

He laid down his penny accordingly, received one of the coins, and went on his way. He could not put it inside his bundle very well, and he had a hole in his pocket, so he was obliged to keep it in his hand. As he passed on into Gracechurch Street, under the window of the large jeweller's shop a crowd which had gathered round a fallen horse, forced him into the doorway, and he took the opportunity of examining his purchase again.

"Well, it is uncommon like, that I must say," he exclaimed. "I haven't fingered too many of these, to be sure; but all I have seen are alike this as one pea is to another. There can't be any chance of its being a real one, I suppose, that would be too good a joke; and yet there is no harm in asking, and this chap will tell me what it is in a minute."

He stepped up to the jeweller's counter accordingly, and, laying his coin on it, inquired of the man "what that might be." "That?" said the jeweller, taking it carelessly up and weighing it on his finger, "why, what should it be, my good man, but a sovereign?"

"A sovereign, a real sovereign!" exclaimed the other; "you don't mean it, to be sure. Just look again, sir, if you please, and make certain."

"There's no need to look again," said the shopman rather sharply; "I should know gold by this time when I see it. It's as good a sovereign as ever came from the Mint, and is quite new into the bargain. I'll give you twenty shillings for it, if you want to change it."

The journeyman stared once more in the jeweller's face, and then turning short round, he made for the door, elbowing his way without ceremony through the crowd outside, and paying no heed to the angry remonstrances addressed to him on all sides. Two or three minutes sufficed to clear his way through the crowd gathered in Gracechurch Street; and then turning down one of the narrow alleys which in those days intervened between the broad thoroughfare and the river, he hurried on with all the speed he could command. Presently he emerged near the entrance to the bridge, and, still fighting his way vigorously, reached the embrasure where he had left the dealer in sovereigns. Alas, he was gone, and his place was occupied by a vendor of gingerbread nuts, who was commending his articles with an earnestness which far exceeded that of his predecessor.

"Where is the man who was selling the sovereigns?" exclaimed the journeyman breathlessly.

"Man with the sovereigns!" repeated the person addressed. "I don't know of any such. There was a chap here with a tray about five minutes ago, just as I come up, but he shut up business and walked off with his friend just as twelve o'clock struck."

Not improbably the reader has heard the explanation of this strange occurrence already—how two fashionable loungers at the West End had made a wager as to what would be the consequence if one hundred sovereigns were offered for sale, at one penny apiece, for an hour on London Bridge, during the most busy period of the day. The one party had contended that they would all be bought up the moment they were exposed to view, the other that the public would totally disregard them. The experiment was tried, and with the result which has been related: of the hundred sovereigns only one was sold, and that to a man who had no belief in the value of his purchase.

It may seem strange to us that men should have shown so little discernment. Yet what is it but the very same thing that is going on every day on the bridge which leads from this world to the next? The servant of his Lord stands by the wayside and offers to all the pure gold of everlasting life in his Master's name, and bids them buy it without money and without price. But they pass by it and heed it not, thinking that that which is so freely offered must needs be worthless. Few or none make purchase of it; and they only find out its true value when it comes to be tested by use. Here also the precious prize is offered only during the brief hour of human life. The angel witnesses stand by and mark the throng as it heedlessly passes by, and when the hour is ended the offer is withdrawn. Vain will it be then to strive and haste to redeem the past. There is no repentance in the grave.—*Sunday at Home.*

CHRISTINE'S SUPPER.—A TRUE STORY.

BY M. E. WINSLOW.

"You don't read the Bible as we do in my country," said our Swedish nurse. "You are all so busy, and you have so many other things. In Sweden we are poor and have so little; but we all have our Bibles, and we take so much comfort reading in them every morning and evening. I remember—"

"Oh, do tell us a story about your own home, Christine; the baby's asleep, there's a whole hour before dinner time, and it's too dark to do anything else. I love to hear about Sweden and its roaring pines and frozen waterfalls, and Odin and Thor and Loke."

"Hush, child, we don't speak of those things now; the old, bad days have passed away, the good God reigns in Sweden and his children do not talk about the idols. I can't tell you about those names you read of in your books, but I can tell you how faithful the dear Heavenly Father has been to me and mine and how well he has fulfilled the promise of his Book: 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'"

"Tell us what you like, Christine, only let us have a story here (in the gloaming) by the light of the nursery fire."

"I was going to say I remembered sitting in my little cottage in Sweden one winter afternoon trying to read my Bible chapter by the fading light and to hush my baby, who wailed pitifully at the same time. I had been reading: 'I have been young and now am old, yet never saw I the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread; and I thought, my fathers were righteous if I am not, and yet I seem to be forsaken, and if there is ever any bread again for me and my little ones I must beg for it, for all the store of money and food which my husband had left me when he went away to look for work in the autumn, was gone, and I could get no work to do—for Swedish people do not have washing done in the winter time—and all the ladies for whom I might have done sewing had gone away to the city; besides my baby was ailing and fretful, as he might be, poor darling, when I had so little nourishment for him, and I could not have left him and my other little boy even for a day. It was only February now and my husband could not come back before April; it was two months since I had heard from him and a longer time than that since he had sent me anything, and I did not see what I and my children could do but starve. But I read on, as long as the gathering darkness would let me see, and the sweet words comforted me, though I scarcely acknowledged it to myself. I read: 'He hath said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' and 'Trust in the Lord and verily thou shalt be fed,' and the words comforted me and I tried to trust, but I couldn't help the tears running down my cheeks, I was so faint, you know, for I had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours."

"Presently I felt a little soft touch on my hand, and my little boy's voice said: 'Mamma, what makes you cry?' 'I'm so hungry,' I said; 'and I haven't anything to cook for supper.' 'Oh, I'll cook your supper!' said the little fellow; 'there's potatoes over there!' and he went into a dark corner of the room and dug up from the loose earth of the floor three little potatoes that I had quite overlooked."

"Now I am going to cook them," said my boy, putting them on the stove, while I brightened up the fire—for I had plenty of brushwood which my husband had gathered—and swept up the room, for I don't think people need be untidy, no matter how poor they are."

"Then I sat down and sang my baby to sleep in front of the blaze, and felt thankful for the shelter and warmth while the north wind was howling among the pines, and the snow whirled along like spectres."

"Suddenly there was a knock at the door, and my boy, who was happy and interested in his cookery, started, looked frightened, and said something about a troll, for you know trolls are the wicked spirits with which foolish people frighten bad children in Sweden. But I bade him go to the door, and when he opened it, in rushed what looked more like a snow-drift than what it really was,—an old beggar woman with a monstrous bag on her back. We all knew the old woman, for she lived in that neighborhood, and supported herself by

begging, making, some said, a very good thing of it.

"Let me in, Christine," she said, "I'm perishing with cold; your room is warm and cheery and your supper smells so nice."

"I have no supper," I said, "except three small potatoes that my boy there has found; but you shall have one if you are as hungry as we are; we have eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. But we have fire and you are welcome to stay all night and enjoy that."

"So the old woman stretched herself out on the settle and stayed all night. She would not take the potato, and before she went away she opened her bag and took out bread and gave me more than eight pounds Swedish, I think. It was well baked and dry, and it lasted till the fearful cold spell was over and till I could get some work, and till the children's father came home with money enough to make us all comfortable. As soon as she was gone and it was light enough to see, I opened my Bible again and read: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord for . . . He hath filled the hungry with good things,' and I said, 'I will bless the Lord at all times; they that seek Him shall not want any good thing.'"

"But I should not think you would like to eat bread so old and stale," said one of us.

"Ah, yes, we always eat it that way in Sweden, it lasts longer, and my people are very poor. We haven't much, no handsome furniture, not many good clothes, no dainty food to eat and very little of what we do have. But we have our Bibles, and we love them better, I think, than you do in America."—*N. Y. Observer.*

THEATRE-GOING.

A very serious matter concerns the amusements of professing Christians. I see it publicly stated by men who call themselves Christians that it would be advisable for Christians to frequent the theatre, that the character of the drama might be raised. The suggestion is about as sensible as if we were bidden to pour a bottle of lavender water into the great sewer to improve its aroma. If the Church is to imitate the world in order to raise its tone, things have strangely altered since the day when our Lord said: "Come ye out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing." Is heaven to descend to the infernal lake to raise its tone? Such has been the moral condition of the theatre for many a year that it has become too bad for mending, and even if it were mended it would corrupt again. Pass by it with averted gaze; the house of the strange woman is there. It has not been my lot ever to enter a theatre during the performance of a play, but I have seen enough when I have come home from distant journeys at night while riding past the play-houses, to make me pray that our sons and daughters may never go within the doors. It must be a strange school for virtue which attracts the harlot and the debauchee. It is no place for a Christian, for it is best appreciated by the irreligious and worldly. If our church members fall into the habit of frequenting the theatre, we shall soon have them going much further in the direction of vice, and they will lose all relish for the ways of God. Theatre-going, if it become general among professing Christians, will soon prove the death of piety.—*Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.*

I AM SORRY.

These words are easily spoken, teach your children to speak them. Teach them to say so, whenever they have done wrong, the habit is a good one. Here, for instance, a woman is knocked down in the street by careless driving, and two wheels of a waggon pass over her back. The waggon carries two women and a boy some ten or twelve years old. The woman is not seriously injured, but the nerves and muscles of her back are lame for a while, and then she walks again. But when she becomes an old lady, the weakened body gives out partially, and her physical powers become less. She says it would have been a comfort to her through all these years, if those women had stopped and said "Oh, I'm sorry! What can we do for you now to comfort you?" Instead of that they whipped up the horse, and were soon out of sight. So far as is known these women do not know but the person knock-

ed down and run over was killed. It would seem as if they would have been more comfortable all these years if they had stopped and said, "I'm sorry."

Yes, teach your children first to feel sorry, and then to say so. The conscience should be educated, and feeling a wrong done to another person, and expressing sorrow for it, helps us to realize our sins and our wrong doings towards our Lord, and makes it easier to say so to Him. It is important to confess our faults one to another, and it is imperative that we humble ourselves before God, and become reconciled to Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our eternity depends upon this, and present time is all we are sure of for doing this great work. Do it now.—*Hans Dorcomb, in The Household.*

PRAYER.

I should like to say a few words to you, dear children, on the subject of prayer. What is prayer? A little girl was once asked this question, and her answer was, "Asking God for what you want." That is it exactly; simply asking your Heavenly Father for what you want, just as you would any earthly parent.

But there are four conditions which God says we must fulfil if we want our prayers answered. The first is in John xiv. 14: "If ye shall ask anything in My Name I will do it." That means that God our Father will give us anything we want if we ask in the name of his Son Jesus Christ; that is why we end all our prayers with the words "for Jesus Christ's sake."

The second is to be found in Matthew xxi. 22: "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." When we pray we must believe that God will answer us, that He has already sent an answer, and not be surprised when it comes and say, "Oh, I did not expect this."

The third condition is, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7).

We must belong to Christ, and be his alone.

Then, lastly, "If we ask anything according to his will, He heareth us." Everything we ask will be given us in accordance with the mind and will of God. Do, then, let us be encouraged to ask for more than we have hitherto done. The Lord likes us to ask Him for what we want. He said once to his disciples, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." If your prayer is not at first answered, persevere. Go on praying. If it is offered in the name of Jesus, if you ask believing you will receive, if you abide in Him, and if you ask in accordance with his most holy will it must be answered.—*The Christian.*

A HOLY life is a voice; it speaks when the tongue is silent, and is either a constant attraction or a perpetual reproof.

Question Corner.—No. 9.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. Where and by whom was an altar erected to the Unknown God?
2. Where did Paul find persons who worked at the same trade as himself, and who were the persons?
3. Where do we find the parable of the Ten Virgins?
4. Where did Christ turn the water into wine; and have we any record of a miracle performed by him previous to this?
5. What is the meaning of "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," and to whom were the words addressed?
6. Of whom was it said that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 7

1. Adonizedek, Josh. 10: 1.
  2. In Joel 3: 8.
  3. 2 Kings 12: 9.
- THE LOVELIER "NINE"—Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. (Gal. 5: 22, 23) Three Graces: Faith, Hope, Charity. (1 Chron. 13: 18.)

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

Correct answers have been sent by Mary E. Moore, Albert Jesse French, Crynthia Bolton and Blackwood Graham.