

"WE'LL GET IT IF WE BE EARN-EST ENOUGH."

"Oh, yes," said the old woman, "we're sure to get it if we be earnest enough."

We had been speaking of forgiveness of sin, and a place in the family of God; and these, she thought, were to be got only by her earnest praying.

"And have you got it yet?" I asked. She shook her head mournfully and replied, "No, I'm fear'd I haven't got it just yet."

"What! have you not been asking it?" "Surely, surely, but I doubt I haven't been so earnest as I would need to be."

"And when do you think you will be as earnest as you need to be?"

The old woman looked very miserable, after a pause, she answered, "Ah, well, I don't know; but I'm sure we'll get it if we be earnest enough."

"Are you needing any money?" I inquired.

Looking both pleased to have done with the worry of such troublesome questioning, and surprised at the sudden change of subject, the old woman faintly smiled and said, "Oh, ay; I'm ne'er above the need o' that."

"Would twenty pounds do you any good?"

"Hoos! the half o't would make me a lady."

"Well, you had better go down to the bank and ask twenty pounds from the banker."

"Oh, ye're jokin' me now," said the old woman, with a puzzled air. "The banker would think I was gone wrong in the mind if I did the like o' that."

"But ask earnestly; be earnest enough, and tell him that he must give it, for you cannot do without it."

"What would he care for my earnestness? He would send for the police."

"And why would he not care for your earnestness—why would he not give you the money?"

"Nay! 't would he give me the money for when I have none in his bank?"

"Oh, then, he gives money only to those that have it in his hands."

"I'm sure ye know that well," said the old woman quite knowingly.

"Yes, I know it. The banker is there to do what is right, and he will give money to no one except those who have a right to receive it. Is not this the case?"

"Yes," she said, "I believe it is."

"Then you cannot get any money from the banker for your own sake. Now, suppose that you try another way. Suppose that you know a kind and wealthy gentleman who has plenty of money in his bank, and who, besides, is interested in you. Well, suppose you go to him and tell him your need, and, after he has heard you out, he smiles and says, 'Now you have done me the greatest favor you could have done me, for I feel it such a pleasure to help you.' And so saying, he fills up an order out of his bank book instructing the banker to pay you twenty pounds on demand, and charge the sum to his account. Now, what would you do with that little bit of paper he gives you?"

"I would tak' it to the bank and get the silver with it," she said.

"But would you not need to ask the money very earnestly?"

"Nay, nay! the bit o' paper would be plenty of itself, I'm thinkin'."

"Yes, certainly, everything depends on that bit of paper and the name that is written on it. If you take the paper with you, you will at once get the money for the sake of him whose name is written at the bottom of it; but if you go without the paper, all your earnest asking will be quite useless, and why? Because it would not be right in the banker to give it to you. The banker, you see, will give you nothing for your own sake, but he will give you any amount your friend pleases, for your friend's sake."

"And now I wish you to attend very carefully to the application of this little parable to the subject we were speaking about. Do you know that you have nothing at all in God's bank, and that it is quite out of the question for you to expect such great blessings as forgiveness of sins, and such like, when you ask them in your own name, however earnestly you may ask? Ah, my friend, your name has as little weight in God's bank as it has in man's. Now, it is a blessed fact that God is willing to give to the sinner, nay, that He delights in giving; but then He will give us only

in a way that is just and righteous. In order that there might be such a way for God to forgive our sins and bless us, He sent His beloved Son to bear our sins Himself, and thus become the Author of eternal salvation to all who believe in His name. And now, since the Lord Jesus has done all this, God is quite ready to pardon and to bless any sinner at once; but it must be clearly understood that what He gives us He gives only for Jesus' sake and not for our own. Now, you have been all along completely setting aside the name of the Lord Jesus; and when you did go to ask anything from God, you have been expecting to get it, not for Christ's sake, but for the sake of your own earnest praying. You have been going to God's bank, you see, without the little bit of paper that was needed to get what you wanted. Is not this true?"

"I'm fear'd it's over true," said the old woman, as the light of a new and seasonable truth lighted up her countenance.

"Will you please to read Psalm xxv. 11?"

She got the verse and read, "For Thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great."

"You see from this, that though David's sin was as great as yours or mine, he both asked and expected God's forgiveness; but notice that he expected to be forgiven, not for his own sake, or for his earnest asking, but for Thy name's sake, pardon mine iniquity." You see that he did not like you, for he took care to have a little bit of paper with him when he went to the bank. And it is quite the same all through the Old and New Testaments. Please to read a verse in the New—Acts iv. 12."

She read, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

"Now, you see from this," said I, "that we are saved on account of a name; and that there is no name whatever that is of any use to us, save only the one name of the Lord Jesus. Now, don't you see that you have been using your name instead of Christ's, and you have expected to get what you asked if you only asked it earnestly enough? Ah, you must do as Jesus bids you; you must use His name, and then you will get it for His dear sake, for the Word of God says that 'whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' You close your prayers with the words 'for Christ's sake,' don't you?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "I never miss that; but I see now that I never have been thinkin' on what it means."

"No, you have used it as a mere form, whereas, in truth, it is by far the most important part of any prayer. Do you think that you understand what I have been saying to you?"

"I understand it well. I never saw it so plain before."

"Well, be sure, then, to make immediate use of your knowledge. Oh, how solemn it is to be so near to death as you are and yet not pardoned! On no account allow yourself to put it off to another day. Jesus is ready, God is ready. All are invited to come and receive. God is freely pardoning not those who ask earnestly enough, but those who think they have fewest sins, but He is pardoning all who come to Him trusting only in the blood of Jesus."—*The Word of Life*.

A LOVE TEST.

The bright eyes closed as the anxious mother leaned over the little sufferer. She was a Christian mother. She had joined the Church in her girlhood, but had been, like many other Christians, satisfied with regular attendance on Sunday services—morning and evening—and an occasional presence at Wednesday night prayer meeting. She had not forsaken her faith; but as she bent over the form of her darling—her only daughter—a sense of helplessness rushed over her—a helplessness that forces the spirit from all earthly support to the heavenly—and opened her eyes to the half-hearted service she had been rendering the Object of her faith. God had been good to her. He had blessed her in home, in friends, and in the gift of this lovely daughter. How had she shown her gratitude? Had she neglected the little one? O no! She may have neglected her prayer-meetings, her missionary meetings, her Church work—but the child, no, never! never the dear little one! She had busted herself con-

stantly in its behalf. She had sacrificed convenience, ease, personal comfort to minister to its wants and promote its happiness. Yes, she had left nothing undone. But now the Almighty Father was calling for the child—for her dear little daughter. How can she give her up? Never again look into those soft blue eyes? Never again hear the patter of those little feet? "Father! Father! spare my darling!" burst from her lips. The child opens her eyes, looks into the mother's face with rare intelligence, and speaks: "Mamma, I dreamed of the poor little girl I heard the preacher tell about last Sunday. He said she had no one to love her, and did not know Jesus. I dreamed she held out her hands for me to help her. I am sorry for her. I cannot go to her now, but I will tell her of Jesus when I get well. Will you let me go?"

"Yes; O yes, my daughter," the mother replied; "but you will have to go far away to help the little girl. You will not leave your mother, will you?"

"Will you not go with me mamma? Do you not wish to help her too?"

As the little one again dozed off, the mother's heart smote her that the calls of heathen children had received so little thought. Their cries had fallen upon ears filled with sounds of happy voices; upon a heart absorbed in home interests.

Again the feeble voice of the child was heard: "Mamma, I cannot go to help that poor girl now; I am too tired. Will you not go? Tell her mamma, I wanted to come and tell her that Jesus loves little girls; that he will give her a home in heaven some time. Mamma don't forget."

"Don't forget!" were the last words that fell from the sweet lips. The gentle spirit passed up with the first rays of the morning. No need to ask if that mother "forgets." She never forgets. She neglects no duty, no necessary home work, but the voice of her little daughter floats about her, ever whispering, "Tell her of Jesus!" No unanswered call for missionary work comes to that home now; no trivial excuse ever keeps that mother from the missionary meeting. Very strange indeed should that mother ever lose interest in heathen children. Her love of her departed child constrains. What of the love of Jesus? Did he not say, "Do this in remembrance of me?" "Go into all the world, and disciple the nations." Do we, his followers, forget?—*Stanford, Ky. Southern Leaflet*.

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Peloubet's Select Notes)

March 8.—Acts 24: 10-27.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Review the last lesson so as to bring out clearly the circumstances of to-day's lesson. Picture out the scene as given in the intervening verses. The pretorium, or judgment hall of Herod; Felix on the judge's seat; Paul, the prisoner at the bar; Ananias and leading members of the Sanhedrim from Jerusalem as accusers of Paul, with a bright, unscrupulous Roman lawyer to plead their cause. Note the flattery with which he begins.

The charges brought against Paul by him were three, as given in the notes. The first part of the lesson to-day is Paul's answer to these charges against him.

The contrast. We have in this lesson two contrasted characters, both brought before a judgment-seat, both charged with guilt,—Paul before Felix's judgment seat, Felix before the bar of his own conscience,—and we are to study the lessons taught by each.

1. An approving conscience.

(1) Paul's answer to the first charge,—of sedition. Illustration. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, describing Faithful and Christian in Vanity Fair, with the charges brought against them.

(2) Paul's answer to the second charge,—of heresy, innovation in religion, bringing in a new religion. Study the five answers given to this in the notes.

Note the hopefulness and comfort of the Christian in view of the future, as contrasted with Felix's terror in view of the same.

Note, too, the care and pains Paul takes to live a right life.

Illustration from any work your scholars may be interested in, as learning music, as speaking a language, or learning a trade. There is no perfection without careful practice.

(3) Paul's answer to the third charge,—of

profaning the temple. In all cases, a simple statement of the facts was enough. And yet Paul was not released. But Felix, afraid to do right, and not willing to do a gross wrong without sufficient motive, regarded Paul as innocent, but yet deferred giving judgment in his favor.

II. A condemning conscience. Picture the interview of Paul with Felix and Drusilla in private. Note the bad character of both.

Paul's discourse convinced them of sin by holding up a picture of what was right.

Illustration. We see the faults in a picture by comparing it with a perfect picture. We see how small we are by standing beside those much larger. So Christ convicts men of sin by his perfect life. So all good men convict bad men of sin, and hence are hated by them.

Dwell on righteousness and temperance. The application was by means of the judgment to come.

Felix trembled, for he saw himself a sinner without hope. He ought to tremble. All sinners should tremble. Paul found joy in the same judgment to come, because his sins were forgiven by Jesus Christ; he had repented, and was striving after perfect holiness.

Putting off duty to a more convenient season.

Illustration from the oft observed fact that if we neglect to obey the alarm clock that awakes us in the morning, it soon ceases to wake us. So conscience disobeys. See also Southey's poem of the *Inchcape Bell*.

Illustration. Paul's long imprisonment, and the good that may have resulted from it, may be illustrated by Bunyan's long imprisonment, that seemed so evil, and yet was the means of giving the *Pilgrim's Progress* to the world, which has done more good than the twelve years of preaching could have done.

Question Corner.—No. 3.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. Who was the first foreign missionary?
2. Tell from what place he started and mention in order the places he visited on his first missionary tour.
3. How many journeys did he make, and to what place was his last voyage?
4. Who was the first Christian martyr.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

Initials and finals give the names of two towns in Palestine. One of the spies who heeded God's command.

A heathen race who dwelt in Israel's land! When did the Holy Ghost in fire descend? Who left his mantle for his dearest friend? A gentle wife, whose son was sold a slave! Name of contempt that foes to Jesus gave! A guilty queen who perished by the sword! Helper in Christ, saluted in the Lord! Her people safe, she led a mighty throng! Praising the Lord with timbrel, dance and song?

No trace of town or temple can you see  
My site to tell,  
For Jesus once declared that I should be  
Cast down to hell.  
Initial letters soon will show my sad  
Dis-honored name,  
I perished, though I kindly warning had  
Of coming shame.  
Turn to the finals, for they sweetly ring  
With angel-song:  
And memories too of Israel's shepherd-king  
To them belong:  
Amid green hills the little village stands  
A silent spot,  
Yet Christian hearts in many distant lands  
Forget her not.

- ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 1.
1. Obadiah. 1 Kings 18: 4.
  2. Ruth; she was David's great-grandmother. Ruth 4: 17.
  3. To the tribe of Judah and the family of David. Matt. 1: 1, 16.
  4. The parable of the unjust judge. Luke 17: 2.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

GENESIS—MATTHEW.

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|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. G-erizim     | 1 Kings 18: 4     |
| 2. E-lisha      | 2 Kings xlii. 21. |
| 3. N-ight       | Rev. xxi. 25.     |
| 4. E-gypt       | Exod. xxii. 2.    |
| 5. S-trenght    | Isa. xiv. 4.      |
| 6. I-nsobriance | 1 Peter 1: 4.     |
| 7. S-hado-w     | Job viii. 9.      |

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

Correct answers have been received from H. E. Greene, and Albert Jesse French.