them to Jesus."

Let me quote two paragraphs further to show that the true spirit of the martyrs glows in many a native heart in the islands of the South Seas, where still much pioneer work remains to be done. This teacher was one day savagely assaulted, and left for dead. Recovering consciousness, he crawled to the mission house. Mr. Paton says:—

"On seeing him, I ran to meet him, but he fell near the teacher's house, saying, 'Missi, I am dying! They will kill you also. Escape for your life.' Trying to console him, I sat down beside him, dressing his wounds and nursing him. He was quite resigned; he was looking up to Jesus, and rejoicing that he would soon be with Him in glory. His pain and suffering were great, but he bore all very quietly, as he said and kept saying, 'For the sake of Jesus! For Jesus' sake!' He was constantly praying for his persecutors, 'O Lord Jesus, forgive them; for they know not what they are doing. O, take not away all Thy servants from Tanna! Take not away Thy worship from this dark island. O God, bring all the Tannese to love and follow Jesus!' To him Jesus was all in all, and there were no bands in his death."

"He passed from us, in the assured hope of entering into the glory of his Lord. Humble though he may appear in the world's esteem, I knew that a great man had fallen there in the service of Christ, and that he would take rank in the glorious army of martyrs. I made for him a coffin, and dug his grave near the mission house. With prayers and many tears, we consigned his remains to the dust, in the certainty of a happy resurrection. Even one such convert was surely a triumphant reward for the missionaries whom God had honoured in bringing him to Jesus. May they have many like Namuri for their crown of joy and rejoicing in the great day!"

W. A. SPICER.



THE statement that "of 35,956 volumes borrowed from the Winchester free library last year, 35,500 were novels," is itself a whole volume of history, telling not only the present habits but the future prospects of the people. No solid structure of judgment, mercy, and truth can be built upon such a sandy, or, rather, chaffy, foundation.

HERE is a characteristic word from Dr. Parker, which we heartily commend to all aspirants to the ministry, or for any line of Christian service:—

"Young men often tell me they have a desire to enter the work of the ministry, and ask, 'How are we to get a call to preach in any church?' I retort, 'You must begin as I began.' The open air is a fine place for ventilation; there is absolutely no limit to the accommodation for congregations which it affords."

Young men, and older ones, too, need to learn that whether or not they will work for the Lord depends wholly on themselves. If they really wish to work, nobody can hinder them. "But what about the pay?" is asked. Ah, there's the rub; and that question shows that they do not wish to work for the Lord so much as to work for money. If they really go to work for the Lord, they will expect their pay from Him. And He will surely pay. It may not be through the ordinary channels, but it will be none the less sure. Whoever takes hold heartily of the work that he is fitted for, and God has called him to, and makes a success of it, may be sure of recognition and support; and if a man is not fitted for a work, and does not succeed in it, he ought not to expect or desire support.

In sentencing a man on strike to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour for *striking* two men so severely as nearly to kill one of them, merely because they would not "strike," a Swansea judge uttered some sound sense. He said that the prisoner was absolutely free to refuse to work if he liked, but that it was an abuse of the words "freedom" and "liberty" for him to say that another man could not do the work that he refused to do. This idea that other men, brought in to do the work that the regular workmen refused to do, were "taking the bread out of the mouths" of the strikers was the "biggest fallacy in the world." This is perfectly in harmony with Scripture, which says that a man who will not work shall not eat. No one can take the bread out of such an one's mouth, for he has no right to any. The bread belongs to men who will work.

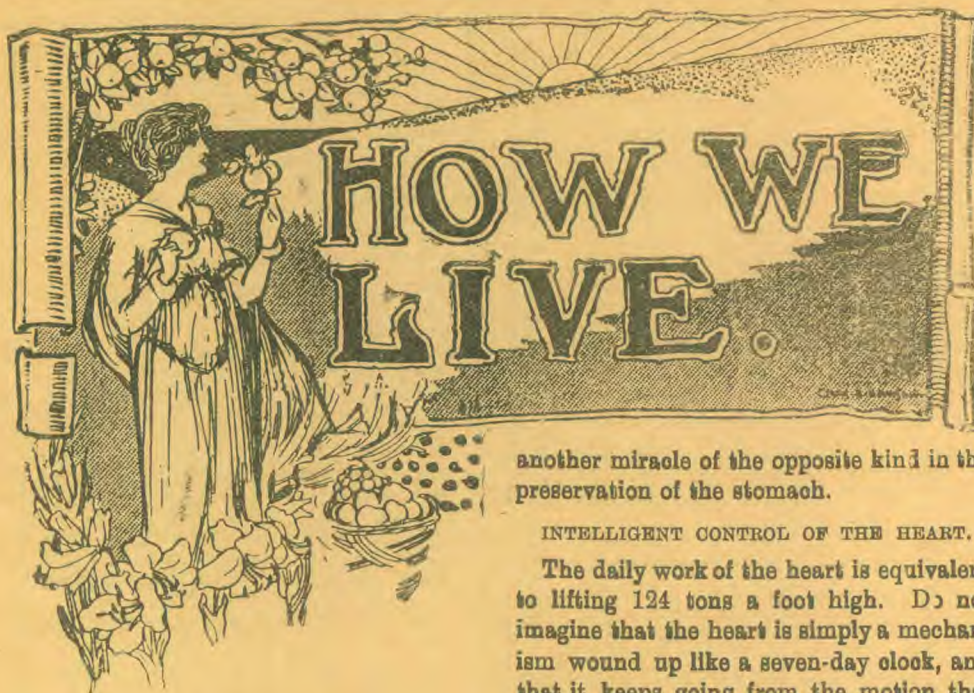
There is another word that is used in this connection, which is very suggestive. The strikers, as is always the case, were "union" men, while those who took their places are termed "free" labourers. That is an admission that trade-unionism as it now exists, is a system of slavery, and the men who bind themselves in such unions

are slaves. And this is literally true; for everybody knows that the members of a union are often obliged to "strike" when they have no grievance, because the leaders command it, and that when on strike they resume work only when the officials are satisfied. It is at the official command that they refuse to work for some man or firm that has displeased the Union. This is the reason why no Christian who knows his duties and privileges will ever join any trade union; for a follower of Christ must always be an absolutely free man.

THE *Daily Chronicle* has been having a good deal of correspondence of late, under the heading, "From Plough to Parsonage," on the subject of the gaining of an education by young men born in the humblest walks of life. Quite recently we noted the wall of an "Oxonian," who found himself, after some years of effort to "improve his position," with a university degree but no employment. A reader of the *Chronicle*, who was struck by his sad story, wrote to that paper, saying, "I should like to suggest to him that he should take Holy Orders. There is a great dearth of clergymen nowadays, and many vicars have to go without curates because they cannot get them. . . . A man who has passed well through Oxford would only require a few months at a theological college to qualify him." What a use of the term, "Holy Orders"! and yet it is no uncommon thing for men to enter the ministerial "profession" for the same reasons, and in the same spirit, that they would take up the profession of law or medicine. No wonder another correspondent has reversed the terms, and asked if anybody knows of any parsons who have gone "From Parsonage to Plough," saying that he knew some very incompetent ones who might with profit to all concerned take that step in advance. And, indeed, a good ploughman is really far above a bad preacher.

At a recent meeting in Berlin of the officials of the International Bureau for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, with the delegate of the British friendly societies, Dr. Hillier said that he believed the tubercle bacillus would eventually federate the world; but however magnificent such an accomplishment might be, it was really of secondary importance compared with the extermination of tuberculosis, which, though now proved to be a preventable disease, is costing Europe a million lives annually. That is heavy toll for ignorance and carelessness; yet there is not much reason to hope that it will be materially diminished. It would certainly be a far grander thing for the nations of earth to federate for the purpose of combating disease than for the purpose of mere trade; but no federation will ever accomplish the desired end. Everybody has his health in his own power, under God, and can secure it, if he will, regardless of societies or national unions; and if the individual does not become intelligent concerning his own body, or anything that pertains to it, and then have the will to choose what is good and refuse the evil, no matter how crossing to natural inclination such choice may be, all federated action will be useless. The way of life is very simple, but is also, as the Saviour says, very strait, that is, narrow. But it is far better to walk in a narrow way, and live, than to walk in a way that allows unlimited wandering, and die.





## AN ERRING RACE.

"DECLARE, ye sages, if ye find  
 'Mongst animals of every kind,  
 Of each condition, sort, and size,  
 From whales and e'phants to flies,  
 A creature that mistakes his plan  
 And errs so constantly as man!"

## GOD WORKING IN YOU.

THE stomach makes gastric juice, but how is it able without brain, intelligence, or reasoning faculties, to do more than we ourselves can do with our brains and mind? The stomach has the power to discern the kind of food that is eaten, and then make a digestive juice that is exactly adapted to it. This juice is a new creation. It is a manifestation of creative power just as the creation of man originally was. So every time we digest a meal, we are brought face to face with a miracle, just as if we saw a man created before our eyes.

Different kinds of food of various colours are taken into the stomach, and become red blood, of one colour and one character. This is as great a miracle as the turning of water into wine, and it requires the very same power; it cannot be done by an effort of the will. It would be as easy for you to transform the food on your plate into red blood, with a touch of your finger, as it is for you to do it after it reaches your stomach. It is done by Divine, not by human power.

There is no living person who is wise enough to explain how the stomach can digest a dinner and not digest itself. This gastric juice will digest even a live oyster, and yet the stomach is preserved intact. The same power that performs the miracle of digestion is at the same time performing

another miracle of the opposite kind in the preservation of the stomach.

## INTELLIGENT CONTROL OF THE HEART.

The daily work of the heart is equivalent to lifting 124 tons a foot high. Do not imagine that the heart is simply a mechanism wound up like a seven-day clock, and that it keeps going from the motion that was originally given to it; for it beats fast or slow according to the needs of the body. When you run upstairs it may beat 120 times a minute; when lying down perhaps only sixty times a minute. Here is a clock which ticks according to the needs of the body, and you cannot control it by will, even if you try. It would be a very dangerous thing if our hearts were under our control. We are not wise enough to manage a heart; it has to be taken care of night and day. If you were managing it, when you fell asleep it would stop. Your hand may have ever so much cunning, but the moment you go to sleep it loses its cunning, because it needs an intelligent will behind it. It is exactly so with the heart. It needs an intelligence and a will that never sleeps, to take care of it. So in every heart-beat there is evidence of Divine power within the body, that can intelligently direct it. God dwells in the body. No man is so wise that he can tell why the heart beats, if he eliminates God from his philosophy.

We breathe when we are awake, and keep on breathing when we are asleep. Furthermore, it is utterly impossible for anybody to hold his breath till he dies. He might possibly hold it till he became unconscious, but the moment he became unconscious he would breathe again, because, when unconscious, his will ceases to hold his breath. The will that commands your chest muscles to contract when the body is in danger is a stronger will than yours. The human will often does things that are harmful to the body, but there is another will that is working on the side of the body's interest, and is taking care of it, often even against our own will, for it knows better than we do how to take care of our bodies.

The liver is a sort of inspecting station, where all the food substances that go into the blood are inspected before they are passed on. And this is carried on night

and day, without a moment's rest. An organ that must conduct business in that way, must have wonderful recuperative powers. It is a self-sacrificing organ. To compensate a little for its service, it is endowed with more vitality than almost any other organ of the body.

## A CONTINUOUS CREATION.

A German scientist once opened a rabbit's abdomen, cut off a part of the liver, then closed the wound, and let it alone for several months. Then he opened it again, and found the part grown on. He then cut off the other half, and later, upon opening the abdomen, found that it had reproduced this half, so that the rabbit had an entirely new liver.

In the liver itself resides a power that can create livers, and this is the same power that made Adam in the first place. Eight million blood cells die every second in our bodies, and there are eight million created every second of our lives to take their places, and every one of these cells is a living organism. How can some people imagine that they can get along without God? We could not live a second without Him, for He is at work in our bodies creating continually, just as He created the first man that ever lived.

The temperature of the body must be regulated continually. When the temperature of the room falls five degrees, there has to be an adjustment of heat-making processes in the body. So this delicately balanced adjustment of safety-valves and governors within the body is constantly operating. Is our will doing this? It takes place without our will; sometimes even in opposition to our desires. There is something beyond the human will, caring for the body every moment. It is higher, greater, stronger, and wiser than the human will.

Let us be persuaded that God dwells within us, that our bodies are living temples, and let us surrender our temples to God, to be the Master of the house; then we shall have no trouble in settling a thousand questions that come up. We shall simply say, "What does God desire?" and that will be the only question for us to answer.

J. H. KELLOGG, M.D.

## A WARNING.

JENNER, besides being a scientific physician, often wrote bright and amusing verses:—

"I've dispatched, dear Lady Morgan, this scrap of a letter,  
 To say that Miss Charlotte is certainly better;  
 A regular doctor no longer she lacks,  
 And therefore I've sent her a couple of quacks."

With the above note came a couple of wild ducks. Lady Morgan's reply:—

"Yes, 'twas politic truly, my very good friend,  
 Thus a couple of quacks your patient to send,  
 Since there's nothing so likely as quacks, it is plain,  
 To make work for a regular doctor again."





## GOD SPEAKING IN THE SON.

GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Heb. i. 1-3.

1. Who spoke in time past?
2. To whom did God speak?
3. When did God speak to the fathers?
4. How often did God speak to them?
5. In what ways did He speak to them?
6. What has He done in these days?
7. To whom has God spoken in these days?
8. What is this time called, in which God speaks to us?
9. By whom has God spoken to us?
10. Being Son, what must He necessarily be?
11. Of how much has God appointed Him heir?
12. What has God done by the Son? (Compare verse 2 with Gen. i. 1; John i. 1-3; 1 John i. 1; Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9.)
13. What likeness does the Son sustain to the Father?
14. Of what is Christ the out-shining?
15. How is He related to God's substance? (See note.)
16. What does He do to all things?
17. How does He uphold all things?
18. What has He done for men?
19. By what means has He made purification of sins?
20. Having purged sins, what did He do?
21. Then what place does He now occupy?

## TOPICS SUGGESTED BY THE TEXT.

1. THE same One who spoke in time past still speaks, and speaks to us. How many hear His voice, and recognise it when they hear it?
2. God spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, yet it was really by the Son that He spoke to them as well as to us; for the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets (1 Peter i. 10, 11), and "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter i. 21.
3. The message which God sent to the fathers by the prophets is the same message that now comes to us; for the prophets understood that they were not ministering unto themselves, "but unto us;" and the apostles, as well as all others who "have preached the Gospel" "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," proclaim the identical things that were ministered by the prophets. 1 Peter i. 10-12.
4. The Word of God "liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter i. 23. This also teaches us that the Word which God spoke unto the fathers by the prophets still exists and is as full of life as when it was first uttered. It is not merely conveyed to us in a book, but the living voice still sounds directly in our ears, if we but have ears to hear. The written Word is also spoken. "The Word of life" "which was from the beginning," is that which is now declared in the good tidings of great joy. 1 John i. 1-4.

5. For "by," in verse 1, and the first part of verse 2, we should read "in," as in the Revised Version: for this is the literal rendering of the Greek text. God "spoke in the prophets," and He speaks to us "in His Son." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. v. 19. But since Christ is "the firstborn among many brethren," God dwells in men who are submissive to Him, as well as in Christ, and speaks in them. He "hath put in us the Word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. v. 19, margin.

It is better also to read "through," instead of "by," in the last part of verse 2, as the Revision has it. God was in Christ, and through Him He made the worlds.

6. Jesus Christ, the Son, is "the Word of God." Compare Rev. xix. 11-15, and 2 Thess. ii. 8, and Ps. ii. 7-9. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "All things were made by Him." John i. 1, 3. A word is the expression of a thought, therefore Christ is the expression of all God's thoughts. "As the heavens are higher than the earth," so are God's thoughts higher than our thoughts. Isa. lv. That is, in Christ we have the highest thoughts of the Most High God conveyed to us. The highest knowledge possible—knowledge infinitely higher than any that can be learned from man—is therefore brought within our reach by the Word of God, who "was made flesh, and dwelt among us," and who still "is come in the flesh." 1 John iv. 2. In Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 2, 3); therefore if we would know "the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10), we must come unto Him, and learn of Him. All things may be learned in His school.

7. Christ is "heir of all things." Therefore whoever accepts Christ has all things. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. God has blessed us "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. i. 3. In giving us Christ, God cannot do otherwise than freely give us all things, because "in Him all things consist." Col. i. 17. Since Christ is good, and we get all things in Him, it must necessarily be that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. viii. 28.

8. The One in whom God now speaks to us is the One "through whom also He made the worlds." "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "For He spake and it was; He commanded and it stood fast." Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9. Christ is the Word of God, without whom not one thing was made. In Christ, the very Word of creation, the Word that brought the heaven and earth into existence, and peopled them with living creatures, is the word that is now spoken to us. Therefore its effect on us, if we receive it, must be to create us anew,—to make us new creatures. "If any man be in Christ, He is a new creature." 2 Cor. v. 17. Thus we see that redemption is simply the continuous working in us of the original Word that created all things.

9. When God created the earth in the beginning, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job xxxviii. 4-7. It was so perfect, so beautiful, so glorious a work

that the heavenly host could not restrain their joy at the sight of it. Now the very same word that produced that glorious new creation still works with the same power. The soul that is created anew by the Word of God is as beautiful as was the earth when God breathed it forth from His Being; and therefore it is that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. God says, "This people whom I have formed for Myself, they shall show forth My praise." Isa. xlii. 21. Then when God says, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col. iii. 16), we have only to respond, "Amen, so let it be," and it will be so, just as when the creative word was spoken in the beginning. Our prayer should be: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Then we can worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

10. The Greek word from which the word "brightness" is translated, is a compound word signifying "to flash forth." Christ is the flashing forth, the bright, clear shining, of the glory of God.

Here we have the settlement of the oft-raised question as to the "pre-existence of Christ." He is the brightness of the Father's glory; then wherever the glory of God is, there Christ is; and He must necessarily have been co-existent with the glory of God. His "goings forth," [or, His flashing forth] have been from of old, "from the days of eternity." Micah v. 2.

11. The two words, "express image," or "very image," are translated from the one Greek word, "character." A "character" is primarily a mark, an impression made upon something soft, or a figure cut into something hard. From this we get the other common signification; namely, a person's moral and spiritual nature. The text tells us, literally, that Christ is the character of God,—the impress of His substance—His being. It was the character, the nature, of God in Jesus of Nazareth that marked Him as the Son of God. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." John i. 12. By "His Divine power" we become "partakers of the Divine nature." 2 Peter i. 3, 4.

12. CHRIST upholds, bears, all things by the word of His power. The same word of power that created the worlds upholds them. "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by name; by the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power, not one is lacking." Isa. xl. 26, R. V.

Since He upholds, bears, carries, all things, it is evident that He bears all men, even us; and so it follows that He bears our sins also, and the sins of the whole world. John i. 29, with margin; Isa. liii. 6. Whether we believe or not, He has our sins, together with us, upon Him. If we decline to bear them any longer ourselves, and leave them upon Him, it does not add to His burden. On the contrary, our letting go of our sins will lighten Christ's load; for when He gets them away from us He casts them into the depths of the sea,—they are swallowed up out of sight.

Although Christ bears the sins of the world, nobody ever saw any sin upon Him. He is the only one upon whom there can be sin without making a spot; His life obliterates it—blots it out. It is thus that His life manifests itself in those who receive it as freely as it is bestowed.



## The Present Truth.

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THIS Christmas number of PRESENT TRUTH takes the place of two issues. The next number will be dated January 1, 1904.

**How to Master the Truth.**—It would be well if all seekers after truth—all students of the Word—would speedily come to an understanding of the principle so tersely expressed by Phillips Brooks, that "not by the sharpening of the intellect to supernatural acuteness, but by the submission of the nature to its true authority," man conquers truth; that "not by agonising struggles over the contradictory evidence, but by the harmony with Him in whom the answers to all our doubts are folded, a harmony with Him brought by obedience to Him, our doubts must be enlightened." A grasp of this simple principle would save days and months, and even years, of fruitless and wearing "investigation." Nobody ever comes to a knowledge of the truth by study. We must first know the truth, by revelation from God, and then we spend the rest of our lives, even through eternity, in studying it.

EVER since the ritualist controversy began there has been a great deal written about the inconsistency, and even the dishonesty, of clergymen who occupy positions in the Church of England while teaching the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome. At the present time the charge of inconsistency is centred on the Dean of Ripon, because of his alleged denial of the miraculous birth of Christ. A very pertinent item in this connection appeared as a communication in the *Daily Chronicle* of November 26. The writer said:—

"Many of your correspondents complain of the inconsistency of the Dean of Ripon. Let such take notice of one of the things that takes place in some churches almost every Sunday morning—viz., the repetition of the Ten Commandments by the clergyman with a prayer after each Commandment by the congregation. Is there no inconsistency in repeating this prayer after the Fourth Commandment? And is the Dean's inconsistency greater than that of those—the vast majority of Churchmen—who repeat the prayer?"

It would be well if this item could come to the notice of all churchmen, and be seriously considered by them. The Fourth Commandment says: "Remember the

Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord Thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work;" and after this is read in church every Sunday, all the people respond, "O Lord, incline our hearts to keep this law," and yet keep on exalting the Sunday, and dishonouring the Sabbath day, with never a thought of the inconsistency. As a matter of fact, this inconsistency with regard to the Fourth Commandment is the root of all the other. If all were real Sabbath-keepers, there could be no ritualism, and no manner of lack of harmony with the Word of God.

### THE REIGN OF PEACE.

WERE half the power that fills the world with terror,

Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,

Given to redeem the human soul from error,

There were no need of arsenals and forts.

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred;

And every nation that should lift again

Its hand against a brother, on its forehead

Would wear for evermore the curse of Cain.

Down the dark future, through long generations,

The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease;

And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,

I hear once more the voice of Christ say,  
"Peace."

Peace, and no longer from its brazen portals

The blast of war's great organ shakes the skies,

But beautiful as songs of the immortals,

The holy melodies of love arise.

—Longfellow.

**God Standing With Man.**—When Moses went up Mount Sinai the second time, with the tables of stone in his hand, on which the law was to be written, "The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there." Ex. xxxiv. 5. What a wonder! what condescension! The Lord of hosts, the mighty God, coming down to earth and standing by the side of a man! Who would not feel honoured by such notice? And who would not feel overawed by the presence of the Almighty? Just that honour, however, is granted to every humble disciple, and, moreover, everyone must necessarily receive it; for we are exhorted to walk with God, and He must stand by our side before we can walk with Him. The Lord is no respecter of persons, and what He did for Moses He does for all. "The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand." "Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." "Fear thou not; for I am

with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness."

THE first two verses of the first chapter of Hebrews, literally translated, tell us that God who in time past spoke unto the fathers "in the prophets," now speaks to us "in the Son." The revelation of God in Christ was simply the fulness of what had previously been incompletely manifested in men, and it set the pattern of what will be when "we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." He says to those who are brought before governors and kings, to testify for Him, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matt. x. 20. How greatly we, the whole body of professed Christians, have failed to realise the lesson of the birth of Christ. "Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given;" and when we, like Mary, say, and say continually, "Be it unto me as Thou wilt,"—He will be formed in us, and we shall be "filled with all the fulness of God."

THERE is no more vivid and striking illustration of the power in weakness, which is the characteristic of the Gospel, than that presented in Rev. v. 5, 6. When no man in heaven or earth could open the sealed book, one of the elders said to John, "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda . . . hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." In accordance with the elder's words, John "beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain." There was "the Lion of the tribe of Juda." John looked for the conquering Lion, and he beheld a slain Lamb! A more striking contrast, and greater seeming contradiction, could not be imagined; yet the two are one and the same. In the slain Lamb which is the conquering Lion, we see how God ordains strength out of the most abject weakness; and thus we have "strong consolation."

THE person who "kills time" has surely no reason to hope that God will give him eternity. Eternity is unlimited time, and the man who has so little appreciation of its value as to seek to kill it, does not deserve more of it on which to perpetrate his murderous designs.



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