

Hope's Quiet Hour.

Take Heed How Ye Hear.

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath.—S. Luke 8:18 (R. V.)

One kind of Hearer—2 Chron. 34, 35. For many years the Kingdom of Judah had been sunk in the depths of wickedness. Heathen idols had been set up even in the Temple of God, and Jerusalem was filled with abominations of all kinds. "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much"; and it is generally supposed that the aged prophet, Isaiah—who had fearlessly declared God's anger against sin—was sawn assunder by the wicked king.

Then came a change. Josiah was only eight years old when he came to the throne but he soon began the great task of restoring the worship of Jehovah. From one end of his kingdom to the other he went, personally superintending the work of destroying the countless idols and heathen altars. When idolatry was put down with a strong hand, the young king—then twenty-six years old—made a great national collection of money and used it to repair the house of the Lord. During this great house-cleaning a copy of the Law of Moses was found. Perhaps this roll of the law had been hidden for safe keeping when Manasseh was trying to destroy all copies of it. It would seem as if Josiah had never before heard this part of the Word of God, for when it was read before him he rent his clothes in grief and sent to a prophetess to ask her about the book, saying: "Great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book."

Josiah was not satisfied to keep the matter to himself, but gathered a great multitude of his people together and read the book aloud to them. The national repentance and cleansing led up to a national renewal of the covenant and a solemn celebration of the passover. "There was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel." You see how a man, whose whole heart was set on righteousness, heard the Word of God. He was filled with grief when he realised how terribly the Law had been broken in Judah and Israel. Though he had been trying to serve God ever since his sixteenth year, he was not self-satisfied. In spite of the strenuous way in which he had worked for ten years at the difficult task of stamping out idolatry, he rent his clothes and wept because his nation stood convicted of defiant rebellion against Jehovah. Josiah's faith in the written message resulted in a great revival of religion among his people, "and all his days they departed not from following the LORD."

Another Kind of Hearer—Jer. 36. Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, was wicked in heart as well as in act, and his people were carried away by his bad example. The prophet Jeremiah had warned, threatened and pleaded, but the only apparent result was his own imprisonment. Then he engaged a scribe to write in a roll of a book God's stern threatenings against sin; "for it may be," he said, "they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people." This prophecy of Jeremiah was read to the princes, who were filled with alarm and determined to tell the king. Knowing his fierce recklessness, they warned Jeremiah to hide himself so securely that no man should know his whereabouts. Then they told Jehoiakim that the prophet had declared God's anger against the people, and had warned them that the king of Babylon should come and destroy the kingdom of Judah. Jehoiakim was sitting in his palace, with a fire burning in the brasier before him (R. V.) He expressed a wish to hear exactly what Jeremiah had written, so the manuscript was brought, and Jehudi began to read it aloud. The

king grew angry and suddenly interrupted the reader. Snatching the roll from his hand he cut it in pieces and flung it into the brasier, where it was burned to ashes.

Full of pride in his kingly power he dared to defy the King of kings; but not so easily can the Word of God be destroyed. Undismayed by apparent failure, the prophet at once dictated another roll, which contained all the warnings of the first one and "many like words." A stern message, declaring God's wrath against him, was also sent to Jehoiakim. It was easy to burn the written message, but it was impossible to go on in a course of wickedness and escape punishment. The warnings which made the king so angry had been sent in love and mercy. They were intended to rouse the people to a sense of the enormity of their sin, so that they might turn every man from his evil way; that God might be able to "forgive their iniquity and their sin."

It is not often that a man is daring enough to openly defy the threatenings of God's Word; but there are other types of hearers. There was the proud Roman, who listened to St. Paul's preaching, and trembled as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. But his fear soon passed, and he waited for "a convenient season" before hearing any more. Then there were the various kinds of hearers described by our Lord in the parable of the Sower. It is particularly of these four classes He is speaking when He says: "Take heed therefore how ye hear." There are the hearers whose hearts are hardened, so the seed can never penetrate the crust of worldliness and selfishness. There are the emotional hearers, who are easily stirred up, but soon forget their good resolves and drift back into easy indifference about spiritual matters. There are the hearers who fully intend to carry out what they have heard, but their time is so occupied with work and care, with business or pleasure, that God is crowded out. Then there are the people who, "in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

The Great Sower is doing His part—are we doing ours? If we are not any better for hearing God's Word we must be worse. As the message of Jeremiah was rejected by Jehoiakim it must have made the king harder and more reckless than before. It is a great privilege to know the will of God—to have the Bible published so

cheaply that everyone may possess a copy. But it is also a solemn responsibility. Our Lord has warned us that a servant who knows his master's will, and does not do it, shall be beaten with many stripes.

The Bible is a priceless treasure—and millions of people in this "Christian Empire" seldom or never read a word of it. They have a copy—it would hardly be decent to be without at least one Bible in the house—but a Bible is not a charm to keep away evil. Food will not nourish your body unless you eat it and digest it, and the Bible will not help your soul if it is never opened. I have heard that there is a manuscript copy of the Irish New Testament in the possession of the British and Foreign Bible Society. This is its story. An Irish peasant was so eager to possess a copy—in the days when Irish testaments were rare—that he asked a gentleman who owned one if he might copy it. Month after month he worked at it, after his day's work was done, and at last the earnest Christian had his treasured Testament completed—he had copied every word. Years afterwards he was given a printed copy, and his manuscript was presented to the Bible Society.

The Word of God is still living and powerful. Though it would almost seem as if everyone must by this time be supplied—when many millions of copies are published every year—but it is still pouring out of the presses by thousands, every working hour of every day. The demand for it is enormous: "Certain it is that the Bible is the only book which does not carry consternation when dealers find it stacked high upon the shelves. 'If we happen to get an extra fifty thousand or so on hand, it does not worry us,' said a prominent publisher. 'We are always certain that they will be disposed of sooner or later.'"

The Bible is here to stay. No king can destroy it. Let us heed its message, as our Lord has told us. Let us search the scriptures, that we may find Him there (S. John 5:39) that we may have Him as our daily Companion and Friend. The Bible does not only come to us as a message from God. If we read it prayerfully we may hear—as Elijah heard—the "still small voice", speaking with love and authority directly to our own souls.

"For when I draw myself apart
From things which make my vision dim
Deep in the silence of my heart
He meets me, and I speak with Him."
DORA FARNCOMB.

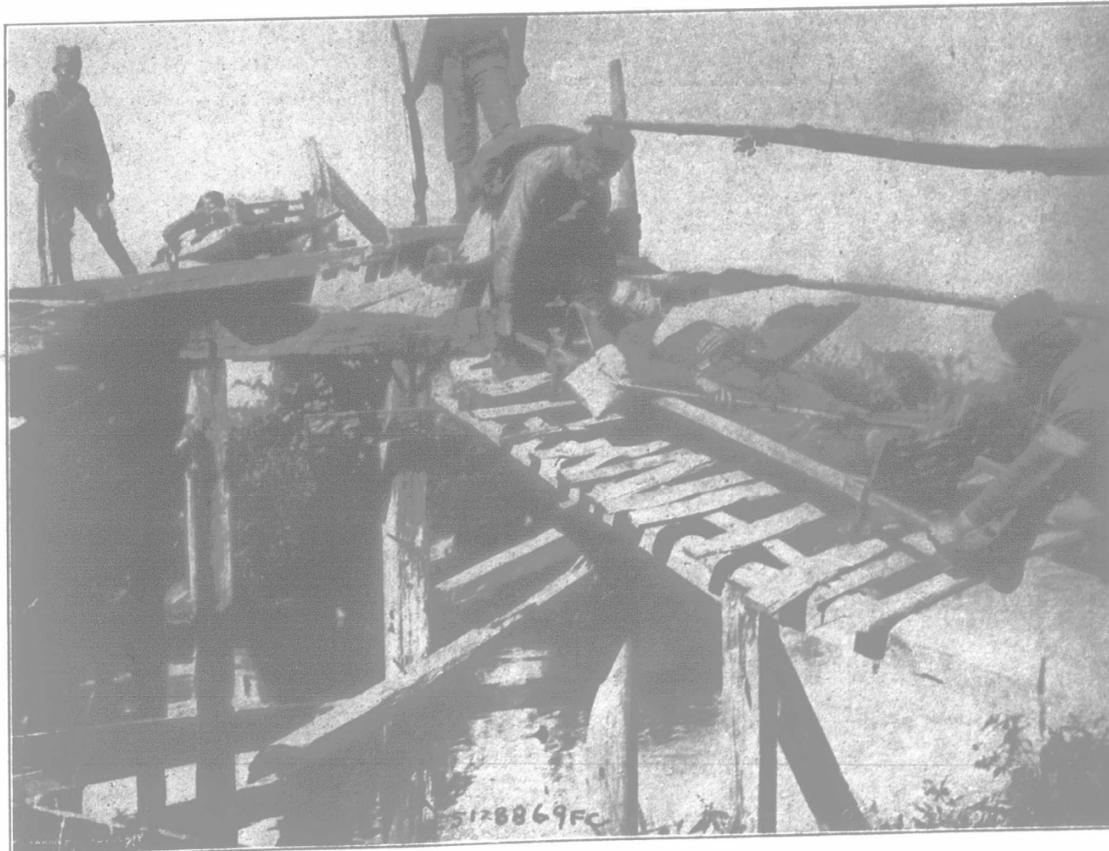
The Windrow

A staff captain from Verdun describes the fighting there as "a battle of madmen in the midst of a volcano eruption."

Already all the rooms in the leading hotels of London and Paris have been engaged by Americans who are going when the war is over to see the devastation in Europe.

By the Expatriation Bill recently passed by the Imperial Japanese Diet, the Government allows Japanese born abroad to secure naturalization. This concession will remove many international complications.

In an address delivered before the League to Enforce Peace, in Washington, President Wilson said: "Only when the great nations of the world have reached some sort of agreement as to what they hold to be fundamental to their common interest, and as to some feasible method of acting in concert when any nation or group of nations seeks to disturb those fundamental things, can we feel that civilization is at last in a way of justifying its existence and claiming to be finally established. It is clear that nations must in the future be governed by the same high code of honor that we demand of individuals. . . . If this war has accomplished nothing else, for the benefit of the world, it has at least disclosed a great moral necessity, and set forward the thinking of the statesmen of the world by a whole age. Repeated utterances of the leading statesmen of most of the great nations now engaged in war have made it plain that their thought has come to this: That the principle of public right must henceforth take precedence over the individual interests of particular nations and that the nations of the world must in some way band themselves together to see that right prevails as against any sort of selfish aggression; that henceforth alliance must not be set up against alliance, understanding against understanding, but that there must be a common agreement for a common object, and that at the heart of that common object must lie the inviolable rights of peoples and of mankind."



Taking Wounded Serbs to Safety Across a Destroyed Bridge.

Scene during the Serbian fighting. The bridge was destroyed by the Serbs in anticipation of an Austrian attack, and temporarily restored by the Serbs for the transportation of wounded to a field hospital. Underwood & Underwood.