

of freedom when he finds that he is no longer under the *dominion* of sin. His besetting faults pursued him, (see preceding note,) but, simply trusting in his "Strong Deliverer," he has gone straight on in the right path, and, to his amazement, has found that those pursuing sinful habits, those fierce and urgent temptations, have lost their power! Now, like the Psalmist, he can "walk at liberty." Now, like the Ethiopian eunuch, he goes "on his way rejoicing."

2. But it is a matter of common experience that this happy and buoyant condition rarely lasts. Almost every Christian man can look back and remember the reaction that followed in his case. Exaltation is succeeded by despondency, and despondency too often leads to discontent. Why is this? Not that God's arm is shortened, or his ear heavy. The cause is in ourselves. We forget that we have still to take a long journey through a wilderness; in other words, that we have a life of discipline and training to live in a world that is not to be our home. The ecstatic feelings of the young Christian may be expressed in the words,

"Spread thy wings, my soul, and fly
Straight to yonder world of joy;"

and when he has instead to turn to "the trivial round, the common task," every-day life seems so irksome that weariness and despondency soon overtake him. Then he finds that the pleasures and comforts of earthly life are no longer sufficient to satisfy him. He is thirsty, but the waters that look so sparkling and so inviting prove to be bitter to his taste. And then he murmurs. His faith has failed, and he falls again into sin.

What is the remedy? There is but one, and that is Christ. He is the real "Tree of Life" of which the Golden Text speaks, the Tree that sweetens the bitterest waters. The occupations, the pleasures, even the afflictions of this life, all *taste differently* when Christ is in them; that is, when, "whatever we do, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Now all this should be faithfully declared to our young people. Conceal not from them the troubles of the Christian life. Let them not expect all "smooth sailing." Let them be fairly warned that

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown."

Yet let them also know how to sweeten the bit-

ter waters. Do we know how ourselves? If so, we can say, "To me to live is Christ: O taste and see that the Lord is good."

Seed-Thoughts for Senior Scholars.

1. For what reason, may we suppose, did God cut off their supply of water?
1. With great and numerous mercies, why does God send also *adversity*?
3. What is the danger of uninterrupted prosperity?
4. Rather than murmur against Moses, what should the people have done?
5. Do they show any *remembrance* of God's interposition for them in Egypt?
6. What is the *tendency* of human nature accustomed to great indulgences?
7. How was Moses affected by this abuse?
8. Was the bitterness of the water, or the corrective quality of the tree, or the discovery of their relation, miraculous?
9. What was that *statute* law, or order, which God here made with them? (v. 26.)
10. How does this *statute* agree with his *universal* order?
11. What is meant by *prove* them?
12. What immunity against disease is here promised?
13. Any more extended promise respecting health?
14. What was the sanitary condition of the people in the wilderness?
15. If disease or wounds occurred to them, how were they healed?
16. What is the *general* law and tendency of holy living on health?

Blackboard Exercises.

What did the people say when they murmured against Moses? *What shall we drink?* Then what did Moses do? *He called unto the Lord.* What was shown him? *A tree, which when he had cast into the bitter waters, they were made sweet.* It may be that there is one who has been studying this lesson to-day, whose soul is thirsting for a drink from the river of life. The waters which this thirsty one has tried to drink, and find relief, are bitter, but the Bible tells us there is a beautiful river of pure water flowing from the throne of God, and on the banks thereof is a tree bearing leaves of healing. These leaves are *love*, *pity*, and *pardon*, and whosoever will cry unto God he will show this tree, and the leaves, which are for the heal-

* Prof. Bush says that neither the Hebrews nor the inhabitants of the desert have preserved any knowledge of any such tree.