

Co-operative Council, and found occasion to express her opinions. There were only six ladies present. Missionary effort had somehow never flourished at St Judith's. The ladies for the last half-hour before separating, were having a little talk over the church's affairs. Miss Stringham managed the Mother's Meeting, and had made a success of it "I declare," she said, vehemently, as she spoke of her work. "I lose all patience with the Rector. I ask him to go and see a sick woman; he says he will, but forgets it. Then I ask him again and he promises, but it is usually about a week before I can get him to go. I can't see how a man can be so careless. I am sure I had to ask him three times before he went to see that poor Mrs. French who died last week."

"I do wish the Rector were a little more practical," said little Mrs. Henry Hodgetts, "but you know he says he has no gift for visiting the poor, and I am sure they couldn't hear him preach with any pleasure. I think that high-pitched voice of his is excruciating."

"But," said Miss Stringham, "Why doesn't he try to improve it, and what is the good of a church to which the poor can't come? I don't know what that verse means about the poor having the Gospel preached to them, if it does not mean that such men as our Rector are to do it. I think his sermon last Sunday, on 'The Measurements of Heaven,' was just dreadful. I couldn't understand a word."

"Oh, I think it was beautiful," said Mrs. Langburn, who was a little rhapsodical.

The time was come for the ladies to separate. A quiet, little lady, Mrs. Bellwood, had as yet said nothing. She was dressed in mourning, and had a pale, thin face. The ladies were always attentive when she spoke, but she was usually silent during their discussions. Only six months ago she had lost a little boy, four or five years old. As they were rising, Mrs. Bellwood said, timidly, "Don't you think we could do something to make things better?"

"I am sure I am doing all I can," said Miss Stringham.

"After my little boy died," said Mrs. Bellwood, "my husband felt very bitter about it and would not come to church. The day after the funeral, my eldest daughter and I were reading a chapter together, and she read aloud, 'Ask, and it shall be given unto you,'

The next day, when my husband talked so hardly about God's dealings with us, I thought of those words. The same afternoon my daughter and I knelt together, and asked that he might see God's hand in our trouble. We have done the same every day since. Last Sunday he came to church with us for the first time since the funeral, and this morning he asked me if there is to be Communion in the church next Sunday."

Mrs. Bellwood was quite breathless, after what was for her a long speech. The ladies had by this time reached the door of the school house. There they separated, each to go her way. All were conscious that there was trouble of some kind at St Judith's, but Mrs. Bellwood seemed to be the only one who quite saw how it was to be ended.

G. M. W.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

ADVANCEMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

WHY do some Christians advance so slowly and others so fast?

Here is one reason:—

Some take a round-about road, others a short cut. Some pray for more peace, more strength, more joy, their mind fully occupied with those blessings. This is the round-about way.

Others think of Christ first, they want to know Him better, love Him more. This is the short cut, for the more we possess of Christ, the more joy, and peace and strength we shall have.

"In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full."

Here is another reason:—

Some keep holding back making excuses, saying: "There is no harm in this," or "That is being too strict." Such cannot advance. Others without hesitation give themselves unreservedly to Christ to do His will. "All for Jesus" is their joyful cry. Leaving behind them the dark mists which overhang the Valley of Self-Will up the mountain heights, they press into the sunshine of their Redeemer's abiding Presence.

F. H. DU VERNET.

LORD, THOU ART MINE.

LORD, THOU ART MINE,
Send help to me!
Christ, I am Thine,
Deliver me!

Then shall I praise and sing,
"My soul, bless thou thy God and King."

Mercies are thine,
Remember me!
Sad sins are mine,
Oh pardon me!

Then shall I praise and sing,
"My soul, bless thou thy God and King!"

Goodness is Thine,
Lord, pity me!
Evil is mine,

Forsake not me!
Then shall I praise and sing,
"My soul, bless thou thy God and King!"

All light is thine,
Oh, shine on me!
Darkness is mine,

Enlighten me!
Then I shall praise and sing,
"My soul, bless thou thy God and King!"

True life is Thine,
Breathe it on me!
All death is mine,
Oh, quicken me!

Then shall I praise and sing,
"My soul, bless thou thy God and King!"

HORATIUS BONAR, D.D.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

THE OLD-TIME CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

NEARLY every one has heard or read a great deal about the buried city of Pompeii, and the perfect picture of ancient life which it gives, now that the lava has been dug away, and the streets and houses laid bare to our view. While so many have heard much of Pompeii, very few have heard much of another buried city that has also been brought to light. This buried city is a city of the dead—the Catacombs of Rome, whither long ago in the early years, when persecuted by heathen emperors in Rome itself, the Christians brought their dead and buried them. When the barbarians from the north overran Rome, the Catacombs were filled with ruins and rubbish, and forgotten for more than a 1000 years. In the seventeenth century they were for the first time rediscovered, and now we have an old Christian city of the dead fresh and unaltered as Pompeii is. Those were sad old times when these Christians lived. No doubt the living laid the dead here, often with their own lives in peril. But when we learn the story that the inscriptions and the carving of the Catacombs tell us, we find that it is not one of sorrowful heaviness, but of joy. There are no gloomy cypress trees in emblem here; no burial urn with a sorrowful veil thrown over it; no figures of weeping parents or children.