

SIXPENCE EACH.

A CURIOUS circumstance occurred in a church near Shrewsbury, England. The clergyman had just given out among other announcements, that in the afternoon a baptismal service would be held, and that parents desiring to have their children baptized must bring them to church before 3 p.m.; when the parish clerk, who is a little deaf, convulsed the congregation by solemnly adding, that those who had not got them could be supplied with them in the vestry after the service, at sixpence each. It transpired that the clerk thought the clergyman had announced that he intended to adopt a new hymn book at the Easter services. Hence the grotesque blunder.

STORIES OF HOME.

AN earnest Christian mother used to teach her children, "As long as you pray, you need never beg."

It was said to a little orphan child, "What do you do now your mother is gone?" "I go to the Lord Jesus," was the answer. "He was my mother's friend, and He's mine."

A mother was once shedding the bitter tears of widowhood with her little boy in the room. He seemed to understand the cause of his mother's grief; and coming up to her, he put his arms round her neck, and said, "You have got me, mother," and it comforted her heart.

The Rev. John Newton tells of a mother of eleven pious children, being asked how she came to be so blessed, said, "I never took one into my arms, to give it nourishment, that I did not pray that I might never nurse a child for the devil."

A bereaved husband, after sixty years of married life, had a plain marble stone erected, with this inscription, "She always made home happy."

A young man fell into depths of grossest sin; "but oh!" said he, "I was never happy, for, wherever I went, whichever way I turned, an angel met me in the way. That angel was the image of my Christian home, and it reminded me of my mother's prayers, my father's council, my sister's love, my happy boyhood. I could not get away from it." And at last it brought the wanderer back.

THOUGHTS OF MANY HEARTS.

SOME men never have a trouble about duty in their lives, because they have practically no conscience about it.

As yet, the disciples are commonly men of only a little faith, and it is with them according to their faith. They too often make a merit of having no merit, and think it even a part of Christian modesty to believe that Christ will do for them only according to what they miss, or really do not undertake for themselves.

What is wanted for the felicity of man is clearly not a change of place or condition, but a change in that which makes both place and condition what they are. The bad spirit, this is the woe; and nothing cures the woe but that which changes the spirit of the mind.

It has pleased God that divine truths should not enter the heart through the understanding, but the understanding through the heart. For human things must be known to be loved, but divine things must be loved to be known.

Religion and science have both their rights, but each within its own domain. A recognition of the boundary line between their respective provinces, is the way to maintain peace.

As the strength of men's bodies, joined to one purpose, removeth that which, one by one, they could not do; so united devotions prevail with God to such effect, as severally they cannot bring to pass.

Such, indeed, is the force of truth, that frequently she makes her opponents speak in her words, undesignedly indeed and unconsciously; and error is often as contradictory to itself as to truth.

As the purity of the doctrine increases, the difficulty of its acceptance increases also.

It is evident to reason that God is infinitely wise, and therefore cannot be deceived; whence necessarily it followeth that He knoweth, and can tell us the truth. Again it is evident that God is most just and true, and therefore will not deceive us, but tell us the truth if He profess so.

The hardest point in all our work is to be weaned from the world, and in love with heaven; and if you will not be weaned from it, that have nothing in it but labour and sorrow, you have no excuse. The poor cannot have while, and the rich will not have while, or they are ashamed to be so forward, the young think it too soon and the old too late: and thus most men, instead of being saved, have somewhat to say against their salvation.

The Bible is authoritative, for it is the voice of God: it is intelligible, for it is the language of man.

If so much care and labour are spent on gaining a little additional length of life, how ought we to strive after life eternal? And if they are thought wise who endeavour in every way to put off death, though they can live but a few days longer, how foolish are they who so live, as to lose the eternal day?

God forbid you should be so mad as to say, I am now too old to learn. Except you be too old to serve God and be saved, how can you be too old to learn to be saved? Why not rather, I am too old to serve the devil and the world? I have tried them too long to trust them any more. What if your parents had not taught you any trade to live by? or what if they had never taught you to speak? Would not you have set yourselves to learn when you had come to age? Remember that you have souls to care for, as well as your children: and therefore first begin with your selves.

Our thoughts are with God, as Noah's dove was in the ark: kept up to him a little against their inclinations and desires. But when once they can break away, they fly up and down over all the world, to see if it were possible to find any rest out of God.

We may reconcile ourselves to the world at our peril; but it will never reconcile itself to us.

They that wear soft clothing were wont to dwell in the houses of kings, Matt. xi. 8, but now they dwell in the houses of most citizens, tradesmen, husbandmen, yeas of ministers themselves: wives, children, and servants are commonly sick at once of this disease. And though it be one of the lowest and foolishlest of games, which pride hath to play, yet women and children and light-headed youths, do make up the greater number for this vanity, wiser sort doth turn itself to greater things.

"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES."

It is the Lord's command. And He can claim obedience, not only because He is God, but because He has gone before us, and has shown us the way to do what He enjoins. Nay more, He will give us, if we ask it, a patient loving spirit that will copy His example. He who taught St. Stephen can teach us, and give us a heart like His own.

Pray for your enemies. It is the best way to conquer them. St. Stephen falls before his foes. But they only kill, and they only kill the body—a poor triumph in both respects. He saves them by his prayer; and he saves their souls: one at least is conquered, if no more. It is greater far to save than to destroy. And the victory is greater, if we compare the killing of the body with the saving of the soul.

A noble triumph indeed! Thus did the Lord Jesus "enter into His glory." Thus did St. Stephen win his crown! Go and do thou likewise.

KEEP AHEAD.

ONE of the great secrets of success in life is to keep ahead in all ways possible. If you once fall behind, it may be very difficult to make up the headway which is lost. One who begins with putting aside some part of his earnings, however small, and keeps it up for a number of years, is likely to become rich before he dies. One who inherits property, and goes on, year by year, spending a little more than his income, will become poor if he lives long enough. Living beyond their means has brought multitudes of persons to ruin in our generation. It is the cause of nine-tenths of the defalcations which have disgraced the age. Bankers and business men in general do not often help themselves to other people's money until their own funds begin to fall off, and their expenditure exceed their receipts. A man who is in debt walks in the midst of perils. It cannot but impair a man's self-respect to know that he is living at the expense of others. It is also very desirable that we should keep somewhat ahead in our work. This may not be possible in all cases; as, for instance, when a man's work is assigned to certain fixed hours, like that of the operative in a mill. But there are certain classes of people who can choose their time for the work which they are called to do, and amongst them, there are some who invariably put off the task assigned them as long as possible, and then come to its performance hurried, perplexed, anxious, confused—in such a state of mind as certainly unfits them for doing their best work. Get ahead, and keep ahead, and your success is tolerably sure.

It is said of the celebrated John Howard, that once, when he had cast up his accounts at the end of the year, and found he had more than he thought, he said to his wife, "My dear, I will treat you with a journey to London." She smiled and said, "My dear, the money would build a pretty cottage for a poor person." The hint was received and acted upon accordingly.

PLEAD YOUR BAPTISM.

"WHATSOEVER is not of faith is sin," Romans xiv. 23; and rather than treat one of Christ's holy sacraments as a mere act of ecclesiastical registration, let us altogether postpone it till our riper years. Well, then, if any one doubts God's mercy towards him, or towards one he loves, let such a one, with all reverence, but with all simplicity and earnestness, plead this baptism with God. Let him say, "Lord, Thou hast begun the work, will not Thou finish it? Thou didst look on me in favour, when I could not with my own lips pray to Thee. Now that I ask of Thee Thy favour for myself, wilt Thou send me empty away? If I do not deserve Thy mercy now, I did not deserve it then. Hast Thou kindled hopes only to disappoint them? Hast Thou taught me to call Thee Father, only to refuse to own me as a child? I ask for Thy love and Thy grace, that I may walk humbly with Thee as a son with a parent. Not because I have a right to it, but because Thou hast promised it to them that ask it. Give me Thy free, Thy full salvation."

MINISTRY AND MINISTERS.

WE do not humble ourselves by disparaging our ministry, nor exalt ourselves by magnifying it. If it be true that the Fathers of our Church believed themselves to be ordained in an unbroken line of succession from the Apostles themselves; can we doubt that they felt their inferiority to their great forerunners, for the same reason for which the Jews wept over the building of the second Temple? If it be true that they believed the Sacraments to be means of grace ordained by Christ Himself; can we doubt that they felt their own unfitness to minister such holy mysteries ordained for the strengthening and refreshing of mankind?

It is surely a false humility to lower our opinion of such truths as these, lest we should seem to take too much upon ourselves. . . . The highest view of every ordinance of God is the surest argument for our own self-abasement.

This, then, is the summary of our practical duty: to glorify God in His Son, in His Church, and in His Sacraments; and, as we exalt these things which are Divine, to learn, in the like proportion, to abase ourselves.

PEACE LIKE A RIVER.

Thus said the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.—Isaiah xlviii. 17, 18, 22.

ONE summer evening late, a lady was crossing a bridge over a river near her home, and observing a man leaning over the side, and looking upon the stream, it occurred to her that he might be meditating self-destruction. As she passed he turned and addressed her in a peculiar and hurried manner, saying some such words as "Fine night, beautiful river."

"Yes," she replied, "but I have just been thinking of that river, the streams of which make glad the City of our God,—the River of Peace."

"Peace," said the man; "What is peace?" "Peace," she answered, "is to be had with God through Jesus Christ; and if you do not know what it is, go home and seek it upon your knees."

On reaching her home the lady told her husband what had occurred. "I hope," said he, "you gave him in charge of the police."

"Yes, in charge of Heaven's police have I put him," was her happy reply.

Years passed away, and it chanced that this lady found herself in a crowded assembly in London, when she was accosted by a man who thus addressed her,—"You do not know me, madam, but 'there is a River, the streams of which make glad the City of God.' You remember," he went on, "that summer evening when you spoke to a man on the bridge at—? I was that man. You spoke to me of peace. You bade me go home and seek it on my knees; I did as you said; and you have been the means of saving me not only from suicide, but from the wretchedness of a life without God."

She had called his thoughts by that word of Scripture from that river wherein he had been contemplating to end his miseries, to another river of peace and joy, a river in whose calm waters his spirit would find true consolation, and on whose bright bosom he could be borne, not to death, but to life eternal. The River of God is full of water. Oh that every soul who has found the bitterness of earthly streams would come and drink!