

it wields a sway as high and as holy as it ever held anywhere. May the God of all grace multiply the number of those who, like this hand-maid of his, are willing to take the lowliest places and bear, without complaint, the heaviest burdens for the sake of Him who "made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!"

EAST ORANGE, N. J.

**The Bible as Literature and Much More.**

ROBERT STUART MACARTHUR.

VII

(Continued from last issue.)

**The Definite Design of the Bible.**

In accomplishing its design, the Bible gives the true rule of life. Heathenism had no conclusive answer to give when questioned as to the rule of life. Epicurus could only say: "The chief good is pleasure; the cardinal grace, prudence." The Stoics taught that the rule of life is indifference to pleasure or pain; the Peripatetics that virtue is to be pursued in prosperity, but at times a lie is preferable to the truth; and that theft, swearing, and any sin occasionally may be allowed. Philosophy has failed to supply a true rule of life in modern times also. Lord Herbert taught that men are not to be blamed for acting according to their passions. Bolingbroke, "Shy and Humr" made self-love the rule of life. Modern heathenism has precepts enough, but it imparts no moral power to reduce these precepts to practice. At this point Buddhism and all the ethnic religions utterly fail. These statements are not the result of pre-conceived prejudices, but are in exact harmony with the highly ascertained facts in the life of Heathen nations. At this point the Bible stands above all these systems of philosophy, both ancient and modern. It is radiant with the glory of heaven as an ethical guide, and it tells the obedient soul how to find the source of power in God. It enables true seekers after God to realize in their blessed experience the noble ideals held for them in its divinely inspired pages. It reveals our lofty destiny, declaring that we are heirs of immortality, and may be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The Bible itself points the way to godliness of life on earth and to immortal glory in heaven. Just before his death the brave and heroic Socrates could only say: "I am in good hope that there is something remaining for those who are dead, and that it will be much better for good than for bad men. I am going out of the world, and you are to continue in it, but which of us has the better part is a secret to every one but God." Plato had only a hope, but no assurance of immortality. Cicero ends his discussion in uncertainty. Seneca says, "Immortality, however desirable, is rather promised than proved." Annihilation is abominable, to every man in his normal, mortal and moral condition. Who can answer for us these profound questions concerning duty and destiny? Human speculation is silent; the most learned philosophy can give us only guess, and not truths. Thank God, the Bible speaks with the authority of truth. It has brought immortality to light; it shows that the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers; it makes earth the vestibule of heaven; it clears away all illusions of speculation, and floods earth with the supernatural radiance of heaven! Blessed Bible! Book of God! Guide of life and revelation from God!

"Star of eternity! the only star  
By which the bark of man could navigate  
The sea of life and gain securely the coast  
of bliss."

The Bible not only gives the true rule of life, but it supplies needed knowledge as to diving strength in the development of character. We never are able to realize our high ideals except as we have strength given us from God toward that end. The word of God tells us of the source of spiritual power. It is the great instrument in spiritual regeneration. The apostle Peter distinctly says, "Being born a sin, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God,

which liveth and abideth forever." Thus the Bible teaches us what to be, and how to become what it sets before us as the standard of character. In this respect the volume is unique among the books of the world. It has been well said by William Walters in his booklet entitled, "Claims of the Bible:" "Bible-loving men are Bible-living men, and are in the highest sense good men." All parts of the Bible tend to produce spirituality of character. It is a safe and the only safe guide to heaven known among men. The Psalmist asks, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? And he rightly answers, "By talking heed thereto according to thy word." The Bible really is intelligible only to those who have honest minds and pure hearts; as the devout Pascal truly observes, "The Bible is a science of the heart and not of the understanding; love is not only the end of the Bible, but the entrance to its meaning." The result is that the Psalmist could properly say that he knew more than the ancients, and was wiser than his teachers. Voltaire was learned in many respects, but he was no match for the Christian serving-woman who

"Just knows, and knows no more, her  
Bible true—  
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never  
knew."

(To be Continued.)

**The Pleasure Book.**

A great many school children keep a pleasure book in the form of a volume of "memorabilia." Here are favors, sprays of flowers, programmes of entertainments, bits of writing, and sometimes photographs, each one representing some happy hour that has been passed. But it is to be feared that such a book is sometimes the index of empty pleasure rather than of real happiness, and it may become a regret rather than remain a satisfaction.

A far better book was that kept to the end of her life by a lovely old lady, whose serenely beautiful countenance was unmarred by lines of care or irritation. So placidly happy was she that a woman given to fretfulness, and almost annoyed by the unassailable peace that shone from the other's face, once asked her the secret of her content.

"My dear," said the elder woman, "I keep a pleasure book."

"What?"

"Yes, a pleasure book. Ever since I was a girl at school I have kept a daily account of all the pleasant things that have happened to me. I have only put down the pleasant things; the disagreeable ones I have forgotten as soon as possible. In my whole experience I cannot recall a day so dark that it did not contain some little ray of happiness."

"The book is filled with little matters—a flower, a walk, a concert, a new gown, a new thought, a fine sentiment, a fresh sign of affection from my family—everything that gave me joy at the time. So if I am ever inclined to be dejected, I sit down and read a few pages in my book, and find out how much I have to be grateful for."

"May I see your book?"

"Certainly."

Slowly the beaming friend turned the leaves. How insignificant the entries seemed! How much they meant! "Talked to a bright, happy girl." "Received a kind letter from a dear friend." "Enjoyed a beautiful sunset." "Husband brought some roses home to me." My boy out to-day for the first time after the croup."

"Have you found a pleasure for every day?" inquired the fretful woman wistfully.

"Yes, for every day, even the sad ones." The answer came in a low tone.

"I wish I were more like you," said the discontented woman, with a sigh. Then she looked up at her aged friend, and a beautiful reverence grew in her face. "I don't think," she said, as her eyes filled, "that you need to write them down any more on paper. Your pleasure book is written in your face."

In the Book of Life God sometimes writes sorrows, but He does not omit the joys. The determination to make the most of happiness and the least of trouble is the truest philosophy, as well as a sign of a beautiful character and a Christian hope.

**The Motive of Life.**

In an old volume which is almost out of print we find the history of a "godly woman" of the last century, who was moved, as she affirmed, by the Spirit to go to Italy, to Greece, and at last to Asia, to preach the gospel. She belonged to a wealthy sect, that furnished the means for these long journeys.

It was remarked, however, that on reaching her far-off field of labor, she was always moved to wander from place to place, and to return home sooner than was expected. Her children, in the meantime, grew up, being nursed and taught by strangers, and her old parents died unattended and neglected.

The woman was evidently sincere in her belief that she was led by a Heavenly Voice in these distant wanderings, until, in her old age, a ke-witted, blunt friend said to her:

"You have a lofty imagination and a love of adventure. May not these account for the fact that you never have been 'moved' to carry the gospel into the alleys and courts of your own town?"

The words pricked her conscience like a fiery dart. "Have I been mistaken?" she cried. "Have I taken my own selfish longings for the call of the Spirit?"

Only death could answer such a question, and make plain to the asking soul its own real motives.

**"Value Received."**

I. M. C.

The question of church finances is one which continually perplexes and annoys church workers and pastors. Especially is this true in the smaller congregations, and a balance "the wrong way" is generally the story told by the treasurer at the close of the year. The pastor is hampered and burdened throughout his labors by the need of his unpaid salary, and the church is weakened and disheartened by its failure to rise above this state of things. "These things ought not so to be." Who can suggest a remedy? In my humble opinion the word contribute, as used in the covenant in many of the churches is a misnomer. Christians should be educated to pay for value received for the support of our church organizations, instead of being asked "to contribute." We so often hear Christians say, when called upon for their contribution, "O certainly, I always give something for the support of the gospel." The ideal. Why not say, "I must give something for the support of my grocer, or butcher, or I will contribute so many dollars towards the support of the gas company?" Oh, no, we pay the butcher, the baker, and grocer for value received, no giving about that, it is simply paying honest debts. Why not then, take the same view of our church obligations? If our church privileges are of no benefit to us then of course what we give to the church is charity, such as we extend to the tramp, who calls for a cold bite at our doors. But if the church and its gospel influences are worth anything to us, then why should we not pay for the value which we receive not only that, but pay promptly just as we would pay other obligations? When we hire an individual to work for us, we do not just give him what we think we can spare. We hire him for a fixed sum and pay him at stated intervals. But when the church hires a pastor for a stated salary, we give towards his support just when it is convenient, or when we feel like it. Poor man, he is placed in the position of a beggar, depending upon the charity of those among whom he is placed. Does not the Bible say, "the laborer is worthy of his hire?" As to the proportion let conscience decide whether we pay more each week for the sustenance of these poor, perishing bodies than for the immortal part of us. "Is not life more than meat?"

WAYLAND, PA.

Prayer is the cry of faith to the ear of mercy. It is not eloquence, but earnestness; not the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it not figures of speech, but compunctions of soul.—H. More.