

men around him. An old lady kindly took him upon her lap and talked to him pleasantly, and between the interest of listening to and answering her and watching a richly dressed little boy not much older than himself, he quite forgot everything else until he heard the name of the street called out.

Luckily there were others to get off at the same place, or he might have been carried to the end of the route. As soon as his feet touched the ground, he went off at a run, never pausing until he reached his own door. In trying to turn the knob he was compelled to put something from one hand to the other. He looked down, and there was a new five-cent piece. It flashed upon him then that he had been overlooked, and had not paid his fare. It was his own, of course; for had he paid it, it would have been gone, and it was not his fault that he had not given it in, for he never thought, and he could not help it now. It was his to do what he liked with.

What a fortune the five cents appeared to the child who had seen other children with pennies, but had never had many of his own in his life! What visions of the delights to be purchased with it danced through his dreams that night, as he slept with the treasure tied tightly in the corner of his little handkerchief, and placed under his pillow.

The next day, as his mother still continued very ill and nobody noticed him much, he started out to spend his money at a neighboring toy-shop. He stood gazing eagerly in at the window. What should he buy? Some marbles, a top, candy? No, there was a beautiful picture-book for five cents,—and a tin horse and cart and a soldier with cap and sword,—and there was such a quantity of pop-corn.

The display of tempting articles was so bewildering, the matter of a choice was so perplexing, he concluded to keep his prize until Monday and show it to the boys. And then he could get Charlie Dunn to come with him and help him select his purchases. That would be nice. So Victor turned his back upon the shop, and for that day his five cents were not spent.

He was at the Sunday-school the next morning, and his teacher thought the little face looked even brighter and more cheerful than usual. It was a custom for the children to attend church in a body, and during the service they sat all together. To-day the sermon was very plain and Victor listened attentively. The minister spoke of the evil of sin, especially little sins that pass unnoticed by the world, but which in God's sight are as great as large ones. In the course of his sermon the preacher said that the person who receives too much change at a store and keeps it, is as really guilty as the man who breaks into a bank at midnight and steals millions; the person who in travelling attempts to evade paying his fare, is a thief and sells his soul for a paltry sum! Little sins lead to greater ones, and, like the man with the one talent, he who is unfaithful over a few things will be unfaithful over many.

Poor little Victor. He walked home along the sunshiny street, his little heart bursting in his breast. He imagined every one he met could read his guilt in his face. A thief! When he reached home he could eat no dinner, so great was his distress. His aunt was alarmed, but he said he was not ill. Gladly would he have unburdened his little aching heart of its load, but he intuitively felt that his aunt would not understand him, could not help him, and his mother was too ill to talk.

All day long he bore his torturing secret, and at night he scarcely dared to kneel by his cot to say his prayers; but neither did he dare leave them unsaid. He knelt down, and all at once a text which he had learned for his lesson came into his mind:

"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

His teacher had explained it to him, and now it was as a flood of light. He would tell all to Jesus, and He would forgive and help him! When he laid his head upon his pillow, peace and a sense of pardon, if not happiness, had returned.

But the thought of the money troubled him. It was not his and must be returned to the owner. But how? That was the question. At last a bright idea struck him. He could not find the conductor, but he could go to the depot a couple of blocks away (he knew where it was), and give it to the man there, and he would see that the gentleman who owned the cars got it.

The next morning a little boy entered the

depot and approached the ticket office. It was too high for him to reach, but he espied an open door, and the next minute was by the ticket agent's side.

"Please," he said, handing him the five-cent piece: "I was riding in a car and the conductor forgot to take my money,—and I forgot, but I am so sorry."

The man looked down upon the eager child for a moment in surprise, then laughed; but a gentleman who had just then come in spoke to him kindly and said:

"What was it you wanted, my little fellow?"

The boy repeated his words and held out the money.

"You are an honest little man," said the gentleman. "Did your mother send you?"

"Oh, no sir, mother is sick and knows nothing about it; and I am not honest, sir, for I kept it three days, and I would never have brought it back if the minister had not found it out and told me how wicked I was. But I will never do so again, sir, never!"

"What is your name?" asked the gentleman.

"Victor Rhoades, sir."

"Victor? A grand name. Do you know what it means?"

"No sir. Does it mean anything?"

Then the gentleman, setting himself, drew Victor to his side, and, after explaining to him that "Victor" signified "a conqueror," told him about the great men of old and their heroic deeds; and as the boy listened, with sparkling eyes and glowing cheeks, he told him of another battle-field where the foes to be overcome are not of flesh and blood, but the powers of darkness, temptations to sin, and of the victory that we may gain through the help of Christ.

The gentleman was the president of the railway company and proved a kind friend to Victor and his mother. He obtained for her easier and more remunerative employment, and, when Victor grew up, secured for him a position where by industry and application he might rise to an honorable and independent station. He has reached that station now, and wealth and honor are his; but often and often, in the temptations that beset him, the remembrance of his name has been his safeguard, and, still in the heat of the contest, he looks forward with joyful hope to the day when, with St. Paul, he can say: "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."—*N. Y. Observer.*

RUSTY RAILS.

BY THE REV. ASA BULLARD.

Travellers may often notice in the vicinity of railway stations, piles of iron rails. Some of these rails have been used on the tracks, and having become worn or in some way damaged, they are laid aside to be sent to the foundry to be recast. Some are new and ready to be used as they are needed. Single rails may also be seen by the side of the track, where they have been thrown when replaced by new ones.

All must have noticed that these rails are always covered with rust. Some look as though they must be injured by this corroding process. This is the necessary consequence of exposure to the rain and the dew of night, when not in use. It is a well-known effect of moisture on iron. But examine the rails on the tracks that are in constant use. They are equally exposed to rain and dew, and yet they are perfectly free from rust. The face of the rails on which the wheels run is as bright as polished silver. They glisten in the sun as far as the eye can reach.

Now, the difference in these cases, it is well understood, is wholly owing to the influence of their use or want of use. Let these rails change places and their appearance will at once be changed; the bright ones will soon become rusty, and the rusty ones bright. Rust cannot form where there is this constant friction, this polishing process of use.

Is not here a very apt illustration of the effect of activity, or the want of it, upon Christians? Let a person enter the church and engage in no Christian labor, and how soon the rust of sloth and indifference begins to appear. How can any Christian graces shine, if they are not brought into use, if they are not polished by activity? "Practice

makes perfect" is the adage. If there is no practice, how can Christian character be developed and made effulgent? How can any one see "our good works," if we do not "let our light shine?" And will any one let his light shine if there are no good works that may be seen?

Inactivity is the bane of the Christian church. No church can be efficient where its members are not in some way employed in Christian work. Are there not many in most churches who are rusting for want of use? They are not only accomplishing no useful object for others, but they are constantly suffering loss themselves. They are not only making no spiritual acquisitions, but they are losing what little they may have. This rust of inactivity is eating out their very vitals.

Take any single grace of the gospel, and how soon it begins to corrode if not in exercise. If secret prayer becomes intermittent the door of the closet soon begins to creak on its rusty hinges. If attendance on the weekly meetings of the church becomes irregular, the steps that lead to that heavenly place begin to lose their elasticity, and heavily drag the reluctant heart. Faith and hope and meekness are all strengthened, like the muscles of the body, by daily and vigorous use, but left but a short time in a state of inactivity, the dampness of the night air tarnishes them with rust, as it does the iron rails that lie idle by the roadside. Some one says the muscles with which we close the hand are much stronger than those with which we open it. It is the weaker or opening muscles that we use in benevolent giving, while it is the stronger ones with which we close our hand against the calls of charity, and grasp our earthly treasures. Now, if the hand is not often opened in charity, these weak muscles will gradually become stiff and rigid, or rusty, so that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to relax them enough to get the smallest offering into the treasury of the Lord.

It should be the care of every church to find some Christian work for every member. No church can afford—whatever the railway may be able to do—to keep on hand a large number of members to rust out in inactivity. There is work enough for all; and the spiritual health and prosperity of the church and its individual members demand that all shall be found at work. "If any will not work, neither shall he eat," commanded the apostle. And if a professing Christian will not work in the Lord's vineyard, no spiritual manna will fall around his tent.—*Advance.*

THE GRACE OF GIVING.

We have often wished we had a few millions of money, just to see what we would do with it. All men think they know how they would dispose of it. The educational institutions of the church would be placed beyond financial embarrassment; missionaries would have ample support, struggling congregations would be helped, and new enterprises would be established on a firm basis.

There is nothing, however, in which a man is more likely to deceive himself than in matters of that kind. Changed fortunes most frequently bring changed dispositions. The man who suddenly inherits large possessions, often becomes selfish in his prodigality, while those who acquire means, usually form habits of closeness that stick to them like the fabled shirt, after they have much more than a competency. We see this illustrated around us every day, and liberal as we may be with other people's money, we cannot be sure that we would be better than they, if placed in their prosperous circumstances.

At any rate, the question may be asked whether the munificent endowments many think of in their day-dreams, would be a blessing, after all? Wealth may be the bane of churches and institutions as well as of individuals. It is doubtful whether any congregation would do best, with every want so supplied as to do away with the necessity of contributions from the people on the altar of the Lord.

Our heavenly Father could give us ample riches if he thought it wisest to make us stewards of so much; or he could supply the gold miraculously if that alone were needed; but we can hardly think of a church so constituted as to do away with the sacrifice of giving, by which our love for him over the world is constantly developed and tested. This is, perhaps, the reason why the privi-

lege and duty is laid upon all, rather than upon the few. The man who seeks exemptions, tries to cut off a means of grace. Surely, if this is the case, we should rejoice in an order of things which allows every one to give. The hope of the church is in this, rather than in large benefactions, which might leave the masses of the people as sordid as if untouched by the love of God.

We hope we have said nothing to frighten off our millionaires. Wealth is a talent for which they will be responsible. But let no one think mere riches would favorably incline him to make gifts to the Lord. The man who is not faithful in little will not be faithful in much, and it is the united contributions of the people that God looks for in the upbuilding of his kingdom. In every case the main advantage accrues to him who sacrifices mammon on the altar of the Almighty. The inward conquest is that which is necessary to true, healthy Christian life.—*Messenger.*

Question Corner.—No. 8.

Answers to these questions should be sent in as soon as possible and addressed Editor NORTHERN MESSENGER. It is not necessary to write out the question, give merely the number of the question and the answer. In writing letters always give clearly the name of the place where you live and the initials of the province in which it is situated.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

85. What city was spoken of as "the glory of kingdoms"?
86. What battle was fought on Mount Tabor?
87. On what mountain was Solomon's temple built?
88. At what place did God last reveal himself to Abraham?
89. What celebrated edifice was afterward built on this spot?
90. Who built the city of Samaria?
91. Upon what mountain did Saul die?
92. When was the name of Luz changed to Bethel?
93. Of whom did Jesus say "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile"?
94. At what place was Paul stoned?
95. Where was an altar erected "to the unknown God"?
96. Where is the following found: "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger?"

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

In the water, in the air, and in the busy brain,
 Busy once, but nevermore to hate or love again;
 One of five, all like itself, in deadly deed united,
 And yet delivering those in whom the Lord of Hosts delighted.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 6.

61. Leviticus, xix. 32.
62. To the tribe of Judah, Num. xiii. 6.
63. On Mount Hor, Eleazar, Num. xx. 25, 28.
64. He was killed in battle with the kings of Midian, Num. xxxi. 8.
65. By the tribes on the eastern side of Jordan, because they feared that in after years they might become separated from the tribes west of the Jordan, Joshua xxii. 24, 29.
66. The Midianites, Judges vi. 7, 11.
67. The tribe of Manasseh, Judges vi. 15.
68. Two, Judges x. 1, 5.
69. From the Ammonites, Judges xi. 30, 33.
70. Samson, Eli and Samuel.
71. To the tribe of Judah, Ruth i. 1, 2.
72. Because there was a famine in Judah, Ruth i. 2.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

B-abel—Gen. xi. 4.
 A-bel—Gen. iv. 4.
 B-el or Baal—Judges ii. 13.
 El—Gen. xxxv. 7.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

To No. 6.—Jane Brown, 11; Jennie Mitchell, 10; William C. Wickham, 12.
 To No. 5.—Lizzie Calhoun, 11; Andrew Fraser, 9; C. A. Redmond, 11; Jacob Hunter, 10; E. R. Blanchard, 10; Flora Estella Bell, 12; Cora McIntyre, 9; A. McDonald, 6; Alice Freeman, 12; William C. Wickham, 12; Menotti Carvosso Flatt, 12; Maggie Sutherland, 12 en.