



# SUNDAY READING

## BIBLE QUESTION COMPETITION.

This competition is open to all the readers of *PROGRESS*, but is more especially intended to interest the young people—the boys and girls who are, or should be attending Sunday school. The following rules should be strictly observed:

### RULES FOR COMPETITORS.

1. A prize of one dollar will be awarded every week for the first correct answer that reaches the office. If there is no correct answer the person who sends the first best answer will receive the dollar. In case two correct answers reach the office at the same time the date stamps of the post offices at which they are mailed will be taken into consideration.
2. Competitors must write on one side of the paper only, giving name and address in full with each answer. These need not be published except in the case of prize-winners and successful competitors.
3. The winner of a prize will not be eligible to compete for another for four weeks.
4. All replies must be received on or before Saturday one week after publication of the questions, thus allowing competitors a clear week for their answers.
5. No post-cards can be received. All replies should be addressed to the "SUNDAY READING," EDITOR *PROGRESS*, St. John, N. B.

I have much pleasure in congratulating Master William John Nesbitt, 136 Carmarthen street, as the successful competitor, for "Prize Bible Questions" No. 3.

I am glad he did not forget to mention Jacob's daughter Dinah, among his children, as so many of the other boys did.

Silvanus or Silas, which is a contraction of the word Silvanus is the "faithful preacher" mentioned by Paul in Thessalonians. He was one of the chief men among the disciples at Jerusalem; and is supposed to have been one of the seventy. Acts xv., 40, 41. He visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia in company with Paul; he was imprisoned with Paul at Philippi, Acts xvi., 25; he always appears as a faithful brother, 1 Peter v., 12.

Those different "looks" seem to have puzzled a great many; yet all the various answers show careful and thoughtful study of God's word. When David saw Bath-Sheba it did not bring destruction to either party concerned; it certainly led to the death of Uriah, but his was not the death of destruction; he died honorably on the field of battle, as many noble warriors have done, and although his death was planned by placing him alone in the front of the battle, I am not sure but that is the position he would have chosen, as all brave soldiers covet the place of danger and honor.

In Aphasians vi., where the Christian's armor of warfare is given, every part of the body is protected but one part; there is no provision made for the back, teaching us we are always to face the foe. Hoping you will all use this armor in the warfare of life against "the wiles of the Devil."

NEANI.

### Answers to Prize Bible Questions—No. 3.

1st. Give the name of a faithful preacher whom St. Paul mentions in the first epistle to the Thessalonians?—Timotheus is the name of the faithful preacher whom Paul mentions in his first epistle to the Thessalonians—1 Thess., iii., 2; also 1 Thess., i., 1.

2nd. Give the names of Jacob's children alphabetically?—Asher, Benjamin, Dan, Dinah, Gad, Issachar, Joseph, Judah, Levi, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon and Zebulon—Gen. xxx.

3rd. From whom was a reluctant consent gained? State the object sought, and the gentle reproof administered when the search was vain?—The reluctant consent was gained from Elisha the prophet. The object sought was Elijah the prophet, who had gone up by a whirlwind into heaven. The gentle reproof administered was: "Did I not say unto you, go not?"—2 Kings, xi.

4th. When did a look bring destruction? When did a look bring trouble? When did a look bring healing?—A look brought destruction in Luke xxii., 61, when the Lord looked on Peter. A look brought trouble in Exodus xiv., 23, 24, when the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians and troubled them. A look brought healing in Numbers xxi., 9, when the Israelites were bitten by fiery serpents and healed by a look at the brazen serpent.

PRIZE BIBLE QUESTIONS.—No. 5.

1st. Where did Paul first preach the gospel on the continent of Europe? and who was his first convert?—2nd. Shew how a liberator of his country was led to acknowledge the true God.

3rd. What famous building was burnt down by a King's servant?—4th. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear Isaiah lxxv.: 24. Prove from the New Testament how this text was literally fulfilled?

"Behold I Stand at the Door and Knock."

### Sermon by Dr. George Macdonald.

The discourse, which was brief, was on the familiar passage from the 15th verse to the close of the third chapter of Revelation—the message to the Laodiceans through John. The hard things said in the introduction to the message are, said the preacher, all said to those who called themselves Christians. I don't seem to have any quarrel myself with those who are without. They will come in; they have not come to the point yet in which they even suppose they can see a glimpse

of the glory of God. It is with those who call themselves Christians, and are pagans at heart, that I find all my quarrel, if I may call it so. These opening words, friends, are full of what very nearly amounts to disgust. Oh, think of it; would you have the Lord of Life, the ideal man, the eternal Son of your Father, disgusted with you? He cannot look on your ways without a sense of loathing in His very heart of love. These Laodiceans loved the praise of men more than the praise of God; they loved money, they gave their energy to be rich and increase in the world's goods, and they lived for a moment above the cares of life. They had heard of nothing, but the eye of the Master, looking down upon them, just saw them as they were—poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked; and then, when the very indignation of His heart had risen to the height, He rebukes and chastens them. He will spare no indignation, no suffering, that can be expended on those that may be bettered thereby; but, as if in the tenderness of His heart He longs to let them know what lies at the root of His words, He says: "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." Even those from whose ways He was compelled to turn His head away with a sort of divine loathing, He loves; and it is because He loves them that He rebukes and chastens them. Oh, Blessed Redeemer, the blame of the Master is the sign that we belong to Him. If it were not the children of God, we could not be blamed that we were not like Him.

Because we came forth from God, and have to return to God, therefore should we welcome the words of blame. Then He pictures Himself at the door and knocking—the first and last, the loving One, the very beginning of the creation of God, standing at our door and knocking. Oh! friends, God is not proud. If He tells us to be humble, it is because He never thinks of Himself as the proud man thinks. "Let me in," He says. What is it that keeps you from opening the door to Him? You have got a big chest there against the door; what is in it? Money, the means of ambition—what kind of pleasures and hopes is that chest heavy with that you cannot drag it away to open that door which was open before, but always in your being? Did He not love you He would not stand there waiting. He loves you, not for much you have done, for you have been spoiling things instead; but He loves you because His Father made you in His own image, and because when once you have seen what you are, you will hate yourself and love God. When once you understand the mean creature that you are, standing on one side of the door, and the Lord on the other, and not opening it, you will loathe your very life, and He knows it, and He wants to come in, that you may give up yourself, and take Him instead, and be one with God Himself. Some of you have found yourselves out, have found out that false self that pretends to be you, and which you worship as if it were you. You have found yourselves out in some things, and are so ashamed of yourselves that you can hardly believe that He would care to come in. You say, "I know that about myself makes me very unfit." That is His business, not yours. You will let Him in, for the sake of all creation, let Him in, to do what He will with you, to bring you to the full dignity of a child of God. Then, see how close He wants to come to us. There is no condescension in Jesus Christ—that kind of thing is not known to Him. He never thinks He is doing such a fine thing and that He is so kind and generous in coming down to help one of His own creatures—one of His Father's creatures, one of the very family. No; the whole thing is to get near enough to help you, just enough to you. "I will come unto you if you will open the door." And you may be sure that if the door is stiff, and you try to open it, it will not remain shut for lack of a push from without. You may be sure the Lord will give a push. Your will and not your strength is all that stands between you. He will come in and, He says, "I will sit with Him, and He with me." You will sit at the table together. And what meal will you have for supper? What is it that the loving Christ could come and eat with you and me? Oh, just the old story the love of God; the love of the Father is that which covers the table. The highest symbol in all the universe is the bread and wine that tells that God himself is the food of His children. Draw the supper table out; till the Lord just talks to us, not of anything and everything but of the love of His Father; for remember that it is the Lord Christ's one idea—My Father. It just fills the heart of Christ out and out, the joy that he has such a Father, and that He sent Him to bring back the child whom He loves. You do not know Christianity if you do not know the heart of Jesus Christ, what He means, what He thinks, what He is after. Jesus is only thinking of bringing the thinking creatures that God has made His sons and His daughters, back to His heart. Jesus Christ would not dare to be what He is if He had not His Father. Were we orphan children with no God for our Father, do you suppose Jesus would care to keep us alive? Nay, verily, the one prayer of the human heart would be: "Let me cease to be for ever; Life is too terrible without Him, I cannot live." So the supper we have been partaking of is just God's gift; even if we come down to earthly eating and drinking it is all God's gift, and it is a terrible thing when it is abused. You eat the word of God, and you eat his very bread at your table, for, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." And the word of God has gone forth, or we cannot live at all. I find my refuge for my smallness, for my own contempt in the perfect God who has said, "I will come in and eat with him and will open the door." And if I have Him who made me, in me and with me, then all is well, but while He is away I am in miserable incompleteness. Then think of this. He is standing at the door of the man He rebuked, and He hopes to get in. There is no pretence in Him, and if He thought there was no chance of his getting in He might remain. I don't know what messages he might

send; it might be an earthquake or a cyclone, or something that would push open doors and windows, and, perhaps, tear the very roofs off the houses, that the Lord might get through by ruin if He cannot get through by law.

But if I understand the ways of Godly men at all—and it seems to me I do, a little—I think that the very pains and horrors of hell will overwhelm you, except you turn and say, "Lord wait, I will open the door and let Thee in." Yet your hearts may be so full of the chest across the door that you may think all I am talking is for the sake of preaching a sermon. There is nothing I hold in greater contempt than a fine sermon that does not come out of a belief. It is one of the most wretched things in the universe. It shall be your fault and your love of money, and of honor and praise, not mine, if I do not tell you the truth as far as I can understand and read it, that God is so bent on making you like children to Him, that He will spare you nothing. He is too good a father to mind your pains, if the pains be necessary. Which of your earthly parents with a noble heart at all would not rather see the life, and the devil with it, shaken out of his son, than to see him remain a creeping, sneaking, self-indulgent fellow. The Lord having told of His indignation and wrath, of His tribulation and anguish, follows on with promise upon promise. Nobody can promise like God. There is no holding back. God doesn't hide anything; He does not keep anything to Himself. He is working always to give, and give, and give, and He says: "To them that overcome I will grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on His throne." If the Lord Christ did say this, and God did not mean it, there is your contradiction, your reduction to the absurd. No man dare say such things as these, and if they are not true, then there is no Christ, and whatever God may be, we don't know anything about Him. "To sit with me on my throne." You never loved the right thing so long as you were content to know anything lower than yourself; God Himself is doing all He can to lift up to His own level; the love of Jesus Christ will not be satisfied until we are seated with Him upon the throne. What throne? A throne of glory. What kind of a victory. Power to compel this and that; power to heap up this and that? No; but to subdue everything that lifts up its head against the law, and the right, and the truth, and the love of God. Rule over self, not over others, supremacy over the powers that dwell in life by perfect obedience to the Father Himself. The Lord says, "I sit down on the throne of my Father because I do not my own will but do the will of Him, who having given me being from eternity, requires that I should live by His will. So I sit with Him on His throne," showing that obedience is divine, and that those who are knitted in one body with the Father and the Son. So that He actually says to you and me, and to the whole of us—to the lowest, least developed, most ugly creeping worm—I dare to say it, I cannot say how much it would be understood. He says you are a child of God, and He wants you to sit on the throne with Him, even better than on the throne with Him, in the very heart of Him. No man is able to go and sit on the throne of God, but the man who has striven, resisting unto blood, striving against sin. The man who will be on God's side, God will be on his side and help him through, but the work and the end of life is to overcome even as Christ overcame. He overcame when, having said, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me," he checked Himself and said, "Thy will be done."

It is a small door built to go in at, and it may be just one thing lying before your mind that keeps it shut. Each one has something before him that he knows he ought to do, and that thing has to be done, because it is the will of God. The way may be hard indeed, but there are no craters full of lava in it, and it is possible to traverse it, for God never tells a man to do a thing that is impossible. "To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne." Oh, young man, hear me, it is time. You will waste yourselves and lose your lives. It is not enough to be respectable. That is what the praise of men comes to; but never heed what men think of you. Do the will of God, and you will be well with you. Abstain from that will, and there is misery for you; the people who think they are all right and quite comfortable, having need of nothing, are those on whom misery may fall at any moment. God has feet of wool, but hands of iron.

But I cannot leave off with that. Jesus finishes all with the grandest of promises: "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there shall he be also." "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." He honours no man who has not followed His Son, and I say the man who has not, is inhuman. Until you come to that, you may count that in you is a great deal of the inhuman. For whatever is bad, is hot human, it is not Jesus Christ, and He only is human. On: friends, we are miserable creatures if we are let alone. I know no man who has less reason to quarrel with life than myself; but I say to you, that except there be a loving One, who will make me clean like Himself, I would this moment yield up my blood, every drop of it. Life is not indeed worth living without that hope of being saved by Him, who was called Jesus, because he would save His people from their sin. There is no salvation but that, and for myself and all dear to me I would pray for nothing else but utter annihilation, except I believe, as I do, that there is a living power that will make them and me clean.

May that power work in your heart-for that power works in every heart all it can-rather I plead that you would let God have his way with you, that you would open the door and let Jesus Christ in, and begin to be true men and women—by obedience to the Son of God.

### Something for Mothers to Get Their Boys To Read and Think Over.

"He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness," saith the Lord, by which we are taught to imitate His life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened and be delivered from all blindness of heart. Let therefore our chief endeavor be to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the doctrines of holy men, and he that hath the Spirit will find therein the hidden manna. But it falleth out, that many, albeit

they often hear the gospel of Christ, are yet but little affected, because they have not the Spirit of Christ. Whosoever, then, would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ, must endeavor to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ. What will it avail thee to be engaged in profound reasonings concerning the Trinity if thou be void of humanity, and art there by displeasing to the Trinity?

Surely such words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God.

I had rather feel compunction than know the definition thereof.

If thou knowest the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it profit thee without the love of God and without grace?

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, except to love God, and Him only to serve.

This is the highest wisdom, by contempt of the world to tend towards the kingdom of heaven.

It is therefore vanity to seek perishing riches, and to trust in them. It is also vanity to strive after honours, and to climb to high degree.

It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh, and to labour for that which thou must afterwards suffer grievous punishment.

It is vanity to desire to live long, and not to care to live well.

It is vanity to mind only this present life, and not to make provision for those things which are to come.

It is vanity to love that which speedily passeth away, and not to hasten thither where everylasting joy awaiteth thee.

Call often to mind that proverb, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."

Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and to turn thyself to the invisible.

For they that follow their lusts stain their own consciences, and lose the grace of God.

### A Prayer of Sympathy.

Almighty Father, we bless Thee that life and immortality have been brought to light in the gospel. We know from Jesus that Thou hast ordained our life, with all its relationships and circumstances, as a discipline for our souls. We learn by living. Thou art training us by labor, quickening us through trial, making us stronger and tenderer, humbler and holier, through suffering. Help us to cherish that spirit which makes all things, whether joyous or sad, to work together for our good. O Eternal Goodness, train us for Thy will; for it is Thy will to make us perfect.

We know from Jesus, and we bless Thee for the knowledge, that death is not the destruction but the expansion of our life; that it opens the way into new opportunities of service and worship, new discipline and new joys; that it cannot take us out of our Father's hands, or separate us from the love of God. We are going whither we cannot see; but we do not leave our Father's house; we are the children of eternal love, and underneath us are the everlasting arms. O help us to realize the faith of Christ, and then we shall have the peace of Christ, and the bereavements that darken our homes will not break our trust.

O Thou art the Comforter of Thy children, Thou God of love and tenderness, we pray for those who mourn at this time. We need not tell their sorrow to Thee. In the stillness of our hearts we ask for them Thy sustaining grace. Be Thou their stay in this sore trial; the strength of the failing heart and the light of the darkened home. Open their eyes to see the Father's house on high, and may they feel assured that the departed has found a better life, and a more perfect rest in Thee.

### HYMN.

#### Love of Man is Love of God.

Lord, what offering shall we bring  
At Thine altars when we bow?  
Hearts, the pure, unselfish spring  
Whence the kind affection flows;  
Quiet thoughts at peace with all;  
Wrongs forgiven into rest;  
Sympathy intent to call  
Sorrow from the wounded breast.

Willing hands to lead the blind,  
Bind the wounded, feed the poor,  
Love, embracing all our kind;  
Charity, with liberal store.  
Teach us, O, Thou heavenly King;  
Thus to show our grateful mind,  
Thus the accepted offering bring,  
Love to thee and all mankind.  
—John Taylor.

### All for a Postal Card.

Several Special Prizes valued at \$10.00 to \$30.00 will be given *each day* to the person in Canada from whom is received the best list of English words (of not less than three letters) formed from letters contained in the two words "Ladies Newspaper." This offer is made by the publishers of a large, 32 page, four column Journal, edited by women, for the intelligent women of Canada. Over two hundred valuable prizes are offered in addition to the above extra special prizes given *daily*. All fortunate enough to secure a prize in this Competition will obtain a valuable one, as none other will be given.

This competition will be upon an entirely different plan from any before offered in Canada, in fact, after the styles of those introduced by leading English publishers, and will be conducted in the same honorable manner which has governed English Competitions.

The publishers of "The Ladies Newspaper" are not offering these competitions expecting to make any money from direct results, but will expend several thousand dollars in this manner for the purpose of introducing their journal.

The first object will be to make them strictly fair and impartial and establish an enviable reputation for the publication itself. Persons desiring to enter the competition may start at once, but send your address on a postal card and receive a free sample copy with full particulars. Address THE LADIES NEWSPAPER CO., Canada Life Building, Toronto, Canada.

### A Constitutional Objection.

Francis II. of Austria did not like constitutions. Baron Stüft, his physician, once said to him, "This cough of your Majesty does not alarm me; your Majesty has a good constitution." "What do you say?" cried the emperor. "We have known each other very long, Stüft, but never let me hear that word again; say, robust health, or, if you like, a strong bodily system; but there is no such thing as a good constitution. I have no constitution, and never will have one."

### THE KORAN.

#### The Bible of the Mahometans—Some Idea of Its Contents.

Koran, from the Arabic *kuara*, "to read," hence *Koran* means the written book, or bible of the Mahometans, containing the revelations and doctrines of their pretended prophet. It is the general belief among the Mahometans that the Koran is of divine origin; that it is eternal and uncreated; that the first transcript was from everlasting by God's throne, written on a gigantic table called the "preserved table," in which are also recorded the divine decrees, past and future; that a copy from this table in a book bound in white silk, and adorned with gold and precious stones, was brought down to the lowest heaven by the angel Gabriel on the night of Al-Khadr, or "night of power," in the month Ramadan. Portions of it were revealed to Mahomet by Gabriel, some at Mecca and some at Medina, at different times during a space of twenty-three years as the exigency of affairs required, and once every year he was allowed to look on the book as a whole. They say that only ten chapters were delivered entire, and the rest being revealed piecemeal, and written down by the prophet's amanuensis by the angel's direction in such a part and such a chapter, till they were completed.

The first part which was revealed is generally allowed to be the first five verses of chapter xvi. "Preach in the name of the Lord, who has created all things." While the prophet lived the Koran was kept only in loose sheets. His successor, Abu Bekir, collected them into a volume, which he committed to the keeping of Hapsha, one of Mahomet's wives.

There are several principal editions of the Koran—two at Medina, one each at Mecca, Kurf, Bassora and Syria, and the common or *Vulgar* edition. The first contains 6,000 verses, the others surpassing this number by 200 or 236 verses; but the number of words and letters is the same in all, viz, 77,639 words and 323,015 letters. The number of commentaries on the Koran is so large that the bare titles would fill a large volume. It is divided into 114 portions of very unequal length, which we should call chapters, but the Arabians call *Sorah*, or in the singular *Sura*; or into thirty sections called *Ajaza*, singular *Jaz*; or again into sixty equal portions called *Azhab*, singular *Hizb*. There are twenty-nine chapters which have this peculiarity: they begin with certain letters of the alphabet which are supposed to con-

ceal several profound mysteries communicated to no mortal but their prophet.

The great doctrine of the Koran is the unity of God, to restore which mahomet said was the chief end of his mission; it being laid down by him as a fundamental doctrine that there never was, nor can be, more than one orthodox religion, though the particular laws and ceremonies are subject to alteration according to divine direction; that whenever this religion became neglected or corrupted in essentials, God re-informed mankind thereof by several prophets, chiefly Moses and Jesus, till the appearance of Mahomet, who is their seal, and no other is to be expected after him.

To engage the people to listen to him, a great part of the Koran is taken up with examples of awful punishments formerly inflicted by God on those who rejected His messengers, and those stories are taken many of them from the old and new testaments and the Apocrypha.

The general design of the Koran was to unite in one religion the Jews, Christians, and idolaters by whom Arabia was peopled. The Koran is held in the highest reverence by the Mussulmans; they dare not so much as touch it without being legally purified. It is read with great care and respect, being never held below the girdle. They swear by it, take omens from it on all weighty occasions, adorn it with gold and jewels, and will not knowingly suffer it to be in the hands of any unbeliever.—*The Dictionary of Religion*.

### Sandy's Prayers.

One day, a few years ago, a native of Scotland was walking through the street of a town in Ireland, when he was accosted by an Irishman who was slightly intoxicated. The Irishman who felt in the right humor for a spree, put himself in front of the Scotchman and at once began to argue with him as to which was the best man of the two, and at last they agreed to fight for it. But the Scotchman said he would not fight over such a paltry thing as that, at which Pat said, "You will have to fight." The Scotchman agreed, and asked Pat if he would give him time to offer a short prayer up. "Certainly," said Pat; and the Scotchman knelt down and began as follows:—"O Lord, forgive me for the two men I killed last week and the one I killed yesterday, and also for the one I am going to kill now." As he finished he looked round for Pat, but that individual had mysteriously disappeared.



## WHAT THEY SAY:

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## — FERTILIZERS.

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