

This leads them to (a) discontent—the food provided by God is contemptuously called “this manna,” (b) unbelief—they doubted God’s love and they doubted His power (Ps. lxxviii. 19). Moses was troubled at the sound of weeping (v. 10). “What does he do? Brings his trouble to God. So should we all (Ps. xviii. 6). Look at the message for Israel (v. 18).

II.—*The Desire Gratified.*—Even Moses almost doubts (v. 21, 22), but God has spoken (Numb. xxiii. 19), and now see the fulfilment (v. 31). A strong wind blows, carrying before it large flocks of quails from over the sea. These, wearied by their flight, alight all round the camp. How eagerly the people hasten to secure the prize. For two whole days and a night they are at work gathering them in large quantities, and drying them in the sun for future use. God’s warning is quite forgotten.

III.—*The End of the Desire.*—They get their fill of flesh, but at the same time their souls are starved (Ps. cvi. 15). In the midst of their gluttony a fatal disease seizes them; strong healthy young men die in great numbers (Ps. lxxviii. 31). Too late, they remember that God had answered their request in anger. What must have been the thoughts of the survivors as they buried their friends? See how the remembrance of their sin is preserved to them in the name given to the place, *Kibroth-Hattaavah*—“the graves of lust.” Let us heed St. Paul’s warning in 1 Cor. x. 6, and learn that it is not always what we long for that will really make us happy.

See, too, how one sin leads to another,—first forgetfulness of God, then discontent and unbelief; all brought on because they thought they knew better than God what was good for them. (See 1 St. John ii. 16).

What is the end of lust? See St. James i. 14, 15, Rom. vi. 23. So with Eve who desired the fruit, and Judas who desired money. They had their desire, but it brought death. Let us try to learn the lesson (which will stand us in good stead through life), to trust God, to believe that He knows best, and let us try to learn the truth of Romans viii. 32.

Family Reading.

“THINK IT NOT STRANGE.”

“Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you,” for “The trial of your faith is more precious than of gold that perishes.” And while with gold, the most precious of metals, we may obtain every good of earth which can be bought, so faith, the most precious of spiritual gifts, will bring to us “All things whatsoever we desire of Him.”

Then if He test thy confidence in Him, faint not, “Knowing that the trying of thy faith worketh patience, and when patience hath had her perfect work ye shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” And heed it not that some will say as did Job’s friends, “If thou wert pure and upright, surely now, He would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.” For those who know not God’s dealings with His children are always ready to say, “Where is now thy God?” But, oh! remember, it was said of God’s well-beloved Son, “His visage was so marred, more than any man; and, He was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief.”

I remember how God taught me a lesson, a few years ago, through a sorely tried and afflicted one, to whom I sought to be a sympathising friend; to her it was sometimes said, “If your Father loves you, as you say, why does He not save you from these trials? It is a strange way to show it.” And while I believed in her loyalty, I wondered myself, why, if she pleased Him. But one day I read in His Word, “He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth. And it shall be said in that day, lo! this is our God, we have waited for Him, He will save us.”

He brought to my mind, in my own life, a time when my father was away in California, and I, his lonely child, looked many years for his promised return, always longing to see him and to be in the home he was to prepare for me. Sometimes a schoolmate would say, “I think if your father loved you much he would send or come for you, and not leave you here alone. I don’t believe he cares about you.” But I never doubted his love, and I said, “He writes me long, loving letters, and

he will come.” And one day, after eight long years, he came; how proud and happy I was, and to my friends I said, “this is my father I have expected so long, and I have to live with him.” While I waited, and trusted his love, my confidence in him was unshaken, but when he came I knew why it was for the best. It is no sign God does not love a child, or is not pleased with him because He does not remove from him sorrow or suffering, but it is our place to trust without knowing.

And truly I believe:

“If we could push ajar the gates of life,
And stand within and all God’s workings see,
We could interpret all the doubt and strife,
And for each mystery find a key.
But not to-day; Thus be content, poor heart,
God’s plans like lilies, pure and white unfold.
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold;
And if through patient toil we reach the land
Where we shall shortly know and understand,
I think we then shall say that God knew best.”

GOOD AND BAD.

“What are all those black ears among the corn?” asked a little child, as she walked with her mother through a corn field in the early summer.

“Those are the bad blighted ears that will never come to any good,” was the answer. “What a pity there are so many, the fields seem full of them.”

“Yes, mother, there are more black ears than white ones,” said the child. “I should cut them off if the field was mine.”

“I don’t think that would be easy, dear,” answered the mother, “but it is sad to see a corn field so blighted.”

They passed on, and neither of them thought again about the blighted corn until some weeks later on, when the corn, now full-grown, was beginning to change color under the hot July sun.

“Mother,” asked the child again, “where are all the black ears that we saw in this field before? I can hardly see any now?”

It was true. When the mother looked around, she saw with some surprise that while in the growing time there had seemed far more bad ears than good ones, now that the harvest was at hand, the good were much the most plentiful. And she thought to herself—may it not be also in the world around us? We see as we think nothing but sin and evil in the world, and wonder why God does not take away the sinners. Perhaps, when the great harvest comes, we shall be surprised to see now many are his hidden saints, and how much more good there are around us on earth than we had eyes to see, or hearts to understand. The black ears are easy to see while the corn is growing, but once let it ripen and they will be lost to sight among the thousands of golden good ones.—E. M. B.

“PATIENT CONTINUANCE IN WELL DOING.”

The apostle goes on to tell the rewards of so doing, inflaming their minds with so glorious a hope, that the trials of this present life might well be transformed into rays of glory lighting the King’s Highway! But I want you to pause and think what in this work-a-day world, at this present time, such words mean to us when we venture to face them, without thinking of the promise that follows.

It is not always difficult to do a good deed. Sometimes it is easier to do right than to do wrong. But to continue doing well all the time, that is quite impossible. We have necessarily a measure of imperfection, and it is well to be exhorted on this point, and to have the commands and encouragements of the mighty ones to urge us on. When you say “patient continuance,” immediately we know that there must be weariness and doubt, perhaps opposition, hope departing, clouds closing round, and we running with patience the race set before us, caring not for discouragements, or enticements, or buffets, with one idea in our minds to continue in well-doing, to wait for the Lord. Then the blessed promises are needed

indeed! They are like water to the thirsty soul. While toiling patiently through desert sands we reach spiritual oases which make the journey possible. And in due season we shall reach the glorious city of our deliverance if we faint not.

A PATIENT ELEPHANT.

“Tell my grandchildren,” writes the Bishop of Calcutta, “that an elephant here had a disease in his eyes. For three days he was completely blind. His owner, an English officer, asked my dear Dr. Webb if he could do anything to relieve the poor animal. The doctor said he would try the nitrate of silver, which was a remedy commonly applied to similar diseases in the human eyes. The large animal was ordered to lie down, and at first, on the application of the remedy, raised a most extraordinary roar at the acute pain which it occasioned. The effect, however, was wonderful. The eye was in a manner restored, and the animal could partially see. The next day when he was brought and heard the doctor’s voice, he lay down of himself, placed his enormous head on one side, curled up his trunk and drew in his breath (just like a man about to endure an operation), gave a sigh of relief when it was over, and then by trunk and gesture evidently wished to express his gratitude. What sagacity! What a lesson of patience!”

THE FARMER AND HIS CHILD.

From the German of Julius Sturm.

BY C. L. BRINE.

The farmer stands before his field
And frowning cries: “With honest seed
I planted here and tilled it well,
But now ‘tis little else than weed
My eye can rest upon. Ah me!
It is the devil’s work I see.”

Now comes his boy with happy laugh,
Bright flowers in each little hand,
Corn flowers, poppies, blue and red,
All gathered from the weedy land.
“How pretty,” cries the little son,
“And the good God made every one.”

—Poetic Caller (who has just arrived in Bermuda): “What is that balmy, spicy odor that wafts in at the casement, and seems to send the new life spinning through my sluggish Northern blood?” Practical Caller (who had been there three weeks): “Onions.”—*Tid-Bits.*

—“What do they do when they install a minister?” inquired a small boy. “Do they put him in a stall and feed him?”

“Not a bit,” said the father; “they harness him to the Church and expect him to draw it alone.”—*St. Paul Globe.*

“WE CAN PRAY FOR THEM.”

BY Y. V. K.

Several years ago, I heard from one of the persons concerned in it, the following story. It interested me very much at the time, and I have since often recalled it as a happy illustration of faith and faithfulness in a relation the duties of which are too often lightly regarded—that of sponsor. Of the two principal actors, a brother and sister, one is now the bishop of an eastern diocese; the other rests from her labours, leaving behind her fragrant memories of a saintly life.

Near the home of their childhood, while the present bishop was still a youth at school, there lived a very godless man, a scoffer at religion. This man’s wife had died leaving twins, lovely baby boys. The young people becoming very much interested in their little neighbors, strongly desired that they should be baptized. But the father’s consent was refused, and in language that gave little hope that he would relent.

The children were still infants when the father suddenly concluded to remove to Colorado, then the far, far West—a farther West, indeed, than now exists this side of sunset. The youth resolved to