

food, especially flesh meat, cannot be kept for any length of time without becoming corrupt, whereas salt preserves them for an indefinite period. Owing to the beds of salt over which the mighty ocean rolls, its water becomes impregnated with the salt, and is kept in a perfectly healthy condition, which otherwise would be impossible, since all the silt from every land is being continually washed into it. Under these conditions the salt sea air is bracing and invigorating, otherwise it would be enfeebling and pestilential.

The value of this illustration would be especially felt in a warm climate, such as that of Judea.

#### LIGHT.

Another illustration here employed is light. "Ye are the light of the world." As a city that is built on a hill may be seen for a great distance from the plain or on the sea, and thus become a valuable landmark for the traveller on his journey, and as a lamp in the night serves to show where the traveller may safely go, so is the life of the Christian man to those around him. And the life of the Christian should be regulated by that thought being constantly kept in view, God wills it that I shall not live for self alone, but for the benefit of those about me.

#### HOW IS THIS TO BE DONE.

There was a few despised peasants, with little apparent influence, who, hearing these words, may well have asked, What can we do? Let this responsibility rest on the doctors of the law, on the scribes, on the Pharisees. But God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. "Ye are the salt of the earth." These Galileans, who had not been heard of until yesterday, are chosen of God to this honor.

#### DOCTRINES.

They were so by the doctrines they taught. Everywhere they "preached Christ and him crucified." "That God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," etc.

They preached repentance from sin, and faith in Jesus Christ, in order to obtain pardon from sin and holiness of heart. They set forth the terrible evil of sin, and the dreadful consequences flowing from it, and then pointed to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

#### THE LIVES THEY LIVED.

Their teachings set forth how men must become Christian, and how they must live afterwards. But their everyday lives showed practical hints as to how to be done. They were grand object lessons on the subject of the Christian life.

In the early days of our Western country, there were binders sent in to cut our harvests. But the farmers had to wait until an expert came and set up one or two, and started them at work. Then it was easy for others to understand how to put them together, and run them in the field. And similarly, after men have the theory of religion, they learn much more of Christianity if they can mingle with men who have found Christ and are living the Christian life—men who, while engaged in the ordinary business of life, strictly honest, courteous, and fair in their dealings. In the home life, seeking to make home attractive to all the inmates, and in the community taking an active, earnest, and intelligent part in the business of the city, province, or state at large. Witnessing such results, they are much more likely to be inclined to seek the Lord than they would be by merely learning the theory of religion.

#### THEIR PRAYERS.

Tupper says, "The prayers of saints are the thousand pillars which prop the

canopy of nature, verily a day without prayer from some terrestrial mind is a curse in the calendar of time, a spot in the blackness of darkness for ever. We are taught to pray for kings and for governments, and for them who despitefully use us and persecute us. It is a matter that unconverted persons rarely consider, yet it is true that the prayers of the children of God have always been for the cities of the plain. Christian people have prayed for the unconverted around them, that they may be convicted of sin and led to cry for mercy. Many would rather be left alone than thus be troubled, even though it be in answer to prayer. But it is not too much to say that a sound conversion never takes place without previous conviction of sin. The good and skillful surgeon is often compelled to use the probe to the very bottom of the diseased part, even though the pain be very severe, yet it is essential to the recovery of his patient. So the depths of sin must be laid open before the way is prepared for the application of the balm of Gilead.

#### MAINTAINING CHURCH AGENCIES.

On Christian people mainly rest the support of all church agencies, as the public worship, missions, charities, Christian education, Sabbath-schools, etc., each according to his ability and opportunity. Some are called upon to give themselves, to devote all their energy to the preaching of the Word at home or abroad, others are selected to fill positions of influence in the management of church work. Others find their places on the teaching staff or management of the Sunday-school. Many of our young people have a useful sphere in the Epworth Leagues, and thus each finds something he can do for God, and for those around him, if it be simply to lead in prayer, or speak a few words in some social or more public means of grace. There is here the care and help of the poor, attendance or visitation of the sick, instruction of the ignorant. All these require time, and often money, and each, according to his ability, is called on to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

#### SLENDER ABILITY.

Not having ten talents, or even five, some seem to feel that they can do nothing of any value and excuse themselves altogether. But we should not forget that "a thing is great or little only to a mortal's thinking." One widow's cruse of oil maintained her family, and the life of a prophet by God's blessing. Another's mite was mentioned with approval, while larger offerings were barely spoken of. And of another woman it was said, "She hath done what she could." Can heart conceive or words express so wonderful a dignity as this to be conferred upon us, to be in any sense helpful in extending the cause of our Lord and his mercy? Our young people rarely have much money at their command, and they have little experience or influence on which to rely. Yet the Master stands ready to accept and honor what we do, so as to use our ability as he would have us, to its full extent, in the easiest and best manner, and not grudgingly, but with a loving and cheerful spirit.

#### PRAYERFULLY.

It must not be forgotten that the Master has said, "Without me ye can do nothing."

"Except the Lord conduct the plan. The least concerted schemes are vain, And never can succeed.

We spend our boasted strength for naught, But if our works in thee be wrought,

They shall be blessed indeed."

REV. ALFRED ANDREWS.

## The Reading Course

### The Outlook.

As far as we are able to judge, from our correspondence, the Epworth League Reading Course for this year is going well. The books seem to give general satisfaction, and the reduction of price ought to result in a very large circulation. It cannot be too strongly insisted that now is the time to commence the work of the Reading Circle. The months before the new year are invaluable, and ought not to slip past without some substantial being done. We are very anxious that secretaries of Reading Circles should write, and give some account of their work, and how they are doing it.

### The Study of Poetry.

We trust that none of our Circles will hastily conclude that the study of poetry cannot be made interesting. Read the articles by Prof. Reynolds, published in this issue, and then take up the study of Whittier with an earnest purpose. Do not try to go through every poem, but select some of the more important ones, and give them some attention.

### The Dole of Jarl Thorkell.

BY PROF. J. B. REYNOLDS.

This poem is a substance a legend of the Northmen or Scandinavians, of Northwestern Europe. It points back to very early times, when heathenism prevailed in Denmark, where these Northmen lived.

Famine and pestilence were raging over the land, and men thought the gods were angry. The Jarl (pronounced Yarl), or lord of the country, sacrificed a cow upon the altar of Frey, one of the gods. But this was not enough, and their priest pronounced that before their gods could be satisfied human sacrifice must be offered (stanzas 1-11).

Then the question arose, who should be sacrificed? The strong warriors could not be spared, and it was decided that the old men and the infants should be sacrificed to the angry gods. Thereupon arose the cry of mothers, but the old men accepted the decision without a word (12-14).

Then up spoke a young priestess, in protest against their ignorance of the gods, and of what the gods required of men. "Frey," she said, "loves not gifts of death, but of life. Save the lives of your people by giving bread to the starving. He, the bounteous Frey, gives us the good things that we enjoy; let us be like him in giving good things to others. With such sacrifices Frey would be pleased and the famine and pestilence will be abated" (15-21).

The Jarl approved of the words of the priestess, and began the good work with his own gift of gold from his chain. Others followed his example, and soon the hungry were fed, and the babes and old men saved (22-26).

In this land there still remain the relics of heathen worship, but the Spirit of Christ rules there now, and the gods have receded into the dim past. This young priestess of long ago, all unknown, had spoken the words of Christ (27 to end).

NOTES ON THE PROPER NAMES FOUND IN THE POEM.

Jarl, or Yarl, is the original of the English word Earl, and means governor or lord.