

WELL ANSWERED.

In the "Presbyterian of the South," a clergyman tells how one evening, after preaching, he requested any who would like to spend a little time and talk on personal religion to meet him in the church immediately after the benediction. Quite a number did so.

"The first morning I met after entering the church was a man some thirty-five years old or more. Very much to my astonishment, when I began conversing with him, he asked me, 'Do you believe in predestination?'"

My reply was, "I do, but what has that to do with your salvation?"

The next question was, "Do you believe in election?"

My reply was, "I do, but what has that to do with your salvation?"

The next question was, "Do you believe God knows all things and knows whether I will be saved or not?"

My reply was, "I do, but what has that to do with your salvation?"

He said, "Well, if God knows I am to be saved, and I am predestined and elected to be saved, it will be all right. If I am not, I can not help myself."

In reply I said to him, "You are a farmer. You believe God knows everything."

"Certainly I do."

"Do you think He knows whether you will make a good crop next year or not? He knows that just as well as He does whether you will be saved or not."

"Of course He does," was his reply.

I said to him, "Then I tell you what to do. 'Go home and sell your mules, don't plow your land, or plant any corn or cotton, don't cultivate your land, and you will make the best crop you ever made in your life,' and I left him."

After the next meeting he met me and said to me, calling my name, "I don't understand that farming operation."

I said, "Neither do I," and I left him.

He was present at the next service. I never saw any one who appeared more deeply interested as I urged the personal acceptance of Christ as the only hope for the salvation of any one.

Soon after the benediction he met me again, and said again, "I don't understand that farming question."

My reply was again "Neither do I," and I left him to meet some others.

Just after the following sermon, meeting me, he said to me, "I am troubled about that farming operation. I do want to be saved, and I am bothered about it."

My reply was, "You have nothing to do with God's secret purposes. Secret things belong to God, that which is revealed, to us and our children."

He said, "I think I have been acting the fool on the doctrine of election."

I said to him, "I don't think anything about it, I know it. The devil is trying to persuade you to take it easy and it will come out all right, as God has fixed it all. Suppose next year is a splendid crop year, the sunshine and rains are all just right, but you never plowed or planted any crop, how much would you make?"

His reply was, "I would make nothing."

"On the other hand, suppose you prepare your land better than you ever did in your life, get the best seed you could find and cultivate your crop to the very best of your ability, but you had not a drop of rain from the time you planted the seed how much would you make?"

"Nothing, absolutely nothing," was his reply.

I said to him, "God has ordained the means, as well as the end, and the end can only be attained through the use of means necessary thereto, and there is no other way. God, of his infinite mercy, has for us poor sinners provided and offered to us a way of salvation, and that is through Jesus Christ his Son, and there is no other way by which we can be saved. That is a sure and certain salvation for every humbled sinner who accepts Christ. God says, 'Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.' The Master says, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' We are taught that He

is able to 'save to the uttermost them that come unto Him.' Paul tells us, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' 'Come unto me all ye weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'

The next morning he came and said to me, "I am rid of all my trouble. I have accepted Christ as my Saviour and trust all to Him. My desire is to unite with the church and, looking to Christ for strength, to spend my life in His service." He came before the consistory and was received into the church, became an active and useful deacon, and by his life gave good evidence that he was a true child of God.

USES OF TRIBULATION.

Why does tribulation come? Because it is needed to bring out the best that is in us. True it comes because of sin, but since we are sinners it is so arranged that our tribulations shall all be over-ruled for our good. What man might have been and how he could have enjoyed heaven had he not fallen, we can only speculate. But we know that the man who is patient under tribulation reveals beauties of faith and service that are most glorious in the realm of mind and spirit. As man is now constituted, tribulation is a blessing.

What are the uses of tribulation? It makes man humble. It sends him to the source of all power. Many a foolish scoffer cries "God help me!" in time of sudden distress. It makes man useful. Having suffered and toiled, man knows how to sympathize with and how to help his fellow-man. It makes man Christlike. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him. I John 11:2.

The tribulations of the sinner are to lead him to repentance. The tribulations of the righteous are to develop within him the Christian graces and fit him to enjoy heaven.

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees. Hebrews 12:12.

I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation. . . . The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Revelation 7:17-18.

Selected.

Are you a disciple of the Lord Jesus? If so, he says to you, "I am with you always." That overflows all the regrets of the past and all the possibilities of the future, and most certainly includes the present. Therefore, at this very moment, as surely as your eyes rest on this page, so surely is the Lord Jesus with you. "I am" is neither "I was," nor "I will be." It is always abreast of our lives, always encompassing us with salvation. It is a splendid, perpetual "now."—Frances Ridley Havergal.

"The only way to remove mountains," it has been said, "is to begin on grains of sand." Wisdom and strength grow by exercise. Small tasks as preparatory to great ones, and even so-called trifles, if attended to with care, may sharpen the wits or train hand or heart for larger enterprises. He is indeed foolish who dispises the day of small things, or who, through lack of perception of the value of the opportunities that come his way, neglects the petty duty near at hand for the imagined opening at a distance of which he is not really called of God. But when a man has humbled himself to perform the task of removing grains of sand, God may call him to grander duty on the high mountains of duty and vision.—Selected.

THE CHANCES WE MISS.

(By Robert Speer.)

A young doctor told recently of a busy day in the clinic. A great crowd of patients filled the benches, waiting each his turn. At the end of the line a mother sat with a babe wrapped up in her arms. It was three hours before the doctors got to her. When she presented her bundle it was too late. The little one was dead. The doctors had done their best. They did not know that that last case was so critical. They could not deal carelessly and hastily with those who came first. Nevertheless, it was a chance missed. The chance of saving a child's life, the life of a child, as the doctor said who had the experience, who might have been an Abraham Lincoln and done in the great social and industrial crisis of our day what Lincoln did in the great political crisis of his day. But was the doctor the only man who missed this chance? Who were that woman's neighbors? Who were the well-to-do folk who were not her neighbors in the sense that they lived near her, but who were her neighbors in the sense that they could have helped her if they had gone over to her side and looked for her as the Samaritan did who sought the man in need by the side of the road and met his wants? . . .

There were two men in the community and their relations were a tragedy. Long ago one of them had wronged the other. He had often intended to go and ask forgiveness. And the other had often resolved that he would go and extend forgiveness. But life was full of things and it was humiliating to confess and it was more than human to forgive. So the tragedy dragged along over the years. One day one man said, "I have waited too long, I will go." And as he walked up to the other man's door, one came out and said to him, "It is all over now. Your enemy will never trouble you more. He is gone where you and he will not speak again,—not here at least." So the hour was past when that could be done whose doing was duty and peace. . . .

A crowd of people surrounded Jesus. Those in the front were evidently hostile to him watching for a chance to trip him in his doctrine or to take him in speech that could be made troublesome to him. He met them with consummate skill. Every question, sincere or insincere, he answered faultlessly. A lawyer in the throng was carried away with admiration, and put to him the deep question of his own soul. The answer alike satisfied and transported him, and he forgot the hostile atmosphere of the crowd and broke out in unfeigned satisfaction. The Lord met him in that hour at the gates, where souls enter or pass. "Thou are here," said he, "not far, but near, at the door of the Kingdom of God. Come in." It was the lawyer's chance. But the enmity of Pharisee and Sadducee, the intimidation of the throng, closed in on him, and there is no intimation that he came in. It was his life's chance, and he passed it by. What was the lesson of the virgins in the parable? "Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!"

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still. Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

- Mon.—A chance passing by (Luke 18: 35-43).
- Tues.—Every-day opportunities (Matt. 25: 41-45).
- Wed.—Almost persuaded (Acts 26: 27-32).
- Thurs.—A great chance lost (John 19: 4-16).
- Fri.—A chance to confess (Mark. 14: 66-72).
- Sat.—A chance missed and taken (Luke 23: 39-43).

\*Y. P. Topics, Sunday, October 23, 1910. The Chances we Miss. (Gal. 6:1-10).