

known in nature. Of this truth, as we have already seen, the Psalmist of Israel sings in the nineteenth psalm. He recognized the fact that the heavens declare the glory of God. He virtually affirmed that "an undevout astronomer is mad." The heavens are far more eloquent to us to-day, with all our discoveries regarding astronomical bodies, than they could possibly have been to the Psalmist. Surely God who has spoken in nature will speak in some higher form. By a marvellous system of ingenious contrivances he has arranged for the supply of our physical needs. Many of these arrangements long anticipate their actual use by us. If God has thus met the wants of our lower natures, surely he will supply the deep necessities of our higher, sublimer and diviner natures. The wide realm of nature abounds in illustrations which aid us in cherishing this hope. There are in the vegetable world wonderful remedial agents for the ills of life. There are in plant and flower a recuperative, restorative, curative element. The bristly plant seeks its normal condition; the broken bone puts forth remarkable energy to recover its former strength; lacerated flesh evokes forces and adopts processes which elicit our admiration, in the effort to recover from its wounded experience. By analogy we reason from the needs and helps of the body to the higher needs of our souls, and to the source of their providential supply. There is reason thus to hope for a restorative element, a reparative process, a spiritual medicament somewhere in the pharmacy of nature, somewhere in the laboratory of God. The thought of forbearance, of mercy, of pardon on the part of God, is anticipated in the creeds even of enlightened heathen philosophers. Hope strives to inspire life even in the saddest hearts. Without such hope, it is doubtful whether heathen faiths could escape from utter collapse. Reason and hope thus suggest deliverance to come from God. Hope thus struggles against doubt, love against fear and light against darkness. In due time God comes with the voice of mercy, singing the song of redemption, and filling earthly life with heavenly hope and joy.

(To be continued in our next)

Infants in The Church.

There are at the same time too many and too few, says *Zion's Herald*. We are not speaking of the blessed little ones whose presence at the services is always to be welcomed, provided they can be kept still enough not to disturb the worshippers and destroy the effect of the word. We refer rather to adults who are at the same time babes. There are either too many or too few, according as the word is taken in a depreciatory or appreciatory sense. Paul generally uses the term in the former. Jesus in the latter, meaning. The apostle has in his mind the weakness, ignorance, and general immaturity of the babe, and so applies the appellation by way of reproof and warning to Christians having these characteristics. The Saviour looks at the little child on its more lovely side, and docility, simplicity, and trustfulness, commends it to His disciples for imitation.

Of the latter kinds of babes we have certainly too few in our churches—to few of those whose mouths are open wide for food, who are not too big to beg for blessings, nor too proud to take what the Lord longs to give; too few of those who trust themselves as completely to the care of the heavenly Father as the serene, smiling infant does to its mother's superior intelligence and abounding love! But there are far too many who are still children in their knowledge of the way, their impatience under control, in their fitfulness and caprice. It is not of much use to bring young converts into the church when the cradles are all full of those who have been twenty or thirty years under training. There is no room for additions in that case, nor is there much likelihood of there being any. More childlikeness, but less childishness, is a crying need.

"My Father's House."

The Father's House has many rooms,
And each is fair;
And some are reached through gathered glooms

By silent stair;
But He keeps house, and makes it home
Whichever way the children come.
Plenty and peace are everywhere
His house within,
The rooms are eloquent with prayer,
The songs begin,
And dear hearts, filled with love, are glad,
Forgetting that they once were sad,
The Father's House is surely thine,
Therefore, why wait?
His lights of love through darkness shine,
The hour grows late.
Push back the curtain of thy doubt,
And enter—we will cast thee out!

As to Denominational Lines.

The London Baptists have been discussing the question of Open Membership Churches. It is common among churches of a section of the denomination to receive unbaptized persons into membership. The question has been raised as to the utility of the practice. Does the custom help or hinder Baptist progress? From an American standpoint everyone would naturally say that a mixed church would lessen, if not destroy, the effect of Baptist testimony to the New Testament principles of church life and order. Over in England the opinion is divided. Some thinking it weakens denominational loyalty and takes the virility out of Baptist convictions, while others believe it aids the cause of truth and piety, especially in villages where the population is too small to support more than one nonconformist church. It is easy to see that when unbaptized members are numerous in the Church the pulpit would speak with hesitation if it speaks at all on the question. A pronounced and aggressive Baptist minister would be likely to forfeit the good opinion of those disagreeing with him on the subject. The village question presents more difficulties than the town and city one. The Church of England is all powerful among village populations and only by union can the free churches hold their own against the influence of Faron and Squire and the social life which centres in them. The discussion referred to did not bring out the statistical side of the matter. Whether the proportion of pedo-baptists in Baptist churches is small or large is not stated. We incline to think it somewhat small. We once heard the late Charles Vince, of Eirmingham, say that open membership in his church was advantageous to Baptist views, as most of those who united with it unbaptized soon became convinced of Baptist views and were baptized. Whether this is a common experience we cannot tell. The strangest thing over in England in matters of this sort is the large number of Baptists found in Congregational churches, and many of them holding official positions. And this is the case in towns where Baptist churches are within reasonable distance. Frequently a mere preference for a preacher or some social advantage determines church membership. The two denominations are united by their church government and the evangelical and political beliefs they hold in common, so members intermingle with much more freeness than in this country. It must not be supposed, however, that the Baptists in America always abide in the Baptist fold. In our suburbs especially the tendency is strong to pass over to other denominations, especially when Baptists have little presence and when the pulpit is inferior to that of other churches. Many losses to our ranks are due to the mismanagement of our churches and to the contentions that arise among them. Our free and independent government is a doubtful good when it falls into the hands of persons of little knowledge and narrow spirit: But we must accept the evil with the good and make the best of things that are discouraging. The surest way to keep our members in Baptist churches is to sow and foster the principles we stand for.—*The Commonwealth*.

Franklin is authority for, "God helps those who help themselves."

The Jews

"A Judicial Murder" is the verdict pronounced by a committee of influential Russian Jews on the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. They have been carefully reviewing the character and claims of Jesus, and have come to the conclusion that He was the "Lord's Anointed," and that their forefathers made a mistake in His condemnation. This remarkable decision is but one of the many indications of a movement of the Jewish people towards the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. Their hopes of his coming have been so long deferred and the power of Jesus as the Christ has become so manifest in the world, that intelligent Jews are more and more impressed with the thought that the ruler at Jerusalem may have been in error, and that Jesus should have been recognized by their people as the Messiah foretold by the prophets. The wide circulation of Hebrew New Testaments, the Gospel tracts of Rabinowitz, and the labors of Rabbi Lichtenstein are having a powerful influence in this direction. Nearly one-half of the ten or twelve million Jews in the world are in Russia. It is necessary to remember that Jews who accept Jesus as the Messiah do not thereby become members of any existing branch of the Christian Church. We watch with absorbing interest to see in what lines the religious life and thought of these Jews who are passing from the old to the new dispensation will run. It takes us back to the beginning of the Christian era, and suggests the question: "Suppose the Jews had accepted Jesus as the Messiah. What would have been the religious history of the world, and what would be its condition to-day?"—*Baptist Missionary Magazine*.

The Grace of Thankfulness.

We are accustomed to go back to the past for perfect specimens of almost everything, says Edward Pell in the *Woman's Companion*. I hope that I may be able to call attention to this grace as it was developed in our mothers without exciting any of those feelings which are said to be excited when a man discourses upon the merits of his mother's pies. For with our mothers thanksgiving was an art, and with many of us I am afraid it is only a lost art. The more one studies the American girl of a generation ago, the more one is impressed with this wonderful, quiet talent which she so highly prized and so constantly used. I think that to us men it seemed the chief secret of her charm. It is hard to forget the girl who never left unpaid a debt of gratitude. It is hard to forget the girl who thanked you so sweetly for the seat you gave up in the car that all the men got up at once to taste its sweetness. It is hard to forget the girl who ever once abused your ears or your kindness with a "Thanks—awfully!" Our mothers were taught that it is thankfulness that gives the charm to thanksgiving, and they did not make the mistake of trying to be charming from the lips outward. That is why their thanksgiving was both reasonable and duly proportioned. The girl who has cultivated the spirit of thankfulness does not gush over at the gift of a daisy, and snap an indifferent "Thanks!" at the man who has lost a day from the office to gratify her little whim. Of course, those mothers of ours had their whim and exercised the priceless privileges of thoughtlessness and snapping now and then, as girls and other than girls, have always done; but I think it cannot be denied that the girl of a generation ago had a conscience on the subject of debts of gratitude such as few have had since her day.

There are very few of us who do not at some time envy the lot of others, but we do not know where their shoes pinch.

We do not always realize what a privilege it is to be able to work—just to have the strength and vitality to take up our tasks day after day.

There are a few days at this season when certain seeds must be planted in order to secure the best results. Delay the planting for a week, and the opportunity of the season is gone. This fact affords a fine parallel with some moral and spiritual experiences.