

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

"A SOFT ANSWER TURNETH AWAY WRATH."

DEAR BROTHER:—The wise man said: "A soft answer turneth away wrath." This may be true or not true, according to circumstances. If a man passing through some "vast wilderness" were to meet a bear robbed of her whelps, and try the experiment of soft answers to her angry growls, think you not he would be disappointed in his attempt to turn away her wrath, although he might be entirely innocent in reference to the poor creature's bereavement. Well, the bear robbed of her whelps acts according to her instinct, and in harmony with her strong animal nature, lacking that reason which usually elevates man above the brute creation. But sometimes it happens that men are not so elevated, nor are their dispositions so softened and tempered by the Gospel of the grace of God that reason holds her rightful sway, and kindness in the heart prevails. And again, it sometimes so happens that the very mildest of men are so situated that soft answers to the amount of a perfect battery are required in front, on the flank, and especially in the rear, and then prove insufficient to shield the luckless wight against the fiery darts of the wicked.

"What should the child of God do under those circumstances?"

He should do just right, and nothing more, and the great wise God, the All-Father, will take care of His own little wayfarers until the time comes to gather them home to a place of perfect safety, where none of the spirit which is from beneath is ever manifested, but where that love which softens the spirit and temper of every child of God will hold universal sway throughout the countless ages of eternity. The child of God should try the spirits. Every spirit which does not soften our nature, sweeten our disposition, and make us more like the blessed pattern given us by our kind and loving Father is not of God. May the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep our hearts and minds just as they should be—in the love of God.

O. B. EMERY.

Feb. 26, 1884.

PATIENT CONTINUANCE IN WELL-DOING.

The holy men who penned the New Testament took great pains to impress upon their readers the all-important truth, that it is not sufficient to profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to join a church in order to secure our salvation, but that it is by a patient continuance in well-doing that we are to seek for glory, honor, immortality, eternal life. Hence we have such admonitions as the following: "Be ye, therefore, steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord;" "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; but he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved;" "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not;" "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." We may safely infer from these and similar expressions that it is only those who "follow on to know the Lord" who will ultimately win the prize of the crown of glory which is offered to all those who choose to strive for it. It is very necessary that we should keep this fact constantly before our minds, lest we should be lulled to sleep by a false feeling of security that might prove disastrous to our soul's salvation. "Watch and pray," lest ye enter into temptation; and again I say unto you, "Watch," are admonitions that should come home to us with double force in these

days of rush and hurry, when men seem to live at railroad speed and to think only of how they can best promote their temporal interests. Happy are they who amidst the cares of this life can truly say that their hope is clear, their faith strong, and their confidence in their Saviour unshaken by the rude shocks of adversity.

It is true that in our efforts to patiently continue in the path of duty and well-doing we meet with numerous difficulties, and are subjected to various trials. But we must remember that we are soldiers, and must fight the good fight of faith; we are pilgrims, and must "go forward" in the midst of danger; we are servants, and must obey our Master's will; we are children, and must neither despise the chastening of our Father, nor faint when we are rebuked of him; we are candidates for a crown of glory, and must run with patience the race that is set before us. We have duties to perform, temptations to overcome, and sorrows to bear which perhaps press very heavily upon us. Our conflict is long, our cross wearisome, and we are perhaps discouraged; but we should remember that we have been forewarned that it is through much tribulation that many Christians will have to enter the kingdom of heaven. We must be strong, therefore, and of good courage if we would persevere in our toilsome path. There must be no hesitation, no indolence, no fear; but a steady, earnest, patient continuance in well-doing. I know some will reply, it is easy to say all this—to feel this—but the great difficulty is to act up to it; we are so soon daunted, so easily discouraged. Well, we must realize that of ourselves we are weak and easily turned aside, and must seek strength from on high. "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me!" was the exultant exclamation of the apostle to the Gentiles, as he realized his own nothingness and the irresistible power of his Redeemer. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be," says the God of Israel. In the time of need we hear His voice saying to us, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." Take courage, fellow Christian, as you recall these precious promises, and press onward and upward, exclaiming with the Psalmist, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress; my deliverer, my strength, in whom I will trust." Yes, trust in Him at all times, for "in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Day by day, and hour by hour, trust in Him and look to Him. So shall your end be glorious, and you shall be received into everlasting habitations, to go no more out for ever. The difficulties, the trials, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with "the glory which shall be revealed."

W. H. E.

Saint John, March, 1884.

THE RICH FOOL.

LUKE 12.

It is generally conceded, I believe, that the two brothers referred to in the 13th verse were sons of the rich man mentioned in the 16th verse. So regarding it, and desirous of bringing out the full force of the Saviour's remarks in presenting a portrait of human nature, but, by no means to be copied, we give a brief statement of the whole case.

About the time of the Saviour there lived in Judea a certain rich man, whose ground brought forth plentifully—to such an extent that his barns were insufficient to hold the increase. One evening, the shades of night having gathered around him, thus bringing to a close the labors of the day, tired and wearied, perplexed in mind he reaches the house, and having partaken of a hasty meal, he gets away off into a quiet room, commences to think and to plan. What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my goods? Plan after plan comes up to his mind, but after careful reflec-

tion one after the other is thrown aside, until he exclaims: "This will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods, and in addition to this I will now decide what my future course in life shall be—I will say to my soul, soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry!" The troublesome questions settled to his entire satisfaction, he feels somewhat relieved, and is soon with the members of his family making known to them his plans for the future. With pardonable pride they recognize his wisdom and ability to meet successfully almost any immergency.

It is now past midnight and all is hushed in sleep; but God who never slumbers, looks down upon that poor man and says: "Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" The morning dawns, and the family which a few hours ago was full of joy is now overwhelmed in grief, for the angel of death during the night had quietly cut down the stay and support of that family. Through the day the news of the sudden death flies from house to house. The neighbors are astonished; serious and holy thoughts take possession of each heart as to who will be the next. The day for the funeral arrives and everything is in readiness. The friends from far and near wend their way to the house of mourning, and waiting for the time to march in funeral order, they stand around in groups discussing the whole course and conduct of the man's life. Some remembering the time and place of his birth, when he came into the present neighborhood a poor boy, but through hard work and prudence he had become a rich man. Every one seemed to have a good word for him. He was a smart man; a splendid neighbor, a kind husband and a good father. But what was the cause of his sudden death? He seemed to be a strong hearty fellow. It must have been apoplexy; heart disease or something of that nature, says one. Some intimate friend replies—no, he has been very much troubled of late; in fact he has been overtaxed in body and mind, and his constitution was unable to stand it. The funeral services are over, and in funeral array the friends march solemnly and thoughtfully to the home of the dead, and soon the body is laid away in the tomb. The friends return to their homes and places of business to discharge as usual the responsibilities resting upon them. The members of the broken family, in company with a relative or two, return to the sad home. After a while the enquiry is started and search is made for a will of the father; but no will has been made. Still no unpleasantness is apprehended; each member is interested in the welfare of the other; their honesty and love for each other is proverbial.

But in a few months the desire of gain begins to grow; self-interest begins to loom up; the rights of others are lost sight of; and one begins to make claims which are denied by the others. The feeling of combativeness is aroused and one is determined, by hook or by crook, let the consequences be what they may, to have as much as it is possible. The lawyer is consulted; a course of law is suggested. The two sons with feelings of enmity appear against each other, wasting the hard earnings of the father. The case is tried, the decision given, and as usual, one at least, if not both, is not satisfied. The one who had lost the case had been watching the Saviour, and being impressed with his wisdom, power, and noticing his influence with the people and that he accomplished everything he undertook, thought if he could get him to take hold of his case he would be sure to gain the desired end. In few words we have the Saviour's reply.

Having thus the whole case before us, in addition to the many lessons that lie on the surface, a few pointed questions with their answers will reveal