

PARTIAL FULFILLMENT ATTAINED.

Since we live in the Christian era after the influence of the life and death of Christ has been at work for over two thousand years, it is quite in order for us to praise and ask to what extent this ideal reign has already been realized in the earth.

Without trying to glorify any branch of the Christian church, one can easily see from the outside that certain great changes which have taken place through the influence of the Christian religion during this era. A few examples may be given:

1. The abolition of serfdom. This giant evil grew up, not altogether in heathen countries, but partly under the patriarchal system and originally with apparent divine sanction. Though harmless under the patriachs it became a great evil under modern forms of government, and might be regarded as the most glaring type of oppression. The judgment of "thy people with righteousness, and thy power as judgment," requir'd the abolition of this great evil, and it has been done so completely that even the darkest corners of the earth cannot afford a safe place in which to practice it.

2. The position of woman has been very greatly changed. Instead of being the drudge of the home and the toy of the stronger sex, she has been given her place as a moral equal to her brother and husband, and is protected as the honored matron of the household. Her intellectual equality is recognized, and her right to a fair share in educational advantages is established. The influence of her character thus elevated is being more and more felt as essential to moral and racial progress. With this may be coupled the much greater sanctity attached to marriage.

3. Practices of torture and cruelty toward criminals and toward enemies in war have given way to more humane methods of treatment. And where severity is used the moral effect is considered rather than revenge or retribution.

4. International rights and obligations have greatly reduced the opportunities for plunder and bloodshed, and have almost abolished the once prevalent evil of piracy.

Arbitration is being advocated and resorted to for the settlement of many disputes which formerly had no appeal but the sword.

5. Religious tolerance has so advanced that the history of past cruelty and persecution for religious objects is now read with a sense of horror and disapproval, such as could never again permit their repetition, save, perhaps, under such exceptional conditions as exist in the empire of the "unseparable Turk."

6. Together with this established tolerance in regard to religious belief, there has taken place a wonderful awakening, especially during the nineteenth century, of a spirit of aggressive enterprise in pushing the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ into the darkest corners of the earth. In Asia the great Mongol group of races is being gradually leavened by the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Japan, the once hermit nation, is now a leader of progress in the East, and is almost compelling Corea and China to abandon their ancient superstitions and open their doors to Western Christian civilization. The grand Lama of Tibet may tremble within his mountain-locked fortress of obscurity and defiance, for his days are numbered, and it is only a matter of a few years till the railway and printing-press will be established in his once inaccessible domains.

In India, caste is being dissolved by western intercourse, and multitudes are yearly brought under the influence of Christianity. It may take time to over-

come the old systems, but the process of disintegration has set in, and there can only be one ultimate result.

Africa can no longer be called the Dark Continent, for, although still in a broken and disorganized condition, the light has entered, the land is fairly understood, the forces which bound it in the darkness of slavery have been broken, and the way is open for a rapid advance in the direction of Christian civilization. We may now rejoice that the states of the nations are open; the opportunity of the Christian is early come, and it is the privilege of the rising generation to go forward in conquest unto victory in the name of the Lord.

THE COMPLETE FULFILLMENT.

The path of success to the complete fulfillment of Messiah's rule is also suggested in the beginning and ending of this psalm. It begins with a prayer, "Give the King thy judgments, O God," "Not in might, nor by power, but by thy Spirit, saith the Lord," We are to ever to see these things accomplished in the salvation of the world, we must exercise great faith, and use it in mighty and prevailing prayer. Every great religious movement is preceded by earnest prayer somewhere and by some one. Until we learn to use this great secret of power we have not discovered our strength. Earnest, persistent, faithful prayer is an agency, the influence of which cannot be measured, and never has been exhausted. The psalm ends with a benediction (vs. 18, 19), in which glory and praise are ascribed to God. This, too, is an essential condition of real progress and ultimate victory. The moment we yield to the temptation to gratify our human vanity, even by the praise of our good deeds, we are shorn of strength, and cut off from hope of success. Let us, therefore, constantly maintain the spirit of this benediction, and say, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen!"

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Have a half-hour prayer-meeting before the regular service, specially directed toward missionary work. Emphasize the importance of prayer as a regular means of seeking the evangelization of the world. Give a brief review of our own missionary operations, with use of maps, and give glory to God for the honor he has given us as a Church in our efforts in the Northwest and in foreign lands. Familiarize yourself with the names of our own missionaries and their fields of labor. Dwell on the character of noted missionaries of any denomination, and of any field of labor.

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OCT. 6.—"THIS GRACE ALSO,"—
"GIVING."

2 Cor. 8. 7-9.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., Sept. 30. Establishing truth. 1 Cor. 1. 27-31, 2-15
Tues., Sept. 1. In the gospel tree. 1 Cor. 9. 27-34
Wed., Sept. 2. The benefits of giving.
Thurs., Sept. 3. All is blessed. Matt. 6. 19-21, Luke 6. 38
Fri., Sept. 4. Giving with regularity. 1 Cor. 16. 17
Sat., Sept. 5. Love and Gifts. 1 Cor. 13. 17

1. This grace also. This word is a flash of light thrown into a dark place. It illuminates our subject. It glorifies it. It displays the gold within the gold. It recalls to us the face of an angel. Much has been said of the meanness of money. We have seen people close up like a clamshell when approached for an offering. We have at times shrunk from

the mention of the subject, because it was so unwelcome. What fresh insight this word affords! Even the gold has a brighter glitter under its rays—we had forgotten that giving—liberality is a grace. But why call giving a grace as ornaments of the life, and especially the favor of God; and then, what that favor produces in us. These results are so supremely good that grace comes to denominate the highest excellencies of character, such as meekness, faith, patience, goodness, love; qualities that are ornaments of the life, that beautify the soul and exert a charm over all beholders. So the proverb says that wisdom and discretion are "grace to the neck." There is nothing more radiant with spiritual beauty than true liberality. It is a grace. It is the body of which love is the invisible soul.

But by calling liberality a grace it is not meant that its function is merely or chiefly ornamental. That is a foolish view of life, which deems coarse things chiefly a grace as ornaments of the life to combine beauty and use. And this grace is most practical. Like mercy "it beseth him that gives and him that takes." It is effective in two realms. It speaks both the language of earth and the language of heaven. For while it relieves physical necessities, it both manifests and provokes love, and is the occasion of many thanksgivings unto God. (See 2 Cor. ix. 12-14.)

So far is it from being merely accessory or incidental that the galaxy of Christian character is not complete without it. The most worthy qualities halt when this is absent. It is impossible to substitute some other goodness for this. There are no options on the Christian curriculum. "As ye abound in everything in faith, and utterance and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your work, see that ye abound in this grace, also." Liberality is not a question of likes. It is a question of loyalty, of honesty in our surrender to God. A Christian without it must be cramped in soul and crippled in action, rheumatic in his joints, anemic in his blood. His very existence as a Christian becomes impossible. Whoso hath this world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need (of whatever sort), and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" 2 Tim. 11. 17. On the other hand, "the liberal soul shall be made fat." "This grace also." How mortified we would be if, when we appear before the throne to receive our crown, there should be one jewel lacking, never having been set.

But to return! It is a grace because its disposition is wrought by the Holy Spirit. It is work and a working of God in you. This is true as surely as the sweet sympathy that goes forth unbidden as the fragrance from the flower as it is of the turning of the stubborn and worldly heart to the true attitude toward riches, which is possible only with God. (See Mark 27.) "When ye restrain your benevolence take heed lest you resist God. But this is not a reflection of that which is in God himself. He is the great giver. His supreme manifestation to man was a gift. (John 11. 16.) Christ's whole life was a giving. (See Mark 1. 15.) This is the eminently the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor. (See Phil. ii. 5-8, and note the injunction. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." ii. 5.)

Giving is a grace, an ornament, an instrument of God, a manifestation of his power, and a reflection of his character in us. See that ye abound. That is a good, wholesome word. It is large and free.