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THE LAST TIMES.

BY THE REV. J. C. K. MILLIGAN, NEW YORK.

The Bible commends the study of its prophetic revelations and the watchful observance of the providential events that prepare the way for their fulfillment. The children of Issachar are praised because they "had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." Christ rebuked others: "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" In the Revelation Jesus declares: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein for the time is at hand." Paul says "that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" to the men of the world who ignorantly disregard the signs of its coming: "but ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." Let us watch and be sober as the children of light; for Jesus said to his disciples: "I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." His revelations in regard to the last times are especially full and clear in Ezekiel chapters xxxvi and xxxvii; Matt. xxiv; Luke xxi; Rom. xi; 2 Thess. i and ii; 2 Tim. iii. These Scriptures should be carefully read by every observer of the times. They contain among other minor signs, those chief indications of the near approach of the end:

I. *The universal spread of the Gospel*, Matt. xxiv 14. The Gospel is even now within the reach of most of the inhabitants of the earth.

II. *Alarming portents*, Luke xxi 25-28; Joel ii 30, 31. This year 1881 has been a remarkable year in some of these respects. The *New York Tribune* calls it "a most phenomenal year." It mentions the earthquakes at Chios and elsewhere, comets, the singular atmospheric demonstrations in New England, the remarkable and infrequent mirage seen off the Jersey coast, and the intense heat and extensive and extended drought in this country. It adds: "It has been marked equally by destructive floods, winds and fires in every part of the globe, resulting in the loss of many lives and waste of much property. Even the crimes of the year have been startling in their number and character, ranging from the assassination of two rulers to the detection of a fifteen or twenty times bigamist." The agony of prayer which for eighty days was offered up in vain for the life of President Garfield, and the universal mourning and grief for his timely end; the state of Russia horrified at the murder of the Czar, and the constant dread of death which haunts his son; England with Irish, Afghanistan, and South African troubles, are certainly not small beginnings of "distress of nations with perplexity." But

everywhere there is unrest and gloomy forebodings, wars, revolutions, and sorrows seem imminent.

III. *The conversion and restoration of the Jews to their own land.* Their conversion is generally admitted; Rom. xi clearly teaches it. Their restoration is largely denied; but Ezekiel's prophecy confessedly relates to New Testament times is still unfulfilled, and ch. xxxvii 22, can hardly be explained otherwise than as it literally reads. That it is not to have a spiritual fulfillment alone, but a literal one also, is indicated by three manifest signs: 1st. The increased interest of leading Jews in the land of their fathers. 2d. The Turkish Government has given to the Rothschilds a mortgage on the whole of Palestine for money which would be given to it on no other terms, and which it can never pay. A foreclosure will soon vest the title in that princely Jewish family. 3rd. The Egyptian persecutions which forced the first Exodus into Canaan are being re-enacted in all the places where the large bodies of this scattered people are to be found, viz., in Germany, Russia, and the parts of European Turkey which have lately gained their independence.

IV. *Prevalent moral and spiritual declension.* Matt. xxiv 10-12, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." 2 Tim. iii 1-6, "In the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." A leading secular journal editorially says of the situation in Russia: "The priests are aloof from all classes, and instead of being a spiritual support of any, are the agents of greed, ignorance, and oppression. No man trusts his brother—the whole air is electric with secrecy, suspicion, and treachery." How applicable is this to the state of almost all Christendom, the frequent utterances of the Press and the Pulpit, and the language of Christendom generally will testify.

V. *Prophetic numbers* indicate that the time of the end is near at hand. The Prophet Daniel gave numbers in reference to the year of the birth and the year of the death of the Messiah, which are everywhere interpreted on "the year-day theory," and accepted as historically true and exactly verified in Jesus Christ. In the same connection Daniel gave other numbers relating to the sorrows of Israel and the destruction of the great world-powers marshalled against the Messiah. It is fair to assume that these are to be interpreted in the same way, and that they will be as exactly fulfilled. In Dan. vii, 25 having described the fourth beast, its ten horns, and another horn that shall "speak great words against the most High," the limit of his power is declared to be "a time and times and the dividing of time," three and a half years, or 1,278 days, which are prophetically as many years. To this exactly answers John's period, Rev. xii 14, in which "to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness," which is the same beastly power fully described in Revelation, chaps. xiii and xvii. As this is the Roman power which arose about A. D. 606 in a great Church-State form, a dragonic despotism, a synagogue of Satan, the anti-Christian complex system, its end will be in A. D. 606 + 1278, or in 1884. Another number is given in Dan. viii 14. It relates to the he goat with one notable horn—the Grecian power which was exalted in Alex-

ander the Great, and is still perpetuated in the Turkish Empire that swallowed up Greece and all its grand conquests. Its limit of duration—the time when it shall cease to “give both the sanctuary and the host (Jerusalem and the Jewish State) to be trodden under foot, and the sanctuary shall be cleansed,” is 2,300 prophetic days or years. The rise of this Macedonian Greek power is obscure; but a Macedonian coin has been discovered that bears a date answering to 416 before Christ, which is not far from its true beginning. Assuming this as the date, the 2,300 years will expire in 1884. If, as some do, we apply the 1,260 days of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth to the oppressions of the Mohammedan Anti-Christ, and date that power from A. D. 622, the Year of the Hegira, the Era of Mohammed the false prophet, it will end in 1882, a thing not unlikely in the present condition of Turkey and of Egypt its strongest portion, and it can hardly endure beyond 1884. If we date it from the destruction of Jerusalem and the erection of the Mosque of Omar upon the Temple site in A. D. 637, thereby profaning the sanctuary and the holy place, it will only extend the time to 1897; but 1884 is more likely.

Surely the Redeemer is saying to us now: “Behold I come quickly.” He comes to make an end of Mohammedanism, Romanism, corrupt Sectaries, all Erastian Church and State systems, all Christless Governments and all the men who have on their foreheads and right hands the marks of allegiance to these unholy powers. He comes to destroy Satan, reform the world, and exalt His saints to supreme government and universal dominion. Before His coming a herald proclaims, “Come out of her my people; partake not of her sins, lest ye partake of her plagues;” and having fully warned all concerned, He will spare only “the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations done in the land,” and who have “dwelt alone and not been reckoned among the nations.” These will be marked with grace by the man with a writer’s inkhorn, and will mark themselves by “not forsaking the assembling of themselves together,” and by “coming out of and being separate from” all the corrupt associations of men. The great masses, seduced by Satan who “is come down, having great wrath knowing that he hath but a short time,” and forsaken by the Spirit whom they have resisted, grieved, and quenched, develop rapidly the wickedness which will upheave society, and by its terrible enormity will justify, even in man’s sight, the awful vials of wrath with which Jesus shall avenge the blood of His saints, and vindicate His covenant.

“The just shall joy where vengeance sweeps,
And wash in impious gore their feet;
And men shall cry, Yes, well he reaps,
Yes, God has still a judgment seat.”

—Selected.

Christian graces are like perfumes—the more they are pressed, the sweeter they smell; like stars, that shine brightest in the dark; like trees, the more they are shaken, the deeper root they take, and the more fruit they bear.

THE INCOMPARABLE EXCELLENCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS.

[FROM DR. CARSON'S "KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS, THE MOST EXCELLENT OF THE SCIENCES."]

Knowledge in itself is good: it is only the abuse of it, or still more frequently the affectation of it in ignorance, that produces evil. The knowledge of the nature and properties of God's works cannot in itself be injurious. To suppose that it is, is a libel on God. But an affectation of knowledge, when there is ignorance is a thing most pernicious. And a great proportion of what is called science, is nothing but ignorance under the cloak of knowledge. Of this character is every part of modern science that pretends to contradict the Scriptures, or to modify their doctrines. Geological inferences and metaphysical doctrines, when they presume to dictate to the truths of inspiration, are worthy of no more respect than a madman's dream. As they are not the necessary result of necessary truth, they are not entitled to be heard in evidence. Their knowledge of the subject does not extend to the points in question. What metaphysics legitimately says, she says with the authority of an oracle. But when she speaks what she is not commissioned, she is entitled to no credit. Let Christians beware of mixing human science with the doctrines of the Divine word, and of regulating systems of theology by the authority of the schools of philosophy. This has always been a fruitful source of the corruptions of Christianity. Theologians affect wisdom and accommodate the doctrines of Scripture to the reigning system of philosophy. The pulpit becomes a mere fogleman to the chair of metaphysics. The very phraseology of science is transferred to theology, and every doctrine is tinged with its spirit. Against this I remonstrate. This I denounce as treason against God.

Science, advance! The gospel fears you not. As far as you are worthy of your name, you are delightful and useful to man. Geology, keep thy province, and thou mayest be useful. Go down, then, to the bowels of the earth, and bring up thy treasures. We defy thee to bring a witness that in his own language will testify against Moses. Such a witness, you say, alleges that the world must be millions of years older than what Moses makes it. False knave, the witness says no such thing. This is your unauthorised inference from his testimony. For any thing that the witness says, the world might have been made yesterday. Could not Almighty power give it all its present appearance even in its creation? Analogy cannot be received in proof against legitimate testimony. Look at that gourd of Jonah. You exclaim, it is several months old. False; it grew up last night. Look at that tree in paradise. You say it must have looked at the sun for half a century. False again. It is fresh from the hands of its Creator. Go on, then, geology, go on with your discoveries. We will thank you for your facts; we will trample on your arbitrary inferences.

Astronomy, thou art a noble branch of science! How transportingly delightful must it be with thee to roam through the immensity of space, and view the wonders that thou hast discovered in the heavens! Go on

with thy discoveries. Every new world that is pointed out to us is an additional inheritance. All worlds are Christ's worlds; and Christ's worlds are our worlds. We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

Metaphysics, thou art the noblest of human sciences! God and the human mind are the subjects of thy study. But thou hast been unfaithful. Thou hast grossly misrepresented both God and man. No longer dare to impose thy rash conclusions as the dictates of an oracle; nor to modify the doctrines of Scripture with thy dogmatism. Thou knowest something, and that something we will take on thy authority. But of the deep counsels of God, thou art as ignorant as was the ass of Balaam.

Noble, noble are all the sciences, so far as they are truly science; but more noble, infinitely more noble, is the science of God, the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If it is important and glorious to be acquainted with the works of God, it must be much more so to be acquainted with God himself. What science, then can in dignity compare with the science that treats of the glorious Creator of the Universe? But the science of God, as he is manifested in the gospel, manifests the Creator in the still more wonderful character of Redeemer. In the salvation of his people, it exhibits all the attributes of Godhead operating in harmony. As a mere matter of science, this exceeds all sciences. It is overwhelmingly wonderful in wisdom. What, then, is the reason that philosophers exclude it from science? What is the reason that they are not transported with its wisdom? What is the reason that they are not continually proclaiming its praise? What is the reason that they are more unacquainted with it than are the most illiterate of the people? What is the reason that in all their wisdom, they do not understand this wisdom of God? It is a doctrine too humbling for their pride. The god of this world blinds their mind. They hate the truth, because it is not the wisdom of this world. They cannot admit that man is so degraded and helpless as this gospel teaches, and therefore they cannot admit the character of God that makes such a plan of salvation necessary. To show His divine power, Jesus occasionally calls some of the wise men of this world to the knowledge of himself, but the bulk of them in all ages seem to be left to perish in their wisdom. It is astonishing what a hatred the wisdom of this world bears to the gospel plan of salvation. The cool metaphysician, whose wrath the most extravagant fanaticism, or the grossest superstition, cannot excite, will grind his teeth when he speaks of the disciples of Christ. Of all the persecutors of the Christians, none were so bitter as the amiable philosopher, Antoninus.

The science of God, as He is manifested in Jesus Christ, is important above all sciences, in that it gives spiritaal life to those who are dead in sin, converts the soul from the love of sin to the love of God, and of His law. What other science can boast such an effect? Cultivation of mind by attention to the sciences, it is admitted, has an effect in giving a taste for nobler objects. But the knowledge of all the sciences, in the most perfect degree, will not have the smallest influence in changing the heart, or producing the love of God. The knowledge of Jesus delivers from the bondage of Satan, and makes the captives free. All men, wise and unwise, are by nature the slaves of Satan. Nothing but the knowledge of the gospel will free them from this state of bondage. "Ye shall know the truth," says Jesus, "and the truth shall make you free."

This science is excellent above all sciences, in that it delivers from that eternal misery which is the doom of all who are unacquainted with it. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, we are told that it will be to take "vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." What a terrible destruction is this! How excellent is that knowledge which delivers from such misery! The wise men of the world, instead of being delivered by their wisdom, will be condemned with an aggravated condemnation. The many talents which they received from the Lord they have used not in his service, but against him.

This science is the most excellent of the sciences, in that it frees the guilty not only from punishment but from guilt; and exalts the vilest of sinners above the highest archangels, without the smallest appearance of caprice. According to this science, when Christ's people are over all creation, they are only in a suitable rank. This, then, must be the most excellent, and the most wonderful of sciences. Even for this world, this science is the most excellent of the sciences, in that, as far as it prevails, it produces peace and happiness. The wisdom of this world, in legislators, philosophers, and philanthropists, has always been searching for plans to lessen human misery, reform from crime, and promote peace. But their efforts have in all ages been vain. The knowledge of the Lord would produce the effects which they foolishly expect from their own plans. When the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, peace and plenty will succeed to poverty and disorder. If statesmen were not blind, they might see that the disciples of the Lord Jesus are in countries the best subjects.

This science is the most excellent of all sciences, in that it introduces us to the immediate and intimate society, friendship, and familiarity with God. It connects us with him in a union which belongs to no other being in heaven or earth. By it he becomes our Father, and we become his children. It makes Jesus our brother, our husband, and the head of the body of which we are members. It makes us one with Him who is one with God. We have access at all times to his presence, and are permitted to ask of him whatever we need. The poorest Christian can look at the heavens and the earth and in Christ Jesus say, all these are mine. Paul declares that "having nothing, he possessed all things." No wonder, then, that he so highly prized the knowledge by which such possessions were bestowed on him. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of which is of God by faith." Philip iii. 7-9. Paul prayed for the Ephesian Christians, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and what is

the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Which he wrought in Christ, whom he raised from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body the fulness of him who filleth all in all." Eph. i. 17-23. Here we see that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation is given in the knowledge of Christ. It is in him that the eyes of the understanding are enlightened to perceive the true extent of the Christian's hope. In no other light can they have a view of that glorious destiny that awaits the heirs of glory. In their union with Christ, they have elevation above all creation. The eyes of the wise men of this world are not enlightened to understand this. They have no hope of such a glorious inheritance. They are contented with the rank which they enjoy upon earth, and would think it insanity to expect to be raised above angels.

TESTING QUESTIONS.

HAVE I MORE PLEASURE

- In studying my Bible, than in a novel or a newspaper?
- In contemplating the righteousness of Jesus than mine own?
- In the prayer-meeting, than in the pleasure-party?
- In mortifying sin, than in indulging it?
- In clothing the naked, than in adorning my person?
- In feeding the hungry, than in gratifying my appetite?
- In doing good, than in paying trifling visits?
- In speaking a word for Christ than in gossiping?
- In praying for an erring friend, than exposing him?
- In the company of the pious, than of the worldly?
- In seeking to save souls, than in saving money?
- In living humbly, than at the expense of others?
- In the approbation of God, than of my fellow-men?

Reader, if thou can'st not answer these inquiries intelligently in the affirmative, why deceive thyself any longer with the idea that thou art "in CHRIST," or in the way to heaven? You may be professor of the gospel, but be assured you are not "born again." Ye *must* be BORN FROM ABOVE, John iii. 3, otherwise ye shall never go thither.

"Saith Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after ME, let him take up his cross and follow me."

"Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

As it sometimes rains when the sun shines; so there may be joy in a saint's heart when there are tears in his eyes.

SKIP THE HARD WORDS, PLEASE.

The prevalence of the vice of profanity in our country is really alarming. Ladies on public high ways and in public conveyances, are subjected to having their sensibilities shocked by it to an extent that is painful in the extreme.

In like manner, children and youths are made liable to having their souls scarred by oaths flying around them which are literally darts of the devil. Damage may often thus be done to the jewels of the homes of our country, compared to which the loss sustained by the parents of Charlie Ross will one day be seen to have been slight. A contagion may thus take effect which had better been small-pox or scarlatina! *Obsta principis.*

Remedy of this evil seems difficult. Application of the civil law, which in most States makes swearing a fineable offence, seems usually to be inadvisable. It is a good rule, however, that "nothing will be done unless somebody tries." The press, both secular and religious, should in the future, even more than in the past, call attention to this fact. Profanity is against the laws of the land, and against the laws of good society. Therefore those who find them practising it have cause to inquire if they can do so and yet consider themselves good citizens, or even entitled to be called gentlemen.

We know good men who have seen so much of the world that their ears have become dull to this horrible vice. Though disapproving it, they hardly notice it when only casually hearing it. To us, however, it is always and only a pain to which we are keenly alive. We have almost a sickening remembrance of hearing Turkish boatmen swearing at each other in English as their swift crafts passed each other, cutting the waters of the Bay of Alexandria.

A friend of ours once succeeded in so presenting this point of its being painful to him and to others to a stage passenger who had been torturing them by his profanity, that the offender offered a public and a hearty apology to all present.

We have often spoken kindly and in quiet tones to those who were swearing. Almost without exception, they have received the reproof in the same spirit in which it was given. The whispered words "Skip the hard words, please," coupled with a kindly, quiet glance of the eye, has almost always conquered. We have had this experience among rough men, and sometimes in wild, dangerous places. It has thus also been the entering wedge almost as often of a word or two of invitation to join us in the journey to the better land.

Among these cases of the latter kind which we have in mind was that of a stage-driver on the frontier. We sat beside him on his high seat. The twilight was rapidly deepening. Dark clouds, incessantly cut by vivid lightning, were rolling up, and peals of such magnificent thunder as is seldom heard except in the far West, were reverberating in air. The driver was a kind-hearted, sociable fellow, but there was an intensity and frequency of his utterance of oaths positively unique. We might say he had a genius of swearing, he was so enthusiastically profane. Our admiration of horses, especially of his splendid "four-in-hand," was

genuine and won the way to his heart. We finally asked him, in an easy, off-hand way, to please oblige us by skipping the hard words. He promptly both thanked us and made apology, cordially volunteering the admission that it was all wrong. He was then ready for talk about mother, home and heaven. He promised to use a Bible his mother had given him on leaving home, and to attend religious, instead of bar-room services; also to read any good papers we should send him. We took his address, and afterward mailed him reading matter which we hope has cultivated the good seed sown.

Another was in a crowded street-car in Philadelphia, en route to the great Centennial Exposition. The profanity of one of the passengers, who was considerably under the influence of liquor, was so terrible and wholesale as to cause expressions of pain on the faces of all ladies within earshot. Words of disapprobation were heard also from both ladies and gentlemen. Some of the latter said—*sotto voce*—"he ought to be put off the car." He looked, however, like a man to make violent work if that were attempted. Soon a companion of his expressed a wish, which we overheard, to know the time of day. We promptly consulted the watch, and gave the desired information. This opened the way for a pleasant word with both parties. Then, leaning over, we whispered in the ear of the troublesome one, to know if a favor might be asked without giving offence. That granted, the request was made to omit words that gave us pain. There was not another rough word from that man on the trip. He and his associate soon followed this act of politeness by giving their seats to ladies who had long been standing, and by their listening to suggestions of how we all may find "wisdom ways" of pleasantness.

The military orders of both Washington and Lincoln against the profanation of the day or name of the Most High, are well known. Also testimonials of many others of the great men of the world.

Mr. Nye of Maine assures us that he is coupling an anti-profanity pledge with his temperance work among children. He has thus led thirteen hundred of the lambs in the green pastures and beside the still waters of truth, on this great subject. No doubt, many a dear boy who has taken this pledge, finds it, as the years pass on, a barrier to bad beginnings of sad ends.—*Geo. May Powell in Christian Union.*

EXCITEMENT.

Rev. Dr. Arnot, having been charged with "excitement" when speaking on total abstinence, has replied:

"People need not tell me that I am excited on these questions. I know that I am. I should be ashamed before God and man if I were not. There is more in the public houses of Glasgow to stir the spirit of a minister than all that Paul saw at Athens. In my ministry, I meet the horrid fruits of these whiskey shops. I see men and women perishing in these pitfalls. The number of the victims is so great that it overwhelms me. My brain is burning, my heart is breaking. The church is asleep and the world too, and they are hugging each other. I am weary with holding in; I must cry. I would rather be counted singular in the judgment of men, than be unfaithful in the judgment of God."

“AND THEN?”

It is told of Filippo Neri, a good and pious man, whom the Church of Rome has enrolled in her calendar of saints, that whilst living at one of the Italian universities, a youth whom he had known as a boy accosted him, with a face full of delight, to tell him that what he had long been wishing above all things in the world he had at length attained—that his parents had given him leave to study the law, and that he had come to the university attracted by its fame as a school of law, and that he meant to spare no pains or labour in mastering his studies, and thoroughly accomplishing himself as a lawyer. In this way he ran on a long time; and when at last he came to a stop, the holy man, who had been listening to him with great patience and kindness, said—

“Well; and when you have got through your course of studies, what do you mean to do then?”

“Then I shall take my doctor’s degree,” answered the young man.

“And then?” asked Filippo Neri again.

“And then,” continued the youth, “I shall have a number of difficult and knotty cases to manage; shall catch peoples’s notice by my eloquence, my zeal, my learning, my acuteness, and gain a great reputation.”

“And then?” repeated the holy man.

“And then!” replied the youth; “why then, there cannot be a question, I shall be promoted to some high office or other; besides, I shall make money, and grow rich.”

“And then?” repeated Filippo.

“And then,” pursued the young lawyer,—“then I shall live comfortably and honourably, in health and dignity, and shall be able to look forward quietly to a happy old age.

“And then?” asked the holy man.

“And then,” said the youth—“and then—and then—then I shall die.”

Here Filippo lifted up his voice, and asked—

“And then?”

Whereupon the young man made no answer, but cast down his head and went away. This last “And then?” had pierced like a flash of lightning into his soul, and he could not get quit of it. It became the text of a long discourse, which he preached to himself till it was applied by a higher Teacher. His venerable instructor had to add no more; his question had landed his young hearer amidst the powers of the world to come. The anticipated glories of time shrunk in the comparison. The youth shortly afterwards forsook the study of law, and gave himself up to the ministry of Christ, and spent the remainder of his days in godly words and works.

The application of this story, when told by the late Archdeacon Hare, in one of his sermons, we must not withhold. “My brethren,” he says, “the question put to the young lawyer I would put to all of you. I would urge you to put it frequently to yourselves. When you have done all that you are doing, all that you aim at doing, all that you dream of doing—even supposing that all your dreams are accomplished, that every wish of your heart is fulfilled—still I would ask you what will you do, what will you be then? Whenever you cast your thoughts for-

ward, never let them stop short on this side of the grave. Let them not stop short at the grave itself; but when you have followed yourselves thither, and have seen yourselves laid therein, still ask yourselves the searching question, 'And then?'

May not this art of wise questioning be studied? The good soldier wields all sorts of weapons—carries all in his armoury, sharp polished ready for action. If he blunder in his first thrusts, and opens himself to assault rather than wounds his adversary, he acquires skill by practice, till he plants the stroke that asks no second. Even a simple, "And then?" winged with faith and love and prayer, and skilfully sent home, may prove an introduction to the great question, and carry a soul, as Filippo Neri bore the young lawyer, beyond the bounds of the seen and temporal, into that which is unseen and eternal.—L. J.

ETERNAL TRUTH.

Old books go out of date. They are written for a purpose, and when that is accomplished they fade and die. The reason is that they are human. Not so with one book—the Bible. It was born in the world's infancy, and tells the story of the world's beginning. It grew, whether under patriarch or prophet, shepherd or fisherman. In Rome, in Ephesus, in Jerusalem, in Patmos, tyranny and infidelity withstood it, but the old Bible lived. It came across the British Channel and was greeted by John Wycliffe. Churches gathered all along its path, stretching out hands of blessing, and each Sabbath morning there are ten thousand heralds of the Cross with their hands on this grand, free, open, old English Bible. But its mission will not be done until it has climbed the icy mountains of Greenland and crossed the steppes of China, and shed its glow over Australian mines, and scattered its gems among the diamond fields of Brazil, and all thrones shall be gathered into one throne—the throne of God—and all crowns shall be melted into one crown—the crown of Christ. Then, but not till then, shall the Bible have accomplished its mission.

Our conscience is as a fire within us, our sins as the fuel; therefore, instead of warming, it will scorch us, unless the fuel be removed. or the heat of it allayed by penitential tears.

As rivers and fountains proceed from the sea, and return thither again; so true grace in the heart, as a fountain, sends forth all its streams towards God, the ocean whence it flowed.

The sins of a good man are like weeds in a garden, which may hinder the growth of fruits and flowers, but (not permitted to get head) cannot kill them.

The casting down of our spirits in true humility, is but like throwing a ball on the ground, which makes it rebound the higher towards heaven.

THE ARK OF SAFETY.

Some weeks ago, while on board a vessel off the east coast of Maine, and the night coming on, the storm which had been threatening for hours gathered around us with the gathering darkness. Our vessel being somewhat frail, and altogether unequal to an ocean storm, the captain wisely determined to seek shelter among the many islands which lie along the coast, so entering a sheltered inlet, we cast anchor for the night. Lying at anchor while on a sea voyage is perhaps one of the most severe tests of human patience, and yet however heavily the time lay upon our hands, as we looked out upon the dark angry waters and heard the wind and rain beating pitilessly against the windows of the cabin, we felt grateful that we were for the time at least free from danger. As the hours passed the storm increased in fury, when, as the midnight hour approached, a little bird was seen to enter one of the open fanlights and fly around the cabin. It appeared much affrighted at first, its wings and feathers ruffled and drenched with the rain; but soon gathering confidence it settled down near one of the lights and closed its eyes in peaceful slumbers, utterly oblivious of the surrounding storm. It had entered an ark of safety and found the needed shelter and rest. Looking at that little bird in its restful security I thought of the human soul, and of Jesus who is the true ark of safety. Human lives daily and hourly are being wafted off the shores of time, out upon the fathomless deep of the eternal world, their eyes often closed to the signals of danger, and their ears deaf to the warning voices, sometimes ignorantly, sometimes presumptuously, go down never to rise again from the midnight darkness. Our heavenly Father would not have it so; he has "no delight in the death of a sinner, but would that all might come unto him and live." Jesus came not only to be the ark of safety, waiting on the shores of time to carry his people over the stormy sea, but he would be here as a friend and companion with them, as a Saviour from the perils attending their footsteps, guarding, and fitting them in the present for the glories of the future.

Reader, have you secured this friend and companion? Are you trusting in this Saviour? Have you found a place in this ark of safety? Life in the present, even, is much like a stormy sea. There are the hours of midnight darkness when we know not where to turn our weary footsteps, and the tempests, at times, too overpowering for frail fallen humanity. We often need an ark of safety, a place of shelter and rest to which we can flee and hide ourselves until the storms of temptations be overpast. We need an omnipotent arm on which to lean, and upon which we may rest our heavy burdens. The wearied, restless, fluttering soul may find all of this in the Saviour; nay, human language and figure fail to present all the wealth of helpfulness, and comfort, and companionship, and salvation that there is found in him whose name is Emmanuel—*God with us.*

" Our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home."

J. T.

As Noah's dove found no footing, but in the ark; so a Christian finds no contentment but in Christ.

THE HOME CIRCLE.

BY REV. S. D. YATES, AMHERST, N. S.

How very suggestive is the above heading. Nearly six thousand years have elapsed since the first Home was begun upon earth. The circle then formed was narrow indeed; but ample room was afforded for world-wide extension. Nor was it long in being ere it was threatened with summary extinction, a breach occurring which but for Divine intervention would have dissolved it, and that forever.

Soon, however, it was repaired, and established upon a better and a surer foundation. Still the breach created another family circle in which the chief element of a peaceful, prosperous happy home was entirely wanting—that of piety. In fact the separating destructive principle was *irreligion*, culminating in the horrible crime of murder. Home, worthy of the sacred name of Home, must continue to exist, live and thrive upon pure and undefiled religion, and where such finds a place, both Home and religion grow apace, and if there is any limit to either, *time, space, and circumstances* create that limit. The Christian Home must widen and enlarge its circle until earth itself will be far too small to hold it. Our present purpose is to advocate its *extension*.

Home seeks and finds *place*, and just so soon as the place becomes too cramped and straitened a wider one is sought and secured. Extension, then, is a chief element in the true Home, and to favor this object should be the aim of every intelligent man, woman and child in Christendom.

We advance this blessed object whenever we seek to increase the circulation of religious literature. The advantage of such Christian Magazines as the *ADVOCATE* becomes at once apparent. The more widespread we scatter the seed of the Word, the more we are doing for the extension of Home and Home influence. The Christian press finds its true sphere in the world in carrying on this glorious work for God. The Pulpit and the Sabbath School have also their appropriate places in the work, but these cannot enter so familiarly within the circle of Home. We claim therefore for the Christian Magazine its proper place in the family. Let us not impede the progress of Home extension in hindering the spread of religious knowledge in the Home circle. Let us manifest our love for humanity by circulating more widely the "*Advocate* for Truth." And let us one and all pray that the seed sown may spring up and fill the whole earth with home-like unity, peace and prosperity.

"Behold how good a thing it is
And how becoming well
Together such as brethren are
In unity to dwell."

A WORD FITLY SPOKEN.

The daughter of an English nobleman was providentially brought under the influence of the followers of Wesley, and thus came to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. The father was almost distracted at the event, and by threats, temptations to extravagance in dress, by

reading, and travelling in foreign countries and to places of fashionable resort, took every means in his power to divert her mind from "things unseen and eternal." But her "heart was fixed." The God of Abraham had become "her shield, and her exceeding great reward," and she was determined that nothing finite should deprive her of her infinite and eternal portion in him, or displace him from the centre of her heart. At last, the father resolved upon a final and desperate expedient, by which his end should be gained, or his daughter ruined so far as her prospects in life were concerned. A large company of the nobility were invited to his house. It was so arranged, that during the festivities, the daughters of different noblemen, and among others, this one, were to be called on to entertain the company with singing and music on the piano. If she complied, she parted with heaven and returned to the world. If she refused compliance, she would be publicly disgraced, and lose, past the possibility of recovery, her place in society. It was a dreadful crisis, and with peaceful confidence did she await it. As the crisis approached, different individuals, at the call of the company, performed their parts with the greatest applause. At last the name of his daughter was announced. In a moment all were in fixed and silent suspense, to see how the scale of destiny would turn. Without hesitation, she rose, and, with calm and dignified composure, took her place at the instrument. After a moment spent in silent prayer, she ran her fingers along the keys, and then, with unearthly sweetness, elevation and solemnity, sang, accompanying her voice with notes of the instrument, the following stanzas :

"No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone ;—
If now the Judge is at the door,
And all mankind must stand before
Th' inexorable throne !

"No matter which my thoughts employ—
A moment's misery or joy ;
But oh ! when both shall end,
Where shall I find my destined place ?
Shall I my everlasting days
With fiends or angels spend ?

"Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how I may escape the death
That never, never dies ;—
How make mine own election sure,
And, when I fall on earth, secure
A mansion in the skies.

"Jesus, vouchsafe a pitying ray ;
Be thou my guide, be thou my way
To glorious happiness !
Oh, write the pardon on my heart !
And whensoever I hence depart,
Let me depart in peace !"

The minstrel ceased. The solemnity of eternity was upon that assembly. Without speaking, they dispersed. The father wept aloud, and when left alone, sought the counsel and prayers of his daughter for the salvation of his soul. His soul was saved, and his great estate consecrated to Christ.

THE CHILDREN'S PORTION.

LITTLE PIM'S TWO WISHES.

Little Pim was a child whom, if you had known, I am quite sure you could not have helped loving.

I loved him very much. Ah, poor child, he had no mother, and I was only his nursery governess.

What talks Little Pim and I had in the twilight, sitting on the low window-seat, and watching the stars appearing, at first one by one, and then so many at a time that Pim and I would have to give up counting them, and just stop and admire in silence.

When Pim and I first met he knew nothing at all about the Lord Jesus or His tender love for Little Pim. True, he was then but four years old; but *now* our evening talks were always about Him, and though Pim was only such a little boy, he seemed far already on his heavenly way. His simple, childlike faith grasped the truth of the full and free salvation wrought at such tremendous cost for him, in a way that many an older seeking soul has failed to do. It helped me the better to understand how *simple* the way of salvation really is,—just 'come,' 'believe,'—and Little Pim at four years old could do that! and why it is 'hid from the wise and prudent' and is 'revealed unto babes.' It is we, I thought, who make difficult what the Lord has made so easy and clear. As a 'little child' he would have us pass 'through things temporal,' and with the spirit of a 'little child,' to enter the eternal glory above.

Thus, in teaching Little Pim, I was myself being taught by him.

One warm, still summer evening, Pim and I sat in our usual seat. He sat up in my arms, and looking first at me, and then at the quiet skies, said wistfully—'I do wish I were home, "over there," Miss Bessie.'

'Why, my darling?' I answered, holding him close and kissing him. 'I want to thank the dear Lord Jesus for dying for me,' he slowly said, 'and for loving me, when I did'nt love Him.' For this was the grief of Little Pim's life, that for four whole years the Lord had loved and cared for his then unloving Pim.

Oh that it could be the case with many—many of us, that we had only *four* wasted years to reproach ourselves with! Let the young, fresh, bright, loving years of our life be given to Him, 'who hath made all things for Himself.'

'Oh, Miss Bessie,' he went on presently, 'what must the glory be on the other side? We can only tell such a little by looking at the stars; they are only little bits of glory, but in heaven it will be *all* glory! Sing to me.'

I had not sung long when I felt Little Pim's head drop heavily on my shoulder, and, looking down, a sudden fear struck chill to my heart. I carried Pim into the nursery, and laid him on his little bed—he had fainted.

And when, after what seemed a long long time, he opened his weary blue eyes, it was only to look at me and say the one word, 'Papa,'

I stooped down and kissed the white, pure face, and then ran down stairs for his father.

'Papa,' he whispered faintly, 'if the Lord Jesus wants me very much, you won't keep me back from *Him*, will you?'

'I can't let you go, Pim, my boy,' the father answered, with broken and troubled voice, kneeling by his child; 'you are all the world to me, Pim.'

'But I shall only be there—in heaven—Papa,' Pim exclaimed; only waiting for you. I wish, oh, I *do* wish, Papa, you would promise to come to me there! Say you will, Papa?' The father got up and walked the room with restless steps in the darkness, and his angel-child lay there in the light. 'Pray for him,' whispered Little Pim to me. 'Papa!' The steps came near, and stopped at Pim's side, 'you are coming, I've asked God! and He will bring you to me; I must go now, Papa—say I may?'

'Oh, Pim! Pim! how *can* I?' But Pim's eyes were fixed on the quiet skies, and Pim's soul was fast passing away from our lingering grasp to Him who had 'need' of this little jewel to shine in the glorious courts above.

'I want to thank Him *so* much,' murmured little Pim, 'and say how sorry I am I did not love Him before. Come, Lord Jesus, Pim is *so* tired. I want to sing—for ever—and ever. Papa, come—Miss Bessie is coming—Pim waits—in glory for you.'

'I *will* come—Pim, my darling boy—I will come, God helping me,' cried the father in broken accents as he knelt beside his dying child. It seemed as if Pim had only been waiting for that; for when the words reached his ears, he raised himself in my arms, and clasped his thin hands as if in prayer, and said, 'Oh, come Lord Jesus—now—Pim is ready—Pim wants to go home—Papa, Miss Bessie, coming—Pim will be—waiting—at the gate—for—you.'

And Little Pim went from us to that glory he had so often dreamt of, and longed for. He went to fulfil his first great wish, and his heart's desire, that of thanking his dear Saviour for His wondrous love, and undeserved sufferings; and, in his death, his second wish, that of his father's salvation, received its fulfilment. So when I think of my little Pim and his two wishes, and *how* they were granted, I cannot wish my darling back, for I know that he is 'far better' now with Him on the 'other side;' though at times my heart aches sorely for his loving words and soft caresses, and my arms feel very empty without that slight form and golden head which had found so frequent a resting-place there. But we shall meet again—little Pim and I! for I know he is only *waiting* in glory—waiting in perfect rest and peace till in God's good time we join our Pim where we shall be one again, and 'for ever with the Lord.'

As the sun ripens and sweetens fruits by shining upon them, without which they would be sour and unsavoury; so it is the sunshine of God's love and favour that sweetens all earthly blessings, without which they would be but crosses and curses to them that possess them.

GUARD ALL ROUND.

[A rhyme six hundred years old.]

Guard, my child, thy tongue,
That it speak no wrong.
Let no evil word pass o'er it ;
Set the watch of truth before it,
That it speak no wrong.
Guard, my child, thy tongue.

Guard, my child, thine eyes ;
Prying is not wise ;
Let them look on what is right,
From all evil turn their sight ;
Prying is not wise ;
Guard, my child, thine eyes.

Guard, my child, thine ear ;
Wicked words will sear.
Let no evil word come in,

That may cause thy soul to sin.
Wicked words will sear ;
Guard, my child, thine ear.

Ear and eye and tongue,
Guard, while thou art young ;
For, alas ! these busy three
Can unruly members be.
Guard, while thou art young,
Ear and eye and tongue.

Guard, my child, thine heart,
From all sin depart :
Or, alas ! these busy three,
Ear, eye and tongue, o'erthrow thee,
Guard, my child, thine heart ;
From all sin depart.

THE DUSTY ROOM.

A YOUNG GIRL was sweeping a room one day, when she went to the window-blind and hastily drew it down. "It makes the room so dusty," she said, "to have the sunshine coming in."

The atoms of dust which shone golden in the sunbeams were unseen in dimmer light. The untaught girl imagined it was the sunshine which made the dust.

Now, many persons imagine themselves very good people. One poor old man, who had lived all his life without a thought of love to God, said he was all ready to die. He didn't owe any man a shilling. If the Spirit of God should shine brightly into such a heart, how would it look ? It would show them sins enough to crush them. This light of the Spirit is like the sunshine in the dusty room. It reveals what was before hidden. When we begin to feel unhappy about our sins, let us never try to put away the feeling. Don't let us put down the curtain and fancy there is no dust. It is the Holy Spirit's voice in our hearts. He is showing us ourselves ; and, better still, He will show us the true way of happiness.

As the fly that plays about the candle, doth often burn its wings at last ; so the Christian, who parleys with temptations, is in danger of having the wings of his soul so shortened by the fiery darts of the devil, that he will not be able to rise again towards heaven, till God shall give him renewed affections.

As it is not putting on a gown that makes a scholar, but the inward habits of the mind : so it is not putting on an outward cloak of profession that makes a Christian, but the inward grace of the heart.

SOLUTIONS OF BIBLE QUESTIONS FOR NOVEMBER.

- XLVIII. John V. John the Baptist, v. 32, 33.
 (2.) His own works, v. 36.
 (3.) The Father, v. 37.
 (4.) The Scriptures, v. 39.
- XLIX. (1.) The ark of the covenant. 2 Chron. VI., 11.
 (2.) Urim and Thummin. Ezra II., 63. I., 7.
- L. David. II. Samuel XV., 30.
 Solomon. I. Kings, XI., 7.
 Christ. Luke XXII., 39.


BIBLE QUESTIONS FOR DECEMBER.

No. LI.—SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

The mountain was my earliest home, where I in beauty grew,
 Till severed from my parent stem, I served a purpose new.
 My owner was of humble birth, his duties peaceful were,
 And in the calling that he chose, I bore a humble share.
 Though lifeless I most useful was, the live-long summer day,
 Till other work was laid on me, then I was ta'en away.
 No longer in the sunny fields did I in peace remain,
 The city was my future home, where honour I did gain.
 But that I might this honour win, I underwent a change,
 From death to life at once I passed—a transformation strange.
 When life was thus bestowed on me, my brothers I destroyed,
 Nor was it strange I should do so, I was by God employed.
 But when I'd proved I was alive, my life was from me ta'en,
 And I was what I was before, as if I had been slain.
 But when once more a lifeless thing, don't think my race was run,
 For after that more lives I took, than I before had done.
 And strange to tell, while death I caused, I thousands brought to life,
 And once when joined with earnest prayer, I victory brought in strife.
 A quarrel once I did decide concerning holy men,
 By sending forth fresh signs of life. This closed my work ; Amen.

No. LII.—SCRIPTURE SCENE.

She called the fugitive aside,
 Who sought in vain a place to hide,
 She joyfully his want supplied,
 And kindly to him spoke ;
 His weary limbs with care she dressed,
 On viands choice refreshed her guest,
 Then watched that he secure might rest.
 He slept, but never woke.

 Communications for the Children's Portion to be addressed: Ed. Junior, P. O. Box 295, St. John, N. B., and should be received not later than the 15th day of the month.

NOTES.

Respect for the doctrine of the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff does not seem to grow much with the years, even in the Eternal City. A late cable despatch states that: "The Pope, in an address to a company of Italian pilgrims, said that the deplorable state of affairs placed before him the alternative of enduring continual captivity, made harder daily, or of going into exile. He therefore asked Catholics to watch and pray for the liberty and independence of the Pope. He concluded by saying that he was no longer secure in his palace; that he was outraged in his person and dignity in a thousand ways. He closed his address with his arms raised to Heaven, as though imploring help. When the pilgrims left the church, the mob pelted them with stones and shouted, Down with the Vatican!"

The religious weeklies have been exercised for some time over the late trial of Dr. Thomas at Chicago, by a committee of the Methodist Episcopal Conference, and his consequent suspension from the office of the ministry. Among the charges for which he was condemned was that of holding loose views in regard to the eternal punishment of impenitent sinners, and the decision of his judges sets forth the important truth that in such weighty questions men must not permit themselves to be led by mere sentiment or feeling, but by the express declarations of revealed truth. At first thought the human mind almost instinctively shrinks from the contemplation of eternal punishment, and yet, on sober reflection, where is there, or how can there be any escape? A gifted writer once exclaimed: "Men say they cannot believe in eternal punishment. My trouble is to believe in pardon. I see man free and responsible. I see the fact of sin and the law of righteousness. A law is a law. It must take its course. How can a man escape its operation? What is there to exempt him in the fact that he is a free agent? Sin and punishment are to me the only certainties. I know nothing of pardon and cannot believe in it." This is the language of reason as well as of philosophy, and when men ignore the provision God has made for the pardon of sin, and deliberately refuse the offers of mercy, then there is surely for them nothing but "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

The apathy of the general government of the United States in regard to the Mormon question seems altogether incomprehensible. Year by year Mormon missionaries with hundreds of their deluded victims are landed at the port of New York *en route* for the West, thus openly defying Christian sentiment and Christian law, while there is no hand raised to stop the nefarious traffic, or remove the cankerous ulcer from the Western plains. That the claims of Mormonism to be a religious system should exempt it from the justly merited penalties of criminal law, is not only absurd but monstrous. Crime perpetrated in the name

of religion is the most deeply dyed of all crimes, and has ever been the most destructive to the best interests of society. The name adopted by these people, that of "Latter Day Saints," is of itself one of the most cruel caricatures of Christianity; for the practices carried on in Utah and the neighbouring territories have been equalled only in the dark ages, and in an *anti-Christian* church. If the American Government and people are powerless to stamp out the entire system, root and branch, then republicanism itself is a failure.

M. Rassam, a celebrated achæologist, says: "If any one wants to be convinced how literally and truthfully the different prophecies about the utter destruction of Babylon have been fulfilled, he has only to visit that country and see with his own eyes the complete desolation of what was once upon a time called in Holy Writ 'the glory of kingdoms.' Indeed, the destruction of that city was so complete that one wonders whether the accounts given of its greatness and magnificence by different Greek and other historians were not rather exaggerated; but the words of God cannot fall to the ground, as Isaiah predicted that 'the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,' and again: 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and all the graven images of her Gods He has broken unto the ground.'"

Tischendorf, perhaps the greatest of modern biblical critics, when first permitted to examine the Sinaitic manuscript of the bible in the Greek convent, sat up all night copying it, in his own words "deeming it impious to sleep;" and yet to-day, when a self-appointed "distinctive critic" lays rude hands on our bible, there are men found calling themselves *Christians*, who take off their hats and applaud.

Light is thrown by an Aramatic phrase on the words used by Christ at the Last Supper, according to John xiii. 26: "He it is to whom I shall give a sop." In Aramatic the expression "to eat a sop" or "morsel" means "to betray" (as in Dan. iii. 8.) The words of Christ, consequently, imply that he to whom he gave to eat the sop was the traitor. Hence the point of the words in the 30th verse: "He then, having received the sop, went immediately out"—this being the beginning of the betrayal.

The Jews in Servia, unlike the co-religionists in Roumania, enjoy full religious liberty. Russia intends to grant special privileges to those Jews who will engage in agriculture. The Russian Government Council of Education have ordered that hereafter instruction in Hebrew and the principles of the Jewish religion form part of the regular curriculum of all the middle-class schools in the St. Petersburg district.