

THE Present Truth

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."—John xvii. 17.

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The Present Truth.

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"Haven't Time."—Have you no time to think of God, to seek Him, to study His word, and to learn of Him? "Are there not twelve hours in the day"—yes, in *your* day? Is it not as long as any other person's day? "From him that hath not," said the Saviour, "shall be taken away even that which he hath." If you have no time now, you will have none hereafter. None are so short of time as those who have no time to prepare for eternity.

Speaking for God.—Who will speak of the wonderful love and power of God? Are there any special ones of His followers who are privileged to tell of His goodness, while others must keep silence? Hear what is written: "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" Amos iii. 8. Evidently none can help speaking His word, save those who have not heard it. Jeremiah once, because of the criticism of men, thought he would not make mention of the Lord any more; but he said, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jer. xx. 9. And so when the apostles were even commanded not to speak any more in the name of Jesus, they said, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts iv. 20. And so it will always be; none will keep silence except those who have not

known the voice of God speaking to them.

"Let those refuse to sing,
Who never knew our God;
But servants of the Heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad."

Our Song.—"The Lord is my strength and song." Ex. xv. 2. Why then should it be thought that there is anything about the service of God that is dismal and sad? It is a service of song. The psalmist says, "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." Ps. xl. 3. We are called to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." 1 Peter ii. 9. Is there anything sad about coming out from darkness into the bright light? This is what the service of God is,—standing in the light where His glory can be seen upon us (Isa. lx. 2), and rejoicing in it. And if we stand there, that song will be in our mouth, and not words of discouragement and lamentation; and then "many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Ps. xl. 3.

Supping with Christ.—Jesus says: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. iii. 20. He is the King of kings, yet He consents to sit as a guest with "any man," even the humblest. Nay, He begs the privilege of associating with us. But what shall we set before Him, when He comes to sup with us? We cannot set anything before Him, for He comes and knocks when we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." He knows this, and so He brings abundant provision with Him. He Himself is the Bread of life. He says, "Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself

in fatness." Isa. lv. 2. But do not forget that we must sup with Him. What that means we learn from His prayer in the garden. Matt. xxvi. 37-42. If we would sup with Him, we must not refuse the cup of temptation, suffering, and reproach. The joy of it is that we have the presence of Christ with it. In Him we have peace in the midst of tribulation. There is exquisite joy in sorrow when Christ shares it with us.

WORKERS WITH GOD.

To THE Corinthians Paul wrote, "We are labourers together with God." 1 Cor. iii. 9. The work of God is carried forward by coöperation. But it is the coöperation of the branch with the vine. The branch bears fruit, but it receives all its nourishment, its strength, from the vine. "Without Me," said Christ, "Ye can do nothing." No person can do anything that would save himself from the penalty of even the smallest sin. He might work all his life, and work harder than any man ever worked, and at the end he would be no nearer to salvation than he was at first. Yet he is required to coöperate with God, and he will not obtain salvation unless he does. All men are sinners, and before they can be saved that sin must be removed. God has provided a way whereby sin may be removed, but He did not in that act actually remove it. He opened "a fountain for sin and uncleanness;" and now all who will may come to that fountain and become clean. None are compelled to come; and all who do not come will die in their sins.

God works through man; but He works always for His own glory, and therefore He can use only those who will give Him the glory. And these are only those who deny (know not) self. Man can place himself where God can use him by denying self. In this work he can coöperate with God.

This thought is prominently set forth

in the first part of Phil. ii.; and then in verse 11 the apostle adds, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." But how can that be?—"For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Verses 12, 13. Thus man coöperates with God, and thus is it possible to "work out your own salvation." The work of man is self-denial; the work of God is to fill the vacuum made thereby with His own life and power.

A POSITIVE FORCE.

A WRITER in the *News* has been discussing the question, "Is Protestantism a mere negation?" The answer to such a question must depend very much upon the signification given to the term "Protestantism." If by that word is meant only what is seen in the most of that worship which differs in form from Catholicism, it may be doubtful whether it is a "mere negation" or not. Certainly a large part of it is not much more than this, and is so rapidly identifying itself with Romanism that it will soon cease to be even that. But if by that term we mean the faith of men like Luther, Wycliffe, and others who in former times earnestly contended against Rome for "the faith once delivered unto the saints," and of the few who are contending in like manner to-day, then the question may be answered with an emphatic negative. Protestantism is not a mere negation, but a positive and most powerful force.

True Protestantism is something very different from a mere denial of the errors of popery. It is a denial of those doctrines, just as truth is always a denial of error, although this is not the proper way to speak of truth. Truth comes first and error afterwards, so that error is a denial of truth, rather than truth a denial of error. And this is all error is; but truth is a positive, living force. It stands alone, beautiful and complete in itself, ignoring all error, and clothed with the power and life of Him who gave it birth.

True Protestantism is the gospel of God. It is "Protestantism" only because of the protest of the princes whose faith led them to stand out against the corrupt communion of Rome. It is a belief, a faith. It was not created by the protest of the princes, but only acquired by that a new name. It existed long before

"Protestantism," as a name, was known; long before there was any occasion for such a name. It existed, indeed, from all eternity; for the Gospel of God is the "everlasting Gospel," being "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i. 16; Rev. xiv. 6.

The only protest that is needed against Rome's errors is the proclamation of this Gospel, this power of God unto salvation. This is the most effective protest that could be made, for the straightforward proclamation of Divine truth is the best barrier that can be raised across the path of the error that denies it. The worst thing that can happen for error is to be contrasted with the truth. The worst thing that can happen for popery,—the power of the pope and the priest and the virgin unto salvation,—is to be contrasted with the power of God unto salvation, which is the gospel. This Gospel can be proclaimed without any reference to popery whatever, and still be just as strong and effective a protest against it.

But the adherents of the papacy wish to make it appear that Protestantism is something dependent upon popery, a mere denial of the doctrines of popery, and therefore something which could not have existed without it. They wish it to appear that popery was first, and Protestantism came after it. But it is only the name that came after it, and not the principles. Popery is the thing that denies, and not Protestantism. Gospel truth was first in the field; it was there from all eternity. It was preached to the children of Israel in the wilderness (Heb. iv. 1, 2); it was preached by the apostles eighteen hundred years ago; it was preached by a faithful few in the dark ages; it is preached by the "remnant" of Christ's followers to-day. The Gospel is not on the defensive; it does not care for popish innovations; but now, as ever, it calmly and majestically pursues its way to every nation and people and tongue, being "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

The Gospel is a positive force; it is an infinite force. Popery cannot stop it, nor any other power that can be brought against it. This is the force which is in the true religion, the true Protestantism. It is a force which lives and works in individuals, in the word of God which abides in the hearts of Christians. If your religion does not contain this force, it is not the Gospel of God. If your heart does

not feel this power, if your life does not manifest it, you are not yet in the way of salvation.

ABIDING IN GOD.

THE Saviour says, "Abide in Me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye except ye abide in Me." John xv. 4. If we abide not in Him, our whole lives will be utterly barren.

How may we abide in Him? Turning to the fourth chapter of 1 John, we read (verses 7, 8), "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." If therefore we cherish enmity and hatred toward those around us, we cannot abide in God; we cannot even know Him.

But again we read (verse 16), "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

And what must we do to love? Can we love by trying to love, by exerting ourselves to make love come into our hearts? Who was ever able to love in that way? Who ever seriously tries to get love for another by such a process? But if we cannot love one of the human family by trying and exerting ourselves to love them, no more can we love God in that way. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." 1 John iv. 20, R. V.

Love comes by beholding. We see one on earth whom we admire, and almost before we know it love has sprung up in our hearts. We made no exertion, but simply let it come. There was no barrier in its way. And that is the only way that love ever comes. "Love is of God,"—all love that is true love,—and whether it be love toward God or man, it comes in the same way.

The trouble is, there is a barrier in the way of our love toward God. Sin placed that barrier there; it is self. The door of the natural heart is closed to that which is Divine. Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. iii. 20. Open that door, and the love of God will come in. Jesus will come in, and we shall see Him, "the chiefest among ten thousand," and

"altogether lovely"; and love will be the inevitable consequence.

But until the door is opened, we do not see Christ. There is much rubbish about the door, which must be cleared away,—the rubbish of self, selfish ambition, pride, jealousies, and all the other works of the flesh. We cannot see Christ through self. Though He is the beauty and the majesty of heaven, so long as we look at self, we shall not be able to discern Him.

We may remove this rubbish by counting ourselves dead unto sin (Rom. vi. 11), dead to all selfish desires and selfish acts. Then there will be no difficulty about opening the door; and then we shall see our Heavenly Visitor in His beauty, and our hearts will be filled with His praise. We will abide in Him.

"We love, because He first loved us;" because "love is of God" and we have opened our hearts and let that love in. And "love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 8, 10. By love will the keeping of the law be manifested to those around us. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments [loveth not], is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; and hereby know we that we are in Him." 1 John ii. 4, 5.

The Word of Power.—When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary the coming birth of Jesus, and how it was to be brought about, he said, "No word from God shall be void of power." Luke i. 37, Revised Version. Every word of God is living, and active; every word is life, so that men may live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Therefore the Lord says: "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. lv. 10, 11. His word cannot return to Him void, because it is power and life; it will produce life, just as surely as the rain causes the earth to bring forth fruit. Therefore all that ministers and teachers of the Gospel have to do, is to let the word of God dwell in them, so that they can speak it, and God will see that it reaches those who need it. "He

that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully." "Is not My word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

THE GRACE OF GIVING.

THE matter of raising money for religious work is one of the greatest perplexities connected with such work in these days. In almost every church the question of raising the minister's salary and meeting other incidental expenses, takes more consultation and planning than the salvation of the people. Almost every denomination has its special agents to raise money for foreign missions,—men who have great power of persuasion,—and the successful pleader for money is considered the most useful man in the cause. And then there are the other methods for coaxing a few shillings out of people, such as suppers, fairs, and bazaars, with devices that ought not ever to be named as becoming Christians.

Now there cannot be any question about the necessity for money in the work of the Gospel. "The labourer is worthy of his hire," and the Lord has "ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." 1 Cor. ix. 14. The only question is, How shall the means be raised?

This question is answered in the statement last quoted. "They which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." God Himself has ordained this. It arises from the very nature of the Gospel, which begins and ends in giving. If sufficient attention were given to the Gospel, the money question would settle itself. Let us read a few texts about giving.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Gal. i. 3, 4.

"The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. ii. 20.

"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.

"Charge them that are rich in this

world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." 1 Tim. vi. 17.

The Apostle Paul exhorts us to "abound in this grace also," the grace of giving; for, says he, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. viii. 9.

From these texts, and there are many other similar ones, we learn that the grace of God consists in giving. Grace itself is a gift. Eph. ii. 8; Rom. v. 15-17. Righteousness is a gift, and so is eternal life. It is the love of God that leads Him to bestow these gifts upon us. The love of God must manifest itself in giving. Therefore when the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of men, they will give according to their ability, just as freely as God Himself does.

See how this was demonstrated in the case of the believers in Macedonia. "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, yea, and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty in regard to this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints; and this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord." 2 Cor. viii. 1-5. They knew the grace of the Lord, who gave Himself, and so they gave themselves; and in giving themselves they gave all that they had.

Notice also how the love of the brethren in Galatia showed itself. The Apostle Paul wrote, "I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." Gal. iv. 15. Nothing that they could give was withheld. What was the cause of this?—Jesus Christ had been set forth evidently crucified among them. Gal. iii. 1. Let the Gospel be preached with the power of the Spirit, so that it becomes a living reality to the hearers, and there will be no trouble in regard to gifts.

All that is necessary, therefore, in order to raise money for the support of the Gospel, is to preach the Gospel of the free grace of God. Men in whose hearts the love of God finds a place, will give without urging, and the Lord

does not desire offerings from any others. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, nor of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. ix. 7. God desires gifts from people who give without urging.

This is shown in the call for offerings for the tabernacle in the wilderness. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering." Ex. xxv. 1, 2. "And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all His service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings," etc. Ex. xxxv. 21, 22.

That shows the kind of offerings that the Lord requires; and now for the result of such giving: "And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; and they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." Ex. xxxvi. 4-7. What a sensation it would make for such a proclamation to be made in some congregation in these days.

Since not even the brethren are to be urged to give against their free will, it is very evident that it is not according to the will of God that contributions for the Gospel should be solicited from unbelievers. God is not so poor that He is obliged to beg for the support of His cause. "For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof." Ps. l. 10-12. There is nothing more dishonouring to the cause of Christ, than the desperate efforts that are put forth by many who profess it, to induce the world to give to its sup-

port. The Apostle John says of the early ministers of Christ that "for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles." 3 John 7.

The love of God is the secret of real giving. When Christ dwells in the heart, the language will be "I am debtor." This was the case with the early disciples. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." Acts iv. 32. The mind that was in them, that made them one, was the mind of Christ, who gave Himself. Such ones delight to give, and thank God for the privilege, so that they can say with David: "Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

THE GLORY OF GOD.

MAN was created for the glory of God. "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." "Even every one that is called by My name; for I have created him for My glory." Isa. xliii. 1, 7. Also in Revelation we read that the four and twenty elders before the throne of God worship Him, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Rev. iv. 10, 11.

But God is not arbitrary in any of His acts. He is not selfish in any of His dealings. In creating man for His glory He had in view not only that glory but the good of man. God existed before any of His creatures were brought into existence, and He was then the Omniscient and the Omnipotent, just as He is to-day. He was dependent on nothing; He needed nothing. But he did not choose to enjoy existence by Himself; for "God is love," "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" and love demanded that His power should be exercised for the good of others. The glory of a Being whose very nature is love must consist in the manifestation of that love; and hence man and all created things were created for the glory of God.

The word of God abounds with ex-

hortations to man to give glory to Him. "Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name." Ps. xcvi. 7, 8. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 20. But how is man to glorify God? He has no glory in himself; he has nothing about him which is worthy of being offered to God. He has no power to get anything that would be worthy. Only that which comes from God Himself can be worthy of presenting back to Him.

God knew this when He created man, and provided that man should be given that which he did not possess himself for an offering to his Creator. From the Saviour's words in John xvii. 1, we learn how it is that man is to glorify God: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." God bestows His love and favour upon His children, and they, in making manifest that love, can glorify Him. As we are told by Peter, we are chosen of God that we should "show forth the praises" of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. 1 Peter ii. 9. And God has said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." Ps. l. 23.

God bestows His love upon man, and he in return manifests the love of God. God delights in acts of love and mercy, and His creatures thereby delight themselves in Him. The arrangement is a reciprocal one, and no less for the benefit of one party than for the other. That which is for the glory of God is for the benefit of man; and that which has been given for man's benefit, if not perverted, redounds to the glory of God. And when God does some act of seeming severity, to maintain in the world the majesty and glory of His name, it is done really for the benefit of His creatures who depend upon Him. That which guards His glory, also guards their happiness.

But most men pervert that which God bestows upon them, using it to the glorification of self. Instead of reflecting back the glory of God, by words and acts of praise to Him, they absorb it with the idea of thereby calling attention to themselves. This, of course, entirely fails of its object, and robs God of His glory. Hence it is that He cannot bestow His glory in large measure upon those who would serve self. But He has bestowed some degree of it upon all, so that each one may, if he will, do something to the

glory of God. And God will bestow upon a person just as much glory as he will use properly. He gives to each one all that can safely be entrusted to him.

The message God sends His people is, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isa. lx. 1. In manifesting to them the righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ, which is "unto all and upon all them that believe," He has shewn His people the worthlessness and sinfulness of self, that they may cast self utterly away. And self being cast out, they are prepared to glorify God, to reflect back to Him the light which He sends upon them. And thus this call, this message, is the signal for God's name to be glorified in the earth. No man will be glorified in it; but "His glory" shall be seen upon His people, and all the earth will know that it is the glory of God.

All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom. iii. 23. They have come short of giving to God the glory that is His. When sin is in the heart, the glory that God sends will not be perfectly reflected, but a part if not all of it will be absorbed by self. Self never throws out anything good, but always seeks to retain it. And therefore to make ourselves perfect reflectors of the glory of God, we must cast out self. To cast out self we must look to Christ. Looking into His face, beholding the beauty and glory of "the chiefest among ten thousand and the One altogether lovely," we will soon cease to be conscious of self; and then self is gone, and only the image of Him we see, remains with us. And Jesus is "the Light of the world" and the brightness of the glory of God. Heb. i. 3; John viii. 12.

When Isaiah beheld in vision the Lord seated upon His throne, he exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." We, like him, are men of unclean lips; but when our lips have been touched by a live coal from off the altar of the Lord, we can be sent forth with His message. "O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise." Ps. li. 15.

AN address by Mr. Charles Booth, recently read before the Royal Statistical Society, shows that there are in London 172,502 single room tenements; 189,700 tenements consisting of two rooms; 153,189 of three rooms; and

115,117 of four rooms. Of the single-room tenements, 60,115 are inhabited by one person only; 55,766 by two persons; 29,005 by three; 16,111 by four persons; 7,409 by five; 2,871 by six; 879 by seven; 231 by eight; 72 by nine; and there are some single rooms that are actually occupied by ten, eleven, and "twelve or more" persons. These figures tell their own story.

WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?

POSSIBLY ninety-nine out of every hundred people who give the matter any thought at all, would answer that it is the anniversary of the birth of Christ. So general has this idea become, that many people regard Christmas as a sacred day, and think that labour thereon is a sin. In the Catholic Church it is regarded as far more holy than Sunday.

As a matter of fact, nobody knows the month nor the day of the month on which Jesus of Nazareth was born. The only place where we could hope to find any definite information on the subject, namely, the Bible, is utterly silent regarding the matter. The fact that the Bible gives no sanction whatever to the celebration of the birth of Christ, not even mentioning when it occurred, is sufficient evidence that the Lord did not wish to have it celebrated. Whatever the Bible does not mention is forbidden.

There is only one thing that we can know with any certainty about the birth of Christ, and that is that it did not take place on the twenty-fifth of December, nor in the month of December. Read the record: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; . . . for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke ii. 8-11.

Winter in Palestine is the season of rain. Snow falls, and there are sharp frosts. While it is a subtropical country, it is certain that in the winter season sheep are not kept in the field, and shepherds do not in winter, watch their flocks by night "all seated on the ground," as the hymn has it. Christ was undoubtedly born in the spring or summer, although at what date nobody knows, for no record has been kept. No one thought of cele-

brating any day as the birthday of Christ until about three hundred years after His ascension. Dr. Schaff tells us that we first find Christmas in Rome, "in the time of the Bishop Liberius, who on the twenty-fifth of December, 360, consecrated Marcella, the sister of St. Ambrose, nun or bride of Christ, and addressed her with the words, 'Thou seest what multitudes are come to the birth festival of thy bridegroom.' This passage implies that the festival was already existing, and familiar. Christmas was introduced in Antioch about the year 380; in Alexandria, where the feast of Epiphany was celebrated as the nativity of Christ, not till about 430."

Dr. Schaff also tells us something about the origin of the Christmas festival. He says:—

The Christmas festival was probably the Christian transformation or regeneration of a series of kindred festivals—the Saturnalia, Sigillaria, Juvenalia, and Brumalia—which were kept in Rome in the month of December, in commemoration of the golden age of universal freedom and equality, and in honour of the unconquered sun, and which were great holidays especially for slaves and children. This connection accounts for many customs of the Christmas season, like the giving of presents to children and to the poor, the lighting of wax tapers, perhaps also the erection of Christmas trees. . . . Had the Christmas festival arisen in the period of the persecution, its derivation from these pagan festivals would be refuted by the then reigning abhorrence of everything heathen; but in the Nicene age this rigidity of opposition between the church and the world was in a great measure softened by the general conversion of the heathen.

When we recall the fact, stated by Mosheim, that in consequence of the introduction of pagan philosophy into the church, the heathen came into the church in great numbers, without thinking it necessary to materially change any of their former practices, we can understand how the opposition between the church and the world came to be softened by the general "conversion" of the heathen. As Dr. Schaff says, Christmas was adopted after the close of persecution, when abhorrence of everything heathen had ceased. There is not the slightest question but that Christmas is of purely heathen origin, and is one of the things which mark the progress of the transformation of Paganism into Roman Catholicism.

In the paragraph quoted above, Dr. Schaff says that the heathen festival which later became Christmas, was "in honour of the unconquered sun." In heathen times, when sun-worship was universal, there was a festival in the latter part of December, to hail what the heathen termed the birth of the sun, when the sun began to rise

higher and higher, after its decline. The professed Christian bishops, who were willing to make almost any compromise to enlarge "the church" numerically, adopted this festival, identifying the sun with Christ, "the Sun of righteousness," so that the heathen could keep their old custom and still be called Christians. They continued to worship the sun, but were told that in doing so they were worshipping Christ.

Mosheim tells us that even in the second century, a large part of the Christian observances and institutions had the aspect of the pagan mysteries. This was because "the Christian bishops purposely multiplied sacred rites" for the purpose of conciliating the pagans. As illustrating this spirit of compromise, he quotes the following from Gregory Nyssen's life of Gregory Thaumaturgus: "When Gregory perceived that the ignorant and simple multitude persisted in their idolatry, on account of the sensitive pleasures and delights it afforded, he allowed them in celebrating the memory of the holy martyrs, to indulge themselves, and give a loose to pleasure (*i. e.*, as the thing itself, and both what precedes and follows, place beyond all controversy, he allowed them at the sepulchres of the martyrs on their feast days, to dance, use sports, to indulge conviviality, and to do all things that the worshippers of idols were accustomed to do in their temples on their festival days), hoping that in process of time they would spontaneously come over to a more becoming and more correct manner of life."—*Ecclesiastical History, Cent. 2, part 2, chap. 4, section 2, note 3.*

When "Christian" bishops would allow that, it would be but a light thing for them to adopt the very days themselves that the heathen celebrated. This is shown very fully in the following by Dean Milman:—

The festivals in honour of the martyrs were avowedly instituted, or, at least, conducted on a sumptuous scale, in rivalry of the banquets which formed so important and attractive a part of the pagan ceremonial. . . . Panegyric orations were delivered by the best preachers. The day closed with an open banquet, in which all the worshippers were invited to partake. The wealthy heathens had been accustomed to propitiate the Manes of their departed friends by these costly festivals; the banquet was almost an integral part of the heathen religious ceremony. The custom passed into the church; and with the pagan feeling, the festival assumed a pagan character of gaiety and joyous excitement, and even of luxury. . . . As the evening drew on, the solemn and religious thoughts gave way to other emotions; the wine flowed freely, and the healths of the martyrs were pledged, not unfrequently, to complete inebriety. All the luxuries of the Roman

banquet were imperceptibly introduced. Dances were admitted, pantomimic spectacles were exhibited, the festivals were prolonged till late in the evening, or to midnight, so that other criminal irregularities profaned, if not the sacred edifice, its immediate neighbourhood.

The bishops had for some time sanctioned these pious hilarities with their presence; they had freely partaken of the banquets, and their attendants were accused of plundering the remains of the feast, which ought to have been preserved for the use of the poor.—*History of Latin Christianity, Book 4, chap. 2.*

The Dean says that "the heathen calendar still regulated the amusements of the people." These amusements, be it remembered, were the festival days of the church; so that the "church year" is but little else than the old heathen round of festivals. The heathen had a festival on the day that the sun was longest seen in the heavens,—the midsummer holiday. This was, of course, just six months before the winter festival which afterwards became Christmas, and so it was very conveniently adopted as the birthday of John the Baptist, and is now known as St. John's day. Most of the other church festivals had a similar origin in connection with sun worship.

Thus much for the compromising spirit in general, which adopted heathen customs, so that the heathen could be brought into the church. Now for one more statement, bringing the matter home. In "The Story of Religion in England," by Brooke Hereford, D.D., we find the following in connection with the history of Saxon times:—

Gradually Christianity became the general religion of the whole people. The change was made easier by its not destroying all their old associations, but rather turning them to account. Augustine had found that at various times in the year there were great religious festivals kept up all over the land, and he knew that it would be very difficult to put these down, for they had been so kept up for centuries, yet he did not like them because they were associated with the old heathenism, and helped to keep it alive. So he sent to Rome to ask what he must do. The Pope wisely replied that he had better let the people keep them as before, and indeed keep their old customs generally, but that he must teach them new meanings for them, and turn them into festivals and customs of Christianity. Thus there was a great religious festival kept by the Saxons in honour of their goddess Eostre, in the spring, about the time when the Christians kept the festival of the resurrection, so it was changed into the Christian festival, but the old name, Eostre—our Easter—remained for it among the people, and still remains. Then in the winter the Saxons, like all the northern people, kept the great Yule feast, so this was turned into a festival of the birth of Christ, and by-and-by people forgot that Christmas had ever been anything else.

The wisdom of the Pope in giving the advice he did to Augustine, was worldly wisdom, and not the wisdom of Christ. The Apostolic injunction was, "Have no fellowship with the unfruit-

ful works of darkness"; but "the church," in its desire to become "Catholic," went into full fellowship with those unfruitful works, and thus brought the darkness into the professed church of Christ.

"But is not Christmas a Christian festival now, since it is associated only with the birth of Christ?" It is just as much a Christian institution as a statue of the Emperor Nero would be a true image of Jesus, if people associated it with thoughts of Christ, and called it His statue. Thinking so, and calling it so, could not make it so. Calling the twenty-fifth of December Christmas does not in the least take away the fact that it is a purely heathen affair.

The existence of such festival days in the professed Protestant Church to-day, only shows how incomplete was the work of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. That was only a beginning, and much yet remains to be done; for when Christ appears the second time He will find a church as free from Paganism as it was when He left it. The finishing of the work of the Reformation will not be brought about *en masse*, nor by any general or formal action, but by individuals taking the Bible alone as their guide, and daring to be counted peculiar for the sake of Christ. Who will be among the number?

REPROVING THE WORKS OF DARKNESS.

IN the home or at business many Christians are brought into association with those who do not honour Christ,—whose ways are a source of pain. At every turn we are reminded that, though not "of the world," we are yet "in the world," and surrounded by the darkness of the world. The Lord tells us what should be our relation to all this. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them." Eph. v. 5.

How is this reproof to be given? Is it by telling the wrong-doer of this or that act, and arraying before him its wickedness? Sometimes, when we knew no better, we have tried this way, and have found a warmth of spirit generated which left matters worse than before. In the verse following the one quoted, the Lord shows that this is not the way: "For the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of."

Then sins may be reprov'd without even speaking of them. "But all things when they are reprov'd are

made manifest by the light." We reprove the works of darkness by holding forth the light. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." In the light sin is its own condemnation, and as Christ "was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," every man in sin knows the condemnation. Therefore the Christian is to be simply a light, a reflection of the glory of the life of Christ, and the light will reprove sin, and work with persuasive force to lead the sinner to yield.

It is not by pressing upon associates some form of words, or setting forth even various truths as a matter of doctrine, that we let the light shine. Many who are continually besieging their friends in this way cannot understand why their efforts are so unfruitful. The difficulty is this: the light is life. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." Only as we have the life can we have the light. But the life of Christ lived in the home or the place of business is the powerful and constant reprover of sin, even though no words are spoken. And the words spoken will not be to press condemnation more heavily upon the one in darkness, but they will flow out from the life within, full of light and helpfulness.

This is the way the Lord treated us. Dead in trespasses and sins he called to us, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee." Then in the brightness of His glory self was made manifest. And we who "were once darkness," became "light in the Lord," and rejoiced in the life which He gave. Let us then "walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord."

When Popery Comes In.—It is when men begin to turn away from the Bible as the very word of God. For instance, in Scotland for a series of years there has been a desperate effort on the part of many to overtake the advanced Biblical critics in other lands, and instead of the preaching of the word, the errancy of the word has been preached.

Now there is a marked Romeward tendency, which surprises many. A Scottish correspondent of a London paper calls attention to the spectacle of "multitudes running headlong to

the superstitions of the Middle Ages," and the other day Professor Blakie, presiding at a Protestant lecture, referred to the fact that some ministers of the Presbyterian Church had been expressing themselves in favour of the practice of prayers for the dead. All this is the sure result of shutting away the word of God from the people. The darkness of popery must follow as surely as the night the day. The only way to keep the spirit of the Papacy out of our own hearts is to let the word of God dwell in us, subduing self unto God. The man who slights the word of God may not be a Romanist, but he cannot avoid being a papist in principle; for the mystery of God, the word of the Gospel, is the one thing which is able to vanquish the mystery of iniquity, which has its seat in every unrenewed heart.

SPEEDY DELIVERANCE.

"PRAY without ceasing," is the inspired injunction. "Continuing steadfast in prayer," is another expression. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint," is what the Saviour said. Few understand the reason for these directions, and that is the reason why there is so much praying that seems to be to no purpose.

Prayer is not for the purpose of changing the mind of God, nor to make Him favourably disposed toward us. That is the heathen idea of prayer, and so the heathen connects with his prayer a sacrifice made by himself. Often it is a money offering as a bribe to the god, and sometimes it is a self-inflicted injury, as was the case with the prophets of Baal, as recorded in 1 Kings xviii. 26-28. But God Himself has provided the sacrifice which brings the things that we ask for, and is willing and anxious to bestow good gifts upon us even before we are ready to receive them. It is His promise alone that is the basis of all true prayer.

The fact that God has made "exceeding great and precious promises" to us, and that in our prayers we have only to claim those promises, shows that prayer, instead of changing the mind of God, is simply coming to take what He unchangingly holds out to us. He "satisfieth the desire of every living thing." Wherever there is an intense, earnest desire for God's good gifts, there follows the bestowal of them. "Blessed are they that hunger

and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Matt. v. 6.

Why, then, the necessity for continual, unceasing prayer?—Because there is continual need. "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." John iii. 27. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above." James i. 17. We are to pray every day, "Give us this day our daily bread," because we need food every day. The fact that we have eaten and been satisfied to-day, will not do away with the necessity for food to-morrow. So with all spiritual blessings. Our inward man must be "renewed day by day;" and it is when we realise that need, just as we realise the necessity for natural food, that we get a continual supply.

This is the lesson conveyed by the parable of the importunate widow and the unjust judge. The widow kept coming continually, because she realised that she was in extreme need. Her very existence depended upon her being delivered from the adversary who was about to devour her property. She would not be satisfied with anything less than complete deliverance.

The widow in the parable is an apt illustration of our case. We are in great need. Our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter v. 8. His power is the power of death (Heb. ii. 14), with which he would devour our life; and the sting of it is sin, which he leads us into. See 1 Cor. xv. 56; 1 John iii. 8. What we need is deliverance from sin; the only difference between us and the widow is that she realised her need, while as a general thing we do not. See Rev. iii. 17.

The poor widow obtained her request even from the judge who "feared not God, neither regarded man" (Luke xviii. 2), because she would not give him any rest until he granted it. He finally said, "Because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming."

"And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." The Greek word rendered "though" in the above, is the regular word for "and," which is given in the Revised Version. The whole sentence is, "And He is long-suffering over them." Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon renders

the same expression, "long-suffering towards." Wycliffe rendered "patience," instead of "long-suffering," the meaning of course being the same.

We may therefore read the passage thus: "And shall not God avenge [give satisfaction to] His own elect, that cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering [or patient] toward them?" Now we see the contrast clearly brought out between the Lord, "the righteous judge," and the unrighteous judge. The latter forced the poor people to "bear long" with him; taxed their patience to the utmost. But with the righteous Judge, it is different; it is He that is long-suffering and patient. Whereas the unjust judge did not wish to do justice, and forced the people to wait long upon him, God is most intensely anxious to confer benefits, and is begging us to come to Him and be saved, but yet is extremely patient with our unwillingness. Here is the sharp contrast: The unjust judge did finally, much against his will, give the poor widow satisfaction, because her need made her importunate; how much more, then, we may expect God to give satisfaction to those who cry to Him, since He has long been imploring them to come to Him for deliverance, and has been patiently waiting upon them.

But what about their crying day and night unto Him? Does that mean that He will keep them waiting a long time? Will He hold them off as long as possible? By no means. "I tell you that He will avenge them *speedily*." When will He avenge them, or give them satisfaction *speedily*?—When they are so in earnest that they will cry day and night for deliverance. When we ask God once or twice for deliverance from sin, but have so little burden for it that we may forget it for days, or even weeks, there is no real sense of need, and consequently no real desire for help, nor willingness to receive it. But when our whole being cries out for the righteousness of God, just as every fibre of a starving man's body cries out for food, then the promise is, He will give speedy deliverance. What a blessed comfort is given us in the parable of the unjust judge.

Have we sins that have long beset us, with which we have kept up an intermittent struggle, sometimes in dead earnest, and sometimes willingly overcome, yet all the time feeling guilty and ashamed? Let us fully realise that those sins will shut us out of heaven, so that we shall cry out "Who will deliver me from this body of

death?" and be so much in earnest that we must have that deliverance above all things else, and the promise is that it will *speedily* come.

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

SUBMISSION.

BE still, my soul, be still!
It is His holy will;
Bow to His rod!
He, He alone is God.

He dwells in dazzling light;
He rules by sovereign right;
Heed His behest;
His will is ever best.

Thou canst not sound the deep,
Which His design doth keep;
A vast profound
Thy knowledge cannot bound.

Enough for thee to know
The way which thou must go
This one short day;
The future, why survey?

To-morrow with its cares,
The burdens that it bears,
Leave with thy God;
Nor fear the uplifted rod.

As He thy cup shall fill
With seeming good, or ill,
Reach forth thy hand,
And drink at His command.

'Tis sweet to quaff the joy:
And what doth most annoy,
Will lighter grow,
If to thy God thou go.

—N. Y. Observer.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

THE history of nations is the strongest evidence of the verity of God's word. Those who have regarded with indifference the word of God, bear the signature of the earthliness of all their acquirements and pursuits. Equity, truth, order, purity, peace, follow in the track of all who practise the teachings of Christ as contained in the Old and New Testaments. The real doers of the word of God are described as those who draw out their souls to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul. God speaks in His word, and let every one listen to His voice. He who has educated himself in such a way that he gives credence to the sophistry of Satan, and who thinks it is a mark of high intelligence to boast of his scepticism and infidelity, needs to become a fool in the eyes of the worldly wise, in order that he may have the true wisdom that cometh down from the Source of all wisdom. To argue with persons who are established in infidel principles, is of no avail; for as fast as

you overthrow one point, Satan suggests to them another criticism.

The time is not far distant when there will be no one to lift up his head and voice in pride, saying, I am an infidel. How is it that men make this boast, and walk in false paths? Life and death are set before them. If men do not continually seek for higher good, if they do not appropriate the precious promises, warnings, and reproofs in the word of God, they will not be refined and ennobled. The bewitching power of Satan will take control of the mind, and they will use the God-given faculties to serve the natural evil desires of the mind. If men do not grow in grace, they will grow in worldliness and sin. Every evil inclination gratified, every action of the person, leaves its impress upon the soul, and is revealed in the character. The conversation we have by the fireside, the books we read, the business we transact, are all agents in forming our characters, and day by day decide our eternal destiny.

Every one who neglects to read and search the Scriptures is in danger; for he loses the hidden treasures of truth. To take up fictitious stories, the fruits of somebody's imagination, is to lay the mind open to the bewitching power of Satan; and this kind of reading creates an unnatural appetite for fictitious stories, from which no moral strength is derived. Fictitious stories leave the mind and heart as destitute of the grace of God as were the hills of Gilboa of dew and rain. Let every one who claims to be a child of God, burn the magical books. If the mind is filled with that which is like to chaff, only chaff will come forth from the mind.

Books from the pens of infidels should have no place in the libraries of those who would serve God. They will make better kindling material for your stove, than food for the mind. Infidel books have been a cause of ruin to many souls. Men have studied these books of Satan's inspiration, and they have become confused in regard to what is truth. Satan stands at the side of him who opens an infidel book, and he will educate the mind that peruses such literature, and so bewitch the soul that it will be almost impossible to break the infatuation.

Let no believer flatter himself that his mountain standeth sure, and that he will never be moved away from his position of faith. No confidence can be placed in human nature, when the soul is separated from God. On every side avenues open naturally from the safe path, and the wary as well as the unsuspecting are in positive danger, unless they do as did Daniel, make the Lord their strength. The intellect is composed of that upon which it feeds. I would speak to the young men who suppose themselves to be free men, because they are cherishing infidel

principles. You are not free. You are bound with bands like steel, and the only one who can free you, is the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus has purchased you from the slavery of sin and death, in order that He may make you sons of God. But you must cooperate with God in the work of your salvation, else Christ will have died for you in vain.

Satan imparts to those who serve under his banner his own attributes, and causes men to lose control over themselves, so that he may lead them to do the very things they have despised. They will be led to talk loftily, and make a boast of things over which they should be ashamed. Those who are thus led into the delusion of Satan, do not know that they are in bondage. The bands have been broken that bind them to that which is good and pure and holy, and they leave their allegiance to God, and become apostates. They are led of passion and blind self-will, and they permit self-will to gain ascendancy over reason and principle. Yet these are the men who call themselves free; but how deluded they are! They imagine that they have a very high standard; but oh, how shamefully low it is! They say, we want our own ways, not Thy ways, O God. They do not realise the truth that Jesus uttered, "Without Me ye can do nothing" to reach a high standard. I ask you, young men, Will you keep back from God that which is His own? Will you rob God, and misuse His time, misapply His talents, and refuse to give Him the service He requires from each one of you? Will you lay yourselves, the purchased possession of Christ, upon the shrine of the world? Jesus, who has bought you with an infinite price, asks you to give Him your heart. Will you give it to Him? He asks your time, your money, your body, your soul. He has bought all there is of you; you are His purchased possession. Oh, do not yield yourselves to the service of Satan, to become a slave to the powers of darkness, and do the bidding of the prince of evil.

MRS. E. G. WHITE.

THE DIVINE GUIDANCE.

My hearers, if the Lord's business is made your principal business, I assure you that you will constantly have Divine guidance in your Christian life. It may be direct or indirect; it may be sensible or insensible; but you will have it. Christ does not call us to be His servants, and then utterly neglect to give us any orders as to our work. Ah, the trouble is that we have not looked to Him for our directions! Like wayward children we have chosen to work by our own plans, instead of asking Him to shew us His plans. Let us resolve to take the position of sons, who are also servants. Many gentleman Christians are there in the

church, and too few servant Christians. We make a polite call on God in the morning, and leave our card in the shape of a few set phrases of worship and adoration, glad when the formality is over, that we may hasten about our business; but we do not stop to take our orders from Him, asking, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Let us be ashamed that this has been so true in our case. Let us be able to say, morning by morning, "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God." A serving attitude is the best prayer for the Spirit guidance. If only with bended knees and folded hands we pray, "Lead me, O God," we shall not lack the desired guidance.—*Rev. A. J. Gordon, D.D.*

THE PRICELESS WOMAN.

THE description of "the virtuous woman," in Proverbs xxxi. 10-31, is in the original Hebrew, an alphabetical acrostic, that is, the first verse begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and so on, in regular order through the twenty-two verses.

The following article is an attempt to exhibit in English this alphabetical order, as nearly as this can be done in view of the fact that the Hebrew and the English alphabets differ in nature, order and number.

The fact that the Holy Spirit has given us this beautiful description of woman in such an attractive form, will impress it upon the hearts and memories of all.

THE ACROSTIC.

(A Paraphrase.)

- A virtuous woman who can find? for her price is above rubies.
 B lithely doth the heart of her husband trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.
 C ontinually she will do him good and not evil all the days of his life.
 D iligently she seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.
 E ver like the merchants' ships is she—she bringeth her food from afar.
 F or she riseth also while it is yet light and giveth meat to her household, and a portion unto her maidens.
 G round she considereth and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
 H er loins with strength she girdeth, and strengtheneth her arms.
 I nspecting her merchandise, she perceiveth that it is good, her candle goeth not out by night.
 J oyfully she layeth her hand to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.
 K indly she stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth out her hands to the needy.

L aughs she at the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed in scarlet.

M aking herself coverings of tapestry, her clothing is silk and purple.

N obly her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

O f fine linen she maketh robes and selleth them, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

P iety, strength, and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

Q uietly she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

R egulates she the ways of her household, and she eateth not the bread of idleness.

S tanding up, her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

T ruly, many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

U ntrustworthy is favour, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised.

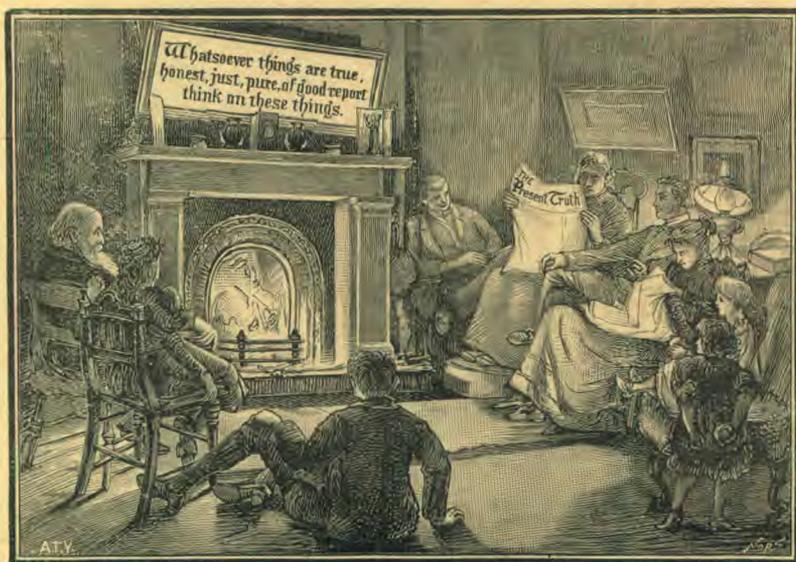
W illingly give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.—*Rev. A. J. Reynolds.*

RIGHT AND WRONG GIVING.

THE matter of making gifts to others, like many other things that are right in principle, is capable of being perverted. Giving is a grace (2 Cor. viii. 7), and not something to minister to the pleasure of self. All right giving has in it the element of self-sacrifice. And this grace, like all other graces, should be exercised according to the instructions of God's word.

In that word we read, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble;" and "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord" (Ps. xli. 1; Prov. xix. 17); but "he that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want." Prov. xxii. 16. The difference between these two is that one is prompted by the Spirit of God, and the other is prompted by self.

But when the Spirit of God directs our giving there comes also this question, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" Ps. cxvi. 12. And by searching further we find that God has answered the question: "My son, give Me thine heart." Prov. xxiii. 26. This means to give yourself to Him (see 2 Cor. viii. 5); and this is all that you have to give. It is a gift that you can make every day. Giving, when practised as a grace, is not regulated by the time of the year, but by the needs and opportunities before you. Give God your heart, and take from Him the cup of salvation. Ps. cxvi. 13.



THE HOME.

THE CORAL GROVE.

DEEP in the wave is a coral grove,
Where the purple mullet and gold-fish rove,
Where the sea-flower spreads its leaves of blue,
That never are wet with the falling dew,
But in bright and changeful beauty shine
Far down in the green and glassy brine.

The floor is of sand, like the mountain's drift,
And the pearl-shells spangle the flinty snow;
From coral rocks the sea-plants lift
Their boughs where the tides and billows flow;
The water is calm and still below,
For the winds and waves are absent there,
And the sands are bright as the stars that glow
In the motionless fields of upper air.

There with its waving blade of green,
The sea-flag streams through the silent water,
And the crimson leaf of the dulse is seen
To blush like a banner bathed in slaughter.
There with a light and easy motion,
The fan-coral sweeps through the clear deep sea;
And the yellow and scarlet tufts of ocean
Are bending, like corn on the upland lea;

And life in rare and beautiful forms
Is sporting amid those bowers of stone,
And is safe, when the wrathful spirit of storms
Has made the top of the wave his own.
And when the ship from his fury flies,
Where the myriad voices of ocean roar,
When the wind-god frowns in the murky skies,
And demons are waiting the wreck on the shore—
Then, far below in the peaceful sea,
The purple mullet and gold-fish rove,
There the waters murmur tranquilly
Through the bending twigs of the coral grove.
—Percival.

CORAL.

CORAL—daughter of the sea—was once supposed to be a plant growing at the bottom of the ocean; but science, which has already taught us about the strange existence of sponges, says coral is another zoophyte, or animal-plant, growing in the deep water of several seas—the Mediterranean chiefly; also in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, along the coasts of Africa, etc. Coral grows in little stiff bushes at the bottom of these seas, at a depth varying from three hundred to six hundred feet from the surface; a large coral-bush sometimes being from twelve to sixteen inches high. But when I talk about "coral-bushes," we must not forget the "animal-plants," or think these

wonderful sea ones grow as the laurels and roses do in our gardens. No: they are living creatures, as really alive as the sea-anemones, which you will not forget on the rocks at the sea, and how you probably brought them home, and made miniature aquariums to keep them in. Sea-anemones are zoophytes, and so are the coral insects, gifted with those curious feelers, or "tentacles," which you must have seen in the sea-anemones, on a larger scale. All over the coral-bushes, along every spray, are rows of these feelers to be seen; for these bushes are dotted over with innumerable tiny holes, forming caves for the tiny creature to whom the feelers belong. I told you sponge, as we see and use it, was the skeleton of the living sponge; and coral, as it is seen in beads and other ornaments, is the skeleton of the coral animal. The beautiful hard substance out of which they are made was covered, under the sea, by a soft, fleshy overcoat; and in this overcoat were the cells and the polyps to be seen. The coral was to their community something like what our bones are to us,—as the fleshy outside grew, the bony inside grew too; and when branches of coral were either broken away on purpose, or carried off by storms, the delicate coral polyps died; and their overcoat wore away, and left the beautiful red skeletons; just as our flesh wears away when we die, and leaves only the frame-work of bones behind.

The "coral-fishery," as it is called, is a very important trade to the poor people who live near the seas where it is found. They get at it both by diving and dredging, and in many other ways. The fishermen who go out after the coral make a dredge of two cross pieces of wood, with netting attached to it, which they let down over the coral bushes. A diver goes down after the dredge, and forces it into the holes and crannies of the rocks till plenty of coral is broken off and caught in the

net, when the spoil is dragged up. For ten or twelve years the coral-ground will be left in peace, for it grows but slowly, and needs that time to attain any size. . . . Almost all the groups of islands in the Indian Ocean are the work of coral insects.—*Histories and Marvels in Common Life.*

A TALK ABOUT WET THINGS.

"WHERE do you suppose they came from?" asked the children as they sat, squeezing the little soft masses of sponge, and watching them swell out again.

"They do not grow on bushes, in the earth, nor even in swamps," said mamma; "for they come from the bottom of the warm sea. All the lifetime of the sponge is spent under the waters, and not till they are taken from their native spots and have the living part pressed out of them are they ever dried, or of any use to man.

"Suppose we visit them in their homes, and travel among their thickly settled villages; but to do so we shall have to forego our breathing for a while, and swim with the fishes under the waves. Down into the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea or of the Gulf of Mexico we might explore among all the curious finny creatures, with scales of silver, gold, or of darker hues, till we reach the ragged rocks or the large cast-off shells lying along the bottom. Plants of green and red stretch their leathery forms on either hand, and there are great coral branches to be seen, in pink or white.

"Like them, the sponges do not swim about, but tightly cling to some rock or bit of shell, and spend their days without a thought of what is beyond this depth of salt water. Their shapes are as different, too, as those of the coral, for some are branched like odd trees, and others are round and thick; some are as fine and silky as velvet, while many are coarse and brown. But if the skeleton, the frame which supports the body, is so soft and light, shall we find flesh in the living animal?

"No, it is nothing heavier than slime resting through and upon all this network of fine fibres, yet putting out arms smaller than a hair by which it pumps the water through these little holes, to feed upon, to breathe and to grow by. Ben should come in just now and give us another line from the 'Ancient Mariner:'

"Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink."

"But the sponge does not mind the salt as we would, for it gets its food and drink and breath from what would choke us. With its food, too, come swimming along larger creatures of more solid form, that would gladly feed upon the sponge—that is, upon its jelly-like body; but this velvety frame-work is by no means a tender morsel, and there are little barbs or

points of flint which it can use to guard itself from those animals which would devour it. They are so small that we would need a microscope to see them, when they would be found as wonderful and various in shape as the crystals of snow viewed in the same way. Sandy particles make some large sponges gritty; but the closely woven ones, like plush, are free from such things; the fine network protects it from the animals that would do it harm.

"Little new sponges are born from eggs; and, like the other members of the slime family, a particle cut from the main body will float away and live by itself, fasten to some hard substance, and build up a frame, so that in three or four years it will be worth the attention of the sponge-diver who captures it. But the diver puts an end to all of this quiet life under the water, for he plunges from his boat to grasp from their fastenings these curious forms which were once supposed to be plants. Very little life they have, yet all the more wonderful in its curious workings; but only the dry bones, you may say, are served to us when we buy sponges.

"And now," said mamma, in conclusion, "I have not told you half about this strange family and its habits; but my part is done for the present, and it is now time for yours. Use the clean slates in telling me what you have learned, which will be much better than trying to write poetry."

The two sorrowful ones were very interested ones just now, and there were commenced two compositions which quite occupied the remainder of the wet afternoon.

It took some time and secrecy, with many erasings and corrections before their efforts were at an end; but at last Marion laid aside her slate with a most satisfied manner and upon it were written these words:—

"Sponges grow in the sea; they are not made in the drug stores where we can buy them. Once I saw a little yellow sponge like a cup; and once, at the sea-shore, I found a little one on the beach after a storm; but it was brown and long, with three or four branches, and the big end was fastened to a broken shell. They are not plants, but they are the strangest things I ever heard of in all my life. If I were an animal, as they are, and lived under the water, I would rather be a gold fish and swim round, instead of bobbing back and forth when the water moved, way down at the bottom of it; only I might not like the sharks and whales.

"But sponges are useful, and pretty, too, and they last a great deal longer than gold-fish do.

"If any little animal bites them they cannot bite back to frighten it away, but there are little stony points in some of them, of different shapes, so that they will not get eaten up.

"I am glad that I know more about them now, and shall think about it very often when I wash my slate."

"O Mabel! let us copy them on nice paper and show them to papa," said Marion.

"Just the thing!" replied Mabel. "Here is what I have written:—

"My sponge has travelled a great deal farther than I have, for it came from some warmer country, and from under the water. I shall not let it get all black and dried up small any more, but shall keep it fresh and puffy, as it used to be when it was alive. There are holes all through it and this is the way it was fed: it pumped the water through these holes, and then took up its food from it and grew larger and larger just as a baby does on milk. I would like to see one alive; but they must be as slippery as a jelly-fish, for that is just about the kind of body they must have. It seems too bad that they do not have eyes to see all those strange things where they live; but if they did, perhaps they would be afraid."—*Philip Henry Dodge.*

THOU ART, O GOD.

Thou art, O God, the life and light
Of all this wondrous world we see;
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
Are but reflections caught from Thee.
Where'er we turn, Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine!

When day, with farewell beam, delays
Among the op'ning clouds of even,
And we can almost think we gaze
Through golden vistas into Heaven,—
Those hues that make the sun's decline
So soft, so radiant, Lord! are Thine.

When night, with wings of starry gloom,
O'ershadows all the earth and skies,
Like some dark, beauteous bird, whose plume,
Is sparkling with unnumber'd eyes,—
That sacred gloom, those fires divine,
So grand, so countless, Lord! are Thine.

When youthful Spring around us breathes
Thy Spirit warms her fragrant sigh;
And every flower the Summer wreathes
Is born beneath that kindling eye,
Where'er we turn, Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine!

—*Moore.*

LIFE IN THE OCEAN WAVE.

THE abundance of animal life in the ocean greatly exceeds that on land. The sea affords a home for the largest of known animals as well as for the most minute, and life teems everywhere. In reflecting on the grand works of nature, one is often surprised to find that they are not only silently and invisibly performed, but by agents which at first sight seem strangely out of proportion to the greatness of their tasks. At the bottom of the animal kingdom, both on sea and land there are multitudes of minute workmen busily engaged in carrying out the designs of God. . . . This new world which the microscope has brought within our reach is peopled with living atoms, so vast in number, so strange in form, that the accounts of naturalists sound stranger than the wildest fairy-tales we ever read. The ani-

malculæ—little inhabitants of the microscopic world, known too as infusoria—inhabit both sea and fresh water; they are found in polar ice, in the most elevated regions of the atmosphere, in the depths of the ocean; and everywhere their vast multitude is as great a marvel to us as the infinite variety of their form.

The ocean produces these animalculæ in almost every part. Each bed of it, says Humboldt, is peopled with them at depths which exceed the heights of the greatest mountain chains; and under the influence of certain meteorological changes we see them rise to the surface, where they form great shining furrows in the wake of the ships. Every one who has sailed at night upon the sea, or passed along its shores, has seen that phenomenon of phosphorescence, which for so long puzzled the learned. For years it was attributed to different causes; now it is known to depend upon the presence of a whole multitude of animals. Sometimes, when of small extent, it is caused by fish traversing the waves like a flaming arrow; at other times it is owing to Medusæ, which are seen calm and motionless in the depths of the water; or to the Physophora, trailing behind them glittering tresses. A phosphorescent sea is, however, generally one in movement; and the tiny sparkling particles are animalculæ of extreme minuteness. Seen through a powerful microscope, one of these brilliant atoms called the Miliary Noctiluca, looks like a tiny sphere of jelly covered with shining points.

Notwithstanding the extreme minuteness of these creatures, some are sheltered beneath a calcareous cuirass; and in many this protection is indestructible, and of the nature of flint. One of these single creatures has, so to speak, no weight; it does not cause the slightest movement in the most sensitive balance. The whale, on the other hand, attains a length of one hundred feet, and a weight of two hundred tons—more than the weight of an army of three thousand men; and yet the atom possesses vital organs which far exceed those of the largest animals in profusion. There are some which have no less than from *fifteen to twenty stomachs*, some even more. In addition, there is in some infusoria a curious mechanism, by which one of the stomachs is furnished with teeth of extreme delicacy, which can be seen through the transparent body moving and crushing the food. Though their form is, as a rule, fixed, yet some of these creatures can change it at will. At one moment they are round or three-cornered, at another star-shaped; some shoot out feet like living roots, which they vary in a thousand ways, lengthening them strangely, or making them altogether disappear. These strange creatures have received the name of Protei.

When the severity of the climate

kills the hardiest members of the vegetable world, where a few scattered animals pick up a precarious subsistence, the delicate organism of the infusoria suffers no injury from the most terrible cold. More than fifty species of animalcules with flinty carapaces were discovered by Sir James Ross on the rounded masses of ice which float in the Polar Seas. In these desolate regions the depths of ocean offer to the view even more life than its surface. Many species of infusoria have been brought up from a depth of more than twelve thousand feet, where they had to support a pressure capable of bursting a cannon, but which the gelatinous body of a microscopic infusorium resists in some marvellous way. The coral polyp is an example of one of those creatures, whose numbers baffle conception, and whose history is full of wonder and interest for us.—*Chapters on Every-Day Things.*

SEA SHELLS.

WHAT do you think that you could see
Down in the waters blue?
Why, scores of pretty little shells
Of many a shape and hue.

Each shell's a fish's house, and when
He wants to make a call,
He takes his tiny house along,
And don't leave home at all.

God cares for all these little fish,
To shelter and to feed;
We'll trust Him too for home, and food,
And everything we need.

J. E. O.

Every zone of sea depth has its appropriate Molluscs; on sandy flats we find the Cockle flourishing; on muddy shores the Mussel; between low and high water marks the Periwinkle, which loves to be left dry twice a day; the Top shells among the sea-weed at low tide; in water four or five fathoms deep, the Oyster; in deeper water the Scallop; in deepest of all, the Lamp shells; in the open sea, far from sight of land, the Sea Snails, and thousands of other Molluscs floating on the surface of the waters.

Their food has something to do with the colouring of their shells; the degree of heat they enjoy also influences it, and still more does the amount of light which reaches them. The more light they have, the brighter their colours.

If they live in rough, stormy seas, the shells become rough and thick; when they live in still waters, the shells are thin and smooth.

The Chitons have a beautifully white, or rose, or green-lined shell made of eight small pieces, which overlap one another, and are united by a tough ligament. The animals are thus enabled to roll themselves and their shells up into a ball when they wish.

English Snails dislike cold weather very much, and therefore fortify themselves against it by closing the mouths of their shells with a sort of door, sometimes even two or three doors, which can be thrown open when spring comes.

Snails not only can mend their shells when they get broken, but they can mend their bodies also. If their head, for instance, is cut off, they will grow a new one! It takes some months, it is true, to grow a new head, and they have to remain indoors during the process, but they can do it.

Some shells are no larger than a grain of sand or a pin's head, and yet they are inhabited by a wonderful living creature that can retire into its house and close the door behind it.

The Scallops are great travellers, and when they get deserted by the tide they take a series of leaps till they get back to the sea. They can go about half a foot at a leap. Besides this, they can lie at anchor in a storm. They spin a thread, and by it moor themselves to a rock or boulder, and there they lie safely till the storm is over, otherwise they might be dashed against the rocks by the force of the waves and their shells broken.

In Sweden the Periwinkle is used as a weather-glass by the peasants, who say that whenever a storm is near, the Periwinkles ascend the rocks, to avoid the dashing of the waves, but in calm weather they descend to the sand.

In Italy and Sicily the *Pinna* is sought as an article of food, and also for the sake of its long, silky, shining byssus, from which a soft warm species of cloth is made, but which, strange to say, will not take any dye. In the Natural History Museum is a pair of gloves spun from this byssus, and Pope Benedict XV. once had a pair of stockings made from it.

The architecture of those beautiful homes of the mollusca, their pearly walls, their spires and turrets, their suites of apartments, their brilliant decorations, their exquisite forms, their spiral staircases, their rainbow-tinted surfaces, their curious doors; and last, but not least, the wonderful and often beautiful architects themselves, were, like all other creatures on earth and in the sea, made for the glory of God.

"One name above all glorious names
With its ten thousand tongues,
The everlasting sea proclaims
Echoing angelic songs"

Yes! they were made for the glory of God, and therefore they may not be despised; they too, even the humblest of them, have their purpose, they were made for Himself; on this account, if on no other, we must admire and value them, and never forget that He has set His own mark of approval on them, for "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good."

And as a final lesson, let us remember in what exquisite colours, what pure, luminous tints He has seen fit to decorate these shells which were created by Him and for Him; and consider if He requires such perfection of beauty in these tabernacles of some of the lowest of His creatures, what will He not look for in the souls of those who are

to dwell with Him for ever? Surely their souls must be radiant with hope, and joy, and love; pure with the purity of the saints, luminous with the Light of the Spirit.—*Condensed from The Glory of the Sea.*

You will be wise to think of these things sometimes, and not to take everything you meet without question. There are few diseases more hopeless and hurtful than that one which shuts up people's eyes from the wonderful things they could see in the world every day, and shuts up their ears from the wonderful things they could hear. All God's voiceless creatures join in the hymn of praise whose sound goes out into all lands; for all His works praise Him, only we are so often too stupid to listen. Do not let us be either deaf or blind; so when you jump into your bath to-morrow morning, think how your sponge was made for you, far under the waves; how it was dived for and brought up from among the rocks of the warm zones of the sea, to how many people it has been a means of livelihood, to how many more of great comfort; and then remember Who ordered it all, and determine to be neither stupid nor ungrateful.—*Sel.*

BEING surrounded in our daily walks by all the ten thousand forms of living existence, we naturally fail to notice more than the higher and more striking forms of organisation. The air we breathe is filled with millions of living creatures, adapted for their own particular sphere, and at their expense we live. We behold the fishes swimming about in their native element, and we say the water swarms with life. But what we can see with the unassisted eye is but a small fraction of the life therein. A single crystal drop is a world within itself. Examine it with a powerful microscope, and a vast creation of animated life appears to view. From the larger animalcules we behold the thousands of sportive creatures, smaller and smaller, until they recede before the powers of human vision. Ehrenberg tells us that five hundred millions of these living creatures can exist in a single drop of water. And each one of these living monads is endowed with appropriate organs for life and motion, and enjoys all the attributes of a separate and independent existence.—*Sel.*

"BUT ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." Job xii. 1-7.

IN THE OCEAN.

THE ocean teems with wondrous life
With creatures great and small;
Far more than you could ever count,
And yet God knows them all;
He made them by His mighty power,
And feeds and cares for them each hour.

To some He gave an armour fair
Of pretty shining scales;
To some a little house of pearl,
As shelter from the gales;
What love and wisdom we behold
In His creations manifold!

To each He gave the tools it needs
To seek its daily food;
He teaches each to use them, too,
Is not our Father good?
In all His works below, above,
We learn His wisdom and His love.

J. E. O.

WATER ANIMALS.

"Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God." Job xxxvii. 14.

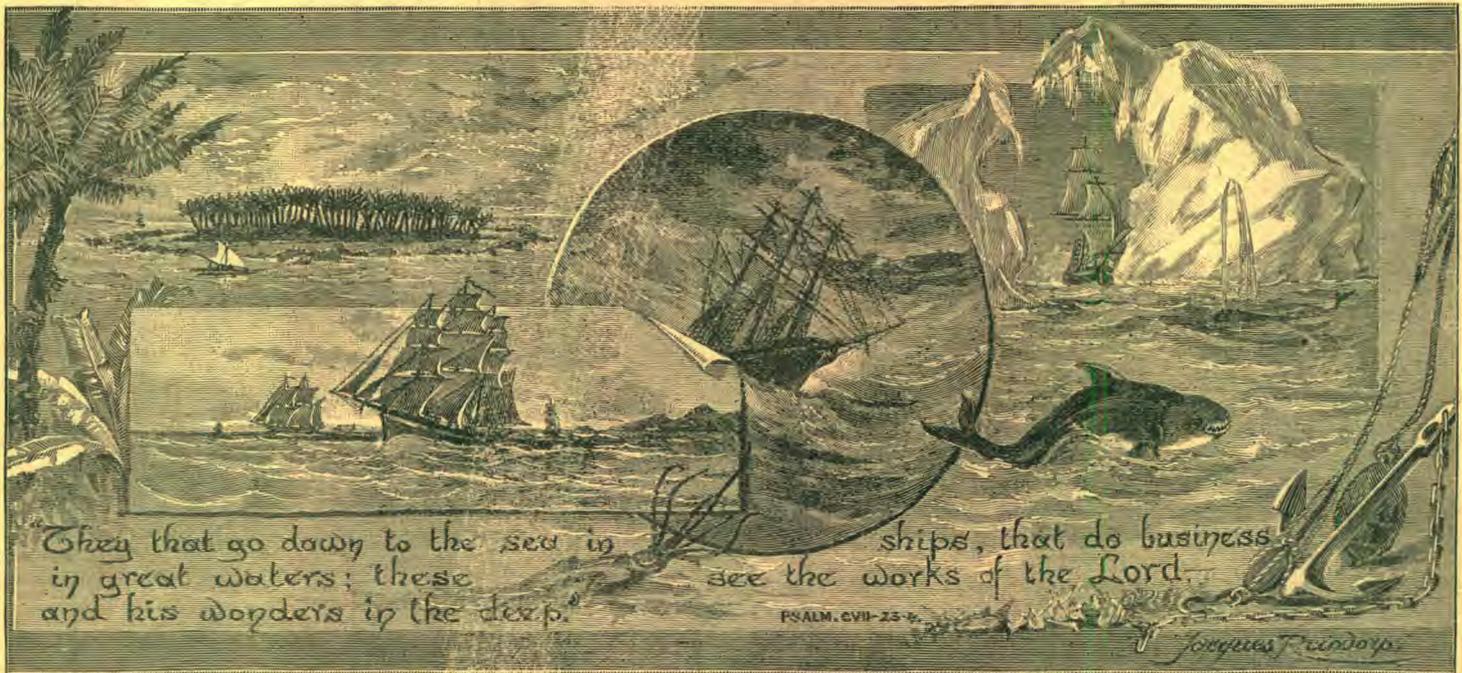
LAST week we learned about the sun, and the moon, and the stars that

until it looks like a five-legged stool. If one of its points, or rays, is bitten off, another grows in its place, and if the fish is torn entirely in two and thrown back into the water, the two parts will get new rays and grow into two perfect star-fish.

But this fish is but one of the many strange things that live in the water. The ocean is just swarming with living creatures. Some of them are very large and many are too small to be seen; yet they are all wonderful. Most of the animals that live in the water have a broad tail and fins with which to swim, "but some crawl, as the crab, some float about, like the jelly-fish, and some lie still, like the oyster."

Each animal has just such covering or clothing as it needs. The whale,

is called the Sea Mouse, because it has such a hairy coat. It is small, and lives under stones and shells, at the muddy bottom of the sea; but it is exceedingly beautiful. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet flash from every hair in its little coat, and make it seem like a tiny "breathing rainbow." The fish are dressed in smooth, hard, different-coloured scales, so lapped one upon the other that they keep out all the water and yet allow the fish to bend in any direction. The scales are kept oiled in order that the fish may glide swiftly through the water. Some animals are covered with sharp, needle-like spines, and others, like the turtle, with thick, bony armour, and still others which lead quiet lives, in houses of the most beautifully-tinted and pearly-lined shell.



we see in the heavens above us. This week we shall learn about the "stars of the sea," and about the many other curious and wonderful things that are found in the oceans, lakes, and rivers.

If you were to visit the sea-shore, and go down among the great rocks, and lift up the long sea-weeds that hang from their sides, you would find stars clinging tightly to the rocks;—not shining stars like the ones in heaven, to be sure, but little, five-pointed, living stars. These star-fish, as they are called, are of different colours, but generally reddish or yellowish. The upper part is hard and rough, while the under side is soft and contains the mouth, and an eye is said to be at the end of each of its five rays. This odd little creature sometimes presses the points of its rays upon the sand, and raises itself in the middle

the largest water animal, is so heavy, and goes to such great depths in the water that it needs a very strong covering to protect it from the pressure of the water and the force of the waves. We therefore find it covered with a thick "blanket," as it is called. Its skin is so made that it can hold a great mass of oily matter, which, it is said, is never less than several inches in thickness, in many places nearly two feet deep, and as elastic or springy as India-rubber. The outside of the skin has no hair, but looks like velvet because of the oil that oozes from it. This causes the great animal to move easily through the water. We find the seals and some other animals dressed in soft, warm fur. One kind, called the Crested Seal, has even a little hood which it can fill with air to protect its head and nose. One animal

Each animal has just such tools as it can use. The whale carries in its mouth a strainer made of fringed whalebone with which to strain the water out of its food. The Sword-fish has a sword, the Saw-fish a saw, and the Cuttle-fish and Squids carry pen and ink. The pen looks like an isinglass quill pen, and lies along the body just under the back. The black ink is carried in a little sac, and when the animal is in danger of being caught, it fills the water with ink. Then it cannot be seen and quickly darts away. The Angler-fish has fishing-rod, and line and bait, and can fish with them as deftly as any fisherman you ever saw. A small round fish called the Beaked Chætodon, has a little gun, or bow, and can shoot as straight as you can. The gun is on the end of its nose, and the bullet or arrow is nothing but a

drop of water. If it sees a fly or other insect, hanging on the grass over the water, the fish comes up quietly and points its little gun towards the victim. Suddenly it shoots a drop of water at the fly, knocking it off its perch and into the water, where it is quickly snapped up by the cunning hunter.

But the creatures that live in the water are more than interesting; they are useful. Sometimes one hundred barrels of oil are obtained from one whale, besides the whalebone that is taken from its mouth, and the glue that is made from its tail. Food, oil, leather, fur, ivory, isinglass, trumpets, costly pearls, ornaments, and many other things are obtained from the creatures in the sea. Many of the windows and lanterns in China are made of the clear Chinese Window Shells; and your sponges are but the skeletons of animals that live in the bottom of the ocean. But what seem to be the most wonderful of all are the little coral insects, many scarcely larger than the head of a pin. And yet we find places in the bottom of the ocean that look like beautiful flower gardens, vegetable gardens, and large forests; and more wonderful still, we find great islands miles and miles in length, which were made by these tiny builders of the sea.

Oh, where did they come from, all these wonderful, beautiful, and useful creatures? Who fitted each one with just the clothing that it needs, and gave it just the tools that it can use? Who taught them all to use their tools? Who painted the lovely shells and caused each hair of the Sea Mouse to reflect a rainbow? Surely it could have been no other than the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The Bible says that on the fifth day He said, Let these things be; and they were. How wise, and how good! He has strewn "beautiful things even on the bottom of the ocean for us." Shall we not love Him with our whole hearts, and praise Him continually?

1. Have you been trying to be a light-bearer for Jesus this week? How?

2. On the fourth day, what light-bearers did He place in the sky?

3. Where else may we find stars? Describe them.

4. Are these the only living things that live in the oceans, and lakes, and rivers?

5. Name a few others.

6. What kind of clothing does each animal have?

7. How is the great whale covered?

8. How are the seals dressed?

9. What kind of coat has the little Sea Mouse? The fish? The turtle?

10. In what kinds of houses do some of the quiet animals live?

11. What kinds of tools do the animals all have?

12. Name a few of the strange tools that are used by some of them.

13. Of what use is the whale? The seal? The Pearl Oyster?

14. Can you name any fish that are used for food?

15. Where did your sponge come from?

16. Did you ever see a piece of coral?

17. What wonderful things are done by the coral insects?

18. Were these marvellous creatures always in the waters of the seas and rivers?

19. Who placed them there? When? How? Gen. i. 20-23.

20. Who alone could give them just the clothes they need, and the tools that they can use?

21. What must they have to keep them alive?

22. Who gives it to them? Ps. civ. 24-28.

23. Then could they live without God?

24. What must we have to keep us alive?

25. Who gives it to us?

26. Then could we live without God any longer than they?

27. What does the Bible say we should do when we see these wonderful things that He has made? Job. xxxvii. 14.

28. Why? They will teach us to know God, and to love Him better.

Interesting Items.

—The Baptist denomination has now throughout the world 44,502 churches and 30,548 ministers.

—Mr. John P. Hopkins, a Democrat, has been elected Mayor of Chicago, in place of the late Mr. Harrison.

—Wages in Germany, in the iron, steel, and metal industries are very low, ranging from 11s. 6d. to 19s. per week.

—Manchester is now constituted a harbour and port under the Manchester Ship Canal Act of 1885. Both this port and Southampton are now said to be nearer to New York by ship than Liverpool.

—A Vienna telegram gives details of a colonising experiment to be tried in British East Africa by a number of colonists of all nationalities, including Englishmen and Americans, at a place some 100 miles south of Mount Kenia.

—As a result of the Anarchist outrage in Paris, every person entering or leaving France will be closely scrutinised by police, who are provided with descriptions of a number of well-known anarchists and revolutionists.

—A terrific bombardment of Rio is reported to have taken place at Rio de Janeiro, by which many persons were killed. It is also stated that Admiral de Mello is preparing to engage the new Government vessels *America* and *Nichteroy*.

—Severe weather continues to prevail on the Atlantic. The Allan line steamer *Corean*, from Glasgow, recently arrived at St. John's, Newfoundland, completely covered with ice. On one day of her voyage she made but fifty-six miles.

—It is reported that two hundred foreign Anarchists and Socialists are about to be expelled from France. This raises the question, Where will they go? They are considered more likely to come to England than to any other European country.

—Temperance women of Norway asked the public authorities a short time ago to make it unlawful for women or girls to serve in publichouses. The request has been granted, and at present an alehouse keeper cannot employ any other woman than his own wife.

—A freight train on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway recently fell down an embankment 135ft. high. Three persons were killed, and four others have received such injuries that it is not likely they will recover. Four hundred pigs and one hundred head of cattle were crushed to death.

In President Cleveland's Message to Congress dealing with Hawaiian affairs, it is stated that the American Minister has been directed to aid in the restoration of the Queen, provided an amnesty is granted to those who took part in the recent revolt. This the ex-queen is unwilling to grant.

—The new Italian ministry propose to tread closely in the path of national economy. Signor Crispi will propose the retrenchment of 6,000,000 lire in the military and 4,000,000 in the Naval budget. In the other State departments, savings to the amount of about 10,000,000 lire will be announced.

—Virginia raises 5,000,000 bushels of peanuts and \$4,000,000 worth of fruits and vegetables. The iron product is 200,000 tons, and over \$2,900,000 of gold has been sent to the United States Mint. This State has the largest lead mines in the South, and the greatest maganese mines in the world.

—It is announced that Signor Crispi will shortly pay a visit to Sicily to examine into the causes of the popular dissatisfaction there. From Palermo it is announced that further serious rioting has taken place at Monreale, where the rioters attacked the Customs House officers. The military had to intervene, and some of the combatants were wounded.

—Philanthropists in Maine have been fruitlessly endeavouring to induce unemployed factory girls in some of the Massachusetts mill centres to go out to domestic service. Most of these young women appear willing to undergo almost any hardship rather than accept employment in honourable work that offers them better remuneration and less hours than they can find in almost any other industry.

—Mr. F. Wheelock, an engineer at St. Paul, Minnesota, has just completed a model of a new electric fire engine. It does away with the use of coal, and can be put in action with one horse and one man less than the engines now in use. The engine weighs but 4,500 pounds, and is of 70 horse-power. This makes the machine weigh 9,000 to 10,000 pounds less than the apparatus now in use, while its efficiency is claimed to be much greater.

—In response to the alarming talk of several prominent ex-officials relative to the condition of the British navy, M. Clémenceau has started a similar campaign against the defective condition of the French Navy. He gives a deplorable account of the defence of the coasts, owing to the bad state of the torpedo service and the insufficiency of the fortresses, his object being to stimulate the French Government to keep pace with England in naval expenditure. Thus the process of adding to the military strain goes on.

—Statistics of the 1891 census dealing with the occupations of the people show that in England and Wales there are 24,232 clergymen of the Established Church, 2,511 Roman Catholic priests, and 10,057 ministers of other religious bodies. As compared with 1881, the priests and ministers in these classes have increased respectively by 2,569, 422, and 323. In the ministry of the Established Church there are seventy-three foreigners of European birth, in the Roman Catholic priesthood 365, in the ministry of other bodies 149, and amongst missionaries, etc., 121.

—According to authoritative information received at Vienna, the relations between the Vatican and Russia are not at present marked by the same cordiality as was the case some time ago. It is understood that in an autograph letter recently addressed to the Czar, Leo XIII. complained of several acts on the part of the Russian Government contrary to the liberty of the Catholics in Russian Poland. It is added that, in the event of the Pope's demands on behalf of the Polish Catholics not being well received at St. Petersburg, it will not be a matter of surprise if the supreme Pontiff makes the matter the subject of a public pronouncement.

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LONDON, DECEMBER 28, 1893.

FOR TERMS, SEE FIRST PAGE.

THE publishers of PRESENT TRUTH send out no copies of the paper, unless they have been ordered. If any persons, therefore, receive papers that they have not ordered, they may know that they are sent by friends, and not by the publishers, and that consequently they will not be expected to pay for the same.

THREE new tracts have just been issued by the International Tract Society, which should have a wide circulation. "What to Do with Doubt" (1d.) is a timely tract, not only for the professed doubter, but for the professed believer as well; for scepticism, the sin of all ages, is specially characteristic of this age. "The Sinner's Need of Christ," and "Consecration," half-penny tracts, are full of gospel truth, simply and powerfully stated.

NEARLY half of the wealthy people of Germany are Jews. Pastor Theodor Jellinghaus gives as the principal reason for this, the fact that in Germany it is not considered gentlemanly to be engaged in trade, and that the sons of wealthy Germans seek positions in the army, which is the sure road to admittance to "good society." Of course their wealth decreases, passing into the hands of the Jews, who care more for wealth than for artificial respectability.

A LETTER from a friend in Basel, a few weeks ago, told of the zeal of the authorities of that city to enforce the Sunday law. All in the establishment with which he is connected observe the Sabbath day according to the commandment, and having rested on the seventh day by the command of the Lord, they do not feel free to dishonour Him by resting on the first day by the command of man. They had been warned by the officials, and were consequently expecting trouble the next Sunday; but a more recent letter says:—

The authorities have not as yet made us any trouble, and we hardly expect any this month, as the Sunday law is laid on the table for the last three Sundays of this month, on account of the extra amount of work.

Nothing could more clearly expose the shallowness, to say nothing of the wickedness, of all Sunday legislation. It is claimed that Sunday is a Divine institution, yet the city authorities grant indulgence to work on it when

it suits their convenience. Who cannot see that the enforcement of Sunday laws is an act of the most arbitrary tyranny? It is all summed up in this: Certain ones say, in effect, "I do not want to work to-day, and so you shall not," and then they get the government to enforce their decision. Even if Sunday were the Sabbath, such a proceeding would be a denial of the very foundation principles of Christianity.

True Worship of God.—"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." John iv. 23, 24. Mark, that spiritual worship is not a privilege merely, but a necessity. Jesus did not say that they that worship God *may* worship Him in Spirit, but that they *must* do so. There is no worship of God but spiritual worship. All professed worship of God, that is not in spirit, is but idolatry, and the taking of His name in vain. How can we worship Him in spirit?—By taking His Spirit, which He freely gives to all. Men cannot give it to us, they cannot compel us to have it; but God gives it as freely as the air, and we may have it as abundantly.

CELEBRATING CHRIST'S BIRTH.

MANY people think that it is almost infidelity, or even sacrilege, not to celebrate the birthday of Christ, even though no man has the slightest knowledge of the day or the month when it occurred. They would ask, "Shall we not devote at least one day in the year to thinking of the miraculous birth of the Saviour?" We would reply, not one day only, but every day. Let us see how this may be.

The birth of Jesus was by the Holy Spirit. The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35.

By that same Spirit's power Christ dwells in the hearts of all who believe. The Apostle Paul prayed to God for us, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Eph. iii. 16, 17. That is the only way

that we can have real life, for Christ is our life. Col. iii. 4. Christ in us is the hope of glory. Col. i. 27.

Now the birth of Christ is nothing to anyone in whom His birth is not repeated. Indeed, he in whom Christ's life has not sprung up, does not know of a certainty that He ever was born, and that He was crucified and raised. These things are known only by faith, and faith brings the life of Christ into our mortal bodies. No one can certainly know anything about Christ's birth, if he does not know Christ Himself; and we know Him only by His life. See John xvii. 3; 1 John i. 1-3; v. 20. The birth of Christ, therefore, can be known and celebrated only through the new birth.

But this is not accomplished once for all. That is to say, the new birth is not an event of one hour or one day, to be ever after looked back upon and celebrated. "Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." 1 John v. 1. Note that he *is born* while he *is believing*. The new birth is complete only as it is continually progressing.

To this end are the words of the Apostle Paul, in 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11, 16: "Always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that *the life* also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Here we have Christ formed within, the real life of the Christian. Now read, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet *the inward man is renewed day by day.*"

He in whose heart Christ's life is not daily renewed, cannot celebrate His birth, because he knows nothing about it. The birth of Christ is not a thing of memory, but of present experience. We commemorate it not by observing days, but by putting on the new man "which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

RELIGIOUS MEETINGS.

THE Seventh-day Adventists of North London meet in Duncombe Hall, Duncombe Road, Hornsey Rise, every Sabbath at 11 A.M. This service is preceded by Sabbath-school.

Services are also held on Sundays at the same place, as follows: Bible study at 3 P.M., and preaching at 7 P.M. Hymn books and Bibles are provided for visitors, and all are welcome.