

## SECOND THOUGHTS.

Are second thoughts always best? Sometimes they are. If all impulses were good, then it might be that first thought would be the best. As they are not, and as impressions as well as impulses need questioning as to their right to be indorsed and obeyed, it is safest and best to submit them to the testing of reason and the Word of God first.

But oftentimes Satan steps up when an impulse is good and right, when first thoughts are proper and best, and suggests all manner of selfish considerations, so that second thoughts are not as good as the first. Many a man's heart at first prompted benevolence, but the miser in him decided to hold on to his money, so his first thoughts were the best. When the Holy Spirit speaks directly to the soul, then first thoughts are always best.—Christian Witness.

## A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH.

Psalm cxix: 105.

A real Christian will be a true lover of the Bible. There is scarcely a better test. If the novel or the newspaper takes the place of the Bible on his table or in his mind, then it is clear that the world has taken the place of God in his heart. If a man's Bible be clean and bright, and unsullied by use, undefiled by contact with daily life, his soul is not.

There is no better spiritual barometer to test the true condition of the soul's atmosphere. He to whom the Bible seems wearisome, monotonous, uninteresting, has good cause for alarm. The neglect of it springs from coldness of affection toward its Author, and dislike of His rebukes.

Whoever wants to grow in grace, simply must study the Bible. It is the way to gain stability of doctrine, so as not to be carried about with every wind of opinion.—Christian Standard.

## SELF-INDULGENCE.

One factor which contributed to John the Baptist's greatness was the fact that he avoided those things which would have belittled, or crushed and destroyed, his soul. He was great in the sight of the Lord, and he drank neither wine nor strong drink. Whether we regard this as a sign of his consecration—his Nazariteship—or consider the statement in itself, it teaches an important lesson.

Self-seeking is destructive of true greatness. There is no true greatness without entire consecration to God. So long as we live for self, we cannot be great in the sight of God.

Self-indulgence is also the enemy of real nobility. We can never be great if we yield to appetites which dethrone the reason,

which inflame the evil passions, which destroy the will, which degrade the affections, which render us unfit for life's duties, from the lowliest to the most sacred.—Sel.

## FIRE LOW.

A deal of lead is wasted in battle by firing over persons' heads, and a deal of breath is wasted in preaching in the same way. The best arguments are often the simplest and homeliest. The Saviour dealt with things which everybody knew and understood. We have in his sermons, which the common people heard so gladly, no far-fetched arguments or classical allusions, but he talks of fishermen and their nets, of the sower and his seed, of the hen gathering her chickens, the husbandman pruning his vines, the shepherd dividing the sheep from the goats.

If we have to prove a fact in order to found or illustrate an argument, our task is somewhat complicated, but if we can use an admitted fact, then our work is materially abridged. Hence it is important that we deal with familiar matters in a familiar way.

The people to be reached by the truth are not a few scores of cultured, scholarly men and women, but thousands of sensible, hard working, and hard-faring honest people, who need the gospel to be their hope and consolation, their guide and strength.

These men should be reached and instructed and helped; but to do this we must stand upon their level, and talk of things which they can understand, things within their reach, so that the common people will hear us gladly, as they heard Him in whom were "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and yet whose words were clear as crystal, and simple as the utterances of childhood.

His thoughts and words were divine, yet he talked of birds on the wing, of sparrows and doves, of lost sheep and lost silver, of new patches on old garments and new wine in old bottles, of foolish boys who left home puffed up with pride, and came back hungry and humble, disenchanted and poverty stricken.

His illustrations came directly to the hearts of men. He spake as never men spake and when we are able to get down from the stilts of our learned conceit and "condescend to men of low estate," we shall find that men will hear the gospel now as they heard it then, if we will preach it as it was then preached, and preach it to the heart.

It is an "evil heart of unbelief" which leads men to depart from the living God. It is "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and if we are to win men to the Lord we must fire low and win their hearts as well as their heads, their human sympathies as well as their intellectual convictions.—Sel.