

are discovered, and God's truth stands out before our minds clearly ascertained and defined, then our only befitting course is to yield it the homage of unquestioning assent and acquiescence. And need it be said that there are truths in the Bible, and they neither few nor unimportant, which can never become ours in the absence of this humble, confiding faith? The Bible is not without its profound mysteries, its deep things of God, its facts and doctrines which baffle human comprehension and stagger human belief. In teaching us, for example, that God, though one in essence is yet three-fold in personality; that Christ, though a man, is yet at the same time God incarnate; that all actions and events are predestinated and fixed, and yet men accountable and free—the Bible makes avowments which we are prone, in the pride of our reason, to dispute, and which, but for the divine testimony on which they rest, we should certainly decline to believe. Deny their divine authority, and these mysterious truths will be no truths to you—they will be to you uncertainties—nay, fictions. But bow to the infallible testimony which reveals them, and you shall be able not only to accept them as true, but to realize their exceeding grandeur, and feel their elevating power. Thus regarded and realized, these high mysteries will cast the spell of their sublimities over your souls. They will impress and affect you, even as stupendous mountains impress and affect the lover of picturesque scenery. They will appear to you the grandest objects in the Scripture landscape. And as you look up to their towering altitudes and down into their fathomless depths, and catch, while you look, the spirit of their awful grandeur, you will bless God for humbling your pride of reason, and endowing you with that child-like faith which doubts not and disputes not, but meekly bows and adores.

As the fourth and chief requisite for successful buying, there must be a disposition to obey the truth.

Be our search for the truth ever so earnest and independent and humble, there will always remain to us many things in the Bible which are difficult and dark—doctrines about which we cannot make up our minds—questions which defy our powers of solution. How are we to arrive, in such cases, at a satisfying decision? How but by doing the will of God as far as we already know it? Let us but act up to the measure of light we already have, and more light will be given us. Let us but obey the truth so far as we already see it, and the truth yet unseen will gradually shine out upon our minds. This is the law of the house. Doing is the appointed condition of knowing. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." And although this is a law which we are slow to admit, and even prone to reverse—although this is a law whose two clauses we are ever ready to transpose as if they had run, "Know the

truth, and then do it;"—yet it has on its side not only the authority of our blessed Lord, but the testimony of all Christian experience. In all ages the men most successful in sounding the depths of the divine counsels have been they who were most obedient to the divine commands. In all ages the men most distinguished for clearness of insight and firmness of faith have been they who acted on the principle, "Obey the truth, and you shall find the truth." And, on the other hand, it is equally certain that careless doors have always been unsuccessful finders. In fact, since truth is given us, not to be argued about, but to be acted on, it is inevitable that he who does it not should not only miss the benefit of knowing it, but incur the penalty of neglecting it. Knowing it but not doing it, he holds it only to his own hurt. Knowing it but not doing it, he holds it to the disquieting of his conscience—he holds it on the condition of being lashed and torn by it as by a whip of scorpions. Nay, declining to do it, he must ere long lose his hold of it altogether, and fall from knowledge and belief into ignorance and scepticism. Divine truth, as has been finely said, is an imperial queen who not only claims to be obeyed, but cannot brook to be neglected; and a man has only to disallow or slight her royal claims, in order to make her gather up her queenly robes, and indignantly depart from him.

These, then, are the lessons which the text should impress on our minds: Divine truth is worth possessing; it may be possessed; it can be possessed by us only by our paying a price for it—even the price of united study and prayer, prosecuted in an earnest, independent, humble and obedient spirit.

Are there any of my hearers who have never yet gone to God's market to buy the truth; or who, though they know enough to enable them to talk about it, are still posting on to the judgment-seat with only the vaguest notions and the veriest uncertainty on the subject? Bear with me, my friends, when I remind you that in thus living on without any ascertained knowledge of the things which belong to your peace, you are not only pursuing a most irrational course, but recklessly jeopardising your present and eternal happiness. So long as health and strength and worldly prosperity last—so long as the pursuits and pleasures of life agreeably occupy you, and leave you little leisure and less inclination to look inward and forward, you may feel it no privation to be "without Christ and without hope." But will you feel the same when trouble comes, when disappointments come, when premonitions of death and judgment come? Will it then appear to you a light matter to be bankrupt of faith and hope in reference to the eternal future? Ah! when your thoughts shall turn inward, and find nothing within but doubt and uncertainty and alarm, and shall dart forward and find nothing yonder but a "certain

fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation," then you shall feel in your inmost souls, that your deepest need is a saving knowledge of the truth, and your direst privation a want of that blessed knowledge. Such, assuredly, will be your conviction then. And why should it not be your conviction now? Is it only then that it will be true, that "a good hope through grace" is the one thing needful? Is this not equally true now? Is not this always true? And what folly then—what wretched folly—to neglect to buy the truth while yet it is in your offer, or to leave yourselves to discover your loss only when the market is closed, and the purchase unattainable? Oh, do not thus beguile and beset yourselves any longer. Go forth with to God's Word and Spirit, that you may learn the way of salvation. Have done with vague religious notions. Have done with beliefs carelessly taken up on hear-say and at second-hand. Study, investigate, ascertain God's truth for yourselves; and rest not till you surely know it, and firmly believe it, and cheerfully do it. Sleep over your business if you will, but not over your religion. Neglect, if you will, all other cares and all other concerns; but oh, by all that is dear to you, neglect not the care of the soul—neglect not the grand concern of salvation!

CHURCH AT HOME.

Foreign Missions.

NO NEW YEAR for a long period has begun, calculated in all probability to be so eventful, with regard to the future of our Indian Empire, as this on which we have now entered. It has succeeded a year stained by a most insane and treacherous revolt—darkened by atrocities not to be forgotten, however painful the remembrance; and signalised by deeds of heroic prowess and calm endurance that have won for our countrymen an imperishable renown. We mourn, indeed, over many less known or more illustrious, who have fallen in this wild and treacherous strife, but we are not unmindful of the high distinction with which their memory is encircled; and we have at least the consolation of knowing that from the bright example of the fortitude displayed by British soldiers, civilians, and missionaries in India, during the year now closed, an impulse may go forth animating other hearts to the same unshrinking bravery by which danger and death have already been so nobly met.

But let us now look forward. It is not here that we are required to enter into minute details, or to hazard conjectures as to the exact form which anticipated changes in India may assume during the course of the present year, but there seems abundant reason to expect that, to a large extent, there may be the remo-