

"But you must excuse my being saucy. It is all fun, isn't it, aunt?"

"There ain't much fun in *my* life," said Mrs. Prescott, with the air of a martyr. "It's lone and hard enough."

"Lone, with such a lively husband?" asked Flora, smiling.

"He's nought to me but the earner o' the bread," answered Mrs. Prescott in a hard tone, as she poured out the tea.

"You won't be pleased with anything I can say or do, to I don't know who's to blame if you're lone, wife," said George, as he drew his chair to the table with a little jerk of annoyance.

"But we *must* be pleased with each other, one and all of us," said Flora, folding her hands on the edge of the table, and looking feelingly up into her aunt's thin, hard face. One of my songs says—

'Come and let us be happy together,
For where there's a will there's a way.'

So if we have the will we shall find the way. I am sure we all have the will, dear auntie, haven't we? and let us begin to find the way at once. Thank you (taking her cup). What fine cream! The fare altogether in the country is so sweet and good. I should like to live *always* away from town, and indeed I shall try to get a country situation, if possible, somewhere not far from you, so that I could run and see you very often."

In this strain chatting went on, and to George's satisfaction and her own chagrin, Mrs. Prescott actually found herself smiling and saying pleasant things to her niece, whose coming she had anticipated with spleen.

"It goes agin the grain for the old lady to be so agreeable," said George to himself, "but Flora may manage to make it come nat'ral to her in time. Who knows?"

(To be concluded.)

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE.

BY THE REV. W. S. CALDECOTT.

THE absence of the faculty of searching the Scriptures is, to a large extent, due to the desuetude of the habit of "expounding." Hence nothing would so much conduce to the revival of this, as would the reintroduction of that godly practice. But, though our space be limited, and the words of a printed page are seldom so fruitful as those of so many living voices, let us make a few suggestions which may, at least, help the young and comparatively inexperienced in the great work of feeding their own souls with the bread of life.

I.—READ THE BIBLE PRAYERFULLY.

Let prayer not only precede and follow your perusal of inspired truth, but let it accompany it. In a passage of singular pathos, Mr. Wesley has given us a picture of himself as he occupied himself in his most retired hours with the Book of God before him. It is the embodiment of much sacred wisdom and simplicity of spirit; so I adduce it:—"Here, then, I am far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his Book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read; does anything appear dark or intricate—I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights: 'Lord, is it not Thy Word. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God? Thou givest liberally, and upbraident not. Thou has said, If any be willing to do Thy will, he shall know. I am willing to do; let me know Thy will.' I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the earnestness and attention of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God, and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak."

So much as to the spirit of humility, love, and teachableness with which the Scriptures are to be read. The other qualifications are more human ones, and yet, perhaps, more uncommon ones.

II.—READ THE BIBLE INTELLIGENTLY.

If the following suggestions read dogmatically, it is simply because we had no room for periphrases or exceptions:—

1. Disabuse your mind of the idea that the Bible is a volume merely. It is that, but it is also a library, or rather a literature. Acquaint yourself, then, with the history, order, and authors of its sixty-six books.

2. Set up in the vacant spaces of your mind a few chronological landmarks, such as the dates of the Flood, the Abrahamic call, the Exodus, the Coronation of David, the Babylonist Captivity, and the Advent of Christ, to which all other historical events may be referred for their latitude and longitude, so to speak.

3. Totally disregard, except for purposes of convenience, the ordinary division into chapter and verse. To help you to do this, obtain a paragraph Bible from the Religious Tract Society, where the ordinary divisions are marked only in the margin, and are not allowed to destroy the cohesion or the sense of God's Word.

4. Pay particular attention to the marginal readings. These are an integral part of the authorised version, and are of equal authority with the text, often contain the better meaning, and should *always* be consulted.

5. Be careful how you lay stress upon the words printed in italic type as they are merely put in to fill up the sense, and are not in the original Hebrew or Greek. Indeed, you may omit them as often as the grammar will allow you to do so.

6. Note all parentheses and quotations, making separate studies of such as may occur in your reading, taking the passage to pieces for this purpose, as a watchmaker does a watch, and afterwards restoring it.

7. For LORD (in small capitals) understand that "Jehovah" occurs in the original writing.

8. Read in order, finishing one Book before beginning another, no fixed number of verses, but one or more paragraphs, at a sitting.

9. Make what use you can of the marginal references. These are often merely verbal similarities, and throw no light upon the passage; but sometimes they are good. With a concordance you may construct your own references—a slow and laborious work, but one well worth the doing.

10. Weigh what you read, drawing a distinction in the historical portions, between the inspiration of the speaker and that of the writer, if they be two persons. This is especially necessary in the Book of Job.

Thus to read the Scriptures is to study them, and to deserve the commendation of those "more noble Persians" who received the Word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things which they heard in the synagogue, were so, or no.—From "Good Works" (London: Elliot Stock, 1s. 6d.)

I have no faith in that woman who talks of grace and glory abroad, and uses no soap at home. Let the buttons be on the shirts, let the children's socks be mended, let the roast mutton be done to a turn, let the house be as neat as a new pin, and the home be as happy as home can be; and then, when the cannon-balls, and the marbles, and shots, and even the grains of sand, are all in the box, even then there will be room for those little deeds of love and faith, which, in my Master's name, I seek of you who love His appearing. Serve God by doing common actions in a heavenly spirit, and then, if your daily calling only leaves you cracks and crevices of time, fill these up with holy service. To use the apostle's words, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men."—*Spurgeon*.

GLADNESS AND HEALTH.—Joy is one of the greatest panaceas of life. No joy is more healthful, or better calculated to prolong life, than that which is to be found in domestic happiness, in the company of cheerful and good men, and in contemplating with delight the beauties of nature. A day spent in the country, under a serene sky, amidst a circle of agreeable friends, is certainly a more positive means of prolonging life than all the vital elixirs in the world. Laughter, that external expression of joy, must not here be omitted. It is the most salutary of all the bodily movements, for it agitates both the body and the soul at the same time; promotes digestion, circulation, and perspiration, and enlivens the vital power in every organ.—*Hufeland*.