

October, and Lord Harford was really coming home at last. On his arrival to England he paid a visit to Woodlands and ordered the house to be repaired.

Lord Harford stayed at Westbury, an old market town some six miles off; but he often went over to Woodlands; and as soon as he could Robert had an interview with his lordship, the result of which was not exactly an engagement, as there were a few points on which the two did not exactly agree.

"It was very foolish of me," said Robert afterwards to his wife. "I should have given way: a servant should not argue with his master. Next time we meet I'll say less; for what shall we do if I fail to get the situation? and I've no prospect of any other employment. The carrier will be well enough to drive his cart in a week or two."

"You must be Lord Harford's coachman, Robert," said his wife.

Robert was often out late with the carrier's cart at night and early in the morning. Mrs. Sexton did not sit up for her husband, neither did she make a point of rising before he started. One evening a letter came for Robert; his wife put it on the mantel-shelf, and went to bed before her husband. Robert rose at five, and by chance saw the letter, which was very important. He carefully answered it, muttering,

"I must go round with the cart, otherwise I would take the letter myself."

Then Robert spoke to his wife, who was not yet up.

"It's a fine day," he said, "and I'm going to give you a little journey. I want you to take this letter to the Queen's Hotel, Westbury, before five o'clock. Don't forget—before five o'clock."

Mrs. Sexton leisurely got through the morning, in her usual way, making no preparations for her journey to Westbury. After dinner she thought of the letter, and said to herself, "What a pity I have to take that long walk just when I want to have my afternoon rest; and Robert knows I dislike going out before tea. Why five o'clock? Surely seven will do as well. I'll have a cup of tea first, and start in the evening. There will be a full moon; so I shan't have a dark walk home."

Subsiding into her chair, Mrs. Sexton mooned over an old newspaper for some time. Then, rousing from the doze which followed, she saw on the floor the letter her husband received the previous night. There were no secrets between them; he read her letters, and she read his. This was as follows:—

"Queen's Hotel, Westbury.

"Let me know to-morrow whether you agree to my terms; if so you may consider yourself engaged as my coachman. Call, or write, before five; otherwise I shall suppose you decline my terms, and I shall give the situation to a young man whom I have every reason to believe will serve me well."

"HARFORD."

In Mrs. Sexton's own words, this put her in a "perfect fright." If the letter was not delivered before five her husband would lose the situation, and how could she reach Westbury before five, when it was now four? She was too late: they would have to suffer all sorts of unknown troubles because she was too late.

Mrs. Sexton's fault was procrastination. She had plenty of energy when fairly aroused. Mrs. Sexton was energetic enough now. She jumped up, put on her bonnet, and hurried on in the direction of Westbury, walking as fast as she could. Though not now a young woman, Mrs. Sexton, scant of flesh, and free from rheumatism, could still walk very fast when she liked.

Through the little village she went, through the churchyard in which little Bobby and Polly were buried, across several fields, along the high road, and then she came to a gipsy-haunted wood, which Mrs. Sexton disliked to enter at any time. But not a moment did she hesitate now, though there was another but longer route. Into the woods she went, and through the wood, and out of the wood, crossing the deep ravine in the centre, and passing the seat at the top of the hill; not a moment dared she to rest, but hurried on to Westbury, entering the town, and reaching the Queen's Hotel just as the clocks were striking—what? Five! It couldn't be! But the clock in the hall of the hotel was at five; and only five o'clock it was after all!

Then Mrs. Sexton remembered that her clock at home was ever so much too fast. For the last few days she had been going to put it right, but had neglected to do so. For once her procrastination was a benefit.

"Is Lord Harford in?" asked Mrs. Sexton.

"He is," replied an attendant, "but is engaged at present."

Mrs. Sexton sat down on one of the chairs in the hall as weary in spirit as she was tired in body. Was she too late after all. Was Lord Harford now arranging about the young man he had mentioned? What a long time it seemed! At last a gentleman came

down, and Mrs. Sexton was shown the way to Lord Harford's room. He was just beginning to write.

Mrs. Sexton delivered her husband's letter. Lord Harford read it, and said—

"You were almost too late; I was just about to engage somebody else. Remember, I asked for an answer before five o'clock."

"My husband could not come, your lordship, and I was a little later in starting to come than I ought to have been."

"I am glad you were not quite too late, for I do not wish to part with old servants if they are willing to serve me."

Mrs. Sexton, very humble and very thankful, had her tea in Westbury, and on setting out to return home met an old miller she knew, who drove her in his cart as far as he went, which was four miles on her way home, and avoided the wood. The rest of the journey was soon performed.

How Mrs. Sexton enjoyed that walk! How different were her feelings than when she came along. The night was mild, the moon was bright, and Mrs. Sexton felt as light-hearted as a young girl. She would never be late for anything again; and, to begin with, supper should be ready when Robert came home. It was ready; and the good news the wife had to tell her husband was excellent sauce.

Robert Sexton is still Lord Harford's coachman, and still lives in the Swiss cottage in the park. Mrs. Sexton has improved in many ways since that never-to-be-forgotten journey in October, when she was almost too late. A lesson to all who procrastinate.—*British Workwoman.*

UNCLE JOHN'S SOLILOQUY.

BY THE REV. E. E. ROGERS.

"Why didn't I see this thing before? Ten dollars for foreign missions, and one year ago I only gave fifty cents. And that half-dollar hurt me so much, and came so reluctantly! And the ten dollars—why, it is a real pleasure to hand it over to the Lord! And this comes from keeping an account with the Lord. I am so glad Brother Smith preached that sermon. He said we should all find it 'a good thing to have a treasury in the house from which to draw, whenever our contributions are solicited.' He asked us to try the experiment for one year—to set apart a certain proportion of our income for the Lord's work. I thought it over. I thought about those Jews, the one-tenth they gave into the Lord's treasury. I thought what a mean and close-fisted Jew I should have made, had I lived in those days. Then I counted up all I had given for the year, and it was just three dollars. Three dollars! and I had certainly raised from my farm, clear of all expenses, twelve hundred dollars. Three dollars is one four-hundredth part of twelve hundred dollars. The more I thought, the wider I opened my eyes. Said I, 'I am not quite ready for the Jew's one-tenth but I will try one-twentieth, and see how it works. I got a big envelope, and put down in the corner of my trunk, and as soon as I could, I put the sixty dollars into it. Said I, 'Here goes for the Lord.' It costs me a little something to say it at first, but when it is done how good I felt over it. When this appeal came from foreign missions, all I had to do was just to run to my treasury and get the money. And this all comes from keeping an account with the Lord. How he has blessed me this year! I never had better crops. Now I am going to try another plan. I am going to give the Lord the profits from one acre—one of my best yearlings, and one-tenth the profits from my orchard. That will surely carry the Lord's fund up to seventy-five dollars; and if it don't, I will make it up from something else."

Thus Uncle John soliloquized, and the more he thought the subject over, the more he wondered he hadn't seen things in the right light before. If the farmers of our land would only try Uncle John's experiment, they would fill the treasuries of our missionary societies to overflowing. No more would the shameful cry of "retrenchment" be heard. No more would our poorly paid home missionaries have to wait for months for their small quarterly dues. No more would the aggressive work of the church be stopped by what Joseph Cook calls "penuriousness." Let us try the experiment. Let us begin to keep a debt and credit account with the Lord, and then we shall realize what the failures of the past have been. May the Lord open our eyes as he did the eyes of Uncle John!—*S. S. Times.*

CHINA.

Mr. Sprague and Dr. Porter have recently taken a Mission tour of about fifty miles to Yu-cho. They mention the case of a convert at Swei-chuan desirous of church fellowship, who burnt his thirteen idols and ancestral tablets. It is at this place that Feng, the native helper, resides.

Dr. Porter says,—"When Feng made inquiring intimations as to what should be done about the idols and tablets, the man was all

ready. He un-hung the pictures from the central room, called the ancestral hall, and brought them all to me, with eight most sacred ancestral tables, the resting-places of the soul (as Dr. Legge reads) of the ancestors of the house. I was strongly tempted to keep some of them as curiosities, but was a little afraid it might not be understood. So I said, as mildly as I could, but with intense gladness in my heart, "Now you shall make a grand confession of your new faith."

So we took the paper gods, the kitchen god, the god of health and the god of mercy, and made a pile in the centre of the little court. The tablets were of fine hard wood and I was afraid they would not burn easily. The man got a whisp of light straw, and with a stout heart set the fire a-going. He brought some kindling too, and at last the tablets fairly caught.

The paper gods were painted heavily, and bright lurid flames crept up slowly through the smoke. At length the paper and wood burned fiercely, and we had a grand bonfire. I was afraid the tablets might not be burned enough, but we all stirred them into the hottest flame, until they were all consumed to ashes.

What a sight that was for a hot July sunset scene! A man in his own court, with his family about him, with hosts of friends and neighbours in the court or standing on the roofs and walls all round, quietly setting fire to his guardian deities, the shrines of his own parents and ancestors! I confess to an exultant feeling as I saw the calm determination of the father, and as I heard the low muttering of horror or deprecation from the by-standers. What a grand witness to the new faith of the man! I suppose that village never saw a like scene. Perhaps few others would have dared to act so openly.

When nothing but charcoal was left of the once worshiped gods, the man merely said, "Well, those tablets cost money when erected," I said, "And how much richer are you without them? Surely there is joy in heaven among the angels on your account to-day."

Twenty thousand people, perhaps, will be startled into some sort of thought by the testimony of this one man!—*Christian Monthly.*

BEING READY FOR DEATH.

(From the United Presbyterian.)

What is it to be ready for death? It is simply to be in that spiritual state and relation to God in which death will work no injury. When death does not separate us from God, when it releases us from this life and gives us an entrance into the eternal life with God, we are ready to die; that is, however suddenly death may come, it does not imperil salvation. In other words, every one who has believed, and is justified, has not only access into grace now, but also entrance into glory whenever summoned. Preparation for death is not a certain measure of holiness, a being "good enough," but it is being in Christ Jesus. Though the lightning be God's swift messenger, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Grace is not intermittent but flows an unbroken stream. The new life is not crossed by chasms into which we may step and be lost, but is a firm way on which we tread confidently. There are no unguarded periods in which death may smite us while the strong arm of the Lord is not about us. We are always in his keeping.

We need to have this deeply impressed upon our minds, that if we have received the Lord Jesus, power has been given us to become the sons of God and we are saved. It belongs to God, then, to determine the manner as well as the time of our removal to his presence. Look at death in the light of these words: "The Father has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." If he chooses to give us the full possession of the inheritance in a moment, how can it work harm? If he, without announcement to us, translates us into his presence, how can it endanger our salvation? If he is pleased to spare us the pains of approaching death, and all the attending sorrow of sundering ties, is it not love? Should we live in dread of the sudden opening of heaven to us?

To be ready for death, then, is to be possessed of the new life in Christ. And this we need for living as well as for dying. For it gives us peace in the assurance of God's favor. It gives us confidence by assuring us of Almighty protection, and of the certainty that death, at whatever time it may come, will be a removal to dwell with Christ.

LAYING IN FUEL FOR THE VOYAGE.—It is a sad thing for a man to say on his death-bed, as the late Samuel Bowles, of the Massachusetts *Springfield Republican*, said upon his, "Nothing is the matter with me but thirty, five years of hard work. I never was much

of a boy; I had very little boyhood." Many a man is over-wearied and prematurely aged because he had "very little boyhood." In crossing the Atlantic, the steamers have to take in their supply of coal and provisions before they start. The time is not misspent that is apparently spent in idling at the wharves. If enough coal is not stored there will be a lame conclusion to the voyage. If there is plenty, then the strokes of the paddles will go on without abatement of vigor until the steamer glides up to its dock in Liverpool. No owner is willing to send off his vessel with out this full supply, but many a parent is even anxious to have his children commence the long voyage of life long before they are laden for it. Boyhood is the storing in time of energy, endurance, valor, nerve, muscle, hope, faith, love, charity, earnestness—all, in fact, that a man needs to make a successful voyage, and without which the fires die down, the wheels cease their revolutions, and the vessel becomes a helpless thing before the voyage is half over. We plead with the parents to let their children have all the childhood possible. They can never do them any greater harm than by making them start upon the voyage too early.—*National Sunday-school Teacher.*

Question Corner.—No. 13.

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

73. On what mountain was Josiah slain in battle?
74. What king of Israel commanded eighty-five priests to be slain with a sword?
75. What woman, upon the death of her son, the king of Judah, murdered her grandchildren and usurped the kingdom?
76. When was the feast of tabernacles celebrated for the first time after the death of Joshua?
77. What was the name of the king of Judah who had his eyes put out and then was imprisoned for life?
78. On what mountain was a king commanded to gather a whole nation?
79. What prophetess dwelt under a palm tree?
80. Who was the left-handed judge that delivered Israel?
81. Who slew his seventy brothers and proclaimed himself king of Israel?
82. Of whom does the Bible give an account as highway robbers?
83. Whose life was lengthened fifteen years in answer to prayer?
84. Who said "Let me die the death of the righteous?"

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

1. The son of Phineas.
 2. A city in central Palestine.
 3. A name borne by one of the children of Anak.
 4. One of the sons of Asshur.
 5. An herb named by our Lord.
 6. The builder of Jericho.
- The initials and finals give the names of two great prophets.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 11.

49. Psalm cix. 10.
50. Isaiah ii. 4.
51. Joshua in dividing the land, Josh. xviii. 8.
52. Acts xv. 23.
53. B. C. 607, By Children of Rechab, Jer. xxxv. 1, 11.
54. In the wilderness by Anah, Gen. xxxvi. 24.
55. Abraham, Gen. xv. 5.
56. Five. 1. Pharaoh to be relieved of the plagues, Ex. viii. 8. 2. Israel to be relieved of serpents, Num. xxi. 7. 3. Jeroboam when his hand was withered, 1 Kings xiii. 6. 4. Simon's prayer, Acts viii. 24. 5. Zedekiah for deliverance, Jer. xxxvii. 3.
57. Because of their cruelty to the Shechemites, Gen. xlix. 7.
58. Abimelech, Judges ix. 25.
59. Jethro, Exodus iii. 1.
60. John the Baptist, Malachi iv, 5, 6.

ANSWER TO ENIGMA.

1. M-ammo-n, Luke xvi. 9-14.
2. O-n-o, Neh. vi. 2.
3. S-hina-r, Gen. xi. 1-9.
4. E-phphath-a, Mark vii. 34.
5. S-heb-a, 1 Kings x. 2, 10.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

To No. 10.—Elna Sutherland, Ingersoll, O. 8; William F. Butchart, Sault Ste. Marie, O. 2; Sophia M. Lamont, Chatham, N.B. 5; Saunders Sweet, Canada Creek, N.S. 5; William Vandusen, Jordan, O. 9; Stephen S. Stevens, Hopewell Hill, N.B. 5; John F. Millon, Cottan, O. 13; E. McLellan, Noel Shore, N. S. 3; W. S. McSachern, N. Koppel, O. 6; David J. Dyson, Kintail, O. 4; Andrew Derby, Durham, O. 2; To No. 11.—Andrew Derby, Durham, O. 2; Mary Rettle, New Deer, Aberdeenshire Scotland sends 7 correct answers to those in No. 9.