

great ones of the city knew aught about the birth of Him whom they sought! But when the troubled king, having made enquiry of the chief priests and scribes as to where Christ should be born, was told in Beth'chem of Judea, and had said to the wise men, Go and search diligently and bring me word again, and they having departed, lo, "the star went before them and came and stood over where the young child was," and when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him, and having opened their treasures they presented unto Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. C. M. D.

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It is not in our surroundings, but by the inner life that we are living, that the possibility of taint coming to us is determined. A recent writer tells of going with a party down into a coal mine. On the side of the gangway grew a plant which was perfectly white. The visitors were astonished that there, where the coal dust was constantly flying, this little plant should be so pure and white. A miner threw a handful of black dust upon the plant, but not a particle adhered. The visitors themselves repeated the experiment, but the coal dust would not cling. There was a wonderful enamel on the white petals, to which no speck or stain could cling. The little plant, with its pure whiteness, amid the dust and drippings of a coal mine, is a picture of what every Christian life should be. In this world of evil, where so many unholy influences breathe about us, it is the mission of Christians to be pure; to keep themselves "unspotted from the world." If God can make a little plant so that no dust can stain its whiteness, can He not, by His grace, so transform our hearts that no sin shall stain their purity? A. H. C. D.

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A CONTEMPORARY furnishes what it calls a "Key to Parochial Success," and gives it in two words, "Church Attendance." "No question about it; no doubt. Given faithfully, persistently, enthusiastically attended services—the people there in force, there as a standing

duty, there to see things proper and there to make things proper—and the thrift of any parish is established! Everything else will follow; warm devotion, hearty worship, activity, ample collections. Even the dullness of ministries can be overcome by this means; being either quickened into sympathetic life or else compelled to "give place" to one more in accord with such an environment. The beauty of it is, too, that this key is within such easy reach of any parish. The people need not be rich, nor experienced, nor learned. Any honest, earnest soul can come often to church, to join in the service, add to its energies and partake of its life. Those who only come to church occasionally or only on Sunday mornings lend a very partial and an almost insignificant strength to their church. They suggest to the clergy the easy letting of things down to the lowest level, except on a Sunday morning. There is no question about it; empty pews invite disaster, and insure defeat; while full pews of people who realize their duty are a prophecy of success."

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MR. D. L. MOODY, who is now carrying on a great work in New York, was asked if he thought that united effort on the part of all Christian workers would bring the Gospel to all in New York. The following is his carefully considered answer: Yes, if they would be as much in earnest about spiritual things as our politicians have been about political matters. No better example is to be had than Mr. Bryan's record. Had any one prophesied, six months ago, that he would have been able to exert the power he has, no one would have believed it. Here was a young man from Nebraska, comparatively unknown, who forced the issue of silver against the opposing party, against the greater portion of the press, asked favors of no one, and roused the nation over the question of finance as it has never been roused over any question for more than a generation. And how was he able to do it? By having a strong conviction and then being dead in earnest about it. I do not agree with Mr. Bryan's position, but I

admire his fearless courage and his stubborn fight. Now if one man can do that for silver, which only effects a man's pocket, what could not the church, with all its facilities and workers, do for men's eternal welfare. What is a man's temporal wealth compared to his soul? Would that every Christian would take a lesson from the history of the past six months, and not only would New York be reached, but all our nation would seek again the God of our fathers.

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To acquire mental strength we must learn to think independently, and the man who is only reading, reading always the thoughts of others, may never acquire this power. Reading is supposed to be an intellectual occupation, said *The Christian* recently, and yet there is much reading which furnishes no more mental exercise than the idle gossip of gabbling fools. There are many who *will not read* a book which contains thought or requires thought; so they read and read and read light, trashy, vapid novels, and know no more at the end of them than they did at the beginning. To be great or strong or successful, persons must do more than read, they must study, they must *learn* and they must *think*.

A millionaire, on entering his office one dull day, saw his partner yawning over a book.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"There was nothing else to do, so I'm reading," was the answer.

"Nothing else to do! Reading!" the great merchant repeated, in a tone that expressed wonder, amusement, and scorn. "When you've nothing else to do, don't read. *Think!*"

Much time wasted in aimless and useless reading would be well employed in earnest *thinking* about and *studying* the things that concern us for this world and the world to come. *Thoughtful* men are needed in a world where there are so many unthinking triflers, who waste the present life and lose the life which is to come.

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DURING the winter the meetings in connection with church work