WANT IN WESTERN KANSAS.

THE SETTLERS POOR BUT NOT STARVING.

A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE CORRECTS EXAGGERATED REPORTS OF DESTITUTION—IMPROVIDENCE OF SETTLERS IN DEPENDING UPON A SINGLE CROP—GOOD RESULTS FROM THE EVILS OF THE DROUTH—WILFUL IMPOSITION UPON THE BENEVOLENCE OF EASTERN PEOPLE. [FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

WA-KEENEY, Kan., Dec. 19.—"Visit Western Kansas and give us the facts about that country," read the instructions which I received two weeks ago in Chicago. Since that time I have travelled over a large portion of Kansas, especially the western part. The prevalent idea that all the settlers are starving is an erroneous one. That they are by no means any too well off is certain; and undoubtedly they have had hard work to pull through the past two years. Their misfortunes began with the year 1879. Attracted by glaring railroad advertisements and glowing descriptions of the country, thousands upon thousands of immigrants came into the State; crossing the Missouri River, they rushed for the Western frontier line, which during 1877 and 1878 moved fully 100 miles each year nearer the Rocky Mountains. Many came who had no business here; who after paying their land-entry fees—the first settlers being always those upon the public lands—had little and in many instances no money left. The case of an Iowa man, told me by the United States Land Agent of this district, who remarked after paying the fee for his land that he had "just one dollar left, a wife and four little children, besides a span of horses and a wagon," is only a fair specimen of the condition of many of those who came to this country. How the man thought he could build his house, break up his ground and live while he was growing his first year's crop is more than one can imagine; and yet there were thousands of such people, and hundreds who came and took up land without possessing so much as a yoke of oxen to plough it with. It may be that these simple people labored under the delusion that the country was one vast garden, which needed but to be looked upon to bring forth grains and vegetables of all kinds; or it may be that many of them thought they could support themselves and family through the first year by working for others, forgetting that the others were in many cases as badly off as themselves.

What added to their misfortune was that they attempted to farm upon the same principle as in Illinois, and planted the first broken ground with wheat, so that the drouth of 1879 brought on a total failure, and many who might otherwise have stemmed the tide found themselves without food or money and slim chances of obtaining employment. Winter came on and great suffering ensued, but, thanks to the aid societies, there were no cases of starvation.

The spring of the present year passed away and no rain came. Many of those who had had the pluck to remain threw up their hands and left the country in despair. There were two classes of people who settled here; one had some money and plenty of perseverance, the other little money and still less perseverance. As a rule those of the former class managed to get along and are now in the possession of good farms, with more or less stock. Those comprising the latter class have almost entirely left the country, and are now cursing the State for that for which they themselves are to blame, as no one ever advised them to settle in a new country unless they had enough to take them through the first year, besides a team and implements to work with. Had the year been one of usual rain-fall there would have been no complaint, but an adverse year makes the poor settler an object of charity. The same thing happened after the failure of the wheat crop in Illinois in 1874.

Again, late immigration westward has not been compact or prudent, but remotely scattered, sparse and hazardous. The good crops since 1875 caused the settlers to lose sight of the liability to destitution among scattered frontier settlements, and the past year has been a sad reminder of this oversight. The continuous succession of prosperous seasons for half a decade, commencing in 1875, culminated in giving Kansas the lead of all other States in wheat production, whether considered as an aggregate, per acre, or per capita. It was this that caused the population to increase so rapidly. In 1860 there were 107,206 people in the State, and five years later but 155,807. There are now nearly a million, and Kansas stands in the foremost rank of agricultural States.

A SAMPLE OF THE FRONTIER COUNTRY.

This place, Wa-Keeney, from where I write, is a fair example of Western Kansas towns. It is 321 miles west from Kansas City, and situated on the one hundredth meridian. It was first settled in 1877 and now contains 600 or 700 inhabitants, there being about 2,500 in the County of Trego, of which it is the county-seat. It is less than 100 miles from here to the western line of the State, and the country is thinly settled about half way to the line. This may therefore be considered a frontier place. It contains a new stone business block, just erected, which could not be built in the East for less than $40,000; a depot, built of similar stone, worth $10,000; and there are hotels, stores and residences to correspond.

A drive into the country found many farmers just opening. Winter wheat never looked better than at present, and if snow covers the ground this winter, or rain comes next spring, there will be a fine harvest. I found the same true south of here in the great Arkansas Valley. The drouth of last year and this spring has driven the indigent and poor settlers away, and while it decreased the population nearly one-half in numbers, it has improved it in quality. For this reason many settlers affirm that the drouth has been a good thing for Kansas; but I do believe that they would prefer to have no more of it. Be this as it may, it has had one good result. People have learned how to farm. They have learned what crops will stand dry weather and what will not, and that no business in Western Kansas is so sure or more profitable than cattle and sheep raising in connection with general farming. It requires but little feed to take them through the mild winters, and there is an abundance of good grazing land, and will be for years. It seems too bad to try to make a farming country of Western Kansas, which for the next ten or fifteen years will certainly prove an uncertain field, subject to many vicissitudes, until climatic changes have taken place, when it is such an excellent stock-raising region. Those who engaged in stock-raising, even on the smallest scale, are coming out very successfully, while those who attempted to raise wheat exclusively have failed. Broom corn, sugar cane, Egyptian or rice corn, sweet-potatoes and peanuts will produce well, and may be grown with happy results in the most severe drouth. These are the lessons which have been taught the farmers of Western Kansas at a fearful cost of money, time, labor and privation. Let succeeding immigration profit from others' experience. Failure and suffering were the results of staking everything on a wheat crop which proved a failure, not because of the condition of the soil, but because of the want of rain, an uncontrollable calamity, liable in any country at times. Wheat-raising was carried on like any commercial business in which a man puts every dollar and possibly what credit he can command; if all is profitable, he makes money; if not, a total failure is the result. If a man's interests are diversified he does not suffer so much from the loss of a single branch.

IMPOSING UPON CHARITY.

The State did the worst thing possible for her own good when she allowed the officials and agents to go under State recognition and beg for the few thousands who were in actual want. In order to arouse the sympathies of the people of other States they greatly exaggerated the facts, and the idea somehow went abroad that Western Kansas was of no account, and elaborate scientific and learned articles were written to show why such was the case; particularly was this so in 1874. Then, too, of late numbers of mendicants have been travelling in the East telling horrible tales of woe which had no reality except in their own fertile imaginations. It is needless to say that the "suffering Kansas settlers" in most of these cases never received the donations freely given. One case of authentic information was that of a certain pious man in Gove County, who, when at home in the little town in which he lives, Grainfield, performs ministerial duties; he has just returned from such a tour through the Eastern States, and is now starting a large stock farm, when before he was not worth a dollar. He obtained money from benevolent people by affirming that 5,000 people in his county alone were in an almost starving condition. The truth of the matter is that, according to the census just taken, there are not over 1,000 inhabitants in the county; and, though I travelled over a large portion of it and made frequent inquiries, I could not find or hear of a single family that was in need of the necessaries of life. One woman living in this county wrote a long letter which "went the rounds" of the press, drawing a heart-rending picture of herself and four little children, one a suckling babe, starving, dying. The noble-hearted Governor of Kansas, St. John, on reading this letter straightway sent her a check for $50, and similar donations have been pouring in upon her for several months. The story was all a hoax, be it said to her shame. The woman lives on a large farm, and is in very comfortable circumstances, while her husband is the lucky possessor of seven rich mines in the Territory of New-Mexico, which could be sold at high prices. I have heard of many cases of persons who have made as much as $20,000 in begging for starving settlers. Their stories of starvation are all bosh. Here and there you will find a family needing aid, but the State of Kansas is willing and able to care for all such. Provisions and clothing are being sent west from Topeka at the rate of three car-loads per week and of this, prominent business men who live in this section of the State affirm that nine-tenths go to people who should by no means objects of charity. Work has been offered, the needy by railroads and in teaming, but as long as they can live upon charity they utterly refuse to work. The result has been that many of them have been reduced to pauperism who would otherwise be earning their own living. The respectable people are opposed to this wholesale pauperism, and justly condemn it; and say while it was positively necessary last winter, it is not now, the only failure in crops for the present year being in wheat. Under the law passed by the last Congress, allowing settlers to leave their claims until October 1, 1881, it is probable that about 15,000 people have left the State.

THE MEANING OF THE STAR.

The Rev. Dr. Capen at the Church of the Divine Paternity (Universalist.)

The Rev. Dr. Capen, President of Tufts College, Massachusetts, preached yesterday afternoon at the Church of the Divine Paternity, Fifth-ave. and Forty-fifth-st. The text was taken from the ninth verse of the second chapter of Matthew, and from the thirteenth verse of the second chapter of Luke. The first text was: "Lo the star which they saw in the East went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was," and the second: "And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host praising God."

Dr. Capen said that the wonderful portents attending Christ's birth had a peculiar meaning and deep force. Before the appearance of the star of Bethlehem the world and human soul were in darkness. Men groping among philosophies found that science and unaided reason could not solve all questions, but Christianity was beginning to shine on the world. The light may be divided into three heads; the first the Light of Divine Truth which shows the purity and sanctity of God, who is filled with love. The light furnishes truth. Christianity, if compared, is superior to all other systems, especially Paganism, and even to Judaism which is narrow and partial. Christianity in its conception of God retains the splendor of the Hebrew faith, rendering it infinitely tenderer and more catholic. The light of Truth is spreading over the world, not only in spiritual but in material things. There is no dividing line between fine facts and religious and laws of science. The Church with occasional mistakes has constantly endeavored to aid the cause of learning. The second meaning of the star is the new light of virtue. There were some ethical teachings before Christ, but they sink into insignificance compared with this. He gave a practical example of world-saving by his life and a passion for humanity. The third is the light of Divine love. God gave his only Son that world might not perish. He is not an enemy, but has given a pledge of pity for our woes and pardon for our sins. Well might the event be heralded by wondrous portents, the appearance of the light that was finally to melt all hearts and subject them. It is usual to try to frighten the world into penitence, but the Saviour's method is one of gentleness and fatherly love as shown in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The Light is one of undying saving mercy. Taking up the second part of the text, Dr. Capen said that the song of the angelic host was a hint of the spiritual nature and ultimate destiny of man. It is an answer to our spiritual yearnings, which are not content with earthly things if we know nothing of the hereafter. The joy of the angels over the birth of Jesus confirms our longings and fixes them on that which never passes away. The star shone on all, and the chorus sounded in the ears of the poor as well as the rich. All men are heirs of an immortal inheritance. Virtue, divine love, immortality are broad as the human race. All who believe have reason at this time for giving thanks.

THEMES IN TWO PULPITS.

The Rev. Thomas Armitage preached at the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, yesterday morning, on the evil effects of prejudice, taking for his text Romans xv., 30-32. The speaker said that the prejudiced man was weak and cowardly, because he did not dare to face the truth. Kind acts had as little effect on him as the drops of rain did on the sea. They were all swallowed up, and not a drop of salt water was sweetened. Yet followers of Jesus Christ would allow themselves to be influenced by this meanness. One man disliked another because he happened to differ from him. Prejudice had cast John Bunyan into jail; had kept the Jews out of Parliament, and the Roman Catholics from the ballot-box. Morning ought to be tolerated in the church, in the preacher's opinion, except brotherly love and liberality.

Christmas was celebrated in the Brooklyn Tabernacle yesterday morning in an interesting manner. The edifice was handsomely decorated with flowers and evergreens. The star on the pinnacle of the organ was illuminated with gas, and in large text over the platform was the quotation: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus." On a table to the right of the preacher was a large cross composed of white lilies, and on small tables at either end of the platform were baskets of cut flowers. Wreaths and stars worked in evergreen were placed on the walls and galleries of the church. The edge of the platform was bound with mistletoe leaves and berries. The musical portion of the service was made more than usually attractive by the presence of a boy choir and Mrs. Florence Rice-Knox. Mrs. Knox, who was in excellent voice, sang two solos, one before and the other after the sermon. The first one was "O shepherd watching 'neath the snow," and the last "O Son of Joy to God ascending."

The sermon was from Luke ii., 12 and 13: "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host." Mr. Talmage's remarks were descriptive of the circumstances attending the birth of Christ. He pointed out that on that night were born encouragement for the poor, good will to men, a sympathetic union with other worlds, and the offender's hope. On the invitation of Mr. Talmage Dr. Spear pronounced the benediction. Before doing so he referred to the apparently revived charges brought against the pastor of the Tabernacle in these words: "My friends, He who was born on this day, hundreds of years ago, the purest man that ever lived, when reviled by his enemies, answered them not a word, thereby setting an example which a Christian may often, with the largest dignity, follow."

THE TRIBUNE IN THE CAMPAIGN.

Mr. Julius Frutell, of Guyandotte, W. Va., writes: "We have ten Garfield and Arthur clubs organized in this county, and are still organizing more. There is reviving among us the spirit of '61, and you will hear a good account of our State in October and November."

Mr. J. S. Norris, Woodland, Pa., writes: "Thanks to the grand old TRIBUNE, Republicanism is in a flourishing condition here. We are united and enthusiastic."

Mr. C. V. Mundy, of Belvidere, Ill., orders THE TRIBUNE for a friend, an Irishman, of whom he says: "This man, like most of his countrymen, has heretofore voted with the Democrats, but is now a stalwart Republican. He tells me what the Democrats in Congress have done, and attempted to do since they controlled that body, and their attempted devilry in Maine, has driven many like himself from their ranks and proved to them their life-long error in not acting and voting with the Republicans, the party of freedom and good government, which has preserved for them the country where they can find a home when driven from their native land by an aristocracy similar in many respects, and worse in one respect, than that to which the Democratic party in this country tends."

MADE INSENSIBLE BY GAS.

Frederick Albers, a German, residing in New-Rochelle, occupied a room in the Summit Hotel, at Canal-st. and the Bowery, Saturday night. He left the gas escaping in the room when he went to bed. Yesterday morning he was discovered unconscious. A physician revived him to consciousness. Albers afterward departed for his home.

"THE COMING GENERATION OF THE FOINEST PISANTRY IN THE WORLD."—Barney—"I shay now Bridges, what was father crying about this morning?" Bridges—"Don't yer know, Barney, boy, they're goin' to put Mr. Attikan's ears to-night, an' they've choosed Napper Tandy to do the cuttin' part, 'stead o' father, who's got a rale grudge agin him. Bedad, an' it's a burnin' shame." Chorus of Children—"Poor downtrodden father."—[Fun.

THE KING OF BETHLEHEM.

DR. VINCENT'S CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING NEW YEAR'S CALLERS—THE LESSON OF MICAH'S PROPHECY—PROPHETIC POINTS IN MEN'S LIVES—NEEDS OF THE WORLD AND OF MAN'S MORAL NATURE—THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST.

At the opening of the services at the Church of the Covenant in Park-ave. yesterday morning, the Rev. Dr. Marvin R. Vincent referred to the temptations that were usually presented to young men during the festivities of New Year's Day. In view of the great evil of intemperance he begged the young women of the congregation to refrain from putting such temptation in the way of young men. Dr. Vincent's Christmas sermon was about the need of a proper sovereignty in the world's affairs, and also in men's hearts, to oppose the elements of anarchy which prevail everywhere. He found the principles and spirit of the needed reformation in the teachings of the King who was born at Bethlehem. The discourse in full is given herewith.

THE SERMON.

Dr. Vincent took as his text Micah v., 1-2: "Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops; they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old—from everlasting."

The Prophet Micah, said the preacher, is one of those wild, strange figures which start out at intervals along the line of the history of prophecy, and which, in the light of modern ideas, we are tempted to regard with suspicion, if not with ridicule. The spectacle of a man half-clad, beating his breast, breaking out at intervals into wild shrieks, and uttering by turns the most terrific prophecies of coming woe and the most cheering predictions of prosperity and peace, is not one adapted, at first view, to compose our minds to religious contemplation, or to move them to thanksgiving or worship. Yet, grotesque as all such figures are, we are not to quarrel with the instruments by which God chooses to make known his will to men. Every such disposition on our part is met with the words: "God hath chosen base things of the world and things are despised to confound the things which are mighty, that no flesh should glory in his presence."

This prophet was contemporary with Isaiah, in the reigns of Uzziah and of his son Jotham, the tenth and eleventh of the kings of Judah. The period was, in many particulars, a peaceful and prosperous one. Commerce flourished, the resources of the state were consolidated, cities were built, and troublesome enemies chastised. At the same time the picture had a darker side. Extortion, oppression, vanity, and ostentation and drunkenness were common, and no one felt these evils more keenly or denounced them more disparagingly than Micah. Yet this same rough, wild prophet is also full of sweet and hopeful predictions. "To him," as one has said, "more clearly than to any previous prophet, comes the assurance that in spite of all his calamities and his exiles, Jerusalem shall become the capital of a vast spiritual and intellectual empire. Side by side in his mind as in the outward world lay the present calamities and the future honor of the people of God."

It might seem ungracious at first view, to couple the prosaic, sober vision with the brighter one so insistently bound up with this festive season. It must be—and, why not be content to dwell on the sweet story of Bethlehem and the splendid promise of a Saviour King? But to any one who thinks seriously it will, I think, be found evident that the sad aspect of this world is the brighter one in the manifest purpose of God. The association is not arbitrary. The prophet could not look forward to the peace and purity and love which were to come in with the new order—and not see at the same time the disorder and lawlessness and crime of his own age. The very intensity of his hope, the very earnestness of his yearning, grew out of the evils of his time which stood out continually for the strong hand of a righteous prince. Judah could now be addressed only as "a gang of robbers." A nation of lawless robbers, with the vanity and the robber, crushing the life out of the poor and exforting their hard earnings, such each danger of Israel moving at the mercy of husband or brother that her vanity might be pampered and that she might walk the streets as Isaiah so graphically pictured—haughty, with stretched forth neck and wanton eyes, in all the bravery of tinkling ornaments and characteristic suits of ample red. The cloud of wrath was gathering on the horizon in the prophet's vision. The Romans were coming in due time. The awful spectacle of Jerusalem compassed round about, the city walls, the divided into troops, rent by factions, desperate enemies among themselves by the fiercest party passions upon his sight. The sanctity of the temple is despised, the authority of priesthood is mocked, the judge of Israel is smitten with a rod upon the cheek. What wonder that his spirit leaped from this dreary scene to the brighter space beyond, irradiated with the light of the Star of Bethlehem, surging with angel forms and ringing with the heavenly strain, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

So it is and to be on our festal days. In a certain sense they are days of vision—prophetic points in our lives. They are stopping-places where we take time to breathe, to review the past, reckon how far we have come, how much we have won, how much we have lost. At these points, too, we are apt to forecast. We ask what is before us. We call upon the watchmen to tell us of the night. We speculate on our own condition, and on that of our country and family and friends, now it may be with them in the coming years. And at such time, if we have any well-grounded expectation of hope, such as, for instance, a hope in Christ, it tends naturally to become more vivid, and to draw around itself more longing and desire under our clearer view of present imperfection, weakness and sin. The prophet's position, therefore, is no unfair representation of ours now at the Christmastide. On the darker side of his vision the prevailing characteristic was disorder and lawlessness. On the lighter side was the ruler who was to bring order out of the confusion. And so to-day we have our vision with its dark and its light sides; and as in the prophet's vision, the evils which we see in us and in our time resolve themselves into the great evil of anarchy, the want of proper rule.

Let us extend this thought a little, thereby making a background for the brighter thought which lies further on. I say the evils which we see in ourselves and in our time resolve themselves into anarchy, lawlessness, the want of a proper rule. Take the matter in its national aspect. I speak not to-day of any of the innumerable phases of our national life, the spirit of lawlessness which lifts its vile head in the face of the awful lesson of past years, the spirit of party, which seeks only its own. I speak rather of those more general, those broader questions of evil government which engage most all times. What government is best? We have never seen a perfect one. History does not furnish it, and experience testifies to only a partial, a bounded good as the result of present experiments. What is best in the abstract? An absolute monarchy, says one; that is God's theory of government. All true, and well, if you can carry God's theory into practice with God on the throne. Once enthrone him in the popular will and affection, and it matters little what you call your government or how you constitute it. His will may work through the popular voice of the republic, or through the councils of the limited sovereignty. The point is that absolutism and holiness be synonymous terms. Or a limited monarchy? But can we be sure of the limitations? Can we trust the popular intelligence to draw the line around the sovereign, not one whit too closely or too widely? Or a republic? Do we feel satisfied always that we have found in this the solution of the problem of government. So we come back from our survey with the conviction that to government, as to all else, human imperfection attaches; that kings are but men, that rulers are weak against the temptations to power, and that the best constructed code leaves an opening for corruption and wrong.

Take another matter—moral reform. Evils, and abuses there are enough to sicken us. They thrust themselves into our faces. They make themselves especially and disagreeably prominent at our festive seasons. Drunkenness, licentiousness, covetousness—one wants reforming quite as much as the other. Their branches twine and intertwine, until it is impossible to say from which root each branch and twig proceeds. And they who are moved with a Christ-like compassion for the world grew heartsick as they behold the spectacle. I do not know anything that is so burdensome to a true Christian spirit, as the sense of helplessness which comes over it in the presence of the colossal misery and sin of a great city like this. And the religious and moral energy of the community is not passive either. Christian society is astir with schemes of reform, with organizations for reform, with movements for reform. Money is poured out, and thought and care freely expended. And the results are blessed; men and women are reclaimed from vice, misery is relieved; and yet we all have a feeling that there is a degree of anarchy in our schemes of reform. The lines cross and tangle at many points. The Christian community is not at one as regards aim of the most prominent and vigorously pressed methods. It is divided not only by constitutions of expediency, but by considerations of conscience; and it seems to be forgotten, sometimes, that there is quite as much conscience on the one side as on the other. And, therefore, with all our grateful sense of the good actually accomplished, we cry out for a rule—for some broad principle which will unify all our efforts to make the world better—which will unite at once our hearts, our consciences and our efforts in the crusade against sin. We are anxious that Zion should no longer be a daughter of troops, but a solid phalanx, gathering into one mighty concentrated movement every one of her sons and daughters, old and young, rich and poor.

Or, once more, come down to personal experience. As we grow older, festive days become more and more days of self-examination. We are getting well on in our growth in character in one direction or another, and thereby settling down upon us that inexorable, that terrible fixedness of habit so hard for younger hearts and heads to understand. We no longer fit loosely in our moulds. We are getting more impatient each year of going out of our track, and if we try to set character to point away from some given region, it swings quickly back with the precision and persistence of a compass needle. And so, as we realize this, we begin to ask now we are growing, which way we are pointing, what are the lines of the mould in which we are setting character, what are the laws which are shaping us? Ah! as we look into the region of our character we have to tell the sad story of anarchy. Life, our own life, is not a well adjusted machine, every part playing in perfect harmony with every other part. The fact is that there is a great deal of disorder, a great deal that is not yet brought under law, forces itself upon us. The condition described by the Apostle is realized in us: not one law, but two laws. Each one of us is a battlefield where two opposite economies struggle. One now has all the city of the prophet's vision—is the heart—a daughter of troops. What troops of desires which move away from God among the myriad roads into which self beckons; what troops of affections which run eagerly down from the highlands of duty and scatter themselves over the low plains of sense; what troops of energies—divided, part doing God's will and part their own! Looking back upon life we do not see it development like a flower or fruit, a beautiful unit from one stock—it is a struggling succession of results, successes or failures from efforts variously impelled. Again we cry out for a rule. Oh, for a law to make us at one with God and with ourselves! This is not the cry of Judah only; not the cry of individual hearts only; the world in all time has yearned for masterdom. You see the fact attested by the way in which every delusion has found dupes, every charlatan followers, every theory, however monstrous, friends and defenders; by the way in which society in every age rushes headlong after men with the scantiest qualifications for leadership, with the mere pretence of power and genius, trusting, obeying, crowning them as heroes.

We want a ruler, then. The Prophet comes to meet us, with his finger pointing toward Bethlehem. "Out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." And let me suggest here, whatever we let go out of our Christmas thoughts of Christ, let us hold fast by this thought of sovereignty. As we go to Bethlehem, let us not fail to ask, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? Christ's person and character, on any other supposition than that of His rightful kingdom is inexplicable. Christ received by us in any capacity which ignores His kingdom is received in vain. Christ will deal with man as a friend, but only on condition of dealing with him as a subject. Every relation in which He stands to man is practically vitiated by the refusal to accept Him as sovereign. What a sublime phrase is that by which the prophet describes this King in Bethlehem, "whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting."—the very phrases by which God's Eternity is described. This going forth from Bethlehem is only an incident in His career. He goes out of Bethlehem as a prince might go forth from the inn where he had passed the night. But His goings forth from everlasting tell us that the ages stretch back to no point toward which He does not advance from further back in the depths of Eternity. Well may we take up the magnificent words of the great Apostle, when he says of Christ, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; and he is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

This being premised, let us consider a very few aspects of this kingdom of Christ, and then go on to see how it meets the craving for rule and order and mastership of which we have been speaking. In the first place, it is distinctively a religious kingdom. You observe the phrase in the Prophet's vision is "ruler in Israel." To be King of the Jews was to be preeminently a religious sovereign," the head of a religious civilization, for such emphatically was the Jewish civilization. So when the good which Law wise men brought to his cradle was a transfer to royalty, the frankincense was a gift for a priest. But religious sovereignty with Christ meant something far wider than the ministries of temple or altar. Christ's kingdom was most religious in its tender care for men; in its finding itself to the whole range of human experience. That thought, love and ministry to man as the highest expression of love to God—a thought well nigh unknown to the religions of paganism—Christ made the keynote of his gospel, and of his personal ministry. He—new Christ's ideas of sovereignty differed radically from human ideals. They removed the king as far as possible from men. They hedged kings round with state etiquette. They held his dignity to be sealed by contact with the multitude. They even strove to clothe him with divine attributes, and so to increase the distance between king and subject. The very Herod who was seated on his thunderous jury by Christ's title of king of the Jews—was designated when the beautiful populace cried "It is the voice of a God, and not of a man." Out of this ideal grew all the more modern talk of the divine right of kings.

To Jesus at once the highest and the most congenial exercise of divine right was to bring Himself close to the humblest of mankind. He could afford to let His royal dignity (as men would have called it) take care of itself. It was part of Himself, and asserted itself in His condescension to less than in His glory. Men had not thought of loving a king. But Christ made them in love with kingship by making it minister to those tender sympathies and helpful needs for which men are most deeply grateful. He showed how the conceptions of king and father, of the paternal empire of which the king-children nations of the world and family proved, might be so united as that the tenderness of the Father should reflect new splendor upon the majesty of the King. So as we go to Bethlehem and look upon the infant saviour, we find all this foreshadowed. We find in this only babe a pure humanity, thoroughly true to the conditions of the state in which he entered. Not any of the fabulous wonders with which the apocryphal gospels adorn his infancy are there to degrade it. His infant kingdom is built on his naked, human simplicity, to be made ready for its own sake—the truth so beautifully symbolized in the familiar Italian picture, in which all surrounding objects are seen in the flash shed from the infant Saviour. And even this infant stage of His life is free of suggestions of a sovereignty unreal in its grasp, including the opposite extremes of society. There may even be something in the conceit of the old painters who put into the animals kneeling round the manger, as in the fulfilment of Isaiah's words: "The beasts of the field shall honor me."

Then, too, both extremes of society are represented at Christmas. Just as, sometimes, around the source of some great river, far up among the Alps, where the stream of a hundred miles breaks out from the mountain side, there gather not only the humble masses and wood-flowers, but also the giant pines and hemlocks, so, round the earthly starting point of this most wondrous life gather at once the simplicity and the wisdom of the age. The Eastern sages come. They who followed truth alone, her star-paved way; and the shepherds, who—

'Ere the point of dawn
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row.

How beautifully the poet of the Christian year puts this:

The pastoral spirits first
Approach Thee, Babe divine.
For love in lowly shepherds are nursed
And fed with love divine.
Sooner than they should miss where Thou dost dwell,
Angels from Heaven will stoop to guide them to Thy cell.

Over both those he sound bear rule; over learning and ignorance, over wealth and poverty, over social position and servitude. The shepherds were only the first of a train of lowly ones who through all time shall press around Him to catch His sympathy with their simple needs, and the sorrows of their lowliness; and the sage's homage was a prophecy which already our eyes see in course of fulfilment, that the wisdom of the world should receive its best inspiration by its contact with Him, and should lay its proudest honors at His feet. Thus reaching both extremes of society, a man cut off and separated from no class or condition, recognizing equality to all, teaching universal and not local truths, basing His sovereignty in meekness, bringing men together, not on the ground of opinion, but on the ground of a common love and enthusiasm for His own person He becomes forward as the ruler whom we want.

For instance, taking up the three points of the former part of the discourse, Christ comes as the promised Ruler of States. We are to have it distinctly before us, as a part of the rich promise of the Gospel, that Christ shall yet rule the State. Not as the Roman Church thinks—through a state Church—but through His principles and Spirit getting lodged in the heart and conscience of lawmakers and administrators. Will He come to teach us new forms of government—to give a final decision in favor of Republicanism or Monarchy, or to decide that all are alike fallty, and to give us some new and perfect state policy? I think not. I think He will be more likely to pervade the existing forms, and show how they may serve the great ends of Christ on a human stratum. Just as in individual life, the Spirit of Christ takes man's powers and nature as it finds them, and turns them to new and higher uses—just as in the church the spirit of Christ does not work to abolish denominational politics, but only to fill them with His power, and to inform all their various methods with a common energy; so it seems to me we may expect to see Christ's sovereignty assert itself through human forms of government, and through perhaps as great a variety of them as now exists. This may seem but a pleasant dream to some. The student of social science may say: "The selfishness of men is unconquerable, and until you can conquer that it is idle to talk of perfect government." But a Christian is not to limit his hopes by the flat of human wisdom. The Bible bids us look for this result. Christ says he can and will do it, and that is enough. It will be, no doubt, long after you and I are in our graves, but it will come. God has time enough. The ruler of Israel is He whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. I know it will not be done by anything which is the circumference of this world. But you remember how the old Greek philosopher said that if he only had a place to stand upon and a long enough lever he could move the world. And even so the power which is to upheave this brute bulk of human selfishness is outside the world. God has a foothold there, and the force which He applies shall do the work thoroughly and forever. So of the method of reform. When Christ's spirit shall have pervaded our reformatory movements, it will, I think, simplify them very much. It will establish one great permanent centre of impulse for them all. It will unite all true reformers in the simple work of lodging the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the hearts of the erring. It surprises me sometimes that men do not see how simple, how practical, how comprehensive that principle is. It concentrates all the Christian energy of the Church upon a vital point. It gives a definite direction to working for an end, with regard to which it is absolutely agreed, and success in Christianizing men includes success along all the lines of reform.

And thus, too, Christ will come as a ruler to the individual soul, to bring order out of its confusion, and symmetry out of its fragmentariness. Oh, my brother, it across the dawning light of the Christmas morning you begin to see the old shadow stealing—if there come in to mar its festivities the bitter, bitter sense of disastrous failure with self, the sense of fragmentariness in the life, of confusion in the moral ideas, of wild misdirection of effort, of uncertainty respecting the choice or the methods of work, or promised acquirement unfulfilled—I say to you, you may banish the shadow. You may bring order out of the confusion with this simple truth of the mastery of Christ. Let the King of Bethlehem come in. Let the great, clumsy plans you have formed for self-shaping go. Abandon all idea of setting yourself right. Let Christ do it. He will come in as the Prince of Peace. He will require that you receive Him as absolute sovereign; but when you do, he will say to you: "My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled." There will come into your soul an order and harmony you have not known. There will be no more confusion as to duty, no more crossing and tangling of the lines of effort; more dissatisfaction with self than ever, but that dissatisfaction swallowed up in perfect satisfaction with Him. You, so independent, utterly so impatient of restraint, shall find to your surprise that at the root of all your uneasiness was the unconscious craving to be firmly and wisely ruled; and in His divine mastery you shall find the craving fully met, and shall daily experience the sweetness of having Father, Brother, Friend and King in one.

EXTENDING CHURCH WORK.

A meeting of Presbyterians, in the interest of church extension in this city, was held last evening at the Brick Church, at Fifth-ave. and Thirty-seventh-st. The Rev. Dr. Crosby presided. The Rev. Dr. Marvin R. Vincent read a paper which set forth what had so far been accomplished by the Committee on Church Extension, and the work that yet remained to be done in supporting the old churches in the down-town wards and in building new churches in the upper parts of the city. The speaker frequently referred to a large map of that portion of the city lying near Central Park, on which the situation of churches of different denominations were marked. There was great need of church work in the lower wards, he said, as out of 20,000 people in one section there were less than 3,000 church-goers; it wouldn't do to go on the principle that anything was good enough below Fourteenth-st. The Episcopal Church working up town, but it had acted more wisely than the Presbyterian by guarding its rear. The committee had not been able, for lack of means, to do much in the way of church extension. There was a large space in the upper part of the city where there was no Presbyterian church or mission, although the Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal and other denominations had established some.

The Rev. Drs. Hall and Bevan also spoke in regard to the variety of work done by the Presbyterian Church in this city.

PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS.

REVIEW OF THE PETITION TO BISMARCK.

The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher at Plymouth Church (Congregational), Brooklyn.

Notwithstanding the extremely inclement weather last evening there was a large congregation present in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, to hear the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's protest against the persecution of the Jews in Germany. Mr. Beecher took his text from Exodus xii., 48, 49: "And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land; for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you."

This is not an accidental sentence, said Mr. Beecher. It pervaded the polity introduced by the great lawgiver. You find it again in Leviticus as if it needed continual reiteration. Here it is based on the highest and proudest consideration as a truth sprung from the very bosom of God. It appears also in Numbers, and there grows stronger and stronger.

I have been asked to unite with other ministers of the Gospel in a respectful remonstrance against the inelegant steps which are now being taken against the Jews in Germany. When Plymouth Church refuses to join a crusade against suffering in any part of the world its pulpit will no longer have any reason for existence. I can assure you for myself that no warmer speaker can be found on behalf of the Jews than I. And when the request comes from the Jews in America it does so with peculiar fitness. To them we owe the earliest form of our commonwealth, as it was established by Moses. We are indebted to this people more than any other for the establishment of the household, for the education of our children, for the first principles of liberty and for the liberty of women. Barbaric treatment of women always results in barbarism, and before all the people of the Orient Jewish thought on this subject stood highest. In Palestine woman was permitted to be a legislator, judge, artist, poet or whatever God inspired her to, while at the same time in Greece the intelligent woman was counted as a courtesan. We owe to this nation the principle of our charitable institutions. We are also indebted to it for the earliest forms of land tenure; and although the religion of the Israelites may not be applicable everywhere, there are features in it which place their land above all other nations. We are indebted to the Jews for the moral ideas of the world, and it may also be said that there is not a rag or a garment of morality not woven by them. The Old Testament was written by Jews; the New Testament is theirs. Mary was a sweet Jewish maiden. Christ was a Jew. John was a Jew. The Apostles who carried the spirit of life into all the word boasted that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Still the race has long received a continued persecution. Nowhere else has such an incessant persecution against a people been found. Every man's hand has been turned against them. And why? From reasons taken from that religion which teaches love. As in the day of our Lord, churches have been possessed of devils, and out of that spirit these people have suffered; not in spite of it all they have thriven. They have not been idle. Industry and thrift have been their very offence. They have not been propagators of dangerous doctrines, nor corruptors of youth. Everywhere they have brought thrift, wise influences, neighborliness—in a word, civilization—to bear. Yet it seems that the bloody fire of persecution is to be raised against them, and this time in Germany. Of all nations, we had hoped that Protestant Germany would refuse to permit such an outrage; and let us hope that this movement may be one of generous wine, which, through its action, allows the last dregs to fall through to the bottom. Let America be heard speaking for the oppressed of all nations.

I hold in my hand a translation of a petition now being circulated in Germany. I think no such document was ever issued before since civilization began. It is addressed to Bismarck, and I shall read it and shall comment on it as I proceed:

"Most Noble Prince, High Ruling, Sir Chancellor of the Empire and President of the Ministry: In every district of Germany the conviction has come to the surface that the spread of the Jewish element brings with it most serious dangers for our nationality." Now, the first danger. "Everywhere wherever Christian and Jew enter into social relations to each other we see the Jew gaining the mastery—the Christian population, however, in a subordinate position." Well, I think if that were true in America my pride would never let me say it. "In the hard labor of the great masses of our people the Jew takes very little part. In the fields and in the workshops; in mines and on the scaffolding of buildings; in marshes and on the canals, it is everywhere only the horny hand of the Christian that has to do the work. The fruits of the Christian's work are harvested especially by the Jew. By far the greatest part of the capital which is produced by the National labor is concentrated in Jewish hands, and at the same time, with the increase of movable wealth their riches in the shape of immovable property likewise increase. Not only the proudest palaces of our large cities belong to Jewish gentlemen, whose fathers or grandfathers crossed the boundaries of our Fatherland as peddlers, but also landed property—this