

which tells the length of the longest day in several places:

At Stockholm, Sweden, it is eighteen and a half hours in length.

In Spitzbergen, the longest day is three and one-half months.

At London, England, and Bremen, Prussia, the longest day has sixteen and one-half hours.

At Hamburg, Germany, and Dantzic, in Prussia, the longest day has seventeen hours.

At Wardbury, Norway, the longest day lasts from May 21st to July 21st, without interruption.

At St. Petersburg, Russia, and Tobolsk, Siberia, the longest day is nineteen hours, and the shortest five hours.

At Tornea, Finland, June 21st brings a day twenty-two hours long, and Christmas one less than three hours in length.

At New York the longest day is about fifteen hours and at Montreal, Canada, it is sixteen hours.—Ex.

Little Joe.

Down in a cellar, damp and drear,
Where never once the sun shone in
With blessed cheer,
Amid deep sorrow, want and sin,
A little one whom angels kept,
Lay still and slept.

"Wake me," he said, "when it shall rise,
The star, you know, that is so bright
It lights the skies
And makes it day where all was night;
To hear about it, as you tell,
Makes me most well."

"Yes, yes, child, I'll be back in time,
You'll see the star ere yet the bells
Begin to chime;
But when the angel music swells,
And gates of heaven open wide,
Don't slip inside."

"I must away, the Christ-child keep
My treasure while, for his sweet sake,
For a day I seek;
How many hearts as mine will break
With cold despair, and want, and fear,
For Christmas cheer?"

"Tis Christmas eve, and everywhere
A sea of joy and beauty shines,
And not a care
Waits on the night, her teeming lines,
Lead forth the countless shining bands,
Girdling all lands."

So sang the chorus, anthem sweet,
That rose into the mighty dome,
And hushed the street;
The merchant in his princely home,
On adding to his treasure bent,
Gives warm assent.

The maiden lifts her fair young face,
And softly whispers, "How divine!"
E'en while a trace
Of falling tears blots out the line—
"The heart of desolation sighs
'Neath Christmas skies."

Beside the grand Cathedral door
A bent form, prematurely old,
Repeats it o'er—
"A sea of beauty, but—so cold!"
And the care-free night—"how glowing
Is their showing!"

"But where little Joe lies dying,
In the dark, alone with sorrow,
Ever trying
Some new grace from pain to borrow,
There, surely night and care are one
Beneath the sun."

"Christmas eve! the world rejoices,
Full, careless as the careless strain,
The glad voices
Are trilling in the holy fane;
They will not miss, they do not know,
My little Joe."

The chimers are rung, the star is set,
But little Joe has slipped away;
And no regret
Can chill the mother heart to-day,
For she has met the angel throng,
And gone along.

—Selected.

Christmas Everywhere.

BY PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!
Christmas in lands of the fir tree and pine,
Christmas in lands of the palm tree and vine,
Christmas where snow peaks stand solemn and white,
Christmas where cornfields lie sunny and bright!

Christmas where children are hopeful and gay,
Christmas where old men are patient and gray,
Christmas where peace like a dove in his flight
Broods o'er brave men in the thick of the fight;
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night.

For the Christ-child who comes is the Master of all;
No palace too great and no cottage too small.
The angels who welcome him sing from the height,
In the "City of David" a King in his might;
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night.

Then let every heart keep its Christmas within,
Christ's pity for sorrow, Christ's hatred of sin,
Christ's care for the weakest, Christ's courage for right,
Christ's dread of the darkness, Christ's love of the light;
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night.

So the stars of the midnight which compass us round
Shall see a strange glory and hear a sweet sound
And cry, "Look! the earth is aflame with delight
O sons of the morning, rejoice at the sight!
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night."

The Young People

EDITOR,

J. W. BROWN.

All communications for this department should be sent to Rev. J. W. Brown, Havelock, N. B., and must be in his hands at least one week before the date of publication.

Prayer Meeting Topic—December 30.

Numbering our days. Psalm 90: 12

We should not so number our days as to make this life on earth the only life we have. Time is to be regarded and prized not for the harvest we may reap, but for the seed-sowing that it enables us to do. Earthly life is not a unit; it is only a minute fraction of a unit. For the unit of being is so large that it has in it all opportunity, all occasion, all achievement, and all duration.

The way, therefore, to number our days is not to so number them that they seem to include the results of our lives, but so to number them that they seem to include simply the beginning of our lives. Our days will bring to us stepping stones which will lead us up to the threshold of a nobler life, nobler in its opportunities, occasions, and the character of its joy.

Wisdom suggests the proper application of facts, the right use of knowledge, the correct direction of our faculties. Your greatest responsibility is yourself. The gravest charge you have to keep is the charge of your own soul. Life weaves us into the fabric of society. We are knitted and knotted with other lives. But death unthreads us from our connections. In the last day you will be responsible for yourself. The blunders of life do not kill. God is always eager to give us one more chance.

The Kingdom of God.

XI. The Consummation of the Kingdom of God. (Part 2. In history).

The purpose of this study is to examine the question which is so frequently asked and so differently answered, "Is the world growing better?" or to put it in another way, Is the Kingdom of God making any progress towards its glorious consummation as outlined in our last study? Does the history of the world, and of the church in particular, warrant the conclusion so finely put by Tennyson:—

"Yet I doubt not through the ages
One increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened
With the process of the years,"

so that the man of faith may appeal to that history as confirming his faith, and on the basis of the knowledge obtained build a larger faith?

We find men who give this question the answer "no." Men were saying no in the day when the author of Ecclesiastes lived, and his reply to them was (Eccl. 7: 10),—"Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." On the other hand there are those who answer this question with a "yes," who believe that God is not going to be defeated in his gracious purposes for the world, and that his truth is mighty and shall prevail. We confess to belonging to this latter class, and confidently believe that our faith is abundantly justified by the progress of the Kingdom of God through the ages.

If you will recall the second study you will remember that we spoke of three spheres in which the kingdom was to be manifested and established, viz:—

1. The individual.
2. The home or family.
3. The state.

Naturally our inquiry in this study would lead us to consider whether the kingdom had brought to these spheres any betterment, and in what way. In other words has the Kingdom of God done anything for the individual? for the family? for the state?

1. As respects the individual.

The kingdom has done so much for the individual that we hardly know where to begin or what to mention. Think of

- a. His redemption.
- b. His ideal.
- c. His hope.
- d. His motive power.
- e. His freedom.

The gospel of the kingdom is preeminently the gospel of man and for man. It takes in all men (John 3: 16. I Tim. 2: 4. 2 Peter 3: 9); it leaves out none. And by taking hold of the life at its most vital points, it helps men to realize themselves, their mission, their destiny.

Christ didn't free any slaves, yet the gospel of the kingdom has freed the slave in England, America, and in Russia. The gospel has no word about prohibition in the sense in which we understand it, yet the principles of the gospel at work among men are grappling with the mighty evil of intemperance, and pushing demon Rum harder and harder to his death. What is known as the temperance reform movement is three-quarters of a century old, and yet within that time there has been a mighty revolution in the thought and sentiment of a great host of people concerning temperance, both within and without the church. When the Saviour was born the manly maxim was, "a man's a wolf to a man he does not know." Over against that the kingdom placed its principle of neighborly love. The history of the nineteen Christian centuries is the history of the struggle between these two principles. The principle of the kingdom is surely gaining the day.

The King by tabernacling in our humanity declared the dignity and supreme worth of man, though he was far astray from God, lost in the whirling rapids of sin. Under the gracious influence of the Son of Man the world has been losing its ferocity, and has been becoming more and more considerate and humane both in its thought and its activity concerning man. The growth of this humane spirit is witnessed to in many ways, among which we may mention the following:—

1. The establishing of charitable institutions, such as orphanages, homes for foundlings, etc.
2. Prison reforms.
3. Hospitals.
4. Educational institutions.
5. More humane methods of warfare; and the use of

arbitration in the settling of international disputes instead of an appeal to arms.

f. In the breaking up of the slave trade, and the abolishing of slavery itself.

g. In the sacredness of human life.

h. Especially in the missionary enterprises of the past century. The forces, which the missionary impulse of the last century has set in motion, have not yet brought forth their abundant harvest; nevertheless great and mighty changes have taken place in heathendom, and we believe that even greater and mightier changes are to occur. The Lord has done and is doing great things for us, for man, whereof we are glad.

2. As respects the family.

It will be readily admitted that the Jewish home was by far the best in antiquity. Yet the Jews tolerated polygamy, and woman's position in Jewry was far from ideal. Christ gave new sanctity to the home, especially in his doctrine of husband and wife (Matt. 19: 3-15; 5: 27-32), and forever exalts woman to her proper place in the world's life. It is a recognized fact that it is the gospel of Christ that has given woman her place and mission in the world: and wherever the gospel goes woman has been elevated and honored; and wherever this has occurred the home has been made more sacred. We have only to glance into the history of missions in order to see how true this is. In this connection it is significant that the law of chastity which Christ proclaimed as the law of his kingdom bears directly and indirectly upon the home.

If any one doubts the influence which Christianity has had in making the home what it is in Christian lands, let him read the history of the early times, or the records of pagan countries even to-day. Was it in Babylon, or in Egypt, in Greece, or in Rome that marriage was sacred and woman honored? Is it in China, or in Japan, in India, or in the isles of the Pacific that the home is blessed, and the mother's influence the sweetest, noblest power therein? Ah! we know how it is, only too well. It is only where the Christ has come with his lofty standard of marriage and chastity, with his ideal for manhood and womanhood that the home approaches the end for which it was instituted by the Creator. In Christian lands even those who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as their Lord, are nevertheless dominated in some measure with his thought about the home life. It is Christ who fills our home with blessings, who makes them Christian. Let us give him the honor and the glory.

3. As respects the nation or the state.

Certainly whatever Christianity has done for the individual and for the family, it has also done for the state.

The student of constitutional history will discover that the governments of the world, especially of those peoples where Christianity has been aggressive, have made great changes in the past nineteen centuries. The ancient governments were despotic. The rulers were absolute in authority. They held the power of life and death in their hands. The doctrine of the deification of the emperor in the time of the Caesars appeared in a modified form to be sure, in the theory of Louis XIV, "I am the state," and also in the dogma of the Stuarts of "the divine right of kings." But during these centuries the leaven of the gospel of humanity was working and the people were coming to a different conviction concerning rulers and governments. The democratic tendencies of the 19th century are but the fruitage of the leaven of the kingdom of God. This democratic spirit has given the world a new conception of nationality and government.

Along with this democratic movement has grown up a new ideal of national life as a moral personality with the consciousness of dependence upon God. We are told that when Mr. Lincoln became president of the United States "he ceased to be indifferent to religion and passed into a devout belief in the mysterious control of the destiny of the nation by a sovereign, omnipotent hand." And in the noble life of Queen Victoria, nothing is more beautiful than her devout reliance upon God and her deep sense of responsibility to him for the exercise of the royal power.

Another element in the idea of national life which may be traced to the influence of the Kingdom of God on the nations, is that of a mission, a destiny. The Christ-spirit moving among a people establishes the conviction of a divine destiny, or if you please of a divine election. But the doctrine of election as held by the Christian nation puts in what the Jews were continually leaving out, viz.—that in them shall all the other nations of the earth be blessed. A nation can't be Christian and be selfish, any more than an individual can. The nations as well as individuals are learning more and more that they can not be a wolf to their neighbor, or to the stranger. Thus we are learning human fellowship and brotherhood. This growth has been partly in, and partly out of the church, partly due to, and partly in opposition to the church. But in all cases the solid progress which has been made is due, and can be abundantly shown to be due, to the presence of the Spirit of Christ in the world. In spite of apparent reverses and counter influences that spirit is, we believe, moving steadily on to final victory. (Cf. Rev. 11: 15.)

After all the question as to whether the world is growing better is an individual one. Am I, are you, growing better? that is, are we growing into the likeness of the King, and manifesting his spirit in the world? Young friends, let us answer the question, as we love Christ and pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in the earth, even as it is in heaven."

NOTE. There are four books which I would like to mention as helpful books in this important study. They are:—

- Bruce: The Kingdom of God.
- Gulick: The Growth of the Kingdom of God.
- Dorchester: Problem of Religions Progress. (Rev. Ed.)
- Dennis: Christian Missions and Social Progress. (Vols. I and II now out.)

The first will aid us in understanding the Master's teaching concerning the kingdom; the others will help us get clear conceptions of the work which the Spirit of Christ has been, and still is, doing in the world.