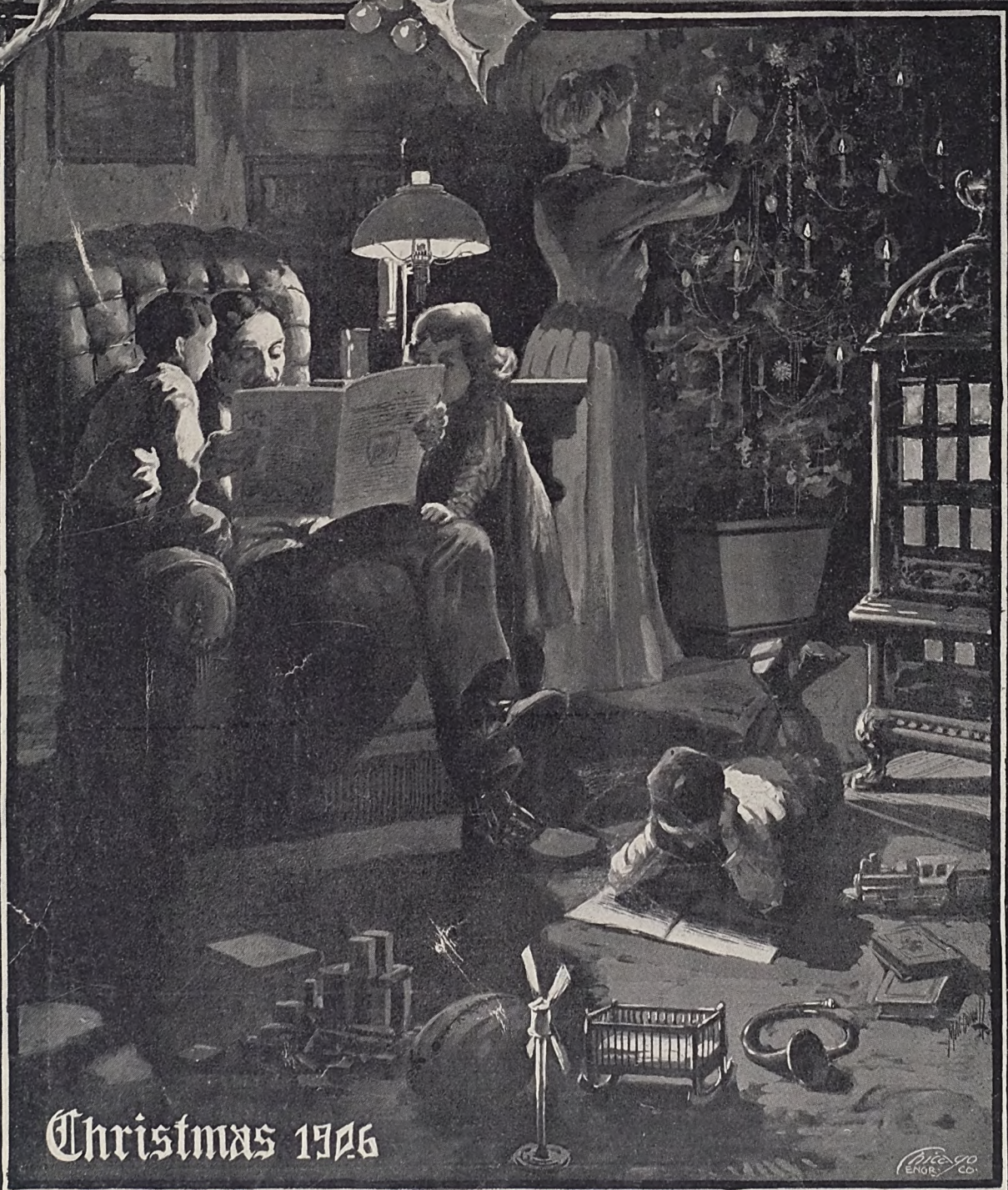


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Man proposes, God disposes.

God's plan of life is different from our own. He sees more things and understands them better.

God cares enough for men to take the trouble, sometimes, to disarrange their plans.

Any plan must be made in ignorance of many of the conditions. That our plans succeed so well is because the infinite wisdom overrules.

Disappointments are God's method of showing the better way. Many a road that looks good leads the wrong way.

The divine will is wrought out through the human plan. Accomplishment or disappointment will be woven into God's pattern.

One is bound to plan for the best things and to covet earnestly the best gifts. The plan will be wrought out or overruled according to its conformity to the divine purpose.

No plan humbly and honestly made, in observance of the Father's will, can fail of final success. The man's proposal is finite; God's wisdom is infinite.

Finis coronat opus.

Variety

A vigorous preacher and pastor, a reader of religious newspapers, recently spoke appreciatively of the variety of topics presented in one of the papers, saying that, while he earnestly believed the particular view of truth held by the Church of which he was a minister, he did not care to have it restated and urged all the time. We think that he expressed the feeling of many ministers and devout members of the Church, who are sound in the faith, but do not believe that it is necessary always to be re-examining the foundations. Like the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, they are disposed to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and press on unto perfection. Perfection involves an infinite variety in unity. The glory of the perfectness of truth is in its variety.

No one mind is able to embrace all the views of the same truth. It is inevitable that there should be, in all finite thinking, a certain narrowness. We see most clearly the face of truth that presents itself to us. We give ourselves most completely to the form of life and activity that accords with our personality. But within the most narrow lines of thought or life there is room

for wide variety. And in our vision of the truth of the Gospel there cannot but be applications of the truth that strike us more forcibly than others. The others, perhaps, are not less true and valuable. It is worth while for us to give them our attention, and to seek to widen our own view.

The Gospel itself is set forth by the Master as a narrow way. There is only one way of salvation, and one path of life. We are urgently called upon to seek that one salvation and walk carefully in that one way. But the salvation involves everything that there is in a human soul, and the way looks out upon the things of all time and all eternity.

There are, therefore, infinitely varied interests to be considered in the life of a Christian and the work and progress of the Kingdom of Christ. The Kingdom is hindered because Christians do confine their view and their interest too closely to one or another item of the infinite whole. One's personal life is, naturally, the primary object of interest. What affects that, favorably or unfavorably, absorbs the attention of the Christian. But the truth is that the personal life will prosper in proportion as the Christian is interested in the prosperity and progress of the whole work of Christ in the world. Bending one's attention solely or chiefly to the concerns of one's own life, or even the work of one's own church, is sure to warp his view of the whole truth and weaken his strength for the fulfilling of the Lord's commission to him. Personal piety, doubtless, is the first concern of each one. But as soon as one becomes a disciple of Jesus, he is brought into membership in a body, the welfare of which is essential to his own. And the particular portion of the Church to which he may belong is only a part of the Church universal, which embraces representatives of all mankind, so that he may not call anything human alien to himself. Right living in his own life or in his own church is bound to make the question of Christian living in China a matter of concern to him. The movement of history in the world abroad is of interest to him, since it is a movement in the progress of the Kingdom of his Lord. No Christian can afford to remain in ignorance of what is going on in the world about him. It all bears on the ultimate triumph of the Lord to whom he belongs. The shriveled life of such churches as have refused to take their part in the mission enterprises of the past century witness to the paralyzing effect of narrow view and contracted interest.

There is variety, also, in the methods by which the work of the Kingdom is carried on, in which any one Christian is bound to take interest. It is never certain that our own way is the best or the only way. What our brother is doing is at least worthy of consideration. There are other ways of serving the one Lord than

❖ AN INTERESTING MEDIAEVAL POEM ❖

By *ETHELBERT D. WARFIELD, L.L.D.*

SOME years ago a manuscript containing four mediæval poems was discovered and brought to the notice of English scholars. It attracted immediate attention and has been the subject of no little controversy. The interest is largely centered on one of these poems, the title of which is "Pearl." The general drift of critical opinion has attributed the manuscript to Middle English of the West Midland counties. It probably belongs to the second half of the fourteenth century, a period rich in interest because of the writings of Langland and Chaucer, and of Wycliffe's translation of the Bible. "Pearl" was translated into Modern English unrhymed verse by Mr. Israel Gollancz and published with an introductory quatrain from the pen of the Poet Laureate, Lord Tennyson. This quatrain is worthy of quotation as illustrating the value placed upon this antique poem by so competent a critic.

We lost you—for so long a time—
True Pearl of our poetic prime!
We found you, and you gleam re-set
In Britain's lyric coronet.

A new rendering has just been published from the facile pen of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell. It is in twelve-line rhymed stanzas, based to a considerable degree upon Mr. Gollancz's translation, but full of Dr. Mitchell's mastery of melodious English and picturesque diction.

The poem has evoked considerable controversy upon the question of its being the expression of the actual loss of one beloved by the poet or an allegory. Strong arguments have been advanced in favor of its allegorical nature, but Dr. Mitchell warmly favors the autobiographical character of the poem. Referring to the controversy, he says: "When I read again the stanzas which appeal to those who have suffered as this nameless poet seems to have done, I felt anew that this poem is surely the honest gift of a personal sorrow to the sorrow of all the after years." His conviction is beautifully voiced in an afterword to the volume.

"A little grave, a nameless man's distress,
And, lo! a wail of lyric tenderness,
Unheard, unseen for half a thousand years,
Asks from love's equal loss the praise of tears."

The purpose of this reference to the poem, however, is not so much to notice the beautiful poem and its exquisite rendering as a whole, as to invite attention to an episode which occurs in it. The poet wonders if one who has lived a very brief space on earth may hope to enjoy the full bliss of heaven. The answer to this is given in an argument based upon the parable of the laborers in the vineyard and the free grace of God is pictured under the phrase of "God's Courtesy." This beautiful episode seems deserving of the very widest recognition.

"My realm," saith Christ, "is like, on high,
A lord's that had a vineyard fair,
When lo! the vintage time was nigh,
And men must to his vines repair.

"Right well his men the season know,
So up full early that lord arose
To send them where his vines did grow,
And unto some did there propose
A penny a day to be their gain.
With this accord forthwith they go,
And toil and labour with honest pain.
And prune and carry, go to and fro.
At noon this lord the market seeks,
And finds men standing idle here.
'Why stand ye idle?' thus he speaks.
'Now know ye not the time of year?'

"We hither came ere day begun,"
This was their answer, one and all.
'Here have we stood since rose the sun,
And no man yet on us doth call.'
'Go to my vineyard, work aright,
And rest ye sure,' that lord did say,
'What wages fair ye earn by night,
In very sooth I will surely pay.'
Into his vines they went and wrought,
The while he came, and came again,
And new men into his vineyard brought,
Until the day was on the wane.

"At close of day, at evensong,
An hour before the sun had fled,
He saw there idle men and strong,
And unto them he gently said:
'Why stand ye idle all day long?'
'No man,' they said, 'has come to hire.'
'Go to my vines, ye yemen strong,
And work your best, as I desire.'
Soon the world grew dusk and gray,
The sun went down, it waxed late;
He summoned them to take their pay—
The hour had come for which they wait.

"That lord well knew the time of day,
And bade his steward pay them all.
'Give every man his proper pay;
And that no blame on me may fall,
Set ye all of them in a row,
And give alike a penny to each.
Begin with him that stands most low,
Until the first his wage shall reach.'
Thereon the first did quick complain:
'My lord, we toiled full long and sore;
These last have had but little pain,
Our wage should justly be far more.'

"Then said this lord, 'In sooth, I try
To use mine own as seemeth meet.
Why turn on me an evil eye,
Who justice seek and no man cheat?'
Quoth Christ, 'I now do thus decree,
The first shall be the last, and those
Who latest came the first shall be.—
Of many called but few be chose.'
Thus do poor men win their way,
Though late they come and low their state;
If brief has been their labour day,
The more of grace doth them await."