

and darkness, too, are the habitation of His seat. And with us the dreary days follow the sunshine all too soon. Our spirit droops, the buoyancy of hope leaves us, and we find the unrest of a craving that may never be satisfied in this life. An old grief revives, and in the sorrow that overwhelms us it is hard to believe that the sun will soon shine brightly again. We ask ourselves, can we be growing stronger in the Christian life when the veil falls so often before our eyes?

It is just here, indeed, that the best test of growth will be found. As we stand on the seashore, the advancing tide will often seem to us to be retreating. The wave that rolls high at our feet rolls back again, and it requires close watching to see that in the advance and decline the tide is slowly creeping forward. The tide of progress in the Christian life advances much more hesitatingly and intermittently. Yet we can know if there is a real advance.

One test of growth is our increased steadiness. How do we bear our dark days? If we yield to despair and melancholy, and have no deep-seated conviction that even the darkness makes for our greater peace, we are not growing. But if we assure our hearts that the distress will pass away, if we make a brave effort to be cheerful when we feel far otherwise, we are on the line of progress. Our knowledge must correct the mistake that the passing feelings of the moment would lead us into. We know that God is love, though perhaps we cannot feel it very vividly to-day. We know that in the past disappointment and sorrow have been better for us than would have been the gratification of our own wishes. And now we can fall back upon our experience of all this, and when the darkness seems to threaten us we shall not pass into it, but shall remain in the sunlight of faith. Tears will fall, perhaps, but they will be without the bitterness of despair. The calmness of strong conviction will be our increasing inheritance, and despondency will come less frequently as we grow stronger, for our faith will learn to anticipate and check our feelings.

Another test of growth will be found in our increased joy in Christian work. Do we like it better than we did? A sense of duty, perhaps, made us undertake the Sunday-school class, the district visiting, the charitable work. But if we are growing, we shall be acquiring a love for the work that we did at first only because we felt that we ought to. It is no longer irksome to pass into the lowly houses of the poor,

but a pleasure to try to win their trust and to open their hearts to brighter and nobler views of life. We shall win love just in the degree that we give it. He who would be useful must love much. Only the magic of God's love working through us will enable us to draw men from the service of sin to obey Him. This strong, masterful passion will dominate us as we grow stronger in the truth, and we shall be more and more willing to serve because we love more deeply. G.M.W.

"FORENOON and afternoon and night—Forenoon
And afternoon and night—Forenoon and—what?
The empty song repeats itself. No more?
Yea, that is life! Make this forenoon sublime,
This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer,
And time is conquered, and thy crown is won."
—Selected.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

THE HIDDEN WORD.

"I REMEMBER distinctly," says the late Rev. John Campbell, "an interesting anecdote, referring to the late Sir David Dalrymple, better known to literary men by the title of Lord Hailes, a Scotch judge. I had it from the late Rev. Walter Buchanan, of Edinburgh.

"I was dining some time ago with a literary party at old Mr. Abercrombie's, father of General Abercrombie, who was slain in Egypt at the head of the British army. A gentleman present put a question which puzzled the whole company. 'Suppose,' he said, 'that all the New Testaments in the world had been destroyed at the end of the third, could their contents have been recovered from the writings of the first three centuries?' The question was novel to all, and no one even hazarded to guess in answer.

"About two months after this meeting I received a note from Lord Hailes, inviting me to breakfast the next morning. He had been one of the party. During breakfast he asked me if I recollected the curious question about the possibility of recovering the contents of the New Testament from the writings of the first three centuries.

"I remember it well."

"Well," said Lord Hailes, "that question accorded with the turn of my antiquarian mind. On returning home I began immediately to collect the Christian writings of the first three centuries, that I might set to work on the arduous task as soon as possible. Pointing to a table covered with papers, he said, 'There, I have been busy for these two months searching for chapters, half chapters, and

sentences of the New Testament, and have marked down what I have found, and where I have found it; so that all may examine and see for themselves. I have actually discovered the whole New Testament from these writings, except seven or eleven verses (I forget which). I am satisfied that I could discover them also. Now," said he, "here was a way in which God concealed His Word that Julian, the Apostate Emperor, and other enemies of Christ, who wished to extirpate the Gospel from the world, never would have thought of; and though they had, they never could have effected their destruction."

The labor in effecting this feat must have been immense, for the gospels and epistles would not be divided into chapters and verses as they are now. A learned judge brought his splendid training to this task of showing the hidden Word in these early Christian writings. His work will serve more than one useful purpose. Above all, it shows how the early Christian writers loved the scriptures; how truly and fully they used them. Their writings in this respect stand in striking contrast to much so-called religious literature of our own day, and few will doubt that the older literature, full of scriptural references, was the more nourishing and refreshing to the hungry and weary spirit. H.T.M.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

MISSIONARY SUBJECTS FOR DAILY PRAYER.

THE following simple scheme has borne the test of practical use, and will possibly meet a want felt by some:

"I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men."—I Tim. ii. 1.

"Am I my brother's keeper?"—Gen. iv. 9.

"Ye also helping together by prayer."—I Cor. i. 2; Matt. xxi. 22.

THE JEWS.

Sunday.—God's chosen people, and special means of communication to the world. Where would the Christian be without the Jew? There are 8,000,000 Jews in the world. Pray for persecuted Jews.—Ps. xxvii. 9; Jer. xxix. 14.

AMERICA.

Monday.—Home missions. The Indians and Eskimos. French evangelization. That our treatment of Chinese may not hurt God's cause. The heathen countries of South America.—Ps. ij. 8.