REV. DR. TALMAGE

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Subject: "Evils of Idleness."

TEXT: *"The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting."*—Proverbs xii., 27.

David and Jeremiah and Ezekel and Micah and Solomon of the text showed that some time they had been out on a hunting expedition. Spears, lances, swords and nets were employed in this service. A deep pit fall would be digged. In the center of it there was some raised ground with a pole on which a lamb would be fastened, and the wild beast not seeing the pitfall, but only seeing the lamb would plunge for its prey and dash down, itself captured. Birds were caught in gins or pierced with arrows. The hunters in olden time had two missions—one to clear the land of ferocious beasts, and the other to obtain meat for themselves and their families. The occupation and habit of hunters are a favorite Bible simile. David said he was hunted by his enemy like a partridge upon the mountain. My text is a hunting scene.

A sportsman arrayed in a garb appropriate to the wild chase lets slip the bloodthirsty hounds from their kennels, and mounting his fleet horse, with a halloo and the yell of the greyhound pack they are off and away, through brake and dell, over marsh and moor, across chasms where a misstep would hurl horse and rider to death, plunging into mire up to the haunches or into swift streams up to the bit, till the game is tracked by dripping foam and blood, and the antlers crack on the rocks, and the hunter has just time to be in at the death. Yet, after all the haste and peril of the chase, my text represents this sportsman as being too indolent to dress the game and prepare it for food. He lets it lie in the dooryard of his home and become a portion for vermin and beaks of prey. Thus by one master stroke Solomon gives a picture of laziness, when he says, "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting." The most of hunters have the game they shot or entrapped cooked the same evening or the next day, but not so with this laggard of the text. Too lazy to rip off the hide. Too lazy to kindle the fire and put the gridiron on the coals.

The first picture I ever bought was an engraving of Thorwaldsen's "Autumn." The clusters of grapes are ripe on the vine of the homestead, and the returned hounds, panting from the chase, are lying on the doorsill and the hunter is unshouldering the game, while the housewife is about to take a portion of it and prepare it for the evening meal. Unlike the person of the text, she was enough industrious to roast that which had been taken in huating. But the world has had many a specimen since Solomon's time of those whose lassitude and improvidence and absurdity were depicted in my text. The most of those who have made a dead failure of life can look back and see a time when a great opportunity opened, but they did not know it.

They were not as wise as George Stephenson, "the father of railways," who, when at sixteen years of age he received an appointment to work at a pumping engine for twelve shillings a week, cried out: "Now, I am a made man for life." God gives to most men at least one good opportunity. A great Grecian general was met by a group of beggars, and he said to them: "If you want beasts to plow your land I will lend you some. If you want land I will give you some. If you want seed to sow your land, I will see that you get it. But I will encourage none in idleness." So God gives to most people an opportunity of extrication from depressed circumstances. As if to create in us a hatred for indolence, God has made those animals which are sluggish to appear loathsome in our eyes, while those which are fleet and active he has clothed with attractiveness.

The tortoise, the sloth, the snail, the crocodile repel us, while the deer and the gazelle are as pleasing as they are fleet, and from the swift wings of innumerable birds God has spared no purple or gold or jet or crimson or snowy whiteness. Besides all this the Bible is constantly assaulting the vice of laziness. Solomon seems to order the idler out of his sight as beyond all human instruction when he says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." And Paul seems to drive him up from his dining table before he gets through with the first course of food with the assertion, "If any will not work, neither shall he eat."

Now, what are the causes of laziness and what are its evil results? I knew a man who was never up to time. It seemed impossible for him to meet an engagement. When he was to be married he missed the train. His watch seemed to take on the habits of its owner, and was always too slow. He had a constitutional lethargy for which he did not seem responsible. So indolence often arises from the natural temperament. I do not know but there is a constitutional tendency to this vice in every man. However active you may generally be, have you not on some warm spring day felt a touch of this feeling on you, although you may have shaken it off as you would a reptile? But some are so powerfully tempted to this by their bodily constitution that all the work of their life has been accomplished with this lethargy hanging on their back or treading on their heels.

You sometimes behold it in childhood. The child moping and longing within doors while his brothers and sisters are at play, or if he join them he is behind in every race and beaten in every game. His nerves, his muscles, his bones are smitten with this palsy. He vegetates rather than lives, creeps rather than walks, yawns rather than breathes. The animal in his nature is stronger than the intellectual. He is generally a great eater and active only when he cannot digest what he has eaten. It requires as much effort for him to walk as for others to run. Languor and drowsiness are his natural inheritance. He is built for a slow sailing vessel, a heavy hulk and an insufficient cutwater. Place an active man in such a bodily structure and the latter would be shaken to pieces in one day. Every law of physiology demands that he be supine. Such a one is not responsible for this powerful tendency of his nature. His great duty is resistance.

When I see a man fighting an unfortunate temperament all my sympathies are aroused, and I think of Victor Hugo's account of a scene on a warship, where, in the midst of a storm at sea, a great cannon got loose, and it was crashing this way and that and would have destroyed the ship; and the chief gunner, at the almost certain destruction of his own life, rushed at it with a handspike to thrust between the spokes of the wheel of the rolling cannon, and by a fortunate leverage arrested the gun till it could be lashed fast. But that struggle did not seem so disheartening as that man enters upon who attempts to fight his natural temperament, whether it be too fast of too slow, too nervous or too lymphatic. God help him, for God only can.

Furthermore, indolence is often the result of easy circumstances. Rough experience in earlier life seems to be necessary in order to make a man active and enterprising. Mountaineers are nearly always swarthy, and those who have toiled among mountains of trouble get the most nerve and muscle and brain. Those who have become the deliverers of nations, once had not where to lay their heads. Locusts and wild honey have been the fare of many a John the Baptist, while those who had been fondled of fortune and petted and praised have often grown up lethargic.

They have none of that heroism which comes from fighting one's own battles. The warm summer sun of prosperity has weakened and relaxed them. Born among the luxuries of life, exertion has been unnecessary, and therefore they spend their time in taking it easy. They may enter into business, but they are not fitted for its application, its hardships, for its repulses, and after having lost the most of that which they have invested, go back to thorough inaction. This costly yacht may do well enough on the smooth, glassy bay, but cannot live an hour amid a chopped sea.

Another cause of indolence is severe discouragement. There are those around us who started life with the most sanguine expectation. Their enterprise excited the remark of all compeers. But some sudden and overwhelming misfortune met them, and henceforth they have been inactive. Trouble, instead of making them more determined, have overthrown them. They have lost all self-reliance. They imagine that all men and all occurrences are against them. They hang their heads when once they walked upright. They never look you up in the eyes. They become misanthropic and pronounce all men liars and scoundrels. They go melancholic and threadbare to their graves. You cannot rouse them to action by the most glittering offer.

In most cases these persons have been honorable and upright all their lives, for rogues never get discouraged, as there is always some other plot they have not laid and some other trap they have not sprung. There are but few sadder sights than a man of talent and tact and undoubted capacity giving up life as a failure, like a line of magnificent steamers rotting against wharves, from which they ought to have been carrying the exports of a nation. Every great financial panic produces a large crop of such men. In the great establishments where they were partners in business they are now weighers or draymen or clerks on small salary.

Reverie is also a cause of indolence. There are multitudes of men who expect to achieve great success in life, who are entirely unwilling to put forth any physical, moral or intellectual effort. They have a great many eloquent theories of life. They are all the while expecting something to turn up. They have read in light literature how men suddenly and unexpectedly came to large estates, or found a pot of buried gold at the foot of the rainbow of Good Luck, or had some great offer made them. They have passed their lives in reverie.

Notwithstanding he is pinched with poverty, and any other man would be downcast at the forlorn prospect, he is always cheerful and sanguine and jovial, for he does not know but that he may be within a day or two of astounding success. You cannot but be entertained with his cheerfulness of temper. All the world wishes him well, for he never did anybody harm. At last he dies in just the same condition in which he lived, sorrowful only because he must leave the world just at the time when his long-thought-of plans were about to be successful.

Let no young man begin life with reverie. There is nothing accomplished without hard work. Do not in idleness expect something to turn up. It will turn down. Indolence and wickedness always make bad luck. These people of reverie are always about to begin. They say, "Wait a little." So with the child who had a cage containing a beautiful canary, and the door of the cage was open and a cat was in the room. "Better shut the door of the cage," said the mother. "Wait a minute," said the boy. While he was waiting the feline creature with one spring took the canary. The way that many lose the opportunity of a lifetime is by the same principle. They say, "Wait a minute." My advice is not to wait at all.

Again, bad habits are a fruitful source of indolence. Sinful indulgences shut a man's shop and dull his tools and steal his profits. Dissoluteness is generally the end of industry. There are those who have the rare faculty of devoting occasionally a day or a week to loose indulgences, and at the expiration of that time go back with bleared eyes and tremulous hands and bloated cheeks to the faithful and successful performance of their duties. Indeed their employers and neighbors expect this amusement or occasional season of frolic and wassail.

Some of the best workmen and most skillful artisans have this mode of conducting themselves, but as the time rolls on the season of dissipation becomes more protracted and the season of steadiness and sobriety more limited, until the employers become disgusted and the man is given up to a continual and ruinous idleness. When that point has arrived he rushes to destruction with astonishing velocity. When a man with strong proclivities of appetite has nothing to do, no former self respect or moral restraint or the beseechings of kindred can save him. The only safety for a man who feels himself under the fascination of any form of temptation is an employment which affords neither recreation nor holiday.

Nothing can be more unfortunate for a man of evil inclination than an occupation which keeps him exceedingly busy during a part of the year and then leaves him for weeks and months entirely unemployed. There are many men who cannot endure protracted leisure. They are like fractious steeds that must constantly be kept to the load, for a week's quiet makes them intractable and uncontrollable. Bad habits produce idleness, and idleness produces bad habits. The probability is that you will either have to give up your loose indulgences or else give up your occupation. Sin will take all enthusiasm out of your work and make you sick of life's drudgery, and though now and then between your seasons of dissipations you may rouse up to a sudden activity and start again in the chase of some high and noble end, even though you catch the game you will sink back into slothfulness before you have roasted that which you took in hunting. Bad habits unfit a man for anything but politics.

Now, what are the results of indolence? A marked consequence of this vice is physical disease. The healthiness of the whole natural world depends upon activity. The winds, tossed and driven in endless circuits, scattering the mists from the mountains, and scooping out death damps from the caves, and blasting the miasma of swamps, and hurling back the fetid atmosphere of great cities, are healthy just because of their swiftness and uncontrollableness of sweep. But, after awhile, the wind falls and the hot sun pours through it, and when the leaves are still and the grain fields bend not once all day long, then pestilence smites its victims and digs trenches for the dead.

All the healthy beauty of that which we see and hear in the natural world is dependent upon activity and unrest. Men will be healthy—intellectually, morally and physically—only upon the condition of an active industry. I know men die every day of overwork. They drop down in coal pits, and among the spindles of Northern factories, and on the cotton plantations of the South. In every city and town and village you find men groaning under burdens as, in the East, the camels stagger under their loads between Aleppo and Damascus. Life is crushed out every day at counters and workbenches and anvils. But there are other multitudes who die from mere inertia. Indulgences every day are contracting disease beyond the catholicon of allopathy and homeopathy and hydropathy and eclecticism. Rather than work they rush upon lancets and scalpels.

Nature has provided for those who violate her laws by inactivity—what rheum for the eyes, and what gout for the feet, and what curvature for the spine, and what strictures for the chest, and what tubercles for the lungs, and what rheumatism for the muscles, and what neuralgias for the nerves. Nature in time arraigns every such culprit at her bar, and presents against him an indictment of one hundred counts, and convicts him on each one of them. The laws of nature will not stop their action because men may be ignorant of them. Disease, when it comes to do its work, does not ask whether you understand hygiene or pathology or materia medica.

If there were not so many lies written on tombstones and in obituaries you would see what multitudes of the world's inhabitants are slain in their attempts to escape the necessity of toil. Men cross oceans and continents, and climb the Alps, and sit under the sky of Italy or the shadow of Egyptian Pyramid, and go down into ancient ruins, and bathe at Baden Baden, and come home with the same shortness of breath, and the same poor digestion, and the same twitching of the nerves, when at home with their own spade they might have dug health out of the ground, or with their own axe hewn health out of a log, or with their own scythe garnered health from the grain field.

There are many who estimate the respectability of an occupation by the little exertion it demands, and would not have their children enter any employment where their hands may be soiled, forgetting that a laborer's overalls are just as honorable as a priest's robes and an anvil is just as respectable as a pulpit. Health flies from the bed down and says. "I cannot sleep here;" and from the table spread with ptarmigan and epicurean viands, saying, "I cannot eat here;" and from the vehicle of soft cushions and easy springs, saying, "I cannot ride here;" and from houses luxuriously warmed and upholstered, saying, "I cannot live here;" and some day you meet health, who declined all these luxuriant places, walking in the plow's furrow, or sweltering beside the hissing forge, or spinning among the looms, or driving a dray, or tinning a roof, or carrying hods of brick up the ladder of a wall.

Furthermore, notice that indolence endangers the soul. Satan makes his chief conquests over men who either have nothing to do, or, if they have, refuse to do it. There is a legend that St. Thomas, years after Christ's resurrection, began again to doubt, and he went to the Apostles and told them about his doubts. Each Apostle looked at him with surprise and then said he must be excused, for he had no time to listen any longer. Then St. Thomas went to the devout women of his time and expressed his doubts. They said they were sorry, but they had no time to listen. Then St. Thomas concluded that it was because they were so busy that the Apostles and the devout women had no doubts.

Idleness not only leads a man into associations which harm his morals, but often thrusts upon him the worst kind of skepticism. Loafers are almost always infidels, or fast getting to be. Consummate idlers never read the Bible, and if they appear in church can be distinguished in an audience of a thousand by their listlessness, for they are too lazy to hear. It is not so much among occupied merchants, industrious mechanics and professional men always busy that you hear the religion of Jesus maligned, as in public lounging places, given up to profanity and dissoluteness. They have no sympathy with the Book that says, "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

I never knew a man given up to thorough idleness that was converted. Simon and Andrew were converted while fishing, and Lydia while selling purple, and the shepherds of Bethlehem watching their flocks heard the voice of angels, and Gideon was thrashing on the thrashing floor, but no one was ever converted with his hands in his pockets. Let me tell the idler that there is no hope for him either in this world or in the world which is to come. If the Son of God, who owned the whole universe, worked in the carpenter shop of Joseph, surely we, who own so little, yet want so much, ought to be busy. The redeemed in heaven are never idle. What exciting songs they sing!

On what messages of love they fly through all the universe, fulfilling God's high behests and taking worlds in one circuit; rushing with infinite fierceness against sin and cruelty and oppression, and making the gates of hell to quake at the overthrow of the principalities of darkness, and in the same twinkle of an eye speeding back to their thrones with the news of sinners repentant. The River of Life is ever flowing, and the palms ever waving, and the hallelujahs ever rising, and the harps ever sounding, and temple always open, and the golden streets always a-rush with chariots of salvation, and the last place which you ought ever to want to go to is heaven, unless you want to be busy.

Alas, my hearers, that in this world there should be so many loungers and so few workers. We go into the vineyard of the church and we hear the arbor groan under the heft of the vines and the clusters hanging down, large and thick and ripe, cluster and cluster, fairer than the bunches of Eshcol and Engedi, and at a touch they will turn into wine more ruddy than that of Libanus and Helbon. But where are the men to gather the vintage and tread the wine press? There comes to your ear a sound of a thousand wheat fields ready for the sickle. The grain is ready. It is tall, it is full, it is golden. It waves in the sunlight. It rustles in the wind. It would fill the barns. It would crowd the garners. After a while it will lodge, or the mildew and the rust will smite it.

Oh, where are the reapers to bind the sheaves! The enemies of God are marshaled. You see the glitter of their bucklers. You hear the pawing of their chargers, and all along the line of battle is heard the shout of their great captain, and at the armies of the living God they hurl their defiance. They come, not in numbers like the hosts of Sennacherib, but their multitude is like the leaves of the forest, and the sound of their voices like the thunder of the sea. Mailed in hell's impenetrable armor, they advance with the waving of their banners and the dancing of their plumes. Their ranks are not easily to be broken, for the batteries of hell will open to help them and ten thousand angels of darkness mingle in the fight. Where are the chosen few who will throw themselves into the jaws of this conflict?

King James gave to Sir John Scott, for his courage, a charter of arms with a number of spears for the crest and the motto, "Ready! aye, ready!" and yet, when God calls us to the work and the cause demands our espousal and interests dreadful as the judgment and solemn as eternity tremble in the balance, how few of us are willing to throw ourselves into the breach, crying, "Ready! aye, ready!"

Oh, I should like to see God arise for the defense of His own cause and the disenthralment of a world in bondage! How the fetters would snap and how the darkness would fly, and how heaven would sing. You have never seen an army like that which God shall gather from the four winds of heaven to fight His battles. They shall cover every hilltop and stretch through every valley and man the vessels on every sea. There shall neither be uproar nor wrath nor smoke nor bloodshed. Harvests shall not lie waste in the track nor cities be consumed. Instead of the groans of captives shall come the song of those redeemed.

Yet the conquest shall be none the less complete, for if in that hour when all should be vigilant the church of God should neglect to seize the prize and the cause should seem to fall from the graveyards and cemeteries of all Christendom the good and faithful of the past would spring to their feet in time to save the cause, and though the sun might not again stand still above Gibeon, or the moon in the valley of Ajalon, the day would be long enough to gain a decisive victory for God and the truth.

But my text is descriptive also of those who hunt for opportunities, and when they get them do not use them. The rabbit they overcome by an early morning tramp lies for weeks uncooked in the dooryard. The deer that they brought down after long and exhausting pursuit in the Adirondacks lies on the doorsill undressed, and the savory venison becomes a malodorous carcass. They roast not that which they took in hunting. Opportunities laboriously captured, yet useless, and that which came in invitingly, like a string of plover and quail and wild duck hung over a hunter's shoulder, turns to something worse than nothing.

So with Agrippa when almost persuaded to be a Christian. So with the lovely young man who went away from Christ very sorrowful. So with tens of thousands who have whole hands full, whole skies full of winged opportunities which profit them nothing at all, because they roast not that which they took in hunting. Oh, make out of this captured moment a banquet for eternity. The greatest prize in the universe to be won is the love and pardon of Christ. Win that and you can say:

> Now I have found a Friend
> Whose love shall never end.
> Jesus is mine!

THE short and sensational career of the two Chicago Board of Trade clerks, Whittaker and Smith, is only another illustration of the dangers of too great prosperity. These two young gentlemen had always borne good reputations until they made a phenomenally successful speculation in wheat. On an original investment of $50 they cleared up $32,000. The half of this amount, carefully invested in any legitimate business, would have made the nucleus of a fortune for either of the young speculators. But their heads were completely turned. They imagined that they saw millions within easy reach, and the money disappeared in a few months, part of it going whence it came, and the rest of it being spent in riotous living. Then followed dishonesty. They used their employers' money to speculate with, and are both now fleeing from the law. Nine men out of ten who have been ruined by speculation have seen times when they might have quit very much ahead of the game. It's the same old story, so tersely expressed by Daniel Drew: "I'd 'a' been all right," he once said, "if I'd only draw'd out when I orter."

You think you have a quick head on your shoulders. What would you do if a lamp should explode? What would be your first move if your baby should choke until it got black in the face? If a man should be stricken down in a fit, would you leave him to die while you ran for a doctor? Could you restore a man who is apparently dead from drowning? If a child should set itself on fire, would you remember that a life depends on what you do at once? Is there any one who is quick-headed enough to do anything in a case of emergency except to scream for help?

SABBATH SCHOOL.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON FOR MAY 15.

Lesson Text: "A Song of Praise," Psalm ciii., 1-22—Golden Text Psalm ciii., 2—Commentary.

1. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name." One has called this a Psalm of David when carried out of himself up to heaven.

2. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Consider how great things He hath done for you (I Sam. xii., 24), but think chiefly of the gift of His Son and all things that are yours in Him (John iii., 16; Rom. viii., 32). Then say with Jeremiah even in darkest days, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul."

3. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Having received Jesus Christ, the Lord, as our own personal Saviour, it is our privilege to know that we have the forgiveness of all our sins, and shall in due time have a body that disease and death shall never touch (Eph. i., 6, 7: I John ii., 12; Isa. xliii., 25 (Phil. iii., 20, 21; I John iii., 2; Rom. viii., 23).

4. "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies." See in Job xxxiii., 14-30, how many things God does to deliver us from going down to the pit. He is not willing that any should perish, and His mercies are new unto us every morning (II Pet. iii., 9; Lam. iii., 22, 23).

5. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Here is the way of perpetual freshness, like the tree of Ps. i., 3; Jer. xvii., 8. And here is also the only true satisfaction (Ps. xxxvi., 8; lxv., 4; cvii., 9; Deut. xxxiii., 23)

6. "The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed." David could testify as to God's dealings with himself, for he had learned to leave all his affairs to God (I Sam. xxx., 6; II Sam. xvi., 12). He also thought of God's deliverance of Israel for the oppression of Egypt.

7. "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." All could see His acts, but only those near to Him as Moses could understand His ways. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant (Ps. xxv., 14).

8. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." See His name as proclaimed to Moses in Ex. xxxiv., 6, 7, and think of Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh, full of grace and truth (I Tim. iii., 16, John i., 14). Paul says that in his case the grace of God was exceedingly abundant (I Tim. i., 14, 15).

9. "He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever." See Isa. lvii., 16; Mic. vii., 18, 19, as a commentary upon this verse, and think of the time when the whole of Israel shall sing, "Thine anger is turned away and Thou comfortedst me" (Isa. xii., 1).

10. "He hath not dwelt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." And why! Because He has found a ransom and dealt with another in our stead (Job xxxiii., 24; Lev. xvii., 11; Isa. liii., 5, 6). Sin must be dealt with, but our substitute having suffered in our stead we are free in Him.

11. "For as heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." His ways and thoughts are also as high as heaven above ours (Isa. lv., 8, 9). This being the case, what folly it is to indulge in our thoughts concerning His great salvation. Rather let us just believe His every word about it and rejoice.

12. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Read with this Isa. xxxviii., 17; xliii., 25; Mic. vii., 19, and by the same Holy Spirit in the New Testament (I John ii., 12; i., 7; Col. i., 14), and if these words do not make your soul cry out "Bless the Lord!" then it is evident that you do not believe them.

13. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." This, with Isa. lxvi., 13, "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you," is surely more than enough to make glad the heart of every true child of God. Come close and trust Him fully.

14. "For He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." To sin He cannot be lenient; but to the sinner saved by His grace He is very pitiful, recognizing the weakness of the flesh and making full provision for our constant cleansing (Mark xiv., 38, I John i., 9).

15. "As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field so he flourisheth." Compare Isa. xl., 6-8, and observe that "The word of our God endureth forever." See also in I John ii., 17, that "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." Let us choose the eternal.

16. "For the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." All true of the mere natural man, the unsaved man, who dies in his sins; but if a child of God, having God in him, and being thus one with God, he is eternal.

17. "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." All who despise and reject His mercy have only themselves to blame. See Prov. i., 23-33. Only accept Him and His eternity and righteousness are yours.

18. "To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." There are no works but those of Christ connected with the obtaining of salvation (Rom. iv., 5; Eph. ii., 8, 9), but having received Christ we must necessarily work, for the absence of works is a proof that we have not received Him (Math. vii., 21; Jas. i., 22).

19. "The Lord hath prepared His throne in the Heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all." The time will come when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, and then shall the overcomers sit with Him on His throne and rule with Him (Math. xxi., 31; Rev. iii., 21; v., 9, 10).

20. "Bless the Lord, ye His angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." Angels shall rejoice with all the redeemed when the kingdom comes and God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven; and meantime they rejoice in every sinner that comes to Jesus (Rev. v., 11, 12; Luke xv., 10).

21. "Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His that do His pleasure." Observe two things about these angels and hosts, they hear His word and do His pleasure. Let us give ourselves wholly to that and we shall have heaven upon earth. Self renounced and Christ enthroned will give a miniature kingdom in our hearts.

22. "Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion; bless the Lord, O my soul." Observe in verses 1, 2, 20, 21, 22, the sixfold "Bless the Lord," and let your heart say, "I will bless the Lord at all times" (Ps. xxxiv., 1).—Lesson Helper.

IN the Nineteenth Century J. N. Lockyer explains the appearance of the new star in the constellation Auriga as due to the collision of meteor swarms instead of the "two solid bodies" which many astronomical thinkers have supposed to give by their impact the fervent heat necessary to cause the outburst of brilliancy which attracts attention at our immense distance from the nearest of those objects. He says this explanation will also account for the disappearance of those new stars when the high temperature resulting from the collision of those meteor swarms has diminished. It is fair to say that Mr. Lockyer some years ago committed himself to the meteoric hypothesis as explaining pretty much all that we see in the firmament, and nearly all the human eye has seen in the past or will see in the future. Exception has been taken to that theory by some sound thinkers, and they will not necessarily concede without several grains of salt its application to the case in point. Still the explanation is the best yet advanced for this particular instance, and for the reason that it is the first in the field it will command much attention.

RELIGIOUS READING.

STILL SHINING.

(Dedicated to Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon.)

One star moves slowly on thro' cloud and night,
Where, for a little while, two shone so bright;
And in our eyes there comes a mist of tears
Whene'er we think of all the golden years
They might have moved together, had God willed.

God's will is love, He can not do a wrong,
His hand is gentle, tho' so firm and strong;
He lifted one to shine beside His throne,
And left the other here to shine alone,
Yet doubt not that His love knows what is best.

We know not why 'twas done; perhaps He knew
That each would be more faithful, strong and true,
If one was lifted into glorious light,
The other left to shine on thro' the night,
And lighten up the darkness of the world.

Shine on, lone star, and may your beams abound
Wherever other saddened hearts and lives are found;
May your great sorrow make you tender, kind,
To all who suffer. May your eager mind
Be helped to see that God knows what is best.

—[Mrs. D. E. W. Spratt, in National Baptist.

THE BIBLE AND THE WORLD.

John Newton used to say, remarks the Glasgow Leader, that he read the New Testament to see how God loved the world, and the newspaper to see how He governed the world. John Henry Newman says to look at the world after reading the Bible brings terror on his heart as if he turned to the mirror and found no reflection of his own face there, for he sees God in the Bible but no reflection of Him in the world which should mirror His glory. So there seems no sympathy between nature and goodness; nature becomes terrible the moment you attempt to connect it with a moral idea; the world lieth in the wicked one whether by the horrible things done in the East or the heartless things done in the West.

BIBLE STUDY.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet," said the psalmist of old. You want your lamp to burn as brightly as possible. You trim the wick; you wash, dry and polish the glass chimney; you keep the shade clean. Let the dust gather and the smoke make its sooty deposit, and the wick becomes crisp and hard and black, and the light upon the open page is flickering and weak. The lamp is your friend but you must take good care of it. It will treat you as you treat it.

The figure may be homely, but it is true. What the Bible brings to you will depend, in large measure, upon what you bring to it. You may have a crumb, or a loaf, or a granary full to bursting, just as you choose. There is gold on its surface, there are jewels in its mines, there are royal pearls in its depths. All are not equally equipped for its study; but every one of us can do his utmost in its patient, loving study, and no labors will bring a surer or a richer reward. —[Dr. A. J. F. Behrends.

SALVATION.

Salvation is first a great rescue, and, secondly, a welcome home.

Years ago a railway train sped over the land bearing the members of many families to their several destinations. Some were conversing, some were reading, some sleeping, some fondling their children, all hastening home or hastening abroad with no thought of danger. But the route lay over a bridge with a draw, and the draw in the bridge was turned to allow the passage of a vessel. The warning signal was flying, but, owing to the direction of the wind, only its edge was presented to the engineer of the train, and he did not see it. On came the train! One man who saw it coming on to certain ruin fainted away under the rush of emotion!

But now a puff of wind struck the flag, and, presenting its side to the coming train, exposed the danger to the engineer, and in an instant down went the brakes, but on came the train toward the gulf of death! On it came, grinding and crunching along, slower and slower, but still coming on! The locomotive went over; the tender went over; the baggage-car went over; and there the rain stopped, the baggage-car actually hanging into the gulf without falling! It was a glorious, a wonderful, a most merciful rescue! What emotions shook those passengers when the truth as to their peril and rescue broke upon them? And religion is a great rescue from a plunge into a gulf that is bottomless.

But it is also a welcome home. Twenty miles farther on a family are waiting for a husband and father in that train. Tidings of his peril and rescue have reached them over the wires, and how the hearts throb at the sound of the shrill whistle announcing his approach! And as he enters, what a welcome of joy and tears greets him! Ah! so shall it be with the rescued sinner as he enters heaven. Loved ones are waiting for him there, and no such joys on earth can hnman hearts ever know as thrill the soul under that welcome home!—[Sunday School Times.

LAUNCHED OUT INTO THE DEEP.

Lloyds' agents report, concerning a late gale, that "the casualties are confined to the coasters." This is often the case upon the sea of religious life. Those who hug the shores of the world, and never lose sight of its associations, are very liable to be blown on the rocks when the storms are out. They have to study men, circumstances, profits and losses, and these are as rocks or quicksands to their integrity. Brave men have quitted the inviting but fatal coasts, and have sailed away to the deep seas of true trust in the living God, and these find searoom in the gale, and ride out every storm. In the late tempests of heresy, it will be found, on reference to the wreck register, that great havoc has been made among the fleet of coasters, whose avocation has always been in the shallows. These know nothing of chart and compass, for they never go out of sight of the cliffs of society, and therefore are quite unable to keep clear of the dangers with which they have so long been flirting. If men only knew the more than earthly joy of being alone with God, and out of sight and sound of human reliance and influence, they would up with the anchor and seek the glorious main, where apparent danger is real safety, and manifest solitude is the truest company. Farewell, ye sandy shores of human trust! Adieu, ye green hills of human admiration! At last, we lose sight of even you, ye highest peaks of trusted attachment! Now our soul waits only upon God, and our expectation is from Him. Above, beneath, around, is the Godhead's fathomless sea. God the horizon, and the zenith, and the whole circle! Now we dare fly before the wind and leap the billows with delight. There are no rocks or quicksands here! O, coasters! could ye but know this liberty and life, ye, too, would fly your present fancied safety.—[Spurgeon, in Sword and Trowel.

Religion is a necessary and indispensable element in any great human character. There is no living without it. Religion is the tie that connects man with his Creator and him to His throne. If that tie be all sundered, all broken, he floats away, a worthless atom in the universe, its proper attractions all gone, its destiny thwarted, and its whole future nothing but darkness, desolation and death.—[Webster.

It is the man who studies the Bible most who finds most in the Bible which is worthy of study.—[S. S. Times.

WHEN a woman says a man takes his wife's death "hard," she means that he groans, and moans, and screams, and tears his hair. If he sits dumb under his affliction, she says he is not affected very much, and that he will be married again in a few months. The emotional sort of grief appeals to the women so much that if a man screams when his wife is buried, and marries again the next day, they say that his great sorrow affected his mind, and that he is irresponsible.

TEMPERANCE.

HOW LONG?

Recently a Brooklyn father went home drunk, and picking up an axe, struck his daughter with it in the face, almost cutting off her nose. A second blow on the back of her head knocked her unconscious, and when the neighbors came in and overpowered him, he was belaboring his unconscious victim with a heavy piece of wood! This drunken criminal, temporarily locked up, was a criminal undoubtedly, because crazed and frenzied with alcohol. How long shall such tragedies continue by the authority and with the toleration of otherwise good citizens who sustain the iniquitous license system? —National Temperance Advocate.

A FIGHT FOR SOBRIETY.

Before the big village of Hyde Park was annexed to Chicago that handsome and well-behaved suburb of the great Western city was run on a strictly prohibition plan, and when it consented to cast its lot with the larger municipality the right to keep out saloons was reserved. Now the good people of Hyde Park are engaged in a hard struggle to maintain the unique character of their section as a temperance oasis in the desert of dramshops and druukenness around it. They deserve the sympathies of all friends of sobriety and good order, for it is an exceedingly difficult thing to keep saloons out of any part of Chicago, and they will win their fight, if they win it at all, against heavy odds. Just as an object lesson, and in order that comparisons may be possible, it is to be hoped that Hyde Park can be kept "dry" for many years to come.—Cleveland Leader.

DAILY GROWING IN STRENGTH.

Lady Henry Somerset, who recently returned to England from an extended visit to the United States, addressed the Temperance Assembly in Liverpool.

In replying to several addresses of welcome she said that the dawn of the day had arrived which would bring their cause a great victory. The temperance party in the United States, continued Lady Somerset, was daily growing in strength and importance. She had found during her trip to the United States a universally sober womanhood. She had been present at a number of social affairs at which intoxicating drinks were among the refreshments offered to the guests, and she had seen only one woman partake of wine or liquor.

The temperance work in the United States was conducted on a grand scale, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was wielding a powerful influence throughout the whole country. Lady Somerset declared that it was not true that the cause of prohibition was a failure in the State of Maine. The illicit traffic in intoxicants was very limited, and as a proof that the excise laws were strictly enforced she said that she herself was cognizant of cases which happened within the last three months where quantities of liquor had been seized by the officials and the sellers of the prohibited goods had been convicted and sentenced to jail for the term of imprisonment prescribed by law.

THE DRINK HABIT IN SCOTLAND.

Drinking both moderate and immoderate, is much more common in the British Isles than in the United States. The fact is, the church, and this is especially true in Scotland, has not yet cast out this curse of the nineteenth century. Brewers and saloon keepers are permitted not only to be members, but office holders in the church in Scotland. Two or three months ago, at the installation dinner, given to the pastor of the Edinburgh churches (the banquet was held at a "temperance" hotel) wine was provided for all the guests. Not long ago the papers reported that a member of the Glasgow Presbytery had introduced a resolution that license holders, or saloon keepers, should not be permitted to hold office in the church. He found only two members to support his resolution. The consequence of all this is apparent in the habits of the people. You cannot walk through the streets on Saturday evening without meeting dozens of men, and often women, reeling along the sidewalk.

Drinking among women is much more common in the British Isles than in the United States. On holidays it is no uncommon thing to see the saloons half full of women. About two-thirds of the groceries in Edinburgh sell liquor. This has greatly increased drinking at home, as many women order liquor with their groceries who would not enter a saloon to buy. During the cold months of November and December you see dozens of barefooted, ragged, hungry-looking children running the streets. Yet, no less than $650,000 is annually expended in charity in Edinburgh. "But," says Mr. D. Lewis, "the drink traffic has counteracted our labors to an almost incredible extent."—The Voice.

BEER AND BOOZE.

No one knows just what strong drink will do to a person, for two reasons. First, no one knows just how a particular constitution will be affected, and second, no one knows just what infernal drugs and poisons the rum seller may have mixed in that particular lot of booze, in addition to the regular "bottled devil" it contains.

Says a physician: "Persons who are heavy and lethargic should never touch beer—I do not mean physically, but for its mental effect. If I drink half a glass of beer at dinner nothing on earth interests me for an hour afterward but an easy chair, slippers and a quiet nap. If my wife, on the other hand, drinks a glass of beer, it sets her nerves tingling and she wants to dress and go to the theatre or a dog show. There is no telling exactly what the effect of drinking beer will be on a man, but it is always interesting to me in traveling to note the differences in the faces of people who drink various beverages. In the West, for instance, whisky is the staple; the men are sharp, active, nervous, lean, thin and intense. They can get along with six hours sleep, because they take a cocktail before breakfast which stirs up the energy which the short hours of sleep have taken away. In Berlin, where they drink beer all the time, the men are heavy, stout and loggy. They sleep nine hours a night, and very frequently take an hour's nap in a chair in a beer garden during the day. In France, where they drink wine, the men have sallow skin and wrinkled faces. The wine has a slightly stimulating effect, but not as much a one as the whisky of our nobility of the West. The best thing for a man to drink is water. Never make any mistake about that. I am not a teetotaller, but I am able to look at the thing clearly, and I know, as every other man of the world does, that nine-tenths of the mischief in society comes from drink. Many a woman goes wrong who would never have thought of it if it had not been for the preliminary champagne. Besides, it is the best opinion of medical experts everywhere in the world that a man is healthier without wines or liquors of any sort than he is with them."—Safeguard.

TEMPERANCE NEWS AND NOTES.

The biggest river in this world is the river of rum.

Local option has long been in operation in Finland, with the result that, as a rule, in the rural districts there are no public houses whatever.

Jacob A. Riis, in his article on "The Poor Children of New York," in Scribner's, says that "drunkenness is the vice that wrecks about half of the homes of the poor which do not cause it."

Mrs. Hitchcock, President of the Nebraska Woman's Christian Temperance Union, writes that they have the names of 8000