

Australian Christian.

CIRCULATING AMONGST

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

In Australian Colonies, New Zealand and Tasmania, for the Advocacy of Good and Right and Truth.

"He wrought good and right and truth before the Lord . . . with all his heart and prospered."—2 Chron. 31: 20-21

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A Merry Christmas
AND A
Happy New Year

TO ALL.

Editorial Notes.

In fundamentals, Unity; in incidentals, Liberty;
in all things, Love.

Christmas.

We are not among those who frown upon Christmastide gaieties because of the probable heathenish origin of the observance of the day. We readily admit that Jesus was not born on the 25th December, that shepherds were not watching their flocks by night on the open plains in the depth of winter, and that in all probability the day we call Christmas was originally celebrated as a pagan festival and "converted" into a Christian institution, just as the idolatrous temples were consecrated to the new faith. But, however this may be, the fact remains that Christ was born sometime, that he came as a little babe, and that childhood has thus been inseparably associated in our minds with the greatest of all Gifts. In heathen lands no such prominence is given to child life. Realising this, it is well for us at special times to have the great fact of our Saviour's advent brought prominently before our minds, and to gather our children around while we again tell them the wonderful story of the Christ-child. It is well too that at the advent of Father Christmas the little stockings should be filled and the little hearts gladdened. And while we reflect upon the angels' theme of "good will toward men," it will not be amiss if we catch up the strain, and out of our abundance send something to help the needy around us. This is a good time to remember the Rescue Home, the Burwood Boys' Home and similar institutions. It is a good time to re-echo the apostle's words: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

What Shall the Harvest Be?

Home Missions have the right of way just now in Victoria and New South Wales. January 1st is the day to which our Conference Committees have been looking hopefully forward, and they are asking, "What shall the harvest be?" Upon the results of this harvest depends the harvest of souls, and upon that harvest depends the still greater harvests to be reaped in future ages. The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few, and it will be but mockery for us to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers if we withhold the requisite financial support for them. Of all people we ought to be the most liberal in supporting missions, for two reasons; 1st. We plead for a restoration of New Testament Christianity, and that was essentially missionary. 2nd. We teach that the Lord saves men by the Gospel, not by some mysterious agency apart from the Word, and upon us therefore comes with greater force the responsibility to contribute means to send the Gospel. It pleases God to save men by the foolishness of preaching, and it pleases him that we should support the preachers. It is possible that for local reasons the officers in some churches may not deem it wise to take up a collection for Home Missions, but we trust such cases will be rare. The need is great; the field is large, and the funds low. Our plea is a glorious one, but unless we can reach the people with it, its power must be unfelt. Let every member make a New Year's gift to the Conference Funds in the two colonies named. Those who prefer can send direct to M. McLellan, 528 Elizabeth-street, Carlton, Victoria, or to R. Steer, "Lares," Stanmore-road, Stanmore, N.S.W. "The liberal soul shall be made fat."

Retrospect and Prospect.

Once more the season of the year reminds us of the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." This was sung 1900 years ago, but the world is not filled with the "glory of the Lord" and there is not yet "peace on earth." The pessimist may point out that in the year

closing there have been wars and rumors of wars, that our own nation has narrowly escaped being drawn into serious conflict over the Fashoda incident and Chinese affairs, and that the civilised nations are groaning under the weight of military preparations, while Europe, with its twelve millions of trained soldiers ready for action at a moment's call, is little more than an armed camp. And yet there is a bright side to all this. The Spanish-American war has resulted in religious and political liberty being accorded to over twelve millions of downtrodden humanity and the humiliation at the hands of a Protestant nation of one of the greatest and most cruel papal powers. The British conquests in the Soudan and the withdrawal of the French from Fashoda are important advances towards the construction of a railway from Alexandria to the Cape. They indicate the impotence of Islam, and the powerlessness of France to hinder the march of Protestant progress through the Dark Continent, by which a hundred million pagans will be brought within the range of British influence and the country opened to the gospel. Whether the dark clouds hanging over China shall be quietly dispelled, or burst in a war storm, in either case it is certain that her four hundred millions of people can no longer isolate themselves from Western civilisation and that Christianity is destined to have a free course in that immense land in the near future. Then, too, we must not forget that for the first time in the world's history a powerful monarch has proposed an international conference to consider the question of general disarmament, and that the conference is actually to meet in February next. It may be too much to expect any immediate visible result, or that armies are to be at once abolished, but as all things must have a beginning, we may surely reasonably hope that eventually the proposal of the Czar will develop into something practical. But in the meantime we may rest assured that God will make the wrath of man to praise him, and that ultimately the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of

the Lord. In this confidence let us enter upon

"Another year of progress, another year of praise,
Another year of proving his presence all the days,
Another year of service, of witness for his love
Another year of training for holier work above."

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The Leader.

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old path.—Jeremiah 6: 16.

Glory to God in the Highest.

Looked at from a critical standpoint, it is quite possible to urge some objections against the observance of Christmas. It may be urged, for instance, that it is not a New Testament institution. That it sprang into existence, along with other religious festivals, in the fourth century, and had its origin in the Church of Rome. Further, that the birthday of Jesus, which it purports to celebrate, cannot be fixed with any certainty, and consequently that the twenty-fifth of December is only an arbitrary date, which, in all probability, had no chronological connection with the natal day of our Lord.

Having stated these objections, it is now in order to enquire if they constitute any valid argument, against the continued observance of the day in commemoration of the birthday of Christ. In our opinion they do not. In the first place, it is not to be presumed, without evidence, that everything which sprung from the Church of Rome is of necessity to be avoided. Even out of Rome some good thing may come, and without doubt the celebration of Christmas has been the means of conveying untold blessings to the human race. And in the second place, if the precise day on which Jesus was born cannot be ascertained, it does not follow that we are prevented thereby from fixing upon an approximate time in which to commemorate the occurrence of the greatest event in the history of the world. The day itself is nothing—the fact is everything. The fact that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea about nineteen centuries ago is beyond the region of dispute. And if, throughout the civilised world, men freely and gladly agree to set apart a day to mark the importance of this event, who among the sons of men has a right to say they shall not? However, let this be as it may, we are not now specially concerned about the validity of Christmas day. It is here, and having lasted fifteen centuries is likely to last to the end of time. The question rather for us to answer is "What does it mean?" Not what does it mean in a purely critical sense, as to etymology, chronology and such like, but what it means in so far as the primary fact it celebrates is concerned, and the influence this fact has exerted and continues to exert upon the human family.

The fact itself, from a historical point of view, is simple enough. It is only the story of how a child was born. Yet simple as the story is, it marked the beginning of a new era in the world's history. "This great event," says Penseuse, "the most momentous in the history of the world—since it divides it into two great parts, and is the hidden pole around which gravitate all human destinies—took place as unheeded as the most obscure. No one marked it, except the angels in heaven, and some shepherds who were keeping their flocks on one of the hills which surround Bethlehem. It was, doubtless, one of those beautiful Oriental nights when the heavens proclaimed nothing but mercy. These simple men were chosen as the first to receive the good tidings of great joy, because they were waiting for it. Everything in those fields, where the young David, like themselves, had fed his flock, reminded them of the promise made to his race, and they, as well as the scribes at Jerusalem, had doubtless read the mysterious

oracle, which declared that the very ground they were treading should be the cradle of Messiah. Suddenly the startled air resounds with a mysterious choir; they hear angelic voices, and divine words proclaim in their ears—

'Glory to God in the highest;
Peace on earth, good will towards men.'

The shepherds believed the things which were spoken. They deemed it not strange—and we are at one with them—that angels, man's elder brothers, dwellers in a purer region, where evil had not come, should celebrate with their sweetest songs such an event as the birth of the Redeemer." Such in briefest form, is the "old, old story," but which, in the telling of it, century after century, is ever new. The song which the angels sang has never ceased, nor lost its melody. True, we cannot hear their voices, but the abiding influence remains forever. All along the centuries its melody has been heard, and though it has not destroyed the selfishness of man, it has done much to lessen it. Our best writers have felt its power, and breathed its influence into the stories they have written. Thus the finest things Charles Dickens ever wrote are found in his Christmas Stories. In a masterly way they tell us how the Christ spirit is abroad at joyous Christmas time, and, how, even into the hardest of hearts, divine charity finds an entrance. Shakespeare too, describes how, even the superstitious of the people were hallowed by the associations of the season:—

"Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawn singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planet strikes,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So gracious and so hallowed is the time."

Thus, the master minds of English literature show the abiding impression which the advent of Jesus has made upon our race. An impression which is not confined to men of God alone, but which is also seen in others, who, though not in Christ, are unconsciously swayed by the power of his matchless life.

All this only tells us of what might be, if men universally would give themselves entirely into the hands of Christ to shape and mould their lives. The indirect influence of Christianity is a force more powerful than men generally think, but its direct influence is a lever to lift the world. If men would but receive the message of the angels into their hearts, it would make our earth a paradise regained. It is because men do not realise this that the question is asked, "Where is the 'peace upon earth and goodwill towards men' that the angels sang about? If they promised it, why have they not fulfilled their promise? The world, after nineteen cen-

tures, is still at war, is still in a state of unrest. Selfishness, oppression and cruelty are still rife in our land. When then is this promise to be realised? The answer is simple—the promise or message was not given to the world at large but to the individual, and only to the world through the individual. Peace and goodwill mean the absence of sin, and the absence of sin means the reigning of Christ in the individual heart. The message of the angels meant that Christ came as the bearer of good tidings to all, and that the acceptance of the good tidings involved peace on earth and goodwill towards men. Whatever measure of these is found upon earth now, is the direct and indirect result of the acceptance of Christ by individuals both of the past and present. That which brings "glory to God in the highest" is the salvation of men from sin. If the time ever comes that men universally accept Christ as Lord and Master, it will be then, that in the widest and fullest sense, the song which the angels sang over the plains of Bethlehem will be realised.

The Australian Christian for 1899.

In response to my appeal for suggestions to help to make the paper better and to increase the circulation by at least 500, I have received a lot of answers. As to making the paper better the difficulty is how I am to follow all the advice I have received. Some think a good story would be just the thing, something light and airy, bright and breezy, while just about the same number object even to our modest family department, thinking that the whole of the paper should be given up to purely good sound religious reading. I am advised by some to throw the paper open to the free discussion of all kinds of religious questions. The trouble I have found is to get people to write within reasonable limits, on live topics and in a kindly spirit. A good many letters are now reposing in a special pigeon hole I have for that purpose, or have found their way into the lower regions of the waste basket, that might have been airing themselves on the smiling pages of the CHRISTIAN had they been sweet instead of sour. I simply will not while I manage the paper have its pages soiled with things of this kind. If subscribers will write in a dignified courteous manner of living issues in reasonable space, room will be found for them. One brother wants us to have a *Health Column*. I shall be glad occasionally to publish articles of this kind, but would not like to promise it as a weekly arrangement. A good many would like to see more news. So would I, but for the life of me I can't bring myself to the idea of manufacturing news. I want all the news of all the churches of all the colonies, but it must be news. Send along your news every week on postcards, brief and to the point. I do not think that our subscribers would like to see

the paper largely taken up with long reports of things of merely local interest. A brief line or two will be sufficient for many things, and help to make the paper interesting. Bits of church news or personal mentions on a postcard for our Here and There will be greatly appreciated. To all these good friends we are thankful for their words of encouragement and appreciation. The subscription list is gradually though slowly rising, which I take as a good sign, and I am hoping and working for the time when each weekly issue will be as large as the present double number. A good few of our correspondents seem to think that the financial aspect of the paper is a small affair. If they had to run it they would find that it was not only a very large but a very real affair. Every Saturday the men who do the work have to be paid; the paper, ink, postage, &c., &c., have all to be paid for, and we are sure that our great brotherhood would not have it otherwise. While I run the paper it must pay its way like a well-behaved paper ought to do. We send out a good few copies for which we do not expect to receive payment, because the parties are unable to pay, but those who pretend to be subscribers must pay up or the paper will be stopped. It may be hard and harsh, but it must be done. No one can have much of an idea, unless they have tried it, of the work involved in conducting a paper like the CHRISTIAN. This I have tried to do the best I could. I ask all our friends to do what they can to help me.

A. B. MASTON.

Original Contributions.

Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.
—1 Corinthians 14 : 12.

Christians and Amusements.

BY R. G. CAMERON.

It is perhaps one of the most vital questions in practical Christianity, how far the people may go in indulgence in the popular amusements of the hour. How far they may go without injury to themselves, to the church, and to their neighbors—to all or to any one of these.

The question is vital, because of the interests involved. It is to be feared that the best and highest interests—the spiritual well-being of many of the professed followers of Christ, is being seriously imperilled, as a result of their participation in some one or other of the many forms of popular amusement. It is to be feared too, that many who are not Christians, are being hindered in their acceptance of the gospel, because of the example set them by church members, whom they know to be devoted to forms of amusement and recreation, that are inconsistent with their profession, and as a consequence of this, serious injury is done to the church, and reproach and dishonor is cast upon it, and the gospel of Christ is hindered.

The amusements of this age, which includes all the games, sports, recreative exercises and the various forms of entertainment, may be classified under three heads—

1. Those which are essentially vicious in

their character and injurious in their effects.

2. Those which, while harmless in themselves are in consequence of their associations, injurious.

3. Those which are in themselves harmless, and are free from evil associations and effects.

It is no part of my present purpose to indicate to which of the above-named classes, the various forms of amusement belong. We must each decide the question for ourselves as the need for the decision arises. The question I want to discuss is, what should be our attitude as Christians, in relation to the various forms of amusement which come under the above heads. As respects those which come under the first category there is of course no room for discussion, as to what our attitude should be. We must leave them severely alone. Indeed no Christian would desire to do otherwise.

Then with regard to those that come under the third class, named above, there is no doubt, I apprehend as to our liberty to indulge in them *within proper limitations*. I emphasise the proviso for the obvious reason that it is possible to engage in amusements and recreations which are perfectly innocent in themselves to such an extent, and involving the expenditure of so much time, that it becomes a positive evil. But, within proper limitations, if they are of such a character, and are so free from objectionable associations that their indulgence precludes the possibility of injury either to ourselves or others; then, we certainly are free to engage in them.

But now, with respect to those amusements which come under the second category—those which are generally regarded as being in themselves innocent, but which have associations of a more or less undesirable and injurious character. What should be our attitude in respect to these? This is a question that has been fruitful of discussion in the past, and the necessity for its re-discussion is constantly recurring.

What are the principles by which we should be guided in regard to these things?

1. *The principle of self-preservation*.—I put forward the selfish motive first, howbeit, it is a perfectly legitimate motive for self-preservation is the first law of nature, and we have no right to do anything or go anywhere except within the sphere of Christian duty, if our doing so involves self-injury either physical or moral. If any pastime or amusement is injurious to the bodily health, or detrimental to the spiritual life of the Christian. If it involves the neglect of any duty, and its tendency is to foster a distaste for higher and better things, then clearly it is our duty to forego it, and any passing pleasure we might desire from it.

2. *We should be guided by that principle of divine charity which constrains us to forego the gratifications of our own desires, and pleadings for the well-being of others*.—There can be no reasonable doubt of the application of the apostle Paul's teaching to the Romans (14 and 15) and the Corinthians (1 Cor : 8 ; 10 : 23-33).

There may be many things that are "lawful" in themselves, but, they may not be "expedient," and so far from tending to edify they may be for pulling down, and in such cases the apostles' injunction is "Let

no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good" (1 Cor. 10: 24). There may be many things in the way of amusement, which in themselves are harmless and we feel so far as we ourselves are concerned we can indulge in them without detriment, and in such cases we have undoubted liberty; but we must "take heed lest this liberty of ours becomes a stumbling block to the weak," (1 Cor. 8: 9), and if it be so, then the apostles' determination must be ours, "Wherefore of meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore" (1 Cor. 8: 13).

It is idle to object here that the apostle is speaking of a specific subject and not in general terms, for he says "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth" (Rom. 14: 21).

3. *We should be guided by a recognition of our responsibility as members of the church of God, to do nothing that will be subversive of its interests.*—Let us remember that it is "the church of God," a divine institution, not a mere human organization, the church, "which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20: 28), the church "which is the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15). The church, which is "the body of Christ," of which "he is the head" (Eph. 1: 22). To this "church of God" we must "give no occasion of stumbling" (1 Cor. 10: 32).

Recently, a solicitor who had been guilty of a violation of some principles of honesty and integrity, which should subsist between solicitor and client, had his name struck off the rolls as a practitioner of the Supreme Court of this Colony, this action being taken at the instance of the Law Society. And why? Because his conduct was recognised as being unworthy a member of that body, and as bringing discredit and dishonor upon it. Of "how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy" who is the means of bringing dishonor and reproach upon the church of the living God. And yet, probably, there is nothing which tends more to discredit the church in the eyes of the world, and to limit and destroy its influence, than the fact that so many of its members are found following after the doubtful amusements and pleasures of this world.

4. *We should be guided in this matter of amusements by a recognition of our obligation to "do all things to the glory of God."* (1 Cor. 10: 31).—By this I understand that we should have constantly before our minds the "glory of God," the promotion of which is our purpose and aim. Consequently all our conduct and actions will be in view of and with reference to that. I know well that this is a high ideal of Christian life and conduct: an ideal to which too few, alas! attain. Still, it is an ideal that is set before us by the apostles, at which we should aim. Let this principle guide us in the matter of worldly amusements and we shall seldom be found compromising our name and position as members of the church of God.

5. Finally there is this consideration, which should weigh with us, and influence our course in relation to this subject. As Christians, we are not dependent for happiness in this life upon the extent of our indulgence in worldly amusements—at least, if we

are, there is something radically wrong with our religion.

If there is not in the religion we profess something which is sufficient to satisfy the deep longings of our souls, and which makes us superior to, and lifts us above the paltry baubles of this world, and which it labels—and falsely labels—happiness, then let us be sure of it, we have made some mistake and have failed to get the genuine article.

It is beneath the dignity of our position as members of the royal family of heaven—as children of the living God, to descend, to stoop, to join with the children of this world in an unseemingly scramble for a share of the husks of this world's enjoyment. Let them have it if they will, and enjoy it if they can, but as for us, let us feed our souls on "Heaven's Diviner food" and be satisfied.

Selected Articles.

Wise men lay up knowledge.—Proverbs 10: 14.

Papyri and the New Testament.

The discovery of the *Logia*, the *Poems of Bacchylides*, and other remains of ancient literature amongst the papyri of the Græco-Roman period, has diverted attention in some degree from the documents representing daily life and business which have been found in enormous quantities. Yet the latter, however trivial and unattractive they may appear, are full of interest and value for the student of history and language. They enable him better than anything else to realise how people lived in Egypt in the centuries immediately preceding and following the birth of Christ, and how Greek was spoken and written by the common people and the servants of the Government during that period. They are therefore exceedingly helpful for the study of the New Testament in the original. Words which are either rare in literary Greek (as we know it), or quite absent, are found to have been in free circulation in later times; and many words and phrases receive fresh light from their legal or popular application as shown in these ancient records. This department of search is, it is true, still in its infancy, but an excellent beginning has been made by a German scholar, Licentiate G. A. Deissmann. His first series of "Biblical Studies," issued in 1895, dealing with this kind of illustration and that derived from inscriptions, is now followed by a second. It is a small book, for it has only 109 pages, and is by no means easy reading, but is full of curious and interesting matter. The following notes are based on gleanings from its learned pages:—

(1) Matt. 6: 2, "They have received their reward." The Greek word translated, "have received," is the regular term used in the papyri for the giving of a receipt. "I have received in full the whole price agreed on," runs a statement in a document drawn up in the Faiyum in the year 44 A.D., that is, about the time of Peter's miraculous deliverance from prison. The hypocrites referred to in the Sermon on the Mount had got all which they were legally entitled to receive. They had so to speak, given a receipt for it, and had therefore no more to claim.

(2) Luke 15: 12, "The portion . . . that falleth to me," was a technical term of ancient law. The prodigal couched his wish in cold, legal language, as such a graceless youth might be expected to do. More than one papyrus has the phrase in the same connection.

(3) Romans 15: 28, "I have sealed to them this fruit." In a papyrus of the Faiyum of the second century A.D., one Chaereon wrote to one Apollonius, "Seal the wheat and the barley," that is, the sacks containing the wheat and the barley. A sealed sack was duly authenticated. The sender had done his part as a capable and honest man of business. So "I have sealed this fruit" must mean "I have duly forwarded it," "I have acted in a regular and honorable way."

(4) 1 Cor. 6: 1, "Having a matter against his neighbor." The word for "matter" is often found in the Faiyum papyri in the sense of "lawsuit."

(5) Col. 2: 14, "The bond." A very common word in this sense in the papyri. Many of these "bonds" have been preserved, and some of them are crossed to show that the obligation has been cancelled.

(6) Several papyri contain the word "elder" or "presbyter" in association with the word "priest." Egyptian heathenism knew of "elder priests." May not the use of the term have facilitated the transformation of the apostolic "elder" or "presbyter" into the priest of later times? The rise of sacerdotalism in the Christian Church may have been aided by pagan terminology.

(7) 1 Peter 1: 7, James 1: 3, "The proof of your faith." The word for "proof" is found again and again in the papyri of "good gold," gold which has stood the test. So here the word may mean "what is genuine in your faith." This interpretation makes the words of Peter far more intelligible.

(8) 1 Peter 2: 2, "The spiritual milk which is without guile." The Greek for "without guile" occurs in a papyrus of unadulterated wheat. So it is not improbable that it was used of pure milk.

(9) Rev. 1: 10, "The Lord's day." The word for "Lord's," the word from which our word "church" is usually supposed to be derived, is found in the papyri in the sense of "belonging to the emperor." Now it seems to be proved that the first day of a month was known in some parts of the Roman Empire as "the Augustan day," or "the day of the emperor." It is not possible that the early Christians may have been unconsciously influenced by this custom when they called the first day of the week "the Lord's day?" They named the first day of the month after the visible earthly ruler, the first day of the week after the invisible King and Saviour in the heavens.

Of course these studies are quite independent of the latest finds, but they give some idea of the material provided by the latter as well as by the papyri discovered some time ago. There is a very wide field for study in these non-literary documents, and there is every reason to believe that they will see the means of pouring a flood of New Testament thought and dictum.—*The Christian World*.

God's Unspeakable Gift.

By J. H. GARRISON

It is not at all strange that Christmas should come to be regarded as a day of gifts. It is in the nature of the day that giving should be associated with it. It is forever linked with the birth of Christ, God's greatest gift to the world. It is this great fact that underlies the spirit of generosity and kindness which characterises the day. It is, indeed, a hard and selfish nature that thrills with no generous impulse on the approach of Christmas. There is about the day a genial atmosphere that thaws out, to some extent, the coldest nature. It is as if a warm breath from the tropics had blown over the frozen regions of the north. Of all the festivals of the year, this brings most cheer and gladness to the hearts of the many. The interpretation of this fact is to be found in the meaning and significance of God's greatest gift to the world on Christmas day.

It is characteristic of love to give. The lover is the greatest giver. God is love. He is the bountiful Giver. Giving is the measure and manifestation of love. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. In this royal gift, all others are included. If God gave us his Son, what will he withhold from his children? Let us pause to consider some of the things included in this gift.

1. *A new conception of God.* Christ brought to the world a higher and worthier conception of the character of God. He unveiled to us the loving heart of the infinite One. He showed us the Father. He made known to us the real character of God as it could only be manifested in a personality embodied in the flesh. Jesus told us of a father in heaven who is more willing to give good gifts to his children, than earthly parents can be to bestow gifts on their children. He told us that his Father loved men—even sinful men—so well, that He gave his only begotten Son to save them. He said his Father was deeply concerned in all that relates to human welfare, that he takes note of our struggles, our misfortunes, our burdens, and that even the very hairs of our head are numbered. God gave to humanity his Son, and his Son gave to humanity a Father in heaven. What royal gifts are these!

2. *A new conception of man.* The old book of Genesis had told the race that man was made in the image of God, but the full significance of that startling fact was never realised until Christ came into the world in the form of a man. It was when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, that men learned for the first time the sublime possibilities of our human nature. Without wealth, without the learning of the world, without social prestige, without the assistance of the great and mighty, by the inherent power of a true and unvitiated manhood, indwelt by the divine Spirit, he resisted the temptations of Satan, the allurements of the world, and, treading the lowly path of self-sacrifice in ministering to others, he rose from poverty and obscurity, and from the world's scorn and contempt, to be the mightiest among the mighty and to be given a name that is above every other name. He taught us that God is our Father, and that all men are his children. He taught, not only the fatherhood of God, but the sonship and brotherhood of

man. This new conception of man, which Christ brought into the world, is revolutionising society, governments, industrial systems and theological creeds. It is destined yet to work out important changes in constitutions, overthrow dynasties, discrown royal tyrants and place the sceptre of power in the hands of the people.

3. *A new conception of religion.* It follows, unavoidably, that with a new conception of God and a new conception of man, there must come a new conception of religion. Religion has to do with the relation between God and man and grows out of such relation. Religion under the law, as interpreted by the Scribes and Pharisees, had degenerated into outward ceremonials. Orthodoxy, among the Jews, when Christ came, consisted chiefly in strictly adhering to the traditions of the elders. Christ taught a wholly different conception of religion. It was something inward rather than outward. It was spiritual rather than ceremonial. It had to do with the principles of truth and righteousness rather than with traditions and customs. It sought to purify the life by purifying the heart. Christ taught and practised a religion that included within its scope the whole race, and contained hope for the lowest and most degraded of men. He opened up the possibilities of a new birth and a new life of freedom for all the struggling bond-servants of sin. Unlike the Rabbins of his time he placed the emphasis upon the vital and fundamental things, instead of upon the outward and ceremonial. His religion exalted the lowly and the humble, and brought down the high and the haughty, and placed humanity upon a common level before God. He laid stress upon the duties growing out of our relations to our fellowmen, and we are indebted to him and rendering acceptable service to God.

4. *A new conception of the kingdom of God.* The kingdom which Christ came to establish was "not of the world." In that respect it antagonised the popular conception of what that kingdom was to be, which prevailed in his time. It was not to be a government of outward pomp and power like the empire of the Cæsars or of Alexander or Cyrus, or even like that of David or of Solomon. It was to be, and is, a spiritual kingdom, having for its domain the spiritual nature of man, and through that regulating his conduct. It is an internal power, working outward, not an external power working inward. It consists not in meats and drinks or other ceremonial regulations, but in righteousness, in joy and in the Holy Spirit. It is not what the Jewish people expected it to be—a kingdom of this world, regulating religion in harmony with Jewish traditions; neither is it what many Christians have supposed it to be—a divine power for the individual man, adapted only to the religious side of his nature, and having no relation to business, politics, government and social life. The kingdom of God is the divine government adapted to men in all their relationships and manifold activities. It seeks to bring governments, politics, institutions, laws, customs, commerce, and all the forms of industry and amusement, under its benign influence. In a word it seeks to purify all the relationships of life, and to introduce a golden age in which the will of God shall be done on earth as in heaven.

5. *A new era of hope.* The world's heart was heavy with despair. It was sinking under the weight of sin and woe. Neither Jewish law, nor Roman government, nor Greek philosophy, could lift the race out of the mire of its moral corruption and start it on an upward career. On this night of the world's woe there shone the star of Bethlehem. Amid the darkness of despair there came the sublime Optimist, Jesus of Nazareth. He believed in man and in the triumphant power of righteousness. He saw the divine image in man, marred though it was, and appealed to it. He overcame sin, conquered the grave, put his foot on the neck of the tyrant Death, and pointed the race to a glorious future. He showed man his true worth and inspired humanity with a new hope. His gospel is a divine potency for overturning Satan's empire, and making men free. He is the leader of a new humanity. His example and teaching have changed the face of the world. Hope sings its triumphant songs wherever his cross has become the harbinger of victory. All who believe on him look for a new heaven and a new earth where-in dwelleth righteousness. Heathenism abroad and materialism at home shall give way before the advance of his victorious banner. His loyal legions are marching forward under the inspiration of an all-conquering hope. The lowly sons of toil, struggling in the vale of poverty, have heard the notes of the angel-song, the prelude to the anthem of the world's redemption, and, catching up the sweet refrain, have filled their cabins and hovels and work-shops with the music of hope. The Star of Bethlehem has become the Star of Hope in the sin-burdened world.

If these be some of the elements that enter into God's "unspeakable gift," why should Christmas not be a day of unspeakable gladness? Why should not every believing heart open its door, wider still, for a royal welcome to the Christ, who brings with him such munificent gifts? Blessed be the hearts, this Christmas tide, that offer hospitable welcome to God's Christmas gift—his only begotten Son, our only Saviour and King!

How to Spend Christmas.

W. T. MOORE.

Very few will seriously contend that Christmas is now spent as it ought to be. Indeed, it may be questioned whether the holiday season is an advantage at all. In any case there is certainly room for improvement; and consequently I do not hesitate to make some suggestions in reference to this matter.

1. It ought to be a period of rest. Certainly no labor should be performed which can be easily avoided. The American people give too much time to work. If the old proverb be true that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," then there ought to be a great many dull boys in the United States; at any rate a great many men; for there is no country in the world where there is such a constant strain upon the intellectual and physical energies as the United States. It may be that the Mosaic legislation is not adapted to the conditions of our modern life; but all the same, I cannot help thinking that much of that legislation is

at least suggestive as to what would be best for the American people. The Israelites were not only prohibited from labor on the Sabbath, but every seven years was a Sabbath year, when labor was practically discontinued for twelve months. Besides these restrictions, the Hebrews had frequent holidays, or days of commemoration, when all labor ceased throughout the entire land.

In most countries of Europe there is much more attention paid to holidays than in this country. In England the hours of labor for the working man are generally limited to eight or ten, while there are four Bank holidays during the year, in addition to the Christmas season, and several other periods when labor is suspended. Besides these specified times, nearly every person spends several weeks in every year at the seaside or at some other place of recreation. In short, rest is regarded as of quite as much importance as work. No doubt each has its proper place, and consequently neither can be neglected without incurring the risk of disaster. Hence, if for no other reason than the one intimated, I would strongly favor the Christmas season.

2. *Christmas ought to be free from dissipation.* Rejoicing does not necessarily involve an illegitimate indulgence of the appetite. Gluttony if not a sin is at least a crime, for no man has a right to slay his stomach any more than to slay his fellowmen. In this sense gluttony is both a sin and a crime. The excessive use of ardent spirits is only one way of showing our disregard for the laws of health. But both eating and drinking have entirely too prominent a place during our Christmas holidays. Many people seem to think that the main purpose of these holidays is to furnish an opportunity to gormandize. This is surely a perversion of the right use of Christmas. No doubt one of the main features of this occasion is the reunion of the family; and it is difficult to have this reunion without accompanying feasts. Now these feasts may be well enough in their proper place, and when they are legitimately guarded against excesses; but certainly they ought to be carefully watched, and especially at such a time as the Christmas holidays. Indeed, there is a danger that the American people will "go daft" on the matter of eating and drinking. It has come to pass that it is next to impossible to secure a large attendance at most of our churches during the week days without some kind of attraction is offered to the stomach. Oysters and coffee, or ice cream and cake will bring together a crowd where the songs of Zion, the prayers of God's people, or even spirited religious addresses would utterly fail to "draw." Surely there is need of a change in these habits, and the time has undoubtedly come when Christmas at least should not contribute in the maintenance of this sensuous tendency. I do not believe in asceticism at any time, and I would be far from wishing our Christmas holidays to become repulsive in their character rather than attractive; but at the same time I believe that they can be made attractive by providing enjoyment of a higher character than those which appeal mainly to our animal nature. Let us emphasise the social element as much as possible, and especially let us make our home life as beautiful as

possible, for it is from the home circle that goes out the best influence that nurtures our national life.

3. *I believe that our Christmas holidays ought to have a much more distinctive religious flavor than they usually have.* If there is any meaning in Christmas at all then the occasion should be used to honor Christ. The very object of the season is to celebrate his advent into the world; and surely our recognition of the day ought not to be out of harmony with its character. No doubt one reason why the religious character of Christmas has been practically neglected in this country is because many do not believe that the twenty-fifth day of December represents the birthday of Christ, and consequently they feel that any religious observance of the day is a sort of acceptance of a fraud; but in our judgment it does not matter much as to the exactness of the chronology. Nor is it material whether it is a Roman Catholic institution or had its origin in some other way. My point is a practical one. If the time is celebrated at all, then I hold that it should have a decided religious flavor. If we want to make our protest it should be done by refusing to recognise Christmas in any way whatever. But if we accept the general custom then we ought to use it in the best possible manner to advance the kingdom of Christ. Services should be held in all the churches, and throughout the whole period of the holidays Christians should use every opportunity to make the people of the world acquainted with the character of him whose advent is being celebrated. When the air is full of Christmas bells it is then a good time to fill the hearts of the people with the salvation which is through Christ.—*Christian Evangelist.*

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The Home.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
—Joshua 24: 15.

Hidden.

AARON FRINCE ATEN.

The treasures of the earth are deeply hid
Down in the depths, or the waters 'mid.
The golden seams that to men appear
Are the earnest of wealth that is not here.
Down, far down do the treasures lie
Beneath where the picks of the miners ply.
We can gather only the grains of gold,
While the mountains of metal are yet untold.
The diamond that glows with a flash of fire
And kindles the spark of a deep desire,
Is only one from a cave filled deep
Far down where the swirling waters sweep.
So human thought, though a treasure rare,
Is only a grain that is flashing fair—
A grain of gold from celestial source
That is stranded here in its onward course.
The love that stirs in the finite deep
Far away from the infinite fountain's sweep,
Is only a drop that descends to earth
To tell of its Author's wondrous worth.
And, too, this being that boasts its might,
And feels the flowing of earth's delight,
Is the offspring small of the glorious One,
Whose dwelling place is the Central Sun.

—*Christian Evangelist*

The Little Drummer's Last Call.

A pathetic story of the Civil War was related by the corporal of an Illinois regiment who was captured by the Confederates at Wilson's Creek, and is repeated in "Women of the War."

The day before this regiment was ordered by General Lyons to march towards Springfield, the drummer of the company fell ill. There was no one to take his place, and while the captain was wondering how he should supply the lack, a pale sorrow-stricken woman appeared at his tent door, begging an interview. She brought with her a little boy of twelve or thirteen years, whom she wished to place in the regiment as drummer-boy. Her husband had been killed in the service, and she thought that the boy, who was eager to "join the army," might earn something toward the support of the family.

"Captain," she said, after the boy had been accepted, "he won't be in much danger, will he?"

"No, I think not," replied the officer. "We shall be disbanded in a few weeks, I'm confident."

The new drummer soon became a favorite, and there was never a feast of fruit or other hardly procured dainties that "Eddie" did not get his share first. The soldiers were stirred by the child's enthusiastic devotion, and declared that his drumming was different from that of all the other drummers of the army!

After the engagement at Wilson's Creek, where the Federals were defeated, Corporal B., who had been thrown from his horse, found himself lying concealed from view near a clump of trees. As he lay there with his ear to the ground, he heard the sound of a drum, distinct but rather faint. In a moment he recognised the stroke of Eddie, the

drummer-boy, and hastened towards the spot whence the sound proceeded. In a clump of bushes propped against a tree, he found the boy. His drum was hanging from a scrub within reach, and his face was deadly pale.

"O corporal," said he, "I am so glad you came! Won't you give me a drink of water, please!"

The corporal ran to a little stream close by and brought the child a draught. Just at this moment there came an order for the retreat, and the corporal turned to go.

"Don't leave me," said the little drummer, "I can't walk. See!" and he pointed to his feet.

The corporal saw with horror that both feet had been shot off by a cannon-ball.

"He said the doctors could cure them," continued the boy, pointing to the dead body of a Confederate soldier who lay beside him. "He was shot all to pieces, but he crawled over here and—tied—my legs up—so they would—wouldn't bleed so!" And Eddie closed his eyes wearily.

The corporal's eyes were blinded by a mist of tears as he looked down. The Confederate soldier, shot to death, and in the agonies of the last struggle, had managed to take off his suspenders, and bind the boy's legs above the knees!

As the corporal bent down to raise the child, a body of Confederate troops came up and he was a prisoner. With a sob in his voice, he told the story, and the Southern officer tenderly lifted the wounded drummer on his own horse, swinging the drum before him. When the little cavalcade reached camp "Eddie" was dead, but the little drummer's last call had aroused the noblest feeling in the heart of one who was his foe, one whose last act was an effort to save and comfort the boy-enemy who was faithful to his duty.

A Happy Festal Day.

LOUISE RITTER.

The angels' glad song of good tidings is again set to sweet music and reverberates throughout the world in harmonious chorus as this greatest of all festival days approaches. The new-born King is ever a new-born King to the precious soul that is opened to receive the annunciation, and as the shepherds of old were directed to find the Jesus, and with unwavering fidelity pursued the course directed, so high heaven would direct us to find Jesus.

A very significant fact we would notice in this salvation narrative. The annunciation was first made to simple, honest men of lowly occupation. Why not to kings on thrones or to those in high walks of life? God never calls a soul to any important trust unless that soul is already at his post of duty and in a condition for something higher. This miracle of ages must find its first announcement in the heart of the meek and lowly. The soul that is attuned to nature, which makes him akin to God, in his inmost communion harmonises with the eternal. Thus it is fitting that the Babe in the manger should be visited and revered by the shepherds of Bethlehem.

The way is open for all to find Jesus, and he tells us that we shall find him if we search

for him with all the heart. May we put our heart in the search and find him? He is ever ready to be found; and as Zaccheus of old sought to find Jesus, may we seek until we find him. Then the chorus will be enlarged and the song of everlasting salvation be sung until he appears to call his children his own.

May he be born anew in our heart each day as time rolls on, giving the very best to him, serving him constantly.

Mrs. Mulcrary's Christmas Pig.

The feud between Widow Mulcrary and the railroad began on the day that Patsy stayed at home from school to mind the geese.

"Patsy," she had said that morning; "I have to go to Mrs. Gray's to do washing the day, and I'm thinking you will stay at home and mind the geese while they feed a bit. There's fine good grass in the field beyond, and it's a shame to shut them up while it lasts. Jamesie, b'y, ye'll be telling the teacher."

"But what'll I say mither?" asked Jamesie.

Mrs. Mulcrary pondered a moment for a speech that would be sufficiently dignified. "Say is it?" she replied. "Just say that Mrs. Mulcrary has the honor to present her compliments to Miss Williams; that it is distasteful to her intirely, but circumstances are such that she's needin' the services of her son Patrick for one day, and would she be so good as to oblige her wid excusing the same."

The length of this and the elegance of the language were too much for Jamesie, but he struggled manfully to repeat it. "Mrs. Mulcrary presents her son Patrick to Miss Williams. The services is distasteful to her intirely, and the compliments are such—sure, mither, what does it all mane?"

Mrs. Mulcrary was holding up both hands in mingled amazement and laughter at the strange jumble into which Jamesie had thrown her studied language. "Did ye hear the bosthoo!" she exclaimed. "Indade, I don't know what that manes meself. Here, Jamesie' b'y, sit on me knee till I tell it t'ye again." Mrs. Mulcrary presents her compliments," she repeated. But Jamesie could not master the large words, and finally the mother kissed him and put him down with, "There, laddie, don't ye mind. Indade, it's not the words at all that matter. It's just the smile in yer eye whin ye say thim. Just tell her that Patsy has to help the mither the day."

So Jamesie, repeating the message to himself that he might not forget it, trotted soberly to school; Mrs. Mulcrary, with parting injunction to Patsy about the geese, went to her work, and Patsy drove the great gander, Finn-ma-cool, and his flock up into the meadow that stretched from the house up to the railroad cut, through which the trains sped roaring down the grade toward the city.

"Don't let thim stray away from ye, Patsy, avick," she had said; "and have an eye for the pig the crather; he'll be coming fat now for the Christmas killing, and I mistrust he'll be getting on the track if he can do that same, for sure the fence is that bad that you could t'row feather pillows through it. Mind ye, Patsy, now, if anything happens to the

pig we'll have no Christmas dinner."

The roving habits of the Christmas pig were due largely to the leniency of Mrs. Mulcrary. She had been but two years in America, and she had been brought up in a country where the pig like the geese and the chickens, has free run of the farm; so here it was her custom to allow him a daily outing. This the pig learned to expect, and if not loosed at the usual time would often get out himself.

On the death of her husband the widow had pluckily taken up the battle of life. She understood the management of geese and pigs, the planting of potatoes, and all the little thrifts and economies that go to make up Irish country life; she worked hard at washing, and so she kept the wolf from the door although he lurked never far away.

Patsy tended the geese for a long time with exemplary care, restrained the belligerency of Finn-ma-cool, who was rightly named after the Irish champion, and kept a watchful eye on the pen where the indignant pig grumbled to himself at being shut up all the long day.

But by-and-by the boy's attention wandered to other things. He wondered at the sturdy beauty of the hawkbit and yarrow that stood still erect in the meadow, unmindful of the autumn frosts, and finally he peered into the woodchuck hole to see if he could see anything of the occupants. In this position he did not bear the rush of the day-freight that was coming down grade through the cut and by the meadow.

But the warlike Finn-ma-cool heard it and took it, as he took almost anything as a challenge. As the big "mogul" roared through the cut, the gander lifted his head and with a scream of rage flew over the low fence at the train, followed by the entire flock.

Big Ben, the six-foot engineer of the day-freight, said afterwards that it was one of the most trying experiences that he had ever had. The train was going at high speed, and the big birds came banging against cab and pilot like a bombardment, breaking the glass on both sides and fairly spattering the whole front of the engine with bits of goose-flesh and feathers.

As the train went on, the fireman, recovering from his first alarm, looked back and burst into laughter at the grotesque demonstrations of grief and rage of the little Irish lad by the side of the track.

Some hours later as the big engine slid into the freight-yard at the end of the yard and stopped, the switch-tender held up his hands in amazement. "Millia-murther, Big Ben!" he exclaimed. "Look at the feathers on your engine, man! Did ye kill a feather bird or run over a flock of angels, or what is it?"

"See here, Donovan," growled Big Ben, good-naturedly, "you're no real Irishman, you that came from the North and don't know a Kerry snow-storm when you see it! It hasn't had time to melt off the engine yet."

And so with jest and laughter the story of the slaughter of Mrs. Mulcrary's misguided geese went the rounds of the trainmen, and was presently forgotten.

Poor Patsy! Not a single bird in the flock remained alive, and even the bodies of most of them could not be found. His

grief and dismay was great, and when his mother came home she found him lying face downwards on the floor, sobbing as if his heart would break, while the wayward Christmas pig wandered at his own sweet will about the garden, restrained by some mystery of providence from going through the fence—which, like most railroad fences, was not "pig tight,"—on the track to meet the death of Finn-ma-cool.

With much petting and many soft-voiced "acushlas" and "mavourneens," the widow drew from Patsy the story of the day's disaster, and how it was the day freight that had done the evil deed. Indignation mingled with her sorrow, and when Patsy told of the jeering laughter of the fireman it roused all the Celt in her blood, and she called down voluble disaster on Big Ben and his fireman.

Thus it was that as the train roared out of the cut the next day the two were much amused to see standing on the track a buxon and defiant widow, who shook her plump fist and hurled after them a torrent of denunciation in the purest Erse. Neither could have understood this if they could have heard, and Big Ben was too busy with his engine to give more than a passing glance, but the fireman leaned over with a miraculous grin and shouted in his ear:

"See here, Ben, I think this is getting serious. The widow is waving her hand at you." And Big Ben, who was one of the bravest and shyest man, on the road, blushed red under the grime of the cinders.

With no geese to sell or to eat, Thanksgiving day lay bare at the Mulcrarys'; but they had not been long enough in the country to care much for the Puritan festival, so their customary frugality on that day did not trouble them.

"Don't ye mind for the Yankee feast, laddies," Mrs. Mulcray said to the boys; "the pig'll be fat for the Christmas, and it's a fine big dinner I'll be having for ye."

Now ever as the Christmas pig grew in size cunning increased within him, and to escape from his pen became his daily habit. Twice a day the big mogul engine went by with the day-freight, thundering down the grade afternoons and climbing it with many puffs and much labor early each morning, and often Big Ben looked from the corner of his eye at the widow as she bustled about the place.

"I declare," he said to the fireman one day; I'm sorry we busted those geese. Good mind to go down there my day off and make it right with her. It's only a matter of a few dollars, and it's likely she aint too well off."

The fireman grinned maliciously. "Thought you would be looking for an excuse to call on the widow," he said; and Big Ben blushed again and let his good intentions die on the threshold of enterprise.

There came a foggy day with a cold drizzle of rain. The rails were wet and slippery and as the train boomed through the cut Big Ben was behind time and in not too good humor. He was letting the train go down the grade to make up time, and was keenly watching the track ahead, meanwhile. Then, of a sudden, he caught his breath and cut off steam, while the fireman snatched at the whistle cord and blew for

brakes, and then pulled a succession of sharp toots.

On the track in front of the day-freight was the whole Mulcrary family, including the Christmas pig. He had pushed his way through the fence unseen. Now a boy was tugging at each ear of piggy, while the widow belabored him with a stick. But "the crather" stood with four legs braced the four quarters of the universe, and was budding not one inch.

It was a bad moment for Big Ben and the fireman but it was a brief one. At the first toot of the whistle the widow dropped her stick with a scream, snatched a boy under each arm and hustled them off the track into the field with a rapidity not at all astonishing considering the circumstances. Then Big Ben and the fireman settled firmly in their seats for the shock, as the engine backed by the long train of loaded cars, slid down the wet rails and over the motionless form of the obstinate Mulcrary pig.

There was one brief squeal, drowned in the roar of the wheels, and before the widow was sure of her own safety and that of the boys the Christmas pig was ground to fragments under the rush of Big Ben's train.

Ben was of the opinion that they had done it, at least so far as the widow was concerned, and they certainly had roused her grief and indignant anger to the highest pitch. Her smouldering sorrow for the loss of her geese was fanned to fresh flame by this disaster. Then there was her own narrow escape and that of the boys. It seemed like an insult that Big Ben's train should be so regardless of their safety.

And the Christmas pig! His fragments strewed the track for rods. With an outburst of grief and anger she covered her head with her apron and fled sobbing to the house, while the two boys clung to her skirts and mingled their grief with hers in vociferous outcry. But the widow was not one to weep long. Next morning, before the day-freight had come puffing up the grade, she had gathered up the scattered remnants of the Christmas pig, and while the boys were at school she worked all day over the fire frying out the stained and grimy fragments. Before night she had a big kettle of lard.

"What's that for, mither?" asked Patsy, when he came home. "Sure its not fit for ateing."

"Indade, then, it's not for ateing, but for bating," replied the widow, grimly, and would say no more about it.

Next morning, as the day-freight came puffing up the grade by the place where the obstinate pig had met its death, the big drivers on the engine suddenly slipped and whirled without clinging to the rail at all, and it was only by fairly exhausting the sand-box that the train passed on.

The next morning it was worse yet; the wheels whirled and slipped and whirled again, till Ben and the fireman look at one another in amazement.

"What's the matter with this place?" shouted Ben.

The fireman shook his head. "It's bewitched," he said; "we killed the geese, we smashed the pig and nearly went off the iron, and we like to run over the widow and the boys right here; and now its as much as

ever we can do to get up the grade. It beats the Dutch!"

In the gray of the next morning Mrs. Mulcrary stood by the track with an empty bucket in her hands, and looked sadly at the two long lines of rails that stretched along, black and frostless, although the morning was sharp and the fields were white.

Then she went slowly back to the house. Her head hung low, and she was already sorry for what she had done. The longing for revenge was not sweet, after all, and for the first time for many a day she was sober and listless about her morning's work.

Meanwhile, with good head of steam, the day-freight came puffing up the grade. Then in the same place came the slipping and whirling of the drivers, and after pushing ahead with lessening momentum the train came fairly to a stop.

Big Ben glowered with rage. He pulled the throttle wide and sent the steam roaring through the cylinders till the big wheels whirled with lightning speed, but they would not grasp the rails; and the train, its momentum once lost, began to slide back.

When the brakes at length brought the train to a standstill on the grade, Big Ben and his fireman sprang out and hurried to that part of the track where the trouble lay. Then they looked at one another.

"This is to pay us for killing the pig," said the fireman.

"Yes," answered Ben; "the company ought to have fixed it up with her for that, and for the geese too—look at the way the fence is neglected! Come get aboard here. We must get out of this before we stall the passenger."

But getting out of the way was not so easy. In vain they tried to pass with a rush; the grade was sufficient to overcome the momentum, and they invariably fell back again. Besides, backing and going ahead with a heavy freight, and taking all the precautions prescribed by the rules, takes time, and by and by Ben heard a whistle and saw the passenger crawling carefully up. Again he made a fierce attempt to climb the grade and again he fell back.

The conductor came walking forward. "What did you break?"

"Nothing broken, sir," replied Ben, politely but briefly; "can't seem to get up the grade, that's all."

"Steam low?" asked the conductor, looking at the fireman with tentative severity.

The fireman flushed and answered for himself. "Steam's right up to the top notch, sir." Always there on the day-freight," he said.

There was another whistle, and Ben looked down the line and gave a sigh of disgust at his own ill luck. An engine was pulling slowly up to the rear of the passenger with a single handsome car. A man sprang lightly off the car and came rapidly forward, and the passenger conductor whistled low.

"The division superintendent!" he exclaimed. "Well, you're in for it."

The delay was no fault of Ben's, but he could not help feeling uncomfortable as the little man looked sharply at him through gold-bowed spectacles and said, severely, "Well, my man, why don't you go ahead?"

"I can't get up the grade," answered Ben; "the iron is greased."

The magnate looked at Ben as if that certainly must be his fault. "The iron is greased!" he repeated. "Hum!" Then briskly: "Well, well, we can't wait here. Send men enough ahead to wipe off the rails. Have them sand them thoroughly and go ahead. You ought to have done that in the first place. The other train and mine will follow and push you if the wheels don't hold."

A short time after this, Mrs. Mulcrary, peering from behind closed shutters, saw the long freight, the passenger train, and the superintendent's engine and car pass in long procession up the grade, with much slipping and whirling of drivers and gritting and grinding of the rails. Her revenge was complete. She had made trouble for Big Ben and the fireman, and she was heartily sorry for what she had done.

The two were called up before the division superintendent next day and questioned. An agent of the road also called on Mrs. Mulcrary and got her version of the killing of the geese and the Christmas pig; he also noted her evident poverty and frugality, and being a man of good heart, did not fail to lay stress on this in his report. Moreover, the fence had been neglected, he said. And here the matter rested until two days before Christmas.

As Big Ben left his engine that day he was called to the office and entered the august presence of the superintendent with much trepidation. Nor was he reassured by the apparent severity of the little man behind the gold-bowed spectacles. As he told the fireman afterward, the interview was a good deal like a boiler inspection, in which he was the boiler. The closing remarks of the superintendent deserve recording.

"Something must be done about this affair, Mr. Budson," he said. "We can't have people along the line interfering with the trains. We shall have to make an example, sir. Now, you were concerned in this matter and you shall have a share in the retribution." The superintendent stopped, and Ben began to wonder if he could get a train on another road after being discharged from this one.

Then the magnate went on: "Therefore to-morrow you will be relieved from duty"—Big Ben straightened up—"for one day only, and I shall ask you as a favor to see this Mrs. Mulcrary and represent to her the harm her actions might do. You can use such arguments as you see fit, but"—handing Ben an unsealed envelope—"I think you will find this something that will be quite effective."

There was a suspicion of a twinkle behind the superintendent's spectacles as Big Ben went out, still in doubt as to what had happened to him. But his doubts were cleared up when he opened the envelope. It contained a crisp bank-note and a paper on which he read, "For the Mulcrary's Christmas dinner."

It was a large and a heavy basket that Big Ben, blushing, but backed by the boldness of firemen, bore to home of the Widow Mulcrary the day before Christmas, and it contained not only the material for a good Christmas dinner, but many other things in

the way of Christmas greeting for the family.

The fireman was often questioned as to what Big Ben said to the widow in reproof for interfering with the traffic of the road, and he always went off into peals of laughter at the recollection, but he never told. Evidently it was effective, for the widow has done nothing of the sort again. Perhaps Ben's calls, which they say he now makes without the backing of the fireman, keep her pleasantly inclined toward railway matters in general.

The Mulcrarys had the best Christmas in their experience, and it was one great surprise. On Christmas morning the widow, waking early, refused to believe her ears. Then she dressed hurriedly and hastened to the pen behind the house, where she held up her hands in astonishment, for there, grumbling away to himself, was the facsimile of the Christmas pig.

Both Ben and the fireman profess great ignorance in regard to this pig, and Patsy and Jamesie are firm in the belief that Santa Claus brought him.—*Youth's Companion*.

Poets' Corner.

So will we sing and praise thy power.—Psalm 21: 13

Reflections at Midnight.

A New Year's Offering.

W. T. MOORE.

I sit on meditation's dreamy couch,
Listening to the night wind's wail which breaks
And ruffles up the quiet breast of night,
Which otherwise seems wrapt in silent dreams.
I'm thinking of the year that's gone; and as
That cold grey light streams through my window pane
And seems to chill the promised cheer it brings
With freezing wavelets from the boreal climes—
I ask my soul this truth: Was not the year,
Which now sleeps in the tomb of ages past,
Mixed half with bright and cheerful rays of hope
And half with gloomy darkness of despair?
Each heart that's felt discords of death pass o'er
The sweetest strains of music in the soul's
Grand Oratorio of life knows well
How much of earnest, solemn truth I speak.

How calm and beautiful is Nature's sleep!
Yet time moves on, nor stops, nor stays for aught.
All round I hear the fleeting moments creep
With stealthy tread, as on the silent past
They lift their tiny, fairy feet, while back
The echo comes: gone from the earth forever.
But oh, how strange, and yet how surely true:
These moments all have left the firm impress
Of life in passing by, and hence upon
Their fragile forms, a picture deep is made
Of actions true or false, for weal or woe,
In that great day when God shall judge all men
And give to each his portion, great or small,
According as his earthly life has been.

'Tis true these moments, now in crystal form,
Will then appear as jewels in the crown
Of him to whom these joyful words are said:
"Well done, thou good and faithful child of God:
Come, enter in, and sit at my right hand."
But oh, what gloomy spectres will arise
From out the dismal caverns of the past
To him who hears the awful doom pronounced:
"Depart, unworthy soul, I know you not,
Take up thy place in outer darkness vast."
Each moment, then, while trembling in that poise,

Which midway holds the future and the past,
Should feel the light of virtue on it fall,
Reflected from the acts of lives well spent:
For only thus will present cares and toils
Their meaning speak and compensation find,
As in the record of each passing day
The tale is told of struggling souls.

Some say

That years are many days well measured off,
That life comes up within these years and fills
A space in time, and therefore time is life.
But now if honest truth does speak in that,
Then her own voice truth surely does not bear:
Else must not life with time lie down to sleep
Nor rise again, since time shall be no more?
But who does not within his own soul feel
The weight of life immortal pressing on
The dreamy outward edge of finite being,
Where longings uttered half are pleading for
Some recognition of their grave request?
Or who in solemn silence does not sit
And listen to the hymn of consciousness,
Which from the darkest hour of death rings out
The clear, sweet notes: We sleep, but cannot die?

But life, as measured here by time, is short
Indeed! What is a year? 'Tis but a breath
Of weary life breathed from the heart of vast
Eternity. Our mortal state is but
An ebbing wave rolled from the tide of time.
I stand between the future and the past,
And try to estimate the worth of each
One, in history, points to tears and blood,
And shows a rent in human faith which God's
Own Word can scarcely keep e'en hope itself
From falling through; but on prophetic page
The other throws a brilliant light, and shows
The lovely robes of white which saints shall wear;
So high above the world, now draped in black,
We feel that God will keep them there untouched,
Unstained by mortal strife. And when the day,
For which all other days were made, shall come;
When time shall be no more; the Past, with all
Its dark background of woe, will make our robes
But whiter still, our joy the more complete;
For every tear will show the place it washed,
And every pain will make a sad, sweet note
Within our song, which none but suffering souls
Can ever reach, for none know how these notes
To make but those who learn in bitter grief.

Future and Past! Words of immortal fame!
How can the finite mind reach to their length?
I'll not attempt a task so sure to fail;
But in the light of compromise (which seems
The light of heaven), I'll take the ends of each,
And welding them together, make the hour
Which now is passing by, and meekly strive
To use it so that God will say, "Thou good
And faithful servant, just and true, well done."
And as I lay one hand upon the head,
The hoary head of trembling bygone years,
And feel the other pressing close the warm
Bright cheek of coming days, all full of life,
I think my heart is quickened by the thought
That light comes out of darkness deep, and youth
Is always tripping close within the shades
Which age throws back upon her mournful path.
And as I thus hold on to each, in prayer
And praise I alternate my soul's deep love
To him who in the present now doth keep
My fitful, wayward life half reconciled
To hope and fear. While thus my ardent soul
Does homage to its parent and its love,
There come bright gleams of light from future years
That deck the dim horizon with the rays
Of life beyond the tomb. And then I think

I catch the perfume sweet of flowery fields
Beyond the swelling flood, as, floating on
The wings of faith, they come from new-born life,
Where resurrection morn unveils the past.

Now let me in this reverential mood
Close up the page on which my musings look,
And, shutting Nature down beneath the doors
Which Night has thus far kindly left ajar,
I'll wait for that Great Day when Present, Past
And Future joys shall be complete in him
Who is the resurrection and the life.

—Christian Evangelist.

The Star of Bethlehem.

AMAH TORREY HENDERSON.

'Twas night when Jesus came to earth
From out the skies
Angelic hosts announced his birth
From Paradise
A loving Father looked and smiled
Upon the little sleeping child
Sleeping so calmly, sweetly there
Upon the breast
Of his young mother, meek and fair
This all the rest
That ever from his humble birth
The suffering Saviour knew on earth.
'Twas night. Across Judea's plain
A heav'nly ray
Guided a wand'ring angel train
To where he lay
And, gazing on the child divine
The angel eyes with glory shine.
Swiftly that glory rose on high
O'er his poor bed,
And shone a star from out the sky
Above his head.
And then the glory shining ray
Guided the shepherds on their way.
'Twas night. And o'er a sin-cursed earth,
With rays divine,
Telling us of a Saviour's birth
That star will shine
Until from out the clouds and night
We enter heaven where all is light.
That lovely star will shine on thee
In sorrow's hour,
And guide thee safely. Thou wilt see
And know his power.
The shining light of angel eyes
Is beaming on thee from the skies.
Oh, lovely star of Bethlehem,
With rays divine,
Oh, peerless, shining, heavenly gem.
Thou, too, art mine.
Art mine to guide me on the way
To Christ, and home, and perfect day.

—Christian Standard.

Sisters' Department.

The Lord gave the word; the women that publish it
are a great host.—Psalms 68: 11 (N.V.)

Her Gift.

The minister's eyes swept with intense searching the apathetic faces of his stylish, worldly congregation. He had made an impassioned appeal for help in the support of a little Mission Church up among the mountains—a section where rough men and women knew scarcely anything of God and the re-

ligion of Christ. He had hoped to inspire the people with the spirit of giving, to make them feel that it was a sweet, blessed privilege, and he had failed. A sense of deep desolation crept over him.

"God help me," his lips muttered mutely. He could not see the bent figure of little crippled Maggie in the rear of the church—a figure that was trembling under the fire of his appeal.

"Lord Jesus," the little one was saying brokenly, "I ain't got nothin' to give. I want the people in the mountains to hear about my Saviour. O Lord, I ain't got nothin' ter—"

What was it that made the child catch her breath as though a cold hand had taken hold of her heart? "Yes, you have, Maggie," whispered a voice from somewhere, "you've got your crutch that was given ter you, and is worth a lot of shinin' dollars. You kin give up your best friend, what helps you to git into the park where the birds sing, and takes you to preachin' and makes your life happy."

"Oh, no, Lord," sobbed the child, choking and shivering. "Yes, yes I will. He gave more'n that for me."

Blindly she extended the polished crutch, and placed it in the hands of the deacon, who was taking up the scanty collection. For a moment the man was puzzled, then comprehending her meaning, he carried her crutch to the front of the church, and laid it on the front of the old pulpit. The minister stepped down from the platform, and held up the crutch with trembling hands. The sublimity of the renunciation unnerved him so that he could not speak for a moment.

"Do you see it my people?" he faltered at last, "little crippled Maggie's crutch—all that she has to make life comfortable? She has given it to the Lord, and you—"

There was a moment's silence. The people flushed and moved restlessly in their cushioned pews.

"Does anyone want to contribute to the mission cause the amount of money this crutch would bring, and give it back to the child who is so helpless without it?" the minister asked gravely.

"Fifty dollars," came the husky tones from the banker.

"Twenty-five."

"One hundred."

And so the subscribing went on, until papers equivalent to six hundred dollars were lightly piled over the crutch on the table.

"Ah! you have found your hearts. Thank God! Let us receive the benediction," almost whispered the minister, as he suddenly extended his hands, which were trembling with emotion. Little Maggie, absorbed in the magnitude of her offering and of the love which had prompted it, comprehended nothing that had taken place. She had no thought for the future of how she would reach her humble home, or of the days in which she would sit helpers in her chair, as she had once done. Christ had demanded her all, and she had given it with the blind faith of an Abraham. She understood no better when a woman's arm drew her into close embrace, and soft lips whispered in her ear, "Maggie dear, your crutch has made six hundred dollars for the Mission Church among the mountains, and has come

back to stay with you again. Take it, little one."

Like a flash of light there came a consciousness that in some mysterious way her gift had been accepted of God and returned to her, and with a cry of delight she caught the beloved crutch to her lonely heart, then smiling through her tears at the kind faces and reverential eyes, she hobbled out of the sanctuary.—Exchange.

The Nearest Duty.

My soul was stirred, I prayed: "Let me
Do some great work, so purely,
To right life's wrongs, that I shall know
That I have loved thee surely."
My lips sent forth their eager cry,
The while my heart beat faster,
"For some great deed to prove my love,
Send me, send me, my Master!"

From out the silence came a voice,
Saying: "If God thou fearest,
Rise up and do, the whole life through,
The duty that liest nearest.
The friendly word, the kindly deed,
Though small the act in seeming,
Shall in the end unto the soul
Prove mightier than thy dreaming.

"The cup of water to the faint,
Or rest unto the weary,
The light thou giv'st another's life,
Shall make thine own less dreary;
And boundless realms of faith and love
Will wait for thy possessing;
Not creeds, but deeds, if thou wouldst wis
Unto thy soul a blessing."
And so I wait with peaceful heart,
Content to do his pleasure,
Not caring if the world shall mock
At smallness of the measure;
Of thoughts, or deeds, or daily life,
He knows the true endeavor—
To do his will, to seek his face—
And he will fail me never.

—Sarah A. Gibb

Executive.

Mrs. J. Pittman presided, the following sisters engaging in prayer: Thurgood, Lyall senr., Kelson and J. Pittman. As the treasurer, Mrs. Walker, was going into the country, leave of absence was granted until Easter. The correspondence included a very interesting letter from Miss Thompson. It was resolved to hold a prayer and praise meeting on the first Friday in January, to which all sisters are invited. Resolved, "That £1 be given to Rescue Home." Mrs. Holdsworth was appointed Hospital Visitation Superintendent *pro. tem.* The Home Mission fund was reported to be in arrears £70. The Sisters were asked to do their utmost to make the annual collections as great a success as possible. Sunday School report showed three additions from school North Carlton, two Johnston-street. Footscray school reported to be in fine condition. Coppin-street doing well. South Melbourne has recovered itself. A report of the W.C.T.U. and Hawthorn Temperance meetings were given. Next meeting, January 6th, 1899.

Dorcas and Prayer Meetings.

The Committee visited North Fitzroy last month. The first hour is devoted to prayer,

praise, and reading the Word of God. Sister Chown is president, and Sister Souter secretary. They have a good attendance and have recently helped the church to the extent of £15. They held a Home Mission meeting at Sister Baird's during the month and arranged a church social.

(Mrs.) E. McL.

Mrs. Thurgood's Letter.

"There are moments in to-day,
God knows where,
When they who have a blessing
And can spare,
May confer as angels do,
Help to bring another through
A troubled day."

DEAR EXECUTIVE SISTERS,—Greeting! Here we come from another Convention—away down in the far south land, at Chattanooga, Tenn. We had been travelling about so much this summer we felt we could not be spared this time; but at our united auxiliary meeting the ladies said I ought to go for the work's sake, and a letter from one of our grand good preachers, inviting Mr. T. and wife to come and give an address in reference to our Pittsburgh work, decided us to go. So early on Monday, October 10th, we were off on an all-day journey through a lovely country. Met at the station 6 p.m., taken to a good home, and most hospitably entertained. Tuesday we gave a talk to the sisters on missionary lines. Then Mr. T. briefly outlined his work, and together we went through our "kinder" programme of "merry games and songs," to explain how we won the children to "something better than they had known." Wednesday morning early we were off to the great National Convention, passing through Lexington, Ky., en route, where our dear ones were at the station to give us a greeting. On Thursday the executive business meeting of our C.W.B.M. was called, and all matters were briskly and briefly attended to. No time was lost, and yet every plan and suggestion was listened to and considered in an orderly manner. At night a pleasant reception, and on Friday the regular session opened. Among other good things an address by Mrs. Jessie Brown Pounds was most excellent; subject, "The greatest woman in the world." Perhaps some of us wondered who it would be. Esther; who was willing to give up her life to save others; or those "who would lay down their own necks to save Paul! She said the women of "self-denial," of "unselfish service," were the greatest women in the world. We had seven missionary ladies with us, who gave most interesting accounts of their labors, and thrilling, touching incidents—real facts that drew us nearer to them in loving sympathy. We had fine addresses in reference to the "children in the home" and young people's work. Again the "bible chair" work in our large universities is doing a powerful work; many testimonies from students were mentioned. Saturday was given to receiving reports, resolutions, and more fine addresses. Sunday, after the service of the Lord's Supper—solemn impressive, where two thousand souls met to "remember him"—we had our hour of prayer at five o'clock, where every department of the C.W.B.M. was specially men-

tioned. At this hour a young girl offered herself as another missionary to India. She had just finished school with the one purpose of giving herself, time, talents—all to the service of the King. Thus closed our woman's session of the National Convention of '08. The American and Foreign Missionary Societies (of our brethren) continued all through the next week with tremendous interest; and now we are all back to our work, rejoicing in the progress of the past year, and hopefully considering the future. May we all grow stronger through effort to exalt the Christ at home and abroad, and may our young people rally round the standard with brave, bright helpfulness, welcoming the opportunity to serve. Yours for Christ and his cause.

ANTOINETTE K. THURGOOD.

1931 Fifth-av., Pittsburgh.

Selected Paragraphs.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.—Prov. 25: 11

We are not half happy enough over our Christianity. We need to chuckle more over it. Spurgeon was once out riding, and was laughing, as he went, at the top of his voice. A friend met him and asked the cause of his mirth. "Oh," answered the big-hearted Christian, "I was just thinking about 'My grace is sufficient.' I was thinking about how big grace is and how little I am."

There is nothing which will give a chance for rest to the over-tired nerves so surely as a simple religious faith in the overruling, wise, and tender Providence which has us in its keeping. It is in chafing against the conditions of our lives that we tire ourselves immeasurably. It is in being anxious about things which we cannot help that we often do the most of our spending. A simple faith in God, which practically and every moment and not only theoretically and on Sundays, rests on the knowledge that he cares for us at least as much as we care for those who are the dearest to us, will do much to give the tired nerves the feeling of the bird in its nest. Do not spend what strength you have like the clematis, in climbing on yourself, but lay hold on things which are eternal, and the peace of them will pass into your soul like a healing balm. Put yourself in the great, everlasting currents, and then you can rest on your oars, and let those currents bear you on their strength.—*Harper's Magazine*.

Don't be discouraged if your health is poor and your body undersized. Ability isn't measured by the pound, and men who couldn't put on their own clothes have governed empires. Dr. Gregory well says: "Many people who have made a mark in the world have been weak people, who made up for their weakness by strength of will. Florence Nightingale has been an invalid, shut up in a sick room during the greater part of her life. Mrs. Browning was a delicate woman with a baby's strength. You see how these two—one by exciting people to noble works, the other by noble songs—

have influenced girls and women of their time. It is said that Julius Cæsar was of delicate constitution, had painful headaches and fits of epilepsy, yet he became master of the world. Macaulay says of William of Orange that he was so weak as to be soon fatigued and was continually suffering pain; but the force of his will had never failed. Grand old Dr. Johnson, Alexander Pope, Robert Hall, and others, were men greatly afflicted, or with many drawbacks which their resolution overcame. One of the most spirited travellers of her day, Miss Isabella Bird, had less physical strength than ordinary women. Lord Nelson never went to sea without being sea-sick. The biography of greatness is full of records of people who nobly fought against their difficulties and said, 'I am resolved to do!' The triumphs of mankind are not triumphs of physical strength or mental genius, but of will."—*Christian Commonwealth*.

Of all the mistakes which mortal men make, none seems to us more pitiful than that of men passing along through life to its swift close, postponing until some future time the joy and blessedness that might be theirs to-day; walking under brazen skies instead of under a starlit dome that stretches away into the infinities; slaves to their daily tasks and in bondage to pursuits that minister only to their lower natures, when they might be freemen in Jesus Christ, rejoicing in the liberty of the children of God; moaning out lamentations because of their hardships, their burdens and their disappointments, instead of singing jubilant songs of triumph along the pilgrim way that leads to the delectable mountains; deluding themselves with the idea that sometime in the future will be a better time for them to open their souls to heaven's light and peace than to-day, instead of early entering into fellowship with God and walking all the way in the sunlight of his presence, their paths growing brighter until they enter the Celestial City. Let not this mistake be ours. Let us be admonished by this word of the apostle and to-day begin that larger and better life to which God is calling us and to which our souls in their higher and better moments respond.—*Christian Evangelist*.

Our Missions.

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.—Mark 16: 15 (N.V.)

Foreign.

THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA.

I thank you for this opportunity of standing before you to-night. It gives me great pleasure to stand before such a large audience, because it shows me that among the churches of Christ in South Australia there is indeed a great interest taken in the work in foreign lands. Now this evening I want to speak to you a little while about the religions of India. First of all Hinduism.

Hinduism is a system which no one can exactly define. It is a mixture of superstition and vile practices. The Hindoo is completely in the power of the Brahmin priest. I have been in homes where the

little widows have been brought out to bow to the priest. They first of all go down on their hands and knees, and then the priest puts his hands on their heads; this is to show that they are completely under his power. These Hindoos would drink the water that the priest had washed his feet in, and think that they would be cleansed from all their sins.

During my stay in India I paid a visit to Benares, one of their sacred cities. It is a most awful town, full of idols and all kinds of vice and wickedness. Some of the natives have said to me, "It is only because you are a Christian that you take any notice of this," but I have been told by travellers in India that if one of our most wicked countrymen paid a visit to that town he would never repeat one half of what he saw or heard there.

I once asked a Hindoo what would be the outcome of all this religiousness. He then told me that if a man lives a good life in this world he will be a stage higher in the next, and if he lives a bad life—well, he goes down instead of up. That is one of the reasons why a Hindoo is kind to animals, for he thinks the soul of his ancestors may be in the animal!

Another side of the question is that it makes the people callous and hard. I went into one house where a child was lying, dying of fever on the floor of the hut, and she was crying out for water, the mother was standing by apparently unmoved by the pleas of the child. I said to her, "Why don't you get the child a drink?" but she replied, "It is better that she should die than to live a life of misery."

There are 29,000 widows under the age of four years in India, all too young to know that they are married, and many of these, later in life, throw themselves down wells to escape the life which they have to live. And this is done in the name of "religion." I hardly think it is right to give it the name of religion.

The other most important religion is Mohammedanism. Moslems have five means of gaining heaven. They must always say their prayers, give alms to the poor, go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, speak the truth, and fast. They pray five times a day after carefully washing their faces, hands and feet; then bowed to the ground they repeat their prayers. I once asked a true believer what he said. He said he didn't know: but that the priest had taught him Arabic prayers, and he repeated them, but he didn't understand it. So that, really, only the educated know what they are saying to God.

I have been in Australia now for nine months on furlough, and during that time I have heard many people say, "Why not work at home, the people in India have their own religions." Well, I have tried to show you what these religions are—immorality, vice and wickedness of every description encouraged.

KANAKA REPORT.

We had a repetition of what was known in the early days of the colony as "Black Thursday." It was impossible to look in any direction without seeing the bush and cane-fields on fire. Much damage has been

done to the crops. No rain having fallen for some time, and the heat being excessive, water is becoming very scarce. Much sickness prevails. Through the generosity of Dr. Jos. Verco, who had a large underground tank put down at the mission house, we have been able to give many of the sick among the Kanakas good drinking water. I had to bring under the notice of the police authorities a painful case of leprosy—a Kanaka I have known for eighteen years. He had been unable to work for some time, and was in very destitute circumstances, but through the kindness of the Sunday Scholars and teachers of Kermode-st. and Prospect, South Australia, I was able to supply his wants until he was removed to the lazarette. We intend to have a baptism (D.V.) on Christmas morning. Fifteen have desired to be immersed.

JOHN THOMPSON.

Childers, 24/11/98.

Victorian Missions.

ANNUAL COLLECTIONS.

To the churches of Christ in Victoria.—On the first day of the year 1899, which falls on the first day of the week, the collection for the Home Missions will be taken up (D.V.) in the churches of Christ in Victoria. I should suggest this opportunity as a favorable time for each brother and sister presenting to the Lord a NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

"His providence has brought us through
Another varied year:
We all with vows and anthems new,
Before our God appear."

The missionary Committee are sustaining four evangelists in the Echuca, Wedderburn, Wimmera, and Kaniva districts, besides giving financial help to others. The expenditure to date has exceeded the income by more than ONE HUNDRED POUNDS, and the members of the churches are confidently appealed to for means to liquidate this liability and carry on the good work till Conference, 1899.

I have lately visited the Wimmera and Kaniva districts, and have witnessed the good work being done there, and have been impressed with the difficulties of overtaking the work requiring to be done. The evangelists deserve our sympathy, our prayers, and all possible encouragement.

The church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth. Therefore we go not to the world for money. To maintain the apostolic example, for our members to say, "We seek not yours, but you." It is the duty of every member of the churches to give as the Lord has given ability. "Not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver."

"Trying to please him, how simple the task,
Not the impossible Jesus will ask,
Not the preposterous startling deed,
Little will please him if love shall but lead."

Wishing all (God willing) a happy prosperous new year and increased fruitfulness in every good work and word, and that this year's annual collection may exceed all previous years.—Yours in the Lord,

C. G. LAWSON.

Correspondence.

I also will shew mine opinion.—Job. 31: 10

Satan—a Problem.

Satan is without doubt the enemy of God and man, of righteousness and truth, whether known under the scriptural names given in the article written or as it is placed in the margin, Book of Job, revised version—adversary. God never designed Satan to be a devil. We understand he fell through aspiring to be as God, to usurp authority and power. God has not neither does design that Satan should in any way be a means or servant to carry out his will. God is not the author of sin, cannot be, or confusion. Satan is one of God's creation; the great controversy from the beginning has ever been who shall rule. Shall the Creator or creature? Satan seeks to overthrow Christ and his kingdom. Wherever evil is Satan is, writes our brother (true). He has power to control the driving storm, can send us disease, famine, war, etc., but God and Satan are working together (strange combination), and it will all result to the glory of God and the good of his people. All things work together for good to them that love God. This is the solution of the problem Satan and evil—strange solution. Does our brother wish us to believe with the universal restorationist that sin, Satan and death are all God's great design and all evil shall yet be overcome with good? I affirm Christ came to destroy Satan, sin and death. The mission of Christ is to save from sin. Christ has destroyed the works of the devil in the hearts and lives of the truly obedient children of God. He shall yet have the ultimate glorious victory over Satan, sin and death, for he must reign until he hath placed all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. In the grand finale, the new creation, there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor pain, for the former things are passed away. Behold, I create all things new. Blessed consummation devoutly to be wished for after all the curse and sad sorrow.

R. A. JENNER.

REPLY.

If Bro. Jenner will kindly read my article again he will see that I carefully guard against the notion that Satan was formed to serve God in his evil work or that he is ever so employed. I hold him up as a free agent—free to do his work of evil to a limited extent. But that God overrules even the work of the devil for his own glory and the good of his people. Bro. J. says this is a "strange solution." It is no more strange than true, otherwise God suffers defeat at the hands of the devil. I have shown that the bible supports me in this position. Bro. J. asks if I believe in universal restoration. No, I do not, nor does my reasoning imply it. I deal only with the righteous. The destiny of the wicked is perhaps a far more difficult matter, the full knowledge of which we may possess in the future.

J. PITTMAN.

To the Editor of the AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN.
A few weeks ago you were good enough to invite your subscribers to submit for your consideration any recommendations which

they might desire to make having for their object the improvement of your weekly.

I have not availed myself of the invitation until now, as I really saw so little to find fault with in its get-up or policy—if I may be pardoned for using the latter expression in referring to a religious newspaper—and so much in it to admire.

For a very long time—over a quarter of a century—I was “identified” with your people, but for some years past I have been “outside the pale.” I have simply stayed away because so many things happened which shook my belief in the identity of your people with the church of Christ. There was apparently so little spirituality—so little of that deep-seated religion which is often to be found amongst those whose plea does not embrace the bible and the bible alone; and so much that ought to be deplored.

All of your people are ready, in season and out of season, to declare themselves Christians, *Disciples*, *Saints*, but how few—how few—!

Does it not sometimes occur to you, Mr. Editor, that instead of insolently, and in many cases unwarrantably, arrogating to ourselves these appellations which signify so much, and involve so many responsibilities, we should rather endeavor to find a place for ourselves in the dust, and crying “My God have mercy upon me,” offer him the thanks of our soul for his goodness in permitting us to enjoy the sunshine, and for granting us the capacity to behold with delight all the wonderful works of his hands! And how much more is there calling for our thanks, our praises, aye and our sobb?

Surely these thoughts alone should lift us out of the dreadful condition into which some of your people have sunk.

If the writer of the letter signed “A Disciple” which appeared in your issue of the 8th inst. is a fair sample of your present membership, I pray that I may never know him, or have any association with those who share his miserable, cold-blooded, savage, views. Of all the abominable, God-dishonoring fulminations which I have ever seen in a religious paper, his letter on page 396 begets the lot.

His opening argument, in which he states that the ordinance of baptism was ordained by our Lord as a test, or rather THE test of the believer's love and loyalty, is wholly inadvisable, and without any scripture warrant, written or implied. And to my mind his reasoning and conclusions throughout are as inane and grotesque as his misrepresentations are bordering on the blasphemous. Save me from such a monster as he makes himself out to be.

And now, Mr. Editor, for my recommendation. Do not allow such contributions to degrade your columns. They can do no good, and they must do harm.

In the minds of those of your members who are not of the dreadful Pharisee types, such must cause a feeling of intense resentment.

They will hurt the young people; and young disciples, who are too apt to think that as *Saints* (in the old acceptance of the word) they stand head and shoulders above everybody else, including past generations of Christians who have adorned the world's

history, and stood amongst the redeemed long before the question of baptism was made a bogie of, by such creatures as your Disciples and other popish writers.

And further, how can you face the Christian world when your columns are made the vehicle for casting slurs upon Christians of all denominations, outside of your own little coterie?

I have been a subscriber to your paper and its predecessors for thirty years, and this must be my excuse for taking the liberty of writing you at some length. I have never troubled you before, and I shall never address you again for publication, unless you desire me to do so. This letter is plain, and I think very much to the point; and if it does not rouse some of your people up, I shall be mistaken and much disappointed.

Very truly yours,

PRÆDA.

REPLY.

We fail to see any great crime a follower of Christ is committing in calling himself any of the above names, as they are all warranted by the book which he has taken as a guide of life. He may be a very unworthy Christian, etc., but if he is in Christ he has a right to any or all the names. All this talk about Christians “arrogating” to themselves New Testament names arises from the fact that many of the children of God call themselves by names not found in the book. Will the reader kindly note what our correspondent says of the letter of “A Disciple” appearing in our issue of December 8. He then asks us not to allow such contributions to degrade our columns. Now if anything more unlovely, uncharitable or vindictive has appeared in our pages during the past twelve months than the letter of “Præda,” then it has escaped our attention; and that too from one who has left us because of our lack of “spirituality” and “deep-seated religion.” We humbly trust that if this is the kind of thing which folks learn who are “outside the pale,” the rest of our people may stay in. We very mildly submit that if the writer had taken up the statements of “A Disciple” and answered them in the spirit of “sweetness and light,” it would have been a much better argument in favor of “deep-seated religion” than such choice (?) expressions as “miserable, cold-blooded, savage,” “inane and grotesque,” “blasphemous,” and “monster,” with a number more like them. We have never been asked to “face the Christian world” with a more unchristian-like contribution than the above. Our correspondent hopes that his letter will “rouse” up some of our people. Maybe so; but if they can't express themselves in a spirit more in harmony with “deep-seated religion” than he has done we shall be ashamed of the whole lot of them; besides, we do not want them to send their contributions our way. We know something of the people in these colonies who want to be known simply as Christians, disciples or saints; and while there may be and no doubt are some unlovely characters among them, yet for real New Testament spirituality and “deep-seated religion” they will compare favorably with the very best of “Christians of all denominations” of whom our good friend so eloquently speaks. ED.

Sunday School.

Then were there brought unto him little children.
—Matthew 19: 13

LESSON FOR JANUARY 8TH, 1899

“CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES.”

John 1: 35-46

GOLDEN TEXT—“Behold, the Lamb of God.”—John 1: 36



These “first disciples” were gained about forty days after the baptism of Jesus by John, for the temptation had intervened. The day before the events of our lesson took place, John had also pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God—the day after his conversation with the priests and Levites. Now he repeats the great enunciation, “Behold, the Lamb of God,” for the benefit of two of his disciples. What thoughts would these simple words raise in the minds of pious Jews! The deliverance of Israel was associated with a lamb—the paschal lamb; lambs were part of the continual Mosaic sacrifices (Num. 28: 1-6); now, if they can but realise it, they are told that in their presence is the divinely-appointed antitype of these, here is the Lamb of God which beareth the sins of the world, indeed, “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” No wonder the two who heard John were so interested as to follow Jesus. Who were the two? One we know was Andrew; the other doubtless John himself—another instance of the apostle sinking his own identity. Notice how easily they found the Master. How gracious the Lord was! Here is an exemplification of the principle, “Seek, and ye shall find.” He turned and asked, “What seek ye?” In terms denoting respect and almost containing a plea for discipleship they answer, “Rabbi, where abidest thou?” Perhaps they only thought of a visit later; he bids them come and see now. We can imagine the happy time they had; as it was the tenth hour (about four o'clock in the afternoon) they abode with him that day.

Let us notice the result of that announcement of the Baptist. Andrew is the first one mentioned as coming to the Saviour. We know but little of him; in Acts he only appears in the list of apostles. Yet he brought a Peter to the Christ. Surely he will be remembered long for that “He findeth first his own brother Simon.” Some have understood this statement to mean that Andrew found Simon before John found James his brother, or he found Peter before Peter found him; perchance we are to understand that this was the first task he took

in hand. So Peter found the Messiah, and had a new name given to him. Simon, the son of John, was henceforth to be called Cephas (Peter)—a name significant of the change which was to transform him who was impulsively weak, even so far as to deny his Lord, into a hero of faith who would stand undaunted before the great Sanhedrin itself. Next day Jesus findeth Philip, who with Andrew and Peter was of Bethsaida, and called him. Here we have the first "Follow me,"—the first recorded call to be a disciple. The response was immediate. Philip too considered it a privilege to bring another to the Messiah; would that all disciples did so! He found Nathanael, who is generally identified with Bartholomew. The reasons for this identification are, briefly:—Matthew, Mark and Luke speak of Bartholomew, and do not mention Nathanael; John tells of Nathanael, and says nothing of Bartholomew. Again the three associated Philip with Bartholomew, while John tells us that Philip "found" Nathanael. It astonished Nathanael to hear of the Messiah of promise coming out of despised Nazareth. Philip gave the best reply possible, one which would annihilate theoretical objections: "Come and see." He came, and was abundantly convinced. So of Christ's religion. Practical experience of it renders theoretical objections of none effect.

"Mission schools may learn a blessed lesson from this humble beginning of the kingdom of God. One man knows the Christ. He tells two; one of them finds a third. Now four know him. But the Christ himself finds one, and that one picks up another. Now there are six, and the Master. And thus from the smallness of a mustard seed it has grown, and has been proven unconquerable. The humble congregation of six, which Christ assembled on Jordan, has spread into all the earth, and has possessed the centuries" (*Eclectic*).

A. R. MAIN.

From The Field.

The field is the world.—Matthew 13: 38.

Victoria.

FOOTSCRAY.—During last three months six confessions. Prospects cheering. Bro. Jones passed away after a long illness on 17th. Memoriam service 1st Jan., 1899, D.V. J. W. BRADWICK.

MALVERN.—The anniversary meeting of the Mission Band was held on the 7th inst. Songs, recitations, etc., were rendered by members and friends, and F. M. Ludbrook and A. B. Maason favored with missionary addresses. Refreshments were provided; and the several visitors expressed themselves as being pleased with the effort to entertain and instruct. The Band is in good working order.

Dec. 17.

D. E. P.

WARMUN WEST.—There are joyful news to tell of souls being saved in this part of the Malloo district. H. G. Browne baptised six into Christ in the writer's dam before a goodly number of witnesses. The ladies (three) will be baptised in the chapel at Brim. Others are expected to come soon. The total number of decisions now is eleven, the first being only a short time ago. The fields are indeed white unto harvest. Bro. Drake will rejoice to read this news, as he first preached here, followed by Bro. Browne, Leng. Ev-

rett and Connor, whose labors the Lord has blessed abundantly. Bro. Browne has the happy faculty of getting all to work, and is a power for good wherever he is.

Dec. 13.

GILBERT GOUDIE.

BALLARAT EAST.—H. G. Picton is still preaching at Ballarat East to very good meetings. On Sunday evening, December 4, two from the Sunday School were baptised. Before the baptisms Bro. Picton preached to the largest gathering we have had for some time, the place being crowded. We are expecting more conversions. The whole of the church is very prosperous, and we are enjoying good times. W. A.

Queensland.

WEST MORETON.—The half-yearly meeting of our committee was held at Rosevale on December 10. Bro. Watkins presided. The total additions to our number from all sources during the last six months are 23. Earnest efforts on the part of the committee resulted in the appointment of R. J. Clow, of Victoria, to assist our evangelist, P. J. Pond, until Conference, which is to be held at Marburg on Good Friday next. Truly the harvest is great, but the laborers are few.

All churches are requested to note that it has been decided to fall in line with the southern Conferences by appointing the first Sunday in January as home mission Sunday. Will churches kindly arrange, and forward collections to the president, Bro. Wm. Watkins, Thornton, or to the treasurer, P. J. Pond, Marburg.

We acknowledge with thanks the following sums contributed to the mission since June 1—Rosevale, £6/1/6; Marburg, £6; Mt. Walker, £5; Millboong, £3/10/-; Mt. Whistestone, £2/7/-; Spring Creek, Greenmount and West Haldon, £1/10/4; Thornton, £1/1/3; Killarney, £1; Bro. Alf Peachy, 10/-; Bro. Wm. Alcorn, 10/-. Wm. BAILLS.

New Zealand.

AUCKLAND JOTTINGS.—Three immersions on confessing Christ last evening, two being the parents of two young sisters who have been in the church less than a year, the third a member of the young men's bible class and the youngest son of our late Bro. Downey. These three are in a measure at least the fruit of Sunday School work. At the close of the meeting a young woman intimated her desire to be immersed. The baptism will take place on Wednesday evening.

The Auckland Industrial and Mining Exhibition is now open and is generally considered a success. Brethren in Australia wishing to spend a profitable holiday could not do better than visit our city now. They would be heartily welcomed by the church here. T. J. BULL.

South Australia.

PORT PIKE.—Last Lord's day evening we baptised a young lady who has been an attentive bearer of the truth, and another has decided to obey the Lord in his own way. Please permit me here to thank and inform the various brethren from whom I have received such warm invitations to their hospitality during my holiday, that in consequence of it taking longer to settle my business affairs I will not be able to leave home before the second week in January. The church at Alberton, S.A., will have my first visit. W. MOFFIT.

NORWOOD.—On Thursday evening last the office-bearers and teachers of our Sunday School visited the home of Bro. A. Weir, our late Sunday School super-

intendent, and Bro. Rankine on behalf of the same presented Bro. Weir with a beautiful Oxford Testament Bible, as a token of their appreciation of the services rendered by Bro. Weir to the School as superintendent during the past eight years. Bro. Bristow was also present and a hymn-book was presented to him for the helpful services given in connection with our anniversary. Both brethren suitably replied. A pleasant evening was spent together. On Wednesday evening last the choir gave a Xmas service. Sacred scripture readings were given after each carol was sung. Mr. J. G. Wright gave an address bearing on the birth of Christ. Last night the service was repeated. Bro. Rankine gave an address on "The Name of Jesus." A. C. KENNEDY.

New South Wales.

WOOLLAHRA.—The CONFERENCE is still progressing. T. Hagley is laboring with us, the conference committee having just engaged him for a second period of six months. During the seven months of our brother's work we have added to our roll 31 members—13 by letter, 17 by faith and obedience.

At our anniversary meeting yesterday two were received into membership, and at the night service two were immersed, and two others confessed their faith in the Lord. The hall was almost filled, and great interest evinced. The week night meetings are well attended, and the Sunday School is growing. Dec. 19. A. W. SHEARSTON, Sec.

Here and There.

Here a little and there a little.—Isiah 58: 1-7.

VIC & N.S.W. MISSION SUNDAY!
ANNUAL COLLECTIONS!!!

LORD'S DAY, JANUARY 1ST, 1899!!!

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT FROM ALL!!!

Don't fail to look at Coming Events.

Two confessions at Woollahra Sunday night.

If you have not ordered your supply of Almanac for 1899, now is the time.

We notice that R. J. Clow has commenced work as an evangelist in Queensland.

Our Original Article is slightly long, but we should fail to read it on that account.

S. S. UNION.—Annual examination will be held April. Subjects—First quarter's lesson.

C. A. Rofe has removed from Sydney to Lithgow, N.S.W., where he may now be addressed.

There was a good crowd at Lygon-street Sunday night, and one young man confessed Christ.

A crowded meeting at Enmore last Sunday night as usual. At the close six young people decided on Christ.

G. Newby, of Taree, one of the pillars of the church in the Manning River district, is on a visit to Sydney.

The church in Lygon-st invite all who want a pleasant outing on New Year's day to their picnic at Preston.

Will the Sisters of Melbourne and suburbs please note the prayer meeting to be held in Swanston-st on Jan. 6.

The office of the Austral Co. will be closed Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, December 27th and 28th.

The Sydney C.E. and Petersham Mutual Improvement Society intend holding a picnic at the Park on January 1st.

We are sending out a supplement to our agents this week, which we hope they will make good use of. They will know what to do with it.

The annual Endeavor Union picnic will be held at Horticultural Show Grounds on Boxing Day. Hot water, swings, &c., on the ground. All invited.

G. B. Moysey and G. T. Walden make a month's exchange in January-February. This will be a change for Swanston-st and Enmore as well as for the preachers.

What are you going to do during 1899 towards helping to increase the circulation of the paper, so that we can make it every week the same size as this double number?

A good meeting at Petersham Sunday night. At the close a lady was baptised, and a young woman, daughter of Bro. J. Roots, a well-known disciple, confessed Christ.

From a private letter from Isaac Selby we learn that he and his family are well and enjoying themselves in the United States. He promises to write a letter for our columns soon.

Good meeting at Fitzroy Tabernacle Sunday night, one young man from the Sunday School baptised, and at the close his mother made the good confession; Bros. Swain and Cook speaking.

We had a pleasant call last week from Bro. Heart, of the church at Perth, W.A. He speaks hopefully of the cause in the West, and especially of the work in the capital. Bro. Heart is on a visit to old friends.

Mrs. Bingham and family, from the church at Drummond, have removed to Dookie District. They would be glad to know of any disciples in that place. Address, Mrs. Bingham, Boxwood P.O., near Dookie.

Do we intend to enlarge? We shall see that the paper grows with the subscription list. That is all we can promise. The paper will be as large as it is now every week, and as much larger as we can make it.

There was a fine meeting at Lygon-street on Thursday night last, when two Chinese brethren were baptised. A large number of the Chinese scholars were present. We are glad to note this evidence of progress.

During the first few months of 1899, beginning in the first number, we propose publishing a life of Alex. Campbell. It is a most fascinating story, splendidly told, which alone will be worth more than we ask for the whole year.

Quite a number of CHRISTIANS are sent out free to those unable to pay. Any desiring to help in this work are invited to do so. You can either have the paper sent to any address furnished by yourself, or leave the matter with us.

The article in another column headed "Religions of India," is made up of brief notes of an address by Miss Archer, Baptist missionary delivered at the S. A. Conference. The notes were taken down and type-written by Miss E. M. Smith, of the Grote-street church.

At South Melbourne last Lord's day morning one brother was restored, and at the gospel meeting in the evening two were immersed, one an aged brother of seventy-four. Another made the good confession, and signified her desire to walk in obedience to the Lord's commands.

We have not the least objection to any or all of our exchanges copying from our pages. They are welcome to the many good things we present to our readers from week to week. But we think the very least they might do is to acknowledge the source from which it comes. An exchange now before us has three selections from our pages, but not a word of thanks.

We wish that all those wishing to avail themselves of our special offer would read the conditions on another page. The subscription for one year must be sent in full, free from exchange. We have received a lot of letters asking questions about the matter. We can't make it any plainer than we have.

H. G. Picton gave a very interesting lantern lecture at Peel-street chapel, Ballarat East, on Tuesday, December 7th. The audience was highly pleased with the pictures, which were taken by Bro. Picton. Those which caused the most sensation were the classes of the Sunday School.—W.R.

The church at Hawiborn gave A. R. Main a farewell social on the evening of Dec. 7, at the close of his two years' labor with them. A number of kindly and appropriate talks were given, interspersed with music. On behalf of the church, Bro. Finger presented Bro. Main with a pocketbook containing £8. A. R. Main is spending a few weeks preaching at Drummond, his home.

In the Shire Hall, Camberwell, last Saturday afternoon and evening, the Burwood Boy's Home held a very successful Christmas Floral Fair. There was a good crowd of sympathisers of this noble work and a good programme of musical items was presented. There was a splendid display of flowers and pot plants, many of which were sold. A Christmas present to the Home would now be in order.

The Speech Night of the Prahran College took place last Friday evening in the local town hall, which was filled to the doors. This efficient institution is under the principalship of the Misses Laing. A very enjoyable programme was presented and at the close the Mayor of Prahran, who presided, distributed a large number of prizes. The report of the head master showed the school to be in a highly prosperous condition. We can recommend this school to those having children to educate.

J. C. Dickson who went from S. A. to America last year, and who is located at Clifton Forge, Virginia, received an urgent request to continue as the preacher. A church in Canada had sent him a unanimous call to work with them, but when the brethren at Clifton Forge heard of it they would not hear of his leaving. One man, an M. D., a member of the church, said that Bro. Dickson had done the church more good than any preacher they had ever had. An elder in the church, a judge in the law courts, urged Bro. Dickson to stay, for the church was getting into such a healthy state. Bro. Dickson acts on the principle of getting everyone to work.

Obituary.

To live is Christ; and to die is gain.—Phil. 1: 21.

SEEDSMAN.—Again it is our painful duty to record the death of another of our sisters in the church. We have been passing through a very dark period during the past six months; several of our members have been ailing, and our Sister Seedsman is the third sister who has fallen asleep in Jesus during the past three months. Our young sister was just 24 years and 5 months old when she was called away. She was born in Geelong, the only surviving daughter of our esteemed Bro. and Sister Christopher, late of Geelong, now of S. Africa. She was immersed by Bro. Park some 14 years ago, and thus was brought up in the church. As a scholar and teacher in the Sunday School, she was ever ready to do any service for her Lord and Master. As a church member she was always in her place at the Lord's day meetings to remember the Lord's death, and the public worship.

On all occasions her presence was a source of sunshine to the members; she was ever ready with a smile and a kind word. Our sister was married to Bro. A. E. Seedsman, the church secretary, four years ago, and it seems so hard that after four years of union one should be taken away and a rent made in a happy home; but we cannot see at present the workings of our heavenly Father, who doeth all things well, and we rely on his promise that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Our sister was only ill for a few days, and she passed away on the 4th November in full assurance of a glorious resurrection. Her messages to her parents and to her husband, prior to her decease, are words long to be remembered as the testimony of a Christian in word and deed. Bro. Pittman came from Melbourne and conducted the burial service to a large assemblage gathered to pay the last respects to the departed, and Bro. Lochhead held a memorial service on the following Sunday for our Sisters Murray, Borge and Seedsman to a crowded house. We pray for our brethren, and trust the Lord will bless and strengthen them in their sad trial. W.B.

IN MEMORIAM.

HANNAM.—In loving memory of Albert Victor (Lertie), the dearly-loved little son of H. and S. A. Hannam, who died on December 29th, 1897, aged 5 years and 7 months.

For many years our family chain
Was fondly linked together,
But O! that chain is broken now—
One link is gone forever.

Inserted by his loving parents, H. and S. A. Hannam, Torrens-st., College Park, S. A.

Coming Events.

Observe the time of their coming.—Jeremiah 8: 7.

DEC. 26.—Endeavor Union Picnic. Horticultural Gardens, Burnley. Friends are Cordially Invited. Hot water provided free. A Short Service will be held at twilight, at which Bro. Hagger will give an address.

JAN. 1.—Church of Christ, Lygon-st., Carlton Picnic, New Year's Day at Hamilton's paddock, Preston. All brethren will be welcome.

JAN. 2.—Temperance Committee meets first Monday in each month. Next meeting will (p.v.) be held on January 2nd, 1899.

JAN. 6 (Friday).—Swanston-street Sisters' Prayer and Prayer Meeting. Mrs. P. Ludbrook will preside. Papers will be contributed on "Prayer" and "New Opportunities." All Sisters Invited.

Acknowledgments.

The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.—Haggai 2: 8.

FOREIGN MISSION FUND.

Hagnell Bros., N.Z.	.. ..	£ 10 0
S. School, Shepparton, Vic., B.	.. ..	0 10 0
South Australia, per F.M. Committee	.. ..	60 0 0
121 Collins-st, Melb.	F. M. LUDBROOK, Sec.	
146 Queensberry-st., N. Melb.	ROBT. LYALL, Treas.	

To Subscribers.

W. Cubbin, 47; G. P. Parnell, Geo. Dickens, D. A. Lewis, Mrs. Harwood, L. Martin, Mrs. Hurl, Miss Jackson, 57; Jas. Brake, C. Anderson, W. Cowper, Geo. Templeman, H. Templeman, T. and J. Stannyer, Mrs. Dudley, L. A. Hoskins, Mrs. W. H. Beer, T. Hawkins, 107; W. T. S. Harris, 117; P. J. Laiter, 147; M. Cerdeman, 157; Wm. Wright, L. H. Robinson, 257; J. Rothery, 437; E. A. Riches, 476; D. Battersley, 627.

RESCUE HOME.

Thankfully received—

Mrs. L. Colvin, Ashwell, Q.	..	£1	1	0
Mrs. Burn, Glenferrie	..	..	0	3
Mr. Trivett, Lygon-street	..	..	0	5
Mrs. P. Ludbrook, Brighton	..	..	1	0
Mrs. Crouch, sen., Doncaster	..	..	1	0
A Friend, Adelaide, S.A.	..	..	1	0
A Friend, Brim	..	..	1	0
Church Wallsford, N.Z.	..	..	1	0
" Rosewood, Q.	..	..	0	7
" Hotoo North, N.Z.	..	..	0	16
" Hindmarsh, S.A.	..	..	3	0
" Bungawalbyn	..	..	1	0
Col. Cards, Mrs. Colvin, Ashwell, Q.	..	..	5	9
" Miss Kerr, Sydney	..	..	1	3
" M.M., Emerald	..	..	0	15
Victorian Sisters' Executive	..	..	1	0
W. Cowper	..	..	0	2

J. PITTMAN, Armadale.

Yando, 10/-; Church Runnymede E., 10/-; M. W. Green, Cheltenham, 5/-; Mrs. Moeres, Cheltenham, 2/-; Mrs. Boyd, 10/-; Mrs. Day, North Melbourne, 2/-; Mr. Sykes, Doncaster, 2/6.

VICTORIAN MISSION FUND.

Church Yando, per Sister J. Stranger	..	£1	10	0
Do Runnymede E., per Sister Dickens	..	0	19	0
Sister C. Stevenson, W.A., per Sister Hill	..	0	19	6
Bro. T. Potter, Meredith	..	..	1	0
		£3	19	6

" Milford," J. A. DAVIES, Treas.
Church-st., Hawthorn.

MARRIAGE.

On the 25th December, 1893, by Mr Hammill, Evangelist, at the residence of the bride's brother, Regent-street, Prahran, Frank Felix, eldest son of F. B. Payne, commission agent, London, to Sarah Jane, second daughter of the late Robert Simmonds, contractor, of Prahran (Silver Wedding). Present address, Islington-street, Collingwood.

BRO. F. COWAP RELIEF FUND.
Mrs. T. Railton, 7/6; Church Pakenham, 8/6; Church Hastings, N.Z., 20/-; G.P.P., 5/-; Church

WANTED.
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AUSTRAL BIBLE SCHOOL LEAFLET.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 1800.

Christ and Nicodemus.

John 3: 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"—John 3: 16.

MEMORY VERSE

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

DAILY READINGS

Monday	Jan. 16—John. 7: 40-53
Tuesday	17—John. 19: 33-42
Wednesday	18—Rom. 5: 1-10
Thursday	19—Acts 10: 34-48
Friday	20—Titus 2: 1-11
Saturday	21—Num 21: 4-9
Sunday	22—John. 2: 12-25



LESSON SURROUNDINGS.

THE scene of our last lesson was in Galilee; that of the present one is Judea, in or near Jerusalem. After the wedding at Cana, Jesus went to Capernaum and stayed there a few days and then, that he might attend the Passover, returned to Jerusalem. Here he drove out the money-changers and the cattle (John 2: 13-27) from the temple and worked many miracles, in consequence of which numbers believed on him.

LESSON NOTES.

Verse 1.—A man of the Pharisees.—The Pharisees were a Jewish sect, distinguished from the Sadducees by their belief in angels, spirits, and the resurrection. They pretended to great piety; made much show of religion, were particular as to forms and ceremonies, but often neglected truth, righteousness, and purity. Nicodemus, a ruler.—A member of the Sanhedrin (a sort of Jewish parliament) and a public teacher (v. 10). Twice afterwards favorably mentioned (7: 50 and 19: 39).
2.—By night.—Possibly because he did not wish his visit to be known, or because it was the last time for a quiet talk. He assures Jesus that he knew he was a teacher come from God, because no man can work miracles such as he wrought unless God was with him. This was sound reasoning. God

gave his prophets and apostles power to work miracles, to prove that what they said was true. Jesus had wrought miracles in Jerusalem. These Nicodemus had seen or heard of, and knowing that God would not work miracles to support an imposter, he rightly concluded that Jesus must be a true prophet.

3.—Jesus answered, Verily, verily.—Most truly or assuredly. Except a man be born again.—Or from above. Explained in verse 5 He cannot see.—Thou enjoy or enter. Kingdom of God.—The reign or kingdom of God which Christ was about to set upon earth. For nearly 12 months John the Baptist had been proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand, and the people were expecting it to be set up at any moment.

4.—The expression to be "born again" was familiar to the Jews. When Gentile adopted the Jewish religion they said he was born again. The Jews felt sure that they were perfectly fit, without any change of mind or life, to enter the coming kingdom, and when Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again, or become as it were a new man, it seemed to him just as absurd and impossible as it is for a grown man to become literally a little babe, as he exclaimed, "How can these things be?" (v. 9).

5.—In this verse Jesus explains what he means by being born again. It tells us it consists in two parts—1st, of being "born of water"; and, of being born of "the Spirit". Born of water is simply a figurative expression for baptism. This is so evident that almost all the commentaries whether Protestant or Catholic, are agreed upon it. Born of the Spirit is a figurative phrase for being made a believer. When an unbeliever or disbeliever changes his mind and believes in Jesus as God's anointed, God's Son and his own Saviour, he is born of the Spirit. This change of mind is said to be "of the Spirit," because the Spirit furnished the testimony and the proof of its truth without which no one can believe on Jesus. What Jesus here expresses figuratively is expressed literally in Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38, and Gal. 3: 27. He cannot enter, etc.—God may make exceptions to this law if he sees fit, as we cannot.

8.—Read "Spirit" instead of "wind" (as in the margin &c.). The verse tells us how men are born of the Spirit, or are made believers, viz.,—by being born of the Spirit as he speaks to us about Jesus, through the prophets and apostles (see Rom 10: 17).

12.—Earthly things.—Things necessary to entrance into the church or kingdom on earth. Heavenly.—Things about Christ's divine nature and heavenly throne, instead of an earthly one, as Nicodemus expected.

14.—Serpent lifted up (see Num 21: 9. The Son of Man was lifted up upon the cross).

15.—That whosoever.—As the serpent was lifted up, so was Christ upon the cross; and just as all the serpent bitten when they obeyed the command to lift up at the serpent were healed, so all those who obey the command to believe in Jesus will be saved. "Believe" here includes the repentance and obedience. It is intended to produce (see Jas. 2: 26).

16.—So loved.—Does not mean that God was pleased with or approved the world, but that he pitied it and desired its salvation. That he gave.—This shows how much God loved or pitied sinful men.

HOME QUESTIONS.

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| <p>JUNIOR.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who and what was Nicodemus? What did Jesus tell him he must do to enter the kingdom of God? How much did God love the world? | <p>INTERMEDIATE.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How did Nicodemus know that "he" came from God? What is meant by being "born of the Spirit"? What are the "earthly" and "heavenly" things? (of verse 12) What is included in the "believing" required in verses 15, 26? |
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