

# 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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WHEN the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the temple, and told him that his wife Elizabeth should have a son, who should be great in the sight of the Lord, being filled with the Holy Ghost, and who should turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, Zacharias said: "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years." Luke i. 11-18. For this question he was made dumb, and was unable to speak until after the birth of the son.

SIX months later the same angel came to Mary, in Nazareth, and told her that she should bring forth a son, who should be named Jesus, who should be great, and should be called the Son of the Highest, and that He should reign for ever over a kingdom that should have no end. Immediately Mary asked, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" No reproof was given for this question, but it was answered at once.

WHY were these two questions so differently received? Evidently because they were prompted by entirely different motives. This plainly appears when we closely consider them. Zacharias said, "Whereby shall I know this?" showing that he doubted the message. He wanted proof of the

words of the angel of the Lord. He was punished for unbelief. Mary's question, on the other hand, showed that she fully believed the message, but that she wanted further information. She said, "How shall this be?" She believed, but wanted to know what part, if any, she had to act in the matter, and her desire for more light was granted.

IN these two cases we have illustrated two classes of questions that are asked. There are many questions that show unbelief as fully as could be done by any positive statement. Such questions are wicked and ought never to be asked, as God does not answer them. There are other questions that show the desire of a believing soul to receive more light and knowledge. Such questions always receive an answer from the Lord. The promise is that if any lack wisdom, and ask for it *in faith*, it shall be given them. James i. 5, 6.

### CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

THE apostle Peter testified of Christ, that "He went about doing good." Acts x. 38. No man ever led a busier life than did our Saviour. The narrative of His ministry on earth contains no record of weeks or months passed in seclusion or inactivity. It is a narrative of continual travel and labour among the inhabitants of the cities and towns of Palestine,—the fields that were white for the heavenly harvest. It is a narrative of constant work for the physical and mental uplifting of those around Him. He healed the sick, He raised the dead, He cleansed the lepers, restored the crippled, gave sight to the blind, cast out devils, fed the multitudes, and to all He preached the Gospel. He was found amidst the throng and press of the multitude, out in the common daily walks of life, ministering and bringing relief wherever there was suffering and need.

This is the example that is set before the Christian, the follower of Christ. This is to be the basis of his Christian experience. His life must be a life of work, and such work as centres not upon himself, but upon his fellows. Here is one contrast between heathen religions and the religion of Christ. The former make self the object of all religious activity and devotion, while in the latter the object is not self, but our fellow-men. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Phil. ii. 4. Christ left His seat upon the throne of His glory, to come to this dark world where He would have neither wealth nor position, and He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others. This was the mind of Christ, and this is to be the mind of His followers. Phil. ii. 5-8.

But there are very many whose religious experience bears a resemblance to that of the heathen devotee. Their Christian life is lacking in real work done for the uplifting of others. They may be very devout, be seldom absent from religious service, pray long and earnestly, and read and meditate much upon religious themes; but all this does not make a true Christian life. They themselves realise, perhaps, in their inmost souls, that there is a lack somewhere,—some essential feature of Christian living that their lives do not show, yet they cannot see why all this should not make them good Christians. Ah, it cannot be said of them that they go about doing good. Their experience rests upon no solid foundation. They do not do as did the Saviour.

Christ prayed much, but His time was not all spent in prayer. Nor was it all passed in religious reading and meditation, nor in other acts of public or private devotion. His life was spent in contact with others, in ministering to their needs, relieving their distress, and pointing them to the way of life. And this example is to be

copied by His followers. Christian labour is essential to Christian life. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray with devotion; and he who does nothing but read the Scriptures will soon cease to read them with interest, or to get from them their precious lessons of truth. He who merely goes through the forms of Christian service must soon cease to feel the sacred impressions of Christian worship, or to see beyond the mere round of formalities which he observes. The Master does not reveal Himself to the idlers in His vineyard, but to the workers. His lessons of truth become vital principles in the soul only by coming in contact with the spirit of earnest labour for His sake.

The great commission from Christ's lips says, "Go!" "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;" and His promise is, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Mark xvi. 16, 17. But He left no promise to the lookers on. True Christian experience must have a basis of earnest Christian labour. The successful aspirant for a heavenly crown will be the one who has unselfishly laboured to relieve the wants and uplift the souls of his fellows; for to him will be spoken the words, in the day of his Lord's appearing, "Come, ye blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. xxv. 34.

#### AN UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT.

THE *Anti-Infidel* publishes the following little story, which ought to be read and remembered by all who profess to be Christians:—

In one of the towns in Massachusetts, there was a man who took in an infidel paper, and set himself up as an avowed infidel. He argued with, and, as he thought, refuted all the Christians in the place. But there was one old professor in the village who would not debate with him. He spoke of the unspeakable love of Christ; of the preciousness of a good hope; of the comfort it afforded him. His conduct worried his sceptical neighbour. For all the rest he cared not a whit; but that old man—he thought about him most of the time—somehow harrowed up his mind so that he could not rest. And so great was the trouble this old man caused him that it led him to reflect, repent, and believe on Christ. When he came into Conference to relate his experience, anterior to uniting with the church, he pointed to the hoary-headed member, and exclaimed, "the life of that man slew me."

No infidel was ever converted by arguing. Though you answer the objections of a sceptic a thousand times, he will be ready with them the thousand and first time as fresh as ever. But the argument which will have

effect, and which is the only one for the Christian to use, is the manifestation of the life of Christ. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. v. 16. Then when they are attracted by the life, so that they wish to learn instead of to fight, you can "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." 1 Peter iii. 15.

#### AUTHORITY FOR THE SABBATH.

WE are in receipt of a letter which says: "So long as a seventh day of rest is observed, it matters not a bit which of the seven days it is; but it is wise to conform to general custom, for the sake of convenience and order; every day is a seventh day." This statement of the case is worthy of consideration, for it presents a very common idea of the Sabbath question. The only thing that should concern us is to know the exact truth, and not to mistake conjecture for positive evidence.

We are told that "a seventh day of rest" ought to be observed, but that it makes no difference what day it is. Query: How does anybody know that a regular rest day ought to be observed? The idea is quite prevalent among certain nations, but what gave rise to it? Let us see if we can find out.

Someone will say that reason teaches it. But no one has exceeded the ancient Greeks and Romans in acuteness of intellect or power of reasoning, yet they never had the idea of a weekly rest day. They had innumerable holidays,—festival days,—when those who were able to do so gave themselves up to amusement and revelry, but there was no thought of cessation of labour. Those who went to the greatest length in the observance of the holidays, were the ones who did little or no work, while for the labouring class there was no respite.

It is a fact such a thing as a Sabbath day is not and never has been known among what are termed heathen nations. This disposes also of the supposition that physical reasons are sufficient to account for the weekly rest day. The Chinese are diligent toilers, yet they have never learned the necessity of a weekly rest day. It is the same with other heathen peoples. So then it is a fact that by far the greater number of people on earth not only do not observe a weekly rest day, but do not

recognise the existence of such a thing.

Whence, then, comes the idea of the necessity for a weekly rest day? The only answer that can be given is that it comes from the Bible. Where the Bible has no place, the weekly rest day is unknown. The fourth commandment enjoins it, and gives its origin as well. Here it is:—

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Ex. xx. 8-11.

Here is the original authority for the observance of a rest day. Whatever ideas men may have about such a day, the idea that there should be a weekly rest-day at all, sprang from this source, and from this alone. Now the question must arise, Since it is to the Bible that we owe our knowledge of the fact that a weekly rest day ought to be observed, why should we not also depend solely on the Bible for our knowledge of all the particulars concerning it? Why should men learn from the Bible that a rest day ought to be observed, and then consult custom, or their own taste or convenience, as to how and when it shall be observed? Such a course is manifestly inconsistent in the highest degree.

#### THE DEFINITE SABBATH DAY.

NOTE well that in the commandment there is nothing said about "a seventh day of rest." The language is very definite. "The seventh day is the Sabbath." "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." The idea of an indefinite Sabbath, regulated by custom, is utterly foreign to the Scriptures.

Just before the commandments were proclaimed from Sinai, the children of Israel were given manna for their food. See Exodus xvi. Six days in the week it fell, but on the Sabbath none was to be found. On each of the first five days only enough for the day's supply was to be gathered, and if more was gathered, and it was kept till the next day, "it bred worms and stank"; but on the sixth day twice the usual amount was to be gathered, and a supply laid

up for the Sabbath day, in which case it did not spoil, but kept sweet. By this series of miracles, which was kept up for forty years, the Lord showed His regard for the Sabbath day; and at the same time He effectually guarded against the idea that the day of the Sabbath is to be settled by the caprice or custom of men.

The reader can see at a glance how impossible it was for any of the Israelites to get the idea that the Sabbath is an indefinite day. They might rebel against it, and disregard it, but they knew very well that the Sabbath was fixed by the Lord Himself, and not left to man; custom has nothing to do with it.

After the Babylonian captivity the Jews became very strict in the outward observance of the Sabbath, even going far beyond the commandment. They often presumed to rebuke Jesus for what they termed His violation of the day. On one occasion he healed a man on the Sabbath day, and the Jews murmured. That day was the seventh day of the week. If the Sabbath is any day that men may choose, what an opportunity that was to enlighten the Jews. Did He tell them that it made no difference what day was observed, if only a seventh part of time were kept? Not at all. He simply said, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days" (Matt. xii. 12), thus recognising the definite Sabbath day, but showing that He had not violated it.

Christ was crucified on the day before the Sabbath; "that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." Luke xxiii. 54. "And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Verses 55, 56. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared." Luke xxiv. 1. This first day of the week was the day immediately following the Sabbath day, on which they rested "according to the commandment," for the record in Mark says that "when the Sabbath was past, . . . very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre (Mark xvi. 1, 2); and the record by Matthew is still more definite, saying that it was "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week." Matt. xxviii. 1.

What do we learn from these texts?

This: that the Sabbath day, "according to the commandment," is the day before "the first day of the week." The day before "the first day of the week" must be "the seventh day of the week," since there are but seven days in a week. Therefore we have the fact, stated by Inspiration, that the Sabbath day according to the commandment "is the seventh day of the week." Moreover, to make the matter more sure, we are told that even "very early in the morning the first day of the week" the Sabbath is already "past." No matter how early one rises in the morning the first day of the week, he will be too late to find the Sabbath day; it passes before the first day begins.

If one regards the Bible as of no authority, that is another matter. We have no commission to prove the truth of the Bible, for it is its own evidence; but to those who regard the Bible as the word of God, the evidence above given, although brief, must be conclusive. The Spirit of God expressly declares that the Sabbath "according to the commandment" is the day before the first day of the week, namely, the seventh day of the week; and the words of Christ are, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke xvi. 17.

#### CUSTOM.

THE Bible declares that "the customs of the people are vain." Jer. x. 3. The command is, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." Ex. xxiii. 2. Again we read: "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies; because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men." Hosea x. 13.

The correctness of a course is not determined by the number who follow it. In the days of Noah the multitude were opposed to the truth. Noah was in what would be termed "a hopeless minority"; and if the truth of his preaching could have been settled by a popular vote, the flood would never have come. Nevertheless it did come, because the word of the Lord had said so.

When Christ was on earth, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." John i. 11. He was rejected by the church. The question was, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" John vii. 48. They had not, with the exception of one or two who believed secretly, and the fact that they had not was considered sufficient evidence that

He was an imposter; yet He was the Son of God, although "despised and rejected of men."

There is custom, however, that we are permitted to follow, and that is the custom of Christ; for "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John ii. 6. He left us an example, that we should follow in His steps. 1 Peter ii. 21. Of Him we read that after His baptism and temptation, "being full of the Holy Ghost," "He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." Luke iv. 16. Said He, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John xv. 10. Reader, whose custom will you follow? the vain custom of the world? or the righteous custom of the Lord Jesus Christ?

#### GOD'S NEARNESS TO MAN.

THE Apostle Paul affirms that God is "not far from every one of us." Acts xvii. 27. He is not so far away that He may not be found by any one who will earnestly seek Him. The apostle says that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him." He represents them as groping about in obscurity, with but a ray or two of light to guide them in the search; and yet, even under these circumstances they are able to find God, because He is not far away from every one of us. He guides our steps to Him in the darkness and in the light.

But God does not will that men should live in darkness concerning Him. He would have them live in the light, where they can behold His divine presence, and rejoice in a clear view of His attributes of mercy and love. He ordained it so in the beginning, but men turned away from Him, because they "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Rom. i. 21, 28. They "have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. vii. 29) and their inventions have turned their minds away from the things of God, and shut out His glory from their view.

And nowhere has human invention

done more to darken the spiritual eyesight than in the very means which men employ to-day for the worship and service of God. Through the creeds and dogmas, the forms and ceremonies, the orders and offices which pertain to present modes of divine worship, men see God but dimly, if indeed they are able to see Him at all. There is interposed before them an opaque theological body, by which the pure light of heaven is constantly kept in eclipse. The true character of God, and the nature of the plan which He has devised for man's salvation, have been lost to view, and all sorts of vague and erroneous ideas have sprung up, to waste and pervert the spiritual energies.

To interpose something between man and God, between the worshipper and the divine Object of his worship, has been the constant aim of Satan in his opposition to the plan of salvation. He wants men to look to some earthly object instead of to Christ their Redeemer, or to look at Him through some medium of human invention, which will darken and distort their view. He is pleased to have men believe that they cannot come to Christ directly, but must approach Him through some means devised by the Church. He does not care particularly what object it is that is brought between man and God, whether a priest, or a bishop, or a pope, or the Virgin Mary, or the "saints," or anything that is less than God, for all these serve his purpose of causing man to lose sight of the Being whom alone he professes to worship. And when men have lost sight of God and of His character, Satan's aim is to insert himself into the place of God, and present his own character and requirements in the place of God's, so that in thinking to worship and serve God men will in reality be worshipping and serving him. This is what will inevitably result when men allow their sight to be turned away from God and fixed upon something else.

The Christian world needs to learn to-day that God is not a great way off from man, shut out by a great church with its forms and ceremonies, and a long array of "saints" and bishops and ecclesiastical paraphernalia, but that He is near to His creatures, even within the sound of the voice and the sight of the eye. All that is necessary to bring Him in view is simple faith, not the faith of some great divine or some ecclesiastical body, but that of the individual. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that

He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. xi. 6. These are the conditions of seeking and finding God. They are such as any individual who wills to can readily perform.

Christ is the true Shepherd. He speaks to His sheep, and they hear and know His voice. John x. 4, 5. We are to look to Christ, and from Him receive our light. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. iv. 6. "Let us," says Paul, "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Nature and revelation alike point us to God direct. God's word is a revelation of Himself, in which, by the eye of faith, we may behold His goodness and His majesty. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." John vi. 63. Christ is the Head and the Bishop of His church. "For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." 1 Pet. ii. 25. He is the Bishop to whom all must look who would find the way of salvation.

#### "TAKING UP THE SWORD FOR GOD."

DURING the last few months these words have sounded and resounded through the north of Ireland. They have come from platform and pulpit, church and chapel; from clergy and laymen, ministers and people, in fact have been generally used and advocated by all sorts and conditions of men, but especially by professed Christians. At a special meeting of the Belfast Y. M. C. A., at which I was present, the Secretary and others vehemently exhorted the members that as Christians it was their individual duty to stand ready to "take up the sword and fight for God and country." This was the one idea of the meeting, and there was not a dissenting voice among the speakers, though some were of the Society of Friends. In view of all this it is important to enquire what the Author of Christianity Himself had to say on the subject.

In the New Testament we have an example of a man who essayed to take up the sword for God. His name was Peter. And surely if any one ever had a just cause, Peter had it. If any one ever stood up for the right, to defend the innocent and oppressed, he

did. His meek and lowly Master was about to be set upon by a mob of low ruffians armed with swords and sticks. So bold Peter stepped forward to defend his Master with the sword, for had he not just declared his willingness to lay down his life for His sake? Now he will prove it, and to show that he meant business he smote a man and cut off his ear. But hear the stern command of Jesus,—the Lord of Life,—the Prince of Peace. "Put up thy sword." And why? Mark well the reason: "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matt. xxvi. 51.

These are dreadful words full of terrible meaning, and they come down to us with the same power as when spoken. If ever there was a time when they needed to be pondered over, it is now. The war spirit is rampant, not only in the world but in the professed church of God, which is not only urging men to take up this forbidden sword, but training them to use it by "armies" "boy-brigades" and what-not. But there stand the awful words: "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The sword will certainly perish, for the time is coming when there will be no more death; it will be devoured when the earth shall melt, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Just so surely will those who cleave to it be burned up too. Again we read: "He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." In that great day they will be "slain with the sword of Him that sits upon the horse." Rev. xix. 11-21. Compare also Gen. ix. 6 with Ps. cxlix. 5-9. May God help us, dear reader, to grasp these plain words in spite of the teaching of men.

To take up the sword *for God* is impossible. How can a follower of Jesus have anything to do with it? It is an instrument made for the sole purpose of destroying life. But Jesus said, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke ix. 56. He said, "The thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life." John x. 10. And again: "My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight." John xviii. 3. It is only worldliness, then, that fights. Surely those who advocate the sword, like James and John, know not what manner of spirit they are of. Luke ix. 51-56.

FRANCIS HOPE.

## HOW TO HAVE FAITH.

"AND there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock 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, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Luke ii. 8-12.

Now note what the shepherds said and did: "And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." Verse 15.

Most people would say, "Come, let us go and see if this thing is so," but it was not so with the shepherds. They simply wanted to see the great thing, which they knew was true, because the Lord had made it known to them.

That was simple faith, and it is all there is to faith. Faith is the simplest and most natural thing in the world.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. x. 17. There can be no faith where there is no word of God; but where there is the word of God, all one has to do is to believe it, not hesitatingly, not questioningly, but with the positiveness of actual knowledge.

Who would think of trying to teach a little child how to believe its parents? Surely it is important that the child should believe its parents, is it not? Certainly; but there is no necessity for teaching, for the child believes without being taught. It is the most natural thing in the world to do. Now all there is to having faith is to believe just as a little child does.

It does not require an effort to have faith. On the contrary an effort is required not to have faith. For he who does not have faith necessarily believes that which is not true; and it stands to reason that it is much easier to believe truth than to believe falsehood. God's word is truth, and it is the foundation of faith. Therefore faith gives the only true wisdom, since nothing is wisdom except the knowledge of truth.

## SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

SPIRITUAL blindness, like physical blindness, is a sad misfortune. Indeed, it is much the greater calamity of the two, being almost as difficult to remove, and much more disastrous in its ultimate effects. And it is no less real because of its insidious nature, which prevents its victim from recognising its presence; it is only rendered thereby the more dangerous. To persuade an individual to submit to treatment for an affliction which he does not believe to be upon him, is a very difficult task. Just this difficulty must be met in trying to cure the one who is spiritually blind. He neither understands his need, nor finds the necessary remedy agreeable to his natural taste.

The word of God has much to say of this prevailing spiritual affliction. It speaks of those who have eyes, and see not, and ears, yet hear not, and hearts, but do not understand. Such were those to whom the prophet Isaiah was sent (Isa. vi. 10), and such were very many of those who listened to the words of Christ during His ministry upon the earth. Nor was it alone the scribes and Pharisees, or those accounted to have been the greatest sinners, who gave proof of their spiritual blindness. In all ages of the world this affliction has been exceedingly common, and some of the best men as well as the worst have been conspicuous as its victims. Our own age is no exception to others in this respect, nor are we ourselves beyond the reach of this dangerous evil. Indeed it is only by the grace of God received into the heart that any can escape this condition, for men are not born naturally into a state of spiritual enlightenment. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." I Cor. ii. 14.

There is something in the heart of the natural man which, whenever he is called upon to see spiritual things, entirely obstructs his view, so that he cannot discern anything; and no matter how plainly a thing may stand revealed before him, he cannot see it. No matter how hard he tries to see it, he will not be able to do so. It is a simple impossibility. And this something in the natural heart is very liable to exist where its presence is least suspected, or to creep back into the heart after it has once been driven out. It is this something which makes the heart, as the prophet Jeremiah says,

"deceitful above all things" (Jer. xii. 9), more deceitful even than Satan himself. "Keep the heart with all diligence," is the wise man's admonition, "for out of it are the issues of life." Only by the greatest diligence can it be kept in a state which will leave the spiritual vision clear and unperverted.

Even the disciples of Christ, those who stood nearest to Him and were most constantly with Him, often signally failed to discern the spiritual truths which He spake. Often they were as much in the dark as to the meaning of His parables as were the Pharisees themselves. And there is one instance of their failure in this respect which makes one of the strangest and most striking narratives to be found in the Bible. The account is very instructive, both in regard to the effect of spiritual blindness, and the cause which produces it. We will notice briefly that furnished by Mark, beginning with verse 31, of the eighth chapter:—

"And He began to teach them [the disciples] that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spake that saying openly. And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him." "And when He had called the people unto Him, with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Although Jesus spake this saying openly, the disciples understood it no more than though it had been uttered in an unknown tongue. What was the reason of their failure to comprehend language so plain and simple? Did God, by some miracle, withhold it from them? Not at all. God does not withhold from anyone knowledge that would be for his good. Verse 34 reveals the cause. "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." It was SELF. Self was in the hearts of the disciples, and robbed the words of Christ of all their meaning.

"And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and He would not that any man should know it. For He taught His disciples and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him." Chap. ix. 30-32.

Here Jesus made a second attempt to prepare His disciples for the momentous scenes that were to attend His betrayal and crucifixion, then so near at hand; but again they failed to understand what He said. The succeeding verses give the reason: "And He came to Capernaum; and being in the house He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace; for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest." Verses 33, 34. Here was self again, seeking for exaltation, and the result was that the simplest and plainest statements were turned into a mystery. Self threw the whole field of spiritual vision into total eclipse. The plainest objects before them, so near that they were standing within their very shadows, were by self made wholly invisible.

Yet again Jesus sought to tell His disciples of the events connected with the solemn tragedy so soon to be enacted at Jerusalem. A third time He endeavoured to prepare them for the approaching scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, using even more explicit language than on the two occasions preceding. "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid. And He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto Him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him unto the Gentiles; and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again." Chap. x. 32-34.

But His words were as much of a mystery to them as ever. Three times within the space of a few days, the Saviour had told them, in the plainest possible language, what was about to befall Him; and yet they understood nothing about it, and when the events that He had told them of took place, they were taken wholly by surprise. What can account for such blindness? Again the record tells us.

"And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto Him, saying, Master, we would that Thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And He said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we

may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left in Thy glory." "And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John." These two disciples were scheming to get the chief places in the kingdom of heaven, and the remaining ten were angry with them because they had gotten their plea in first! This was what occupied their minds while the Saviour was trying to tell them of the great events that should mark the conclusion of His earthly ministry. Self was there, and filled the whole horizon of the future, so that nothing else was visible to their sight.

What a loss the disciples sustained on account of their blindness! The privilege of watching with their Lord in Gethsemane, of strengthening Him by their sympathy through the dark hours of His agony, of being actors for God in the world's greatest tragedy,—what, to the Christian, would not this be worth! But they missed it all, and acted the part of sleeping sentinels and deserters. It was not necessary that it should have been so. It was not some inscrutable act of Providence that kept back the disciples from comprehending the plain statements of their Master. It was self. Seeking for their own exaltation and filled with their own desires, they lost the rich blessings which God desired to bestow upon them.

And this is what always comes from the presence of self. It works just the same to-day that it did in the days of the apostles. It will keep us from getting what is for our good just as surely as it did them. It will make us just as blind as it did them. It will prevent us from comprehending the plainest statements of God's word, or of knowing what He speaks to us by the agency of His Spirit. Self perverts the judgment of the most powerful intellect, and turns the spiritual light of the mind into darkness. Self must be purged from the heart, or the individual will walk in spiritual darkness, and know not whither he goeth.

#### WALKING IN THE DARK.

WE do not blame straws for being straws, although we make use of them to show which way the wind blows. Even so in quoting the following conversation, we make no criticism on Dr. Lyman Abbott, but simply use him to call attention to the peculiar "wind of doctrine" that seems to be blowing pretty strongly now. Dr. Abbott is

pastor of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., and editor of the *Outlook*, formerly the *Christian Union*. He is a very pronounced evolutionist, and recently gave a lecture to the intent that evolution is God's only method of operation. After the lecture the following conversation occurred:—

"Dr. Abbott, do you think that Jesus was miraculously conceived?"

"I am not certain about it, but I think that He was."

"If He was, what becomes of evolution, regarded as an exhaustive explanation of God's method?"

"I have not considered this point seriously, and I do not think that the miraculous conception of Jesus is a vital question."

An English clergyman just returned from America, says that Dr. Abbott "is systematising and consolidating in American theology much that Beecher alone made possible." But when such theology becomes general, where will the Gospel be? When, in their zeal for "scientific theology," men deny the very heart and life of the Gospel, what error is there into which they may not run? The miraculous life of Christ is the only light of the world; if that is rejected, it is inevitable that men must be deceived by the ruler of the darkness of this world.

#### TRUSTING, NOT TEMPTING.

THERE is much that passes for trust in God, that is nothing else but tempting God. Christ endured a great temptation on this point, in order that we might know how to distinguish between trusting God and tempting Him. In the account of Christ's temptation in the wilderness, we read:—

"Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto Him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Matt. iv. 5-7.

There is such a thing as changing the truth of God into a lie, and that is always done when the devil quotes Scripture. The words which the devil quoted from the ninety-first psalm are addressed to those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High, abiding under the shadow of the Almighty, taking His truth for their shield and buckler, and not to any who should presumptuously disregard God's word, and do what He has not commanded. Christ was kept

because He trusted in the Father; but there can be no trust where there is no commandment and no promise. As there was no commandment for Christ to throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and no necessity for it, He could not have claimed any promise if He had done so.

The Lord tells us that where sin abounds grace does much more abound; and then the question arises, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Rom. vi. 1. In other words, "Shall we do evil, that good may come?" Not by any means. The grace abounds only in order that we may be saved from the sin in which we find ourselves; to go on deliberately committing the sin after the grace of God has shown it to us, would be to tempt God, instead of to trust Him. It would be trying to get Him to deny Himself by giving His grace to condone sin, and to multiply it, instead of to pardon and cleanse from it.

We once knew of a mother who, in her mistaken idea of love for her boy, allowed him to have his own way in everything, never correcting him for any fault. The result was that as he grew older he manifested no regard for her or her wishes, but made himself intolerable, not only to strangers, but even to his own mother, who had fancied that she loved him. Too late she began to be interested in his salvation, and called in a minister to try to make up for her neglect; but as might be expected, the youth would not listen to a word of counsel or reproof. And then the mother with that spirit of weakness which many mistake for pious resignation, said, "Well, I can do nothing but trust in the promises of God."

But there was no promise in which she could trust. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," she had ignored. The only word that fitted the case, was one in which there was no comfort, namely, "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." So her supposed trust was nothing but presumption.

Many people to whom a plain duty is made known by the commandments of God refuse to obey, and yet they imagine that they are trusting the Lord, whereas they are only tempting Him. When they ask Him to protect and save them, while refusing to listen to His word, they are asking Him to break His word. But it is written,

"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

When people go to places where they ought not, merely to gratify morbid curiosity, and not to seek and save the lost, they are yielding to the temptation of Satan, which Christ resisted. When they are in the path of duty they may safely trust the Lord, no matter where they are, nor what the circumstances; but to go needlessly on the devil's ground is to tempt God, and to court destruction.

The story is told of William III., that in one of his battles he was in a very exposed position, and an officer who had brought a message to him, tarried with him after his business was done. The king told the officer that he was in danger, whereupon the man rejoined, "but Your Majesty is in danger also." "I am safe," replied the king, "because duty calls me here; duty does not demand your presence, and you are not safe." In a few moments the man was killed by a cannon ball, while the king was uninjured. Whether the story is true or not, it illustrates the fact that the only place of safety for any man is the place of duty. While he is in the way of duty, he may "trust and not be afraid."

It is often the case that supposed work for the Lord is done from other motives. Mosheim says, "What is man! The very best often serve God and themselves when they fancy they are serving God alone." Much that is supposed to be defence of the faith, is undertaken at the instigation of the enemy of truth, rather than at the command of the Lord. The professed followers of Christ often allow themselves to be drawn into discussions and contests by unchristian taunts. When professed Christians engage in controversy because they fear that some will accuse them of cowardice if they do not, they are not following the example of Christ. He would not do anything for the mere purpose of proving that He was the Son of God.

We hear much about the necessity of speaking for God, but very little about the importance of keeping silent for Him. Jesus often held His peace when the scribes and Pharisees tried to provoke Him to speak in order that they might catch up something from His mouth. So we may often show our trust in God, and our confidence in His truth, by keeping silent. Here is an example:—

"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle while

the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace even from good." Ps. xxxix, 1, 2.

There is such a thing as casting the pearls of truth before swine, which is forbidden. Who can know when to speak and when to keep silence? Who can know what is exactly the right thing to do on every occasion! Christ alone never made a mistake, and only those in whom He fully dwells can be kept from stumbling. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool;" but the Lord has promised that those who receive His words, and cling to them alone, shall "understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path." Prov. ii. 9. Then, "trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding."

#### THE APPOINTMENT-KEEPING CHRIST.

SOME time before His crucifixion Jesus arranged to meet His disciples after His resurrection at a place in Galilee. "But after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." After the resurrection "the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." It is evident from the narrative that some of the disciples did not expect to meet their Lord at the appointed place, but they went nevertheless, hoping to see their companions and talk over with them the stirring events of the past few weeks. But when they reached the "mountain," after their long and tiresome journey, behold, there was Jesus! He had gone "before" them. What a meeting that was! I see the stalwart frame of Peter trembling with joyful emotion as he falls down and clasps the pierced feet of his adorable Lord. I see John go close and lay his hand in the torn palm. They crowd around Him, touch Him, look into His face, and weep for joy.

Beloved, learn that *Jesus keeps His appointments*. Wherever He has promised to meet you there you will find him when *you* reach the place. He meets with His own when they assemble together in His name. "Where two or three of you gather in My name, there am I in the midst." How the cold, lifeless, and formal services in many churches would throb with quickened life did all believe this gracious truth! Even the smallest assemblies would then possess immeasurable interest and importance.

Jesus has appointed the closet also as a place where He will meet His own. There daily He goes "before" His disciples to meet and commune with them. But alas, how often He remains alone. How often the dis-

ciple comes hurriedly to the place of secret prayer, and with a mind pre-occupied utters a few soulless sentences and hastens away leaving Jesus standing there looking after the retreating form with a pained heart. He had come there bearing in His pierced hands rich gifts. He had come to pour the wealth of His great heart into the soul of the petitioner. He came to regird and reanoint His disciple for greater happiness and usefulness; but before He could do so the world-pressed petitioner is gone. Beloved, have you ever thus disappointed Jesus, and missed His blessing? If we could but realise that our blessed Lord goes before us and awaits our coming at the closet, do you think we would go with such reluctant steps as many of us do? Would we consider the moments spent there as wasted? Oh let us remember, the next time we go to our place of secret devotion, that our Saviour is there "before" us, watching and waiting our coming. Do not hurry away. If Jesus does not immediately reveal His presence to you, do not conclude that He is not there. "Wait on the Lord." Take time for your perturbed soul to grow quiet. Close your ears to the world's noise. "Shut thy door." Be assured that when your soul reaches the appointed place—condition—your eyes will behold Jesus. Satan will urge you to hurry away. He will try to cheat you out of a blessing. He will magnify the number and importance of the duties awaiting you outside. But turn from them and let one desire fill your soul: I "would see Jesus." Presently you will sense His nearness to you by a tender warmth arising in the heart, increasing as the moments go by till the soul is all aglow. And when you depart to take up the work of the day you will say, "Did not my heart burn within me while He talked with me by the way?"

Oh let us remember that He is an appointment-keeping Christ. The world's scorn, the rabbis' hatred, the cruel scourgings, the crucifixion, the sealed tomb, the Roman guards, nor even death itself could hinder Jesus from keeping the appointment in Galilee. Beloved, let us rejoice together that neither the world's hatred nor hell's malice can so securely nail Jesus to the cross that He will fail to meet us at the appointed place.—*Rev. J. H. Hollingsworth, in Christian Advocate.*

"SOMETIMES," says John Newton, "I compare the troubles we have to undergo in the course of a year to a great bundle of fagots, far too large for us to lift. But God does not require us to carry the whole at once. He mercifully unties the bundle and gives us first one stick which we are to carry to-day, and then another which we are to carry to-morrow, and so on. This we might easily manage

if we would only take the burden appointed for us each day; but we choose to increase our trouble by carrying yesterday's stick over again to-day, and adding to-morrow's burden to our load before we are required to bear it."

#### LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

How weary and how worthless this life at times appears!

What days of heavy musings, what hours of bitter tears!

How dark the storm clouds gather along the wintry skies!

How desolate and cheerless the path before us lies!

And yet these days of dreariness are sent us from above;

They do not come in anger, but in faithfulness and love;

They come to teach us lessons which bright ones could not yield,

And to leave us blest and thankful when their purpose is fulfilled.

They come to draw us nearer to our Father and our Lord,

More earnestly to seek His face, to listen to the Word,

And to feel, if now around us a desert land we see,

Without the star of promise, what would its darkness be!

They come to lay us lowly, and, humbled in the dust,

All self-deception swept away, all creature-hope and trust;

Our helplessness, our vileness, our guiltiness to own,

And flee for hope and refuge, to Christ, and Christ alone.

They come to break the fetters which here detain us fast,

And force our long reluctant hearts to rise to heaven at last,

And brighten every prospect of that eternal home, Where grief, and disappointment, and fear can never come.

Then turn not in despondence, poor weary heart, away,

But meekly journey onwards, through the dark and cloudy day;

Even now the bow of promise is above thee painted bright,

And soon a joyful morning shall dissipate the night.

Thy God hath not forgot thee, and, when He sees it best,

Will lead thee into sunshine, will give thee bowers of rest;

And all thy pain and sorrow, when the pilgrimage is o'er,

Shall end in heavenly blessedness, and joys for evermore!

—Spitta.

#### LIFT UP YOUR EYES.

Too many of us walk with eyes glued to the ground. We take narrow views of life and its mysteries, its mission and its manifold opportunities for enjoyment. "Like cures like" sometimes. At least a deep study of the blue dome above us is a good cure for the blues with which so many of us are afflicted. Piety never took out a patent or prescriptive right on facial length. The Gospel is full of good cheer, and there is no commandment given or implied which says: "Thou shalt not laugh." It is a libel on religion to so live as to give the impression that it is good only for old folks, sick folks, and dead folks. Religion is an internal bottle of sunshine. I have seen the roughest stones made to

look picturesque by the growth of flowers about them, and religion will beautify the most humdrum existence and the most monotonous life. I have heard that there are over two thousand tints of blue, and I know that these do not monopolise all the colours God has given us. He who flings abroad such beauty of colour, such wealth of aroma, such variation of form, such marvellous mingling of beauty over land and sea, never intended that religion should be as a pall to cover the beauty of His handiwork. Religion bids the weeping eyes look up and see the rainbow through their tears. He who, dismayed by foes, looks up to the hills, shall find the angels marshalled in force upon them for his help. He who looks up from the depths of the grave shall see the risen Lord, he who looks up shall behold the throne of eternal righteousness, the assurance that truth shall triumph, and every wrong be righted.

He who would know a broader life, a brighter life, a better life, must look up.

Lift up your eyes, so that earth's lights may lose their glamour, lost in the light of the unfading stars; lift up your eyes that earth's shades may no longer darken or dismay; lift up your eyes that you may see the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—*New York Observer.*

#### WONDERS OF MERCY.

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. v. 21.

The first wonder is, *that God should have enemies*—a God so great that He cannot be more exalted, and so good that He cannot possibly be better; and that He should have an enemy in man, to whom He is so kind and long-suffering. Men are enemies to His person, His rule, and His sway; so much so, that what Jesus said of the Jews is true of all,—"They hated Me without a cause." And what can be worse than an enemy?

The second wonder is, *that there should be mercy for such enemies*. Offend an earthly master, and ten to one if he does not cast you off at once and for ever, saying, If I want men to serve me, I can get hundreds to fill your place, who will do it better than ever you did. So might our Father in heaven say, "I did without you from eternity that is past, and I can do without you through eternity to come." But is it so? Nay! He delighteth in mercy; there is pardon with Him for many offences; it is His joy to forgive; it is a luxury to our Father in heaven to receive sinners—yea, the chief of sinners. "He hateth putting away."

The third wonder is, *that He should take the first step toward our reconciliation*. We hear much about our



duty to seek after God, but too little said about God's compassion in seeking after us. The Son of man came to seek as well as to save the lost. It was the shepherd that went after the lost sheep until he found it; it was the woman that sought the lost piece, lighted her candle, swept the house, and sought diligently until she found it. It is true, the prodigal son returned, but he was drawn back by the remembrance that he had still a father. Yea, his father looked for him before he thought of father or home; and it is not likely that he would have had the courage to go up to the house had not his father rushed to meet and embrace him, for he only thought of a servant's place. Peter once thought he made a great speech when he said, "Shall I forgive my brother till seven times?" "Yea," said Jesus, "till seventy times seven;" and added, "if he repent, forgive him." By His Word, His Spirit, His ambassadors, He has sought to save us. Yea, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing to us our trespasses."—*Words of Life.*

#### "TURNED TO THE LORD."

"I MUST forbid your being in this room," said a physician to an invalid friend of mine. "It is most unhealthy."

She looked at him with surprise. "But it is large and well-ventilated," she said. It was, in fact, one of the most spacious and lofty rooms in a handsome London house.

"That's not the question," he answered decisively; "it's a north room: I shouldn't care how small a room comparatively you lived in with another aspect. A room that never gets the sun can't possibly be healthy."

And we said, when the doctor was gone, that he had spoken a parable to us: that even so the healthfulness of our moral life depends upon our aspect with regard to Him who is the Sun of our souls, the all-healing Sun of Righteousness, and not upon our outward surroundings; we thought of our Saviour's words: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," but in his being "rich toward God." If the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ is shining in our hearts, "His love shed abroad therein by the Holy Ghost," it matters nothing by comparison that our earthly conditions are limited and lowly.

And even when clouds of earthly sorrow hang over us we shall be in brightness if the light of His countenance is lifted up upon us. So do I remember how, when crossing a wild country common, I saw, above a wooded hill before me, a sky of dark murky grey, but the trees stood out in dazzling reddish gold, and turning I saw the light shine on the wood from the sun

setting in glory behind me; and the lowering clouds could not shadow but rather brought into brighter relief their reflection of the sunlight.

In beautifully simple metaphor does God's Word describe a Christian heart as one "turned to the Lord:" not only in the first essential act of repentance and reconciliation, but continually turned towards Him as sunflower to sun; living "in the light of the Lord," looking to Him in ever-growing faith and hope and love.

And yet "We see but dimly through earth's mists and vapours" in comparison of the glory that shall be revealed to us and in us, in "the brightness of His coming;" when no longer as in a glass, but face to face, "beholding the glory of the Lord," His people shall be changed into the same image, and shall themselves "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—*Alice Jane Muirhead, in Bombay Guardian.*

#### HOW TO TREAT OFFENDERS.

"FOR even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

How often we feel that we have been dealt with unjustly, that things have been said concerning us that were untrue, and that we have been set in a false light before others. When we are thus tried, we shall need to keep strict guard over our spirit and our words. We shall need to have the love of Christ, that we may not cherish an unforgiving spirit. Let us not think that unless those who have injured us confess their wrongs, we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. We should not accumulate our grievances, holding them to our hearts until the one we think guilty has humbled his heart by repentance and confession. This is his part no doubt, and the thing he must do in order to clear his soul from the sin he has committed. But with him we have nothing to do in this matter, and should only seek to stand before God in the way He would have us, that our prayers be not hindered. We are to have a spirit of pity, of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not

they confess their faults. If they fail to repent and make confession, their sins will stand registered in the books above to confront them in the day of judgment; but if they say, "I repent," then our duty is plain; we are freely to forgive from the heart their trespasses against us, as we hope to be forgiven by our heavenly Father. However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathise with ourselves over our injuries, but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God, so must we pardon those who have done evil to us. Christ taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," and added, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses." "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

We are not to talk of our wounds and bruises, but to bring them to Him who is the mighty and successful Healer of all our sorrows.

Christ has suffered, and He identifies His interests with those of His suffering children; and if our life is hid with Christ in God, Jesus will bear our griefs; for it is He that is wounded in the person of His saints, and He who injures one of Christ's little ones, brings upon himself the charge of injuring the Lord Jesus. O, if we did but realise this truth as we should, how careful would we be in what we say to others, the spirit we cherish, the actions we perform. When we are reviled, how strong is the temptation to revile in return, but in doing this we show ourselves as bad as the reviler. When tempted to revile, send up a silent prayer that God will give you His grace, and keep the tongue in silence, that your lips may speak no guile.

Peter asked, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." Then to impress more fully the lesson of forgiveness upon us, He gave this parable: "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and

worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

God has so loved the world that He has given His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Christ has borne our sins, forgiven our trespasses. He bore "our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Then will any of God's children to whom He has forgiven so much, act as did this merciless servant unto his fellow-servant? Will those for whom Christ has died, be anything but pitiful? Will they cherish anything but the meekness and lowliness of Christ? Will they not from the heart forgive those who trespass against them? Will you not, if any one has done you a wrong, and is too proud and stubborn to say to you, "I repent," go to the offender and say, "I love you for Christ's sake, and I forgive you the injury you have done me"? Jesus will witness and approve of this deed of love; and as you do to others, it shall be done again to you.

Our worship cannot be acceptable to God if our hearts are filled with bitterness toward our brethren, or to those not of our faith. Jesus has given us an example that we should follow in His steps, and manifest compassion and love and good-will toward all. Let us cultivate a kind spirit, a spirit of forbearance, and tender, pitying love toward those, who, when under temptation, have done us grievous wrongs. If possible, let us heal these wounds, and close the door of temptation by removing every barrier the wrong-doer has erected between himself and us. Humble your heart before God, and come close to the one who would deal

unjustly with you, and it may be that the difficulty may all be healed. The Lord delights to bestow His blessings upon those who will honour Him, who will acknowledge His mercy, and show that they appreciate His love to them by manifesting the same gracious characteristic to those around them. O may the youth be able to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us."

MRS. E. G. WHITE.

#### A TEST.

Do you love Christ? I ask not if you feel  
The warm excitement of that party zeal,  
Which follows on, while others lead the way;  
And makes His cause the fashion of the day;  
But do you love Him when His garb is mean,  
Nor shrink to let your fellowship be seen?

Do you love Jesus, blind, and halt, and maimed?  
In prison succour Him? nor feel ashamed  
To own Him, though His injured name may be  
A mark for some dark slander's obloquy?  
Say not, "When saw we Him?" Each member  
dear,  
Poor and afflicted, wears His image here.

—Selected.

#### "SERIOUS THINGS TO-MORROW."

MANY years ago a Greek nobleman made a feast for his friends. In the midst of the festivities, a messenger entered in great haste with a letter. It was from a distance, and was sent to inform him that a plot had been formed by his enemies to *kill him that night*.

"My Lord," said the messenger, "my master desired me to say, that you must *read the letter without delay*; for it is about serious things."

"Serious things to-morrow," said the nobleman, as he threw the letter aside, and took up his cup of wine. The delay was fatal. Before the feast was at an end, his enemies rushed into the hall and slew him.

He neglected his last chance, and perished through his own folly. And are there not thousands who to-day are neglecting opportunities and disregarding warnings, who will mourn at last, when they are lost beyond remedy? To-day God sends His message to us. Oh, *read the letter to-day*, for "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"—Selected.

#### LOOK OUT FOR THE ROCKS.

A GENTLEMAN crossing the English Channel stood near the helmsman. It was a calm and pleasant evening, and no one dreamed of a possible danger to their good ship. But a sudden flapping of a sail, as if the wind had shifted, caught the ear of the officer on watch, and he sprang at once to the wheel, examining closely the compass.

"You are half a point off the course," he said sharply to the man at the wheel. The deviation was corrected, and the officer returned to his post.

"You must steer very accurately,"

said the looker-on, "when only half a point is so much thought of."

"Ah! half a point in many places might bring us directly on the rocks," he said.

So it is in life. Half a point from strict truthfulness strands us above the rocks of falsehood. Half a point from perfect honesty, and we are steering right for the rocks of crime. And so of all kindred vices. The beginnings are always small. No one climbs to a summit at one bound, but goes up one little step at a time. Children think lightly of what they call small sins. These rocks do not look so fearful to them.—*Messiah's Herald*.

#### HURRIED, WORRIED, WEARIED.

"PROBABLY nothing tires one so much as feeling hurried. When in the early morning the day's affairs press on one's attention beforehand, and there comes the wonder how in the world everything is to be accomplished, when every interruption is received impatiently, and the clock is watched in distress as the moments flit past, then the mind tires the body. We are wrong to drive ourselves with whip and spur in this way. Each of us is promised strength for the day, and we must not wear ourselves out. If only we keep cool and calm, we shall be less wearied when we have reached the eventide. The children may be fractious, the servants trying, the friend we love may fail to visit us, the letter we expect may not arrive; but if we can preserve our tranquility of soul and demeanour, we shall get through everything creditably."

#### THE MASTER CARRIES THE KEY.

THE mind of a pious workman, named Thierney, was much occupied with the ways of God, which appeared to him full of inscrutable mysteries. The two questions, "How?" and "Why?" were constantly in his thoughts—whether he considered his own life, or the dispensations of Providence in the government of the world. One day, in visiting a ribbon manufactory, his attention was attracted by an extraordinary piece of machinery. Countless wheels and thousands of threads were twirling in all directions; he could understand nothing of its movements. He was informed, however, that all this motion was connected with the centre, where there was a chest which was kept shut. Anxious to understand the principle of the machine, he asked permission to see the interior. "The master has the key," was the reply. The words were like a flash of light. Here was the answer to all the perplexed thoughts. Yes; the Master has the key. He governs and directs all. It is enough. What need I know more?—*Sel.*



### AT THE HOME.

#### BORN AGAIN.

A RULER once came to Jesus by night,  
To ask Him the way of salvation and light;  
The Master made answer in words true and plain,

"Ye must be born again."

Ye children of men, attend to the word  
So solemnly uttered by Jesus, the Lord,  
And let not this message to you be in vain,  
"Ye must be born again."

—W. T. Sleeper.

#### "YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

FOR some time you have been learning of your brothers and sisters in India. Your heart has ached as you have heard of their sad hopeless condition, and you have doubtless formed plans in your own mind of how you were going to save up pennies to send them Bibles and preachers that would tell them of the living God and His great love. Perhaps you have already begun this good work.

But there is another work which we long to see you begin, which is just as important as helping your brothers and sisters in India. We long to see you seeking help for yourself. Would it not be a sad thing if after you have sent money to save the Indians, you yourself should be lost? You need to be saved from sin as much as they. Jesus says, "Ye must be born again," and "Except a man be born again [margin, from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then it is not enough to have a Bible of your own, and to know *about* the only true God. Jesus says if you are ever saved, you *must* be "born again."

"Well," you say, "I do not see how I can become a little babe again."

No, you do not need to, that is not what the Lord means. He does not say that your body must become small again and that you must again come into the world as a little babe. From the above text in John iii. 3 we see that He does not say that a man must have another earthly birth, but what He does say, is that he must have a heavenly birth as well as an earthly birth. He must be born "from above." It is not enough for you to have an earthly father, you must also have a heavenly Father who is as real to you and who lives with you every day as truly as your earthly father does. You must become changed inside and begin all over again. You must put away your

naughty thoughts and feelings and partake of the sinless and Divine nature of your heavenly Father, as truly as at your first birth you partook of the weak sinful nature of your earthly father.

It is not enough to *call* God your heavenly Father, you might do that all your life and yet never be born of God at all. You must allow Him to come right into your heart by His Holy Spirit. He can then take away every sin and make your heart all over new so that you will want to do good instead of evil. Then you will feel just like a new creature, indeed you will *be* a new creature, as truly as though you had become little and been born again, for do you not see? you will feel so differently and act so differently that you will not be like the same person at all. Where you used to disobey your parents you will now obey them, where you used to get angry you will be patient, where you used to say cross words you will say kind words. You will even look different in some ways, for instead of looking sullen and cross and worried, you will look happy and kind and peaceful, for the loveliness and gentleness of Jesus will be shining through your eyes. You will now be the child of God as well as the child of man, for the Lord says that those who receive Jesus are born again (1 John v. 1) and thus become the "sons of God." (John i. 12, 13.)

Now if we only can learn how to receive Jesus into our hearts, we shall know how to be born from above, shall we not?

We read in Eph. iii. 17 and 1 Peter i. 23 that we can receive Christ into our hearts and be born again by believing and taking into our hearts the word of God. We can see how this is by reading the sixth chapter of John and John i. 1, for there it says that the Spirit and life of Jesus are in the word.

Then if you will read God's words in your Bible and believe that they are God's words to *you*, that they are *living* words filled with the Spirit and life and power of Jesus, and will love them and let them stay in your mind and heart, they will, like a wonderful seed, spring up in your heart and make it all over new and fill it with all the fruits of the gentle Spirit of Jesus,—even with the righteousness of God. In other words, the word of God, if received and loved, will cause you to be born again.

You will not be able to *see* the life of the word come into your heart any more than you can see the wind come into the house, but you will soon be able to see the wonderful change which it has wrought. You will not be able to see *how* it takes away the bad thoughts and fills you with heavenly thoughts and actions, but God says that it will, and that is enough.

All you must do about it is to read and believe and think on His words, and He has promised to cause them to work in you that which is good.

Now do not think that this being born from above is done once and then that is the end of it. Oh, no. It is enough to be born as a baby *once*, but we must be born from above *every day*. So you see you shall need to read and believe and think on God's words very often, for it is God's word that is the living seed that causes you to be born from above.

#### GROWING.

If you would become a good strong man or woman of God, it is just as necessary for you to grow as it is for you to be born again.

If a little babe never grows after it is born, it never can become a strong man or woman. It will always remain a poor, weak, helpless little babe, or else lose the life it already has.

Now what causes the babe to grow?

"Plenty of good milk," you say.

That's true. Nothing can make it grow like pure milk. If the milk is mixed with other things that are not good, the babe will soon become ill, and will die.

Well, suppose your baby brother has all the good milk he can eat for once, and then you should not give him any more, what would happen?

"He would cry," you say.

Yes, undoubtedly. But should he not be satisfied if he has had all that he needs?

"He has had all that he needs for one time, but that will not last him always."

Why not?

"Because in a little while it is used up by the body, to make it grow, and then he is just as hungry as ever."

Yes, when the body has used up all its growing material and needs more, it calls for it by making him feel hungry. And even after he has stopped growing and has become a big man, he will still need food, and will get hungry, for the body needs it to keep up repairs.

So you see a person must have food, and must have it every day if he would grow and keep well. And he must not only have food, but he must have *good* food.

Now the Lord says in 1 Peter ii. 2 that after you are born from above, after you have received Jesus in your hearts, you will need heavenly milk to make you grow strong in the heavenly life, just as much as the little babe needs earthly milk to make it grow strong in the earthly life.

"What is the heavenly milk?"

The Lord says, "As new born babes, desire the sincere [pure, unadulterated] *milk of the word*, that ye may grow thereby." We see, therefore, that the heavenly milk is the pure, un-mixed word of God.

"How can that make me grow more and more like Jesus, and strong to do right?"

By eating it (John vi.), by studying it, and thinking upon it, and just drinking it in with your mind, and desiring it more than your necessary food.

You wonder how it *can* become a part of you, and make you grow better, just by letting your mind think upon it and love it. It does seem wonderful.

But the little babe does not understand how the milk can make its body grow. It just eats and eats and grows, as a little plant,—it knows not how, and we know not how.

Thus the Lord wants you to take His living words into your heart every day, as trustfully and as faithfully as the little babe takes its milk; and His promise is, ye *shall* grow thereby. Men's words will not do, God's words alone can make you grow.

But above all things, remember that one meal, or even one meal a week, is not enough. You must take time to feed on the milk of God's word *every day*. Just as surely as you forget for one day to feed on God's word, you will be too weak that day to overcome the temptations of Satan.

By feeding upon the word you feed upon Jesus, and He is the only One who has power to overcome Satan. So if you forget to feed upon the word you forget to have Jesus in your heart, and thus having nothing but your own weakness with which to resist Satan, you surely will be overcome.

Then let us not be content with being born again. There will be no dwarfs in the kingdom of God. We must also feed on heavenly milk that we may *grow*.

#### EASY SACRIFICES.

HE said it was easy for some people to give up sins which had no fascination for them. "It isn't hard for a one-legged man to give up dancing," he said, "and it requires no effort for a dumb man to stop swearing; a man who has never had any temptation to drink whisky can easily put aside the liquor habit."

He had a niece named Dolly. She was once visiting at the house of her aunt, and after the meal, when it was time for dessert, the hostess said: "Well, Dolly, you'll take a peice of pie?"

"No, ma'am," said Dolly, "my mamma doesn't want me to eat pie."

Well, how grand we thought it was that a little six-year-old girl away from home should do just as her mamma wanted her to, whether her mamma was there or not! But the next day at dessert we had a different kind of pie. The hostess said: "I believe you don't take pie, Dolly?"

"Why, yes, ma'am, I'll take a peice," the girl said, hesitatingly.

"Why, Dolly," her aunt said, "I

thought you said your mamma didn't want you to eat pie."

"Well, I didn't like that kind of pie," the girl said. "And so it is with our sins," the preacher continued, "we can give up those we don't like. What about the others?"—*B. Fay Mills.*

#### HOW TO CONQUER AN ENEMY.

"I HAVE come to tell you," said Mr. Williams to Mr. Holmes, "that I cannot endure Smith's ill treatment any longer."

"I know," said Mr. Holmes, "that he has not treated you very well, but as I had heard nothing new lately, I was in hopes he was coming round a little."

"If I had given him any just provocation, his course towards me would not be so utterly intolerable."

"You have borne his ill treatment thus far with a good deal of meekness. I hope he will not succeed in causing you to render evil for evil. That, I presume, is what he desires. If he could provoke you to some act of retaliation, he would not feel the trouble which he now doubtless feels from a sense of injustice."

"I have made up my mind to go and see him, and tell him how he has treated me, and warn him that I will submit to it no longer."

"I would do no such thing."

"Why not?"

"Because, in the first place, he does not need to have you tell him how he has treated you; he knows that already. In the next place, you would probably get angry and say something which you would have to repent of, besides furnishing him with a self-justifying plea. No, my friend, I will tell you a much better way: Do as Hezekiah did when he received the insulting letter from the king of Assyria. You know he went and spread it out before the Lord. Go and spread out your case before the Lord. Instead of telling Smith how he has treated you, tell the Lord how he has treated you.

"You may enter into all the particulars; for the Lord has a patient ear for all the troubles of His children. When you have made a full statement of your case, you will find yourself relieved, you will find yourself in a very different frame of mind from that which would result from telling your story to the author of your injuries.

"When you have told the Lord your affliction, ask Him to give you grace to bear it without murmuring, and to sanctify it to your growth in grace. Use as an argument the fact that He in His wise providence has permitted the affliction, and that His glory is concerned in your bearing it aright. It is always wise for us to interest the glory of God in accomplishing the end sought by prayer. Use also as an argument when seeking for grace to bear your

trial, the fact that Christ, your great Example, suffered patiently and silently the insults and injustice of men. Say, 'O Lord, help me to bear this grievous wrong calmly, because Christ when reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, threatened not, but committed His case to Him who judgeth righteously.' Ask Him for grace to forgive your enemy; and urge as an argument the fact that otherwise you cannot obey your Saviour, who bids us pray, 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.' You see you have strong arguments to use with the Lord—so strong that they must prevail. Now when you go home, enter your closet, and spread this whole matter before the Lord, somewhat after the manner I have set forth."

Mr. Williams sat for a few moments in silence, then thanked Mr. Holmes for his advice, and expressed his determination to follow it. He then bade him good morning and retired.

About a week afterwards he called on Mr. Holmes again. He appeared to be in good spirits, and made no such complaints as he had been wont to make on former visits. After some conversation on a variety of topics, Mr. Holmes asked, "How are you and Smith getting on?"

"Much better than when I saw you last. He has been to see me and has made some concessions, and promises to do better for the future."

"What has caused the change in him?"

"I do not know."

"You did not go to him and give him warning to change his course, did you?"

"No, I followed the advice you gave me."

"If you had gone and spread out your case before him, instead of spreading it out before the Lord, I doubt very much if he would have made any concession or promised amendment. I am satisfied from experience and observation, that it is best to make our complaints to the Lord, and to the Lord only. You can reach a man's heart more readily by prayer than by any other way. I make it a rule to tell the Lord all my troubles, and I seldom have occasion to tell them to to anyone else."—*Exchange.*

#### THE SAVIOUR'S SYMPATHY.

OF one thing every child of God may be sure in the hour of his suffering or of his sorrow, and that is that he is not himself more deeply interested in his present trial than his Saviour is interested in that trial in his behalf. Nothing comes to pass, in the experience of a believer, that the Saviour is not fully familiar with; nor does the Saviour ever fail to be touched with the feeling of all the infirmities of His every follower with which He is thus familiar. Here is a source of cheer in every sorest need.—*Sel.*



**MAKE JESUS GLAD.**

WHEN little children let sinful thoughts glow,  
Let angry words from their hearts overflow,  
Jesus is sad;  
When little children, no matter how small,  
Strive to be loving and kind unto all,  
Jesus is glad.

When they are fretful and cause others pain,  
Selfish and greedy again and again,  
Jesus is sad;  
When they are kind to the weary and poor,  
If they are patient when pain they endure,  
Jesus is glad.

When they tell falsehoods, are haughty or vain,  
When they His Sabbath both scorn and profane,  
Jesus is sad;  
When they are trying His precepts to do,  
Loving their parents, obedient and true,  
Jesus is glad.

All naughty thoughts I will put far away,  
And I'll be gentle and kind every day,  
Lest He be sad;  
Yes, I will love Him, my Saviour so kind,  
All His commandments endeavour to mind,  
So He'll be glad.  
—Mrs. M. P. Smith.

**OUR HOME, OUR BOOKS, AND OUR FRIENDS.**

FOR the last few weeks we have been looking around us and trying to get better acquainted with our home, our books, and our friends.

We have found that we have a very pleasant and beautiful home, which is as strange as it is beautiful. It is a great round ball of sand and rocks and water! This ball is called "the earth," and it is so large round, that we can see but a small part of it at one time, and can hold but a few grains of it in our hands.



When we look up, we see something that looks like a beautiful, blue starry curtain stretched over us. This is called "the heavens."

The heavens and the earth were not always here. A long, long time ago, on the beginning of the first day, they were made out of nothing! And the earth was hung upon nothing! (Job xxvi. 7.)

We know that man did not create them, for he cannot make the smallest thing out of nothing.

At first the earth was not round like a ball, as it now is, for it was "without form." There was no dry land with grass and trees and flowers; there were no animals or fish or birds or people; there was not a living thing upon it; and it was covered with water. Shut your eyes and cover them tightly with your hands, and see what you can see. Well, that is all that you could have seen if you had been here when the earth was first created; it was as dark as the darkest night. But it was not left so, for it was made to be lived upon by good people.



Now, about our books. As we look them over we see one that has the words "Holy Bible" on the back. We have learned that this book is still more wonderful than our home. It is worth more to us than the whole earth, because if we search and use the precious things that are hid in it, we shall get perfect happiness and eternal life. It really is a letter sent to us by our best Friend, because He loved us and wanted us to know how to come to Him. It shows us how to go as plainly as a lamp shows us where to step. There is something good in it for every man, woman, and child that lives upon the earth. It is so much better, and is worth so much more than other books that it should be handled very carefully. It never should be played with, nor touched with dirty hands. In the first chapter we learned when, how, and by whom, our home was made.

We have found that we have a great many good friends, and also that our parents are the best earthly friends that we have. But our precious Bible tells us about a Friend who lives up above the stars in heaven, who loves us more and has done more for us than even our father and mother. He is the God of heaven, and our kind heavenly Father. He knows more, and can do more than all the men in the world, for it was He who made this great earth and the starry heavens out of nothing. He just commanded them to be created, and



they were! He spake, and the earth was; and it was not there at all before. He made us also, and the birds, and flowers, and every living thing. He gives us all that we have, and cares for us day and night. We should be very particular to do as He says in His letter, and always be very careful how we speak His name, for we do not wish to grieve the dear Friend who has done so much for us.

1. With what three things have we been trying to get better acquainted during the last few weeks?
2. What kind of home have we, pleasant, or unpleasant?
3. Name some of the things that make it so pleasant.
4. What is this great ball called?
5. How large is it?
6. On a bright day, what do we see when we look up?
7. What is it called?
8. Were the heavens and the earth always here?
9. When were they made?
10. Of what were they made?
11. Upon what was the earth hung?
12. Did men make them? How do you know that they did not?
13. How was the earth at first?
14. Suppose God had left the earth so, how long do you think you could live here?
15. What is the name of our best book?
16. Why is it called "Holy Bible?"
17. Who sent it to you? Why?
18. Is it true?
19. How much is it worth?
20. How is it like a lamp?
21. What kind of stories are in it?
22. What story do we find in the first chapter?
23. Who wrote the story of creation? Moses.
24. Did Moses see God do it?
25. Then how did he know anything about it?
26. Who is our best Friend?
27. What makes you think so?
28. Tell some of the wonderful things that He has done.
29. Are you not thankful that you have such a wise, great, loving Friend?
30. How should you always speak His name and treat His letter? Why?

**KEEP THE WORDS OUT.**

"I DON'T want to hear naughty words," said little Charlie to one of his schoolmates.

"It does not matter," said the other boy; "they go in at one ear and out at the other."

"No," said Charlie; "the worst of it is, when naughty words get in they stick, so I mean to do my best to keep them out."

## THE BETTER WAY.

LIBBY made a hat for her doll out of the peel of half a lemon left over from Maggie's cooking.

She took out all the inside, cut two slits in it, one on each side, through which she was going to put a tiny blue ribbon which dolly had worn for a sash, carrying the ribbon straight over the top; to make it complete she would ornament it with a feather out of the duster.

So, with her mind full of the pretty hat, she laid the lemon peel on the window-sill and went up stairs for the ribbon.

Alas for the wonderful hat! Dear old Grandpa came in and sat down by that very window, and seeing the lemon peel (how should he know it was a hat?), took it up and nibbled it a little, just enough to spoil it. He did not relish the taste of it, however, and tossed it over to the woodbox, and then leaned his head against the high back of his easy-chair for a comfortable rest. Just then Libby came in with the doll and ribbon.

"Did you see my doll's hat on the window-sill, Grandpa?"

"No, dear; there was no hat there."

"Then Maggie has taken it," said Libby; "I wish she would let my things alone."

"And it's no hat that I see on the window at all, said Maggie stoutly, "nothing but a bit av limin pale that the ould gentleman threw into the wood-box."

Libby soon discovered grandpa's innocent mistake, and feeling greatly injured, especially as Maggie laughed and Grandpa almost smiled when she explained matters to them, was turning away with flushed cheeks and pouting lips to carry the story of her griefs to poor sick mamma up stairs, when a good thought came to her.

It was her morning verse, "Be ye kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another"; and she turned and looked at Grandpa, who was saying he was really sorry, and, besides, it "had left a bad taste in his mouth," and all of a sudden it flashed into her mind what a dear, good grandpa he was, and she ran to him and kissed him.

"Isn't that a better taste in your mouth?"

"Yes, indeed, my dear." Libby had a happy heart the rest of the day.

It is always a better way to kiss and forgive than to pout and be angry. Try it.

SEEING NOT BELIEVING.—"How can I love God?" said a thoughtless man. "I have never seen Him."

"See that little blind girl," replied his companion; "she can love her father and mother, though she has never seen them, and never will see them in this life. Will you do less? She can teach you to love your Heavenly Father, though unseen."

THE mechanism of the leg and foot of a chicken, or other bird that roosts on a limb, is a marvel of design. It often seems strange that a bird will sit on a roost and sleep all night without falling off, but the explanation is perfectly simple. The tendon of the leg of a bird that roosts is so arranged that when the leg is bent at the knee, the claws are bound to contract, and thus hold with a sort of death-grip the limb round which they are placed. Put a chicken's feet on your wrist, and then make the bird sit down, and you will have a practical illustration on your skin that you will remember for some time. By this singular arrangement, seen only in such birds as roost, they will rest comfortably, and never think of holding on; for it is impossible for them to let go till they stand up.—*Selected.*

"'THOU God seest me' was meant for a pillow for weary heads, and not for a club for naughty children."

## Interesting Items.

—Heavy bank and mercantile failures continue to be reported from America.

—The financial crisis in Australia is regarded as being nearly at an end.

—Much embarrassment is being felt in Italian financial circles from a scarcity of silver small coin.

—The International Workingmen's Congress at Zurich declared almost unanimously in favour of an eight-hour day.

—Wheat has been steadily declining in value since the end of May last, when the average price was 27s. 6d. per quarter, the highest this year.

—The Christian public of Toronto, Canada, are protesting strongly against an effort to have Sunday street cars. A popular vote on the subject is to be taken.

—Unemployed and destitute miners of Kansas and Colorado, U. S. A., are leaving in large numbers for other sections of the country where they hope to obtain employment.

—A telegram from Hillsborough, in Illinois, U. S. A., gives details of an experiment that is to be made of burying a man alive and keeping him interred for forty-eight days.

—Taxation returns show that the rate per head of the expenditure on the relief of the poor last year was 6s. 1d. The total amount of relief to the poor in 1892 was £8,847,678.

—In accordance with an Act passed by the Canadian Legislature, all persons under 17 years are forbidden to be in the streets of certain towns and villages after nine o'clock at night.

—The Italian man-of-war *Etna* recently visited Montreal, Canada, but was refused a salute from the mayor, an ardent Roman Catholic, because of the attitude of the Italian Government towards the pope.

—The revolution in Argentine is considered to be practically ended. The governor of the province of Buenos Ayres has fled, and Senor Delvalle, Minister of War, has assumed control of affairs at La Plata.

—Cholera is still on the increase in nearly all the infected provinces of Russia, but is reported to be lessening in Bessarabia and at Naples. Strict quarantine measures have been adopted by England and the United States.

—The aboriginal Ainus of North Japan are said not to look upon drunkenness as wicked, or a thing to be detested. Fully 95 per cent. get drunk whenever they can obtain enough *sake*, and to be drunk is their ideal of supreme happiness.

—The suburbs of Melbourne have been suffering from an epidemic of measles. On one day recently there were in Fitzroy 1,500 cases, in Collingwood 2,000, and in Richmond cases were so numerous that all the State schools except one were ordered to be closed for a fortnight.

—Not much progress seems to have been made toward settling the controversy of the coal miners with their employers. In some cases the latter have offered to take back their men on the old terms, but no general offer has been received, and the miners express their intention to hold out to the last.

—A miniature fortress has been erected in the park of the new palace at Potsdam. It is a present to the Emperor from Herr Krupp. The model shows an entirely new departure in the construction of fortifications, and experts have declared that fortresses built on that plan will be absolutely impregnable.

—Whilst a party of twenty-eight excursionists from the Rhondda Valley were boating in Swansea Bay, off Port Talbot, on Bank Holiday, the vessel was struck by a heavy sea. Amid the confusion that followed the boat was upset, and twenty-two of the occupants, men, women, and children were drowned.

—Fighting is reported in Samoa between the forces of the rival kings Malietoa and Mataafa. Malietoa, impatient at what he considered the indifference of the Powers, took matters into his own hands, and attacked Mataafa. The latter's losses numbered thirty killed and twenty wounded. England, Germany, and the United States have interfered to prevent further fighting.

—A correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* writes from India that through an oversight in the construction of the Indian penal code the Temple people have been able to revive the horrible practice of hook-swinging, and to set the law at defiance, while they fill their own pockets. He urges prompt action on the part of the English Government to avert a revival of the religious atrocities of former times.

—In his message to Congress President Cleveland deals exclusively with the silver question, to the unsatisfactory condition of which he attributes the present unfavourable financial and commercial condition of the United States. He declares that the people of the United States have a right to demand that legislation which is condemned by the past three years' experience, shall be removed from the statute books as soon as possible.

—The present financial position of the British and Foreign Bible Society is causing some anxiety to the secretaries and committee. The excess of expenditure over income during the last four years has amounted to a total of no less than £67,263, and during the last year alone it was £23,397. This has arisen from the great extension of the society's operations in order to meet the growing demand for the Scriptures from all parts of world.

—Serious rioting has occurred in Spain in the vicinity of Madrid. The inhabitants of Vitoria expected that their town would be made the headquarters of an army corps, and on the adverse decision of the Government, the inhabitants, to testify their disapproval, organised a demonstration while the Minister of War was passing through, attacking the military escort by which he was accompanied. Quiet has now been restored, but the district is being closely watched for signs of a revolutionary movement.

—Readers of the PRESENT TRUTH have often been told that the Church of Rome hopes to regain in England the supremacy which she lost by the Reformation. To this end she is working most diligently, and, sad to say, with fair prospects of success. How much that result when it is reached, will contribute to the good of the country, the reader can judge from the following testimony of one who has been several years a resident of a country over which the Catholic Church has long had full control. Mrs. E. G. Clemens, of Paraguay said at a meeting of the International Missionary Union, Clifton Springs, New York, June 14; "I arrived in Assumption in 1889. There had never been a Protestant sermon there till six years before. Romanism has had control of Paraguay as fully as it had of any country. Nine-tenths of the Paraguayans do not know that there is any other religion than the Roman Catholic. Ninety-eight per cent. of the inhabitants are illiterates, and only two per cent. are of legitimate birth."

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## The Present Truth.

"I am the way, the truth and the life." "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

LONDON, AUGUST 17, 1893.

FOR TERMS, SEE FIRST PAGE.

IN a letter noticed on another page, in regard to the Sabbath, occurs the statement that "every day is a seventh day." This is said for the purpose of showing that men can rest on any day they choose, and still be keeping the Sabbath. But the commandment does not say anything about "a seventh day;" it deals only with "the seventh day;" and it is a fact that every day is *not the seventh day*. The week has just seven days, and the seventh day is the last of the seven; the Sabbath cannot be found anywhere except on the seventh day of the week, and the seventh day occurs nowhere else but at the close of the first six days.

THE Bible knows nothing about observing a "seventh part of time" as the Sabbath. That is an invention of men, to avoid keeping the Sabbath of the Lord. People may say it makes no difference, but it does. Suppose we try it on something else. Here are seven coins in a row; the first six are silver, but the last one, the seventh, is gold. Here is also a man who believes that the commandment requiring rest on "the seventh day" may be kept by resting on any seventh part of time. I tell him that he may have the seventh coin. Of course, true to his theory, he will choose the first, which is only a sixpence. No? Why not? Isn't the first the seventh, as well as any other? That will answer for theory, but not for practice. He will take *the seventh coin*, the sovereign, without any hesitation, and nobody can convince him that any other coin, being one-seventh of the number, is the seventh coin. And he would be right. But why will he argue about God's seventh day in a way that he would call absurd if applied to his seventh coin?

THE cases are quite parallel, for there is as much distinction between the seventh day of the week and "the six working days," as there is between the sovereign and the six silver coins. Men may say, "We cannot see any difference in days." But God says that there is a difference, and when God says a thing, it is man's business to see it. He has put His blessing upon the seventh day, and upon no

other; therefore although we may have a blessing from God on any and every day of the week, we can have *the Sabbath blessing* only on the seventh day. Here is what the Lord says to those who can see no difference where He has made a difference:—

"Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned Mine holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them." Eze. xxii. 26.

**Abolishing War.**—The Zurich Labour Congress has had under consideration recently the question of the attitude to be taken by the working classes in the event of war. It was proposed to make a European war impossible, by means of a general strike when hostilities should have been declared; but this proposal was rejected, and another substituted which aims at the same thing, through the withholding of supplies.

We are sure, however, that, desirable as is the end sought, it will not be attained by either of the means proposed. War has its origin in the depravity of human nature, and unfortunately this depravity is not confined to the aristocracy, but extends to all classes, rich and poor alike. The working-men are quite as ready to fight among themselves, should provocation arise, as are the ambitious representatives of royalty. The only sure way to abolish war is to eradicate that innate selfishness of human nature which continually leads men to seek to advance their own interests at the expense of their fellows; and the only antidote for this is the religion of Jesus Christ.

THE *Interior*, commenting on the outbreak of religious persecution in Asia Minor, says,—

"It was fondly supposed that the days of persecution for conscience sake belonged to ages long past. But apart from the power of the word of God religious tolerance does not exist in the world to-day. We pass every day a lad who is pursued with vindictiveness in his own home because he has renounced the teachings of the Catholic Church. His Bible has been burned, and the Greek Testament that he borrowed was committed to the flames. The public libraries have been forbidden to furnish him reading, and one by one his youthful pleasures are stripped from him. It is as true to-day as it was eighteen centuries ago, that unless the grace of God has softened the heart of the parent, the disciple of Christ must find "a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Nor is the case here mentioned an exceptional one. Persecution for righteousness sake is not by any means an

obsolete thing to-day. There never was an age of the world in which the righteous could live without persecution. But this is not at all strange, for Inspiration plainly tells us that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. iii. 12. This statement is just as true to-day as it ever was. No one should expect or desire to gain heaven in any other way. As the hymn says,—

Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
Whilst others fought to win the prize,  
And sailed through bloody seas?

Without persecution, no one can be fit for the society of Jesus and the martyrs who have followed in His blood-stained steps.

### MOHAMMEDAN ZEAL.

WE are reminded that we are by no means to think of Mohammedanism as a system of religion that is dying out, by the fact that even now there are 400 Mohammedan missionaries sent out from Cairo every year. These missionaries are to be found everywhere in the East, and even in the heart of Africa. There are 11,000,000 Mohammedans in China, and 100 mosques in Peking alone. Mohammedanism is not less aggressive now than it was in the days of Mohammed. It is a religion of force, and can be successfully met only by the Gospel of peace. While it is not dying out, it is a dead religion, in that it has no spirit of life in it. The greater its activity, the greater the death that it causes. Therefore it must be met with the Gospel of life. Mohammedan missionaries need only zeal, and a knowledge of the theory of Mohammedanism. Christian missionaries must have the zeal and knowledge that comes from the life of Christ in the soul.

THE Kat River district, in South Africa, has been experiencing a plague of locusts. The insects, it is stated, stripped the country of everything that was green, except the tobacco. Nor do we wonder. It seems strange that a locust should have more sense about what is fit for the mouth than many men, but it appears to be even so.

WERE there but a single mercy apportioned to each moment of our lives, the sum would rise very high; but how is our arithmetic confounded when every minute has more than we can distinctly number.—*Rowe*.

"By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." Prov. xvi. 6,