

THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS.

Long before the Christian era the 25th of December was religiously observed by the "sun-worshippers." On that day is about the first perceptible return of the sun to the northern hemisphere. His return would drive away the frosts and snows, warm up the frozen earth, and clothe the earth in beauty and luxury. The people looked upon the sun as a god, an intelligence, withdrawing to the south just long enough to let the people see what their home, the world, would be without his presence. His return on the 25th of December they hailed with delight. They rejoiced. They sent presents to their friends. They held their religious feasts, with music, mirth and dancing. Sometimes to great excess these feasts are carried. When Christ came, and His doctrine was preached among the "sun worshippers," many were converted to Christianity. To break off their old habits was very difficult. When the 25th of December came it brought the "sun feast." There was the enticement to go and mingle in it. The Christian leaders were not slow to see what the influence would be, so they gave the day a Christian significance. They met in their meeting-houses. They gave presents to each other. They talked of Christ, the spiritual Sun, who had come to give light to and warm the spiritual world. He was the "light of the world." "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light," and "light had sprung up." "The light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not." "The worlds were made by Him." Therefore the sun was made by Him. The "sun-worshippers" "worshipped the creature more than the Creator," but the Christians worshiped the "Creator, who is blessed for evermore."

The superiority of this over that was soon made visible, and the masses were released from idolatry. It mattered not whether the 25th of December was the birthday of Christ or not, the effect was the same.—*Central Christian Advocate.*

DOWNRIGHT HONESTY.

"What this age wants is a revival of downright honesty," says Moody. It is the adjective that makes this statement remarkable. It intimates, we think, that though most people would consider themselves honest in the main, there are times and circumstances when deviations from the straight course and the candid statement of the matter might be tolerated.

There is in the minds of many people, though there ought not to be, a difference between honesty and "downright" honesty. A man who would not take another's silver dollar might deceive "a lit-

tle" for the sake of selling a bill of goods. A person who would not confess to a deliberate lie might deceive in being "not at home" or "so glad to see you!" as a matter of social convenience.

The difference between honesty and "downright" honesty is not visible; the tender conscience recognizes no difference. Men in business, in society, in sports, in religious work, can find no degrees of honesty, because God provides for no such thing.—*Young Men's Era.*

THE WORD "WIFE."

What do you think the beautiful word "wife" comes from? The great value of the Saxon words is, that they mean something. Wife means "weaver." You must either be housewives or housemoths, remember that. In the deep sense you must either weave men's fortunes and embroider them, or feed upon and bring them to decay. Wherever a true wife comes, home is always around her. The stars may be over her head, the glow-worm in the night's cold grass may be the fire at her feet; but home is where she is, and for a noble woman, it stretches far around her, better than houses ceiled with cedar, shedding its quiet life for those who else are homeless. This, I believe, is woman's true place and power.—*Ruskin.*

Plant truth in youth; shield, water, cultivate and care for it; when resting on the downward path you will enjoy its shade.

Trouble due to not taking a receipt illustrates the difference between knowing and doing, as everyone knows the importance of taking a receipt.

If you talk be sure you know what you are talking about or you will be like the man who remarked that "that is the time you hit the head on the nail."

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