

Good Sunday Reading.

BIBLE QUESTION COMPETITION.

Although this competition is open to all the readers of PROGRESS, it is more especially intended to interest the young people—the boys and girls who are, or should be attending Sunday School. We have entrusted its management to one who is very competent to take charge of the department. In order to make the competition more interesting, the proprietor of PROGRESS will give One Dollar to the person who sends in the first correct answer to all the questions. We believe that this inducement will result not only in increasing the interest in the contest, but also in the acquisition of much information by those who search for the correct answers.

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 PROGRESS 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 dating 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 These need not be published except in the case of prize-winners, and a *non-de-plume* may be adopted for publication.
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 efforts.
5. No post-cards can be received. All replies should be addressed to the "SUNDAY READING," EDITOR PROGRESS, St. John, N. B.

PRIZE BIBLE QUESTIONS.—No. 2.

- 1st. Give the name of a city, where the apostles were taken for gods?
- 2nd. Give the name of the first gentile convert to Christianity?
- 3rd. How many commandments were broken in order that Ahab might gain possession of Naboth's vineyard?
- 4th. By whom were each of the following expressions used? and to whom addressed:
"Hast Thou found me, O mine enemy?"
"Thou art the man."
"My punishment is greater than I can bear."
"But think on me, when it shall be well with thee."
"What is that to us? See thou to that."

"TO-DAY."

By the Rev. John Hunter.

"Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Psalm xciv. 7-8.

1. *Today:* How related to yesterday and tomorrow. The secret of true living is to be found in making the most of each day. We are putting yesterday to its truest and noblest use when we are using its experience to make the life of today better. We are preparing for the morrow in the truest and noblest way, when we are striving with all our might to be faithful to the opportunity of today. To spend today in looking away from it, backward to yesterday, or forward to the morrow, is simply fatal to the highest purposes and issues of life. It is true, that the power of looking before and after is one of the most characteristic endowments of man. And it is not denied, that there is a way of living in the present which makes impossible all best efforts and attainments. We are certainly not making the most of today, if we are not bringing to bear its events, relations, and duties the wisdom drawn from the experience of yesterday, and the inspiration that comes from the thought of the morrow.

Memory has its gracious and serious uses. It may be good now and again to yield ourselves to the spell of past things. To be taken away for a brief moment from our exciting and exacting life into the peace of yesterday, may refresh and strengthen us, rescue us from depressed feelings and narrow views: enable us to perceive and appreciate better the opportunity of the present, and renew our energy for the never-ending struggle. We are making a good use of the yesterdays of our life, when we are taking their lessons to heart, in order to protect and improve the life of the new day that is passing over us. And, if we are truly wise, we shall not be indifferent to the past of the life of mankind and the teaching. It will at least show us that certain ways of dealing with our great speculative and practical question lead to certain conclusions and results, and thus save us from a tragic waste of time and energy. Universal history has been called "a kind of memory" for the race; it is also a kind of Bible-part of that larger and equally divine Bible whose canon is never closed. Sound progress is ever conservative of all that is finest and best in the old life it leaves behind; it does not allow one jot of true substance, one title of true worth to pass away till it is fulfilled in something truer and better. And "looking before" may sometimes be as much a duty as "looking after." Experience teaches us the need of the unlooming and expectant spirit.

We are saved by hope from discouragement and despair; saved also from indolence and ignoble contentment with ourselves and our surroundings. In our hopefulness lies the spring of progress and the promise of achievement. The hopeful temper, kindled and fed by faith in the Eternal goodness, is the temper of inspiration. It is the temper of all the great teachers and leaders of the race. And the humblest man, moving among simplest duties, requires some touch of it to redeem his life from pettiness and vulgarity. It is essential to the working out of that great salvation whose watch-words are Character and Service, that one should feel that his life is linked to divine purposes and movements. "Where there is no vision the

people perish." To-morrow gives larger and deeper significance to the life of to-day.

Granting, then, as we may, do most readily, that a true and noble life is only possible by bringing to bear upon to-day the experience of yesterday and the hope of to-morrow, yet this concession does not diminish the value of to-day. We are to live as if to-day stood alone, unrelated and apart; but we are called to live in today not in yesterday, in today not in tomorrow. We have to guard against that kind of looking back, and that kind of looking forward, which would tempt us to forget or slight the duties on the fulfillment of which depend the preservation of the best life of the past, and the realization of the best hopes we can cherish for the future. We have to fight against moods and habits of thought and feeling which breed indifference to the present, and contempt for it. The past and the future, yesterday and to-morrow, are not being wisely used when they are robbing to-day of interest and meaning; when we are so absorbed by memories or expectations that we have not energy enough to make the most and best of the present opportunity.

Let us be loyal to the life of to-day. Let us not give yesterday more than its due. True life means unrelenting movement, aspiration and endeavor. Even the man of many years is but beginning life, and cannot spare much time for recollection and regret. What we experienced or achieved yesterday is but small compared with what remains. Let us, on the other hand, while cherishing the hope and prophecy of to-morrow, not sink into mere dreamers. The glory we see and seek cannot be born without our whole-hearted co-operation. Let us make of our imaginations inspirations to present activity. The man of faith ought to be the man of works, and the most ideal man the most practical man.

2. *Today: Its Importance.*—To-day is the supreme and critical moment of life. Our vital concern is over with to-day. Life in today is a clear and impressive feature of Biblical teaching. The emphasis of both testaments is on today. "Today if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts." "We must work while it is called today." "To look back is, in the judgment of the Master of our life, to unfit ourselves for any share in the work of the kingdom of God. To be loyal to the Christian idea and order of life, we must be ready to break with the old for the sake of the new. With absolute vigor Jesus Christ ever insisted upon this heroic renunciation of the past, and this heroic obedience to the present inspiration, "Let the dead bury their dead, follow thou me." "He that saveth his life shall lose it."

"Be not anxious for the morrow" is another great gospel saying. It was spoken to raise the troubled heart above all undue care, and with a view to the concentration of thought and energy on the duty of to-day. It is a word perfectly true and wise. It is folly to try to grip too much of life at once. To take the days one by one is divine wisdom. A day may seem but a small section of time to measure and command, but it holds about as much care and responsibility as our minds can embrace and bear. The only way to save ourselves from a past, the memory of which will be a reproach and a burden, is to care well for each new day before it leaves us to take its place among the irrevocable yesterdays.

The only way to prepare for the morrow is through fidelity to the duty of to-day. Today found us as yesterday left us: tomorrow will find us as today leaves us. There is little need, then, to dwell on the past. It is not behind us. In a very real sense it goes with us. Names pass away but faces abide. We stand today in vital connections with all the days we have ever lived. The yesterdays are still with us to bless, or to curse. It is true, in a way, that each new day may be a new beginning and there is never a point in life when we may not move on to something better, and yet each new day is the outcome of the days before. The new continues, it does not efface the old. There is no "dead past": the past is living in the present. We cannot get away from these inexorable yesterdays. Their life lives in what we are today: in the fibre and quality of mind and soul; in thought and feeling; in taste, tendency, and habit; in everything that goes to make up what we call character. "God requirith that which is past." The good and ill we do find us out. Our present character is the Divine judgment upon our past conduct. But today is not only a history of the past; it is also a prophecy of the future. It is by watching to-day we can tell what will be on the morrow. Foresight is truly insight. The power to foresee and forecast is the power to discern the natural and necessary tendency and result of certain principles and habits of life. Life has no sharp epochs. There is no violent break between yesterday and today. The future is not a revolution, but an evolution. To-day is the child and heir of yesterday; to-morrow will be the child and heir of today. It is by a great perversion that so much of our religious teaching directs our thoughts to the life of to-morrow—to what follows death. It is plainly not the will of God that we should think much of the hereafter while we are here. There are seasons and pauses in life when "otherworldiness" becomes the most natural and proper mood and habit of the mind, yet frequent and morbid thought about the future is a hindrance and not a help to sound Christian progress. What we are now in life and character in our relations to God and man, is the main thing. The future can hold no promise of good save what is laid up by present faithfulness. In quietness and confidence we may leave what is to happen after death to the Everlasting Father and Redeemer of souls, while we assure ourselves that the only possible preparation for the worthy use of another life is the worthy use of this life. Strictly speaking, there can be no special preparation for the future. The whole of life, and not isolated acts, experience and hours, is the real preparation. It is by living we prepare to live. He who lives faithfully and well to-day with truth and righteousness, love and peace, with honest and earnest labor for God and mankind, has no need or cause to be anxious for the morrow. Whatever happens it must ever in this world and in all the worlds be well with him.

"It shall be well with thee, O soul,
Though the heavens wither like a scroll,
Though sun and moon forget to roll,
O soul, it shall be well."

3. *The Blessing and Opportunity of a Day.*—What a great and royal gift it is. It comes to us laden with blessing and promise, full of history and full of prophecy.

It has taken many thousands of years to prepare it for us. In the very fuel that feeds its fires is the vegetation of primeval years. The effort to realize the tremendous cost at which we have everything in the daily order and enjoyment of life is baffling even to the imagination. Every day that dawns has countless relations with things far and wide. Ancient Egypt and Israel, Greece and Rome, Scandinavia and primitive Germany, priests and philosophers, prophets and poets, discoverers and inventors, innumerable thinkers and workers, known and unknown, have helped to prepare the materials out of which today's opportunity has been made. We are the heirs of the ages in a most real sense. We inherit the good material wrought out through the experience of many men and many races of men through many centuries. In the life of today are the results of the labor and struggle of all the yesterdays.

"Whatever of true life there was of yore,
Along our veins is springing,
For us its martyrs die, its prophets soar,
Its poets still are singing."

No day is poor and commonplace. The judgment of the pessimist is virtually a condemnation of himself and his own way of living. To the prepared soul every day is full of marvel and joy. Life has lost none of its ancient fascination: it is as full as ever of grandeur and loveliness, of wonder and mystery. All things which deep-seeing men have seen to be in human life, the things which have inspired the finest poetry of the world, are in human life today. Every day has its comedies and tragedies. Genius does not invent; it discovers and interprets. To find examples of heroism we need not turn to classic pages, nor search the annals of martyrdom. Heroism is as unattainable a reality as the daily dawn. Around and in each day are all the great marvels of creation, all the moral forces and splendors of life, and all the sacred realities to which the deeply moved soul has witnessed in every age. The miracle of creation is renewed every day. Light and heat, and all the ancient creative forces are still active, doing the same kind of work they did when "the morning stars sang together, and the first born of the sons of God shouted for joy." "My Father," said Jesus, "works continuously, and I work." Faith is not retrospective only. Revelation is not reminiscence of report merely. God is the living God and the God of the living. The Divine vision can be heard today. Every mountain may be a point of contact between God and man, and the foot of Jacob's ladder may be touched anywhere. We have in today all that men ever had, the same spiritual resources, the same Divine helps. The heavenly realities belong to the present as much as to the past or the future. Loyal to the laws of the highest growth will make today as sacred as yesterday, and one of the days of heaven upon earth. The eternal life of the Christian gospel stands not in quantity but in quality of years, and is shared by us here according to our faithfulness. It is a familiar saying that life is but a day. It is said to express the awful and pathetic brevity of our existence upon this earth. It is the utterance of an impressive truth, common yet never commonplace. But when we say each day is a life, we are giving expression to a truth of deeper importance and of greater practical value and use. There is nothing small. In the smallest things are the elements of the greatest. One day of life has in it the quality of the whole. It is grander than we know or can imagine. It has infinite relations. In its acts and relations we see God making history, and man making his own future-making the character which creates condition and decides destiny.

Are we making the most and the best of the opportunities of today? Many people are sighing and crying for the larger opportunities to which they expect death will introduce them, who do not know the value of a day. One of our older poets has represented the days as coming to us with their faces veiled; but when they have passed beyond our reach and call, the draped figures become radiant, and the gifts we slighted are seen to be right royal treasures. Let us make the most and the best of each day's opportunities for pure and noble enjoyment. Let not our sorrow for some vanished good, make us insensible to, or ungrateful for, the good which is now and here. Let us train our faculties to observe and appreciate all the gracious blessings of our daily life. We need not be suspicious of what gives pleasure and joy. The lesson of joy is as Divine a lesson to learn as that of obedience and sacrifice. Let us make the most and the best of each day's opportunity for thought and meditation. It was a good rule of a great man never to allow one day to pass without reading: something that would quicken and enrich his mind. The inner life needs constantly deepening. Knowledge is growing from more to more, and God is ever revealing Himself. Every day is a day of revelation. We must follow the spirit of truth. Our highest attainments ought only to be new starting points. The mind closed against new truth is already dying. Let us make the most and the best of the opportunity for moral and spiritual growth and beneficent service which is afforded by the daily task. It is in the sphere of everyday duties most men must win the discipline which our earthly life is meant to yield, must form the character which is the crown of life, and prepare themselves for wider usefulness. No violent, overstrained efforts are necessary to achieve the moral and spiritual success which Scripture calls salvation—deliverance from weakness and sin, the reconciliation of the life to the order and will of God, the perfection of character. We may through the humblest fidelities reach the Christian righteousness, and rise out of our selfishness into the Christian generosity and sympathies. It is only by living up to the ideal and duty of making each day perfect in itself we can make life a spiritual triumph. There are only "twelve hours in a day," yet how much can be done in and with a day.

"One day with life and heart
Is more than enough to find a world."

Let us strive to get as much good as we can out of each day, and to do as much good as we can in each day. If we throw away a day no miracle will bring it back to us. There is no tomorrow for the work that ought to be done today. The cry, "Too late," is not false. The mercy of God is infinite every way, but an opportunity lost is lost forever. Other doors may open, but that door is forever shut.

The exhortation, "Prepare to meet thy God," is indeed an exhortation to prepare for life, not death. Every day we meet God; every day we need to be prepared to meet Him. We prepare for what we suppose to be great days. But every day may be a great day, a divine day. It was on a common day the Saviour of men met Zaccheus on the Jericho road and said to him, "Come down, this day I must abide at thy house." It was on a common day He met the woman of Samaria at the well, and by His conversation made that day a day of revelation for all the ages.

Today all good and great things are possible. Let us by our faith and our faithfulness by our obedience to all best visions and impulses turn it into a day of salvation, a day of God, one of the days of the Son of Man, of the days of heaven upon earth.

—J. Ellerton.

Something for Mother's to get Their Boys To Read and Think Over.

The kingdom of God is within you saith the Lord. Turn thee with thy whole heart unto the Lord, and forsake this wretched world, and thy soul shall find rest. Learn to despise outward things, and to give thyself to things inward, and thou shalt perceive the kingdom of God to become in thee.

"For the kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," which is not given to the unholy.

Christ will come unto thee, and show thee His own consolation, if thou prepare for Him a worthy mansion within thee.

All His glory and beauty is from within, and there He delighteth Himself.

The inward man he often visiteth and hath with him sweet discourses, pleasant solace, much peace, familiarity exceeding wonderful.

O, faithful soul, make ready thy heart for this Bridegroom, that He may vouchsafe to come unto thee, and to dwell within thee.

For thus saith He, "If any man love me, he will keep my words, and we will come unto him, and will make our abode with him."

Give therefore, admittance unto Christ, and deny entrance to all others.

When thou hast Christ, thou art rich, and hast enough. He will be thy faithful and provident helper in all things, so that thou shalt not need to trust in men.

For men soon change, and quickly fail: but Christ remaineth forever and standeth by us firmly unto the end.

There is no great trust to be put in a frail mortal man, even though he be profitable and dear unto us: neither ought we to be too much grieved, if sometimes he cross and contradict us.

They that today take thy part, tomorrow may be against thee: and often do men change like the wind.

Put all thy trust in God, let Him be thy fear, and thy love: He shall answer for thee, and will do all things well, and as it is best for thee.

Thou hast not here an abiding city: and whosoever thou mayest be, thou art a stranger and pilgrim; neither shalt thou ever have rest, unless thou be inwardly united unto God.

Why dost thou here gaze about, since this is not the place of thy rest? In heaven ought to be thy home, and all earthly things are to be looked upon as it were by the way. All things pass away and thou together with them.

Beware thou cleave not unto them, lest thou be caught and so perish. Let thy thoughts be on the highest, and thy prayers for mercy directed unto Christ without ceasing.

Christ was also in the world, despised of men, and in His greatest necessity forsaken by His acquaintances.

A Prayer of Intercession.

Almighty God, the Father of all mankind, who hath commanded us to make intercession for all men, hear us while we pray: That it may please Thee to purge our political life of every evil that may keep back the people from the highest measure of virtue and happiness, to inspire us with calmness and self-restraint, and the endeavor to get Thy will done everywhere upon the earth;

That it may please Thee to bless all classes of the people and so to turn the hearts of men toward each other that the spirit of caste may be destroyed, that all unjust and needless inequalities may disappear, and that the fair brotherhood of men, which Thy Son came to establish, may exist among us of a truth;

That it may please Thee to regard with Thy favor the commerce of our country, so that men everywhere may be in their transactions, upright and honorable, in their workmanship, conscientious and thorough, and that dishonesty and avarice and selfishness may speedily cease;

That it may please Thee to guide all those who study the laws of the land, that they may give wise and just advice to men in their dealings with one another; to give grace to those who humbly search out Thy works, and mark the wisdom in which thou hast made them all; and to help all writers of books and newspapers, and all who mould the thoughts and opinions of men, that they may be lovers of that which is pure and good, and use all their powers in the cause of truth and righteousness;

That it may please Thee to bless the city in which we live; may our first men be our wisest and best; may knowledge, virtue and religion grow in our midst; and may we all so cultivate the spirit of fairness and charity that our religious views may not bitterly divide us, nor our politics sharply part us, nor our tactics dishonor us, nor our conflicts leave us unkind;

That it may please Thee to pity and bless the poor and sick in our workhouses and hospitals; the afflicted in our asylums; the sufferers in their own homes; and to guide through death to a better life all who are appointed to die.

The God of the Living.

God of the living, in whose eyes Unveiled Thy whole creation lies, All souls are Thine; we must not say That those are dead who pass away; From this our world of sense set free, Our dead are living unto Thee.

Not spilt like water on the ground, Not wrapped in dreamless sleep profound, Not wandering in unknown despair, Beyond Thy voice, Thine arm, Thy care; In life, in joy, in peace they be Not dead, but living unto Thee.

Thy word is true, Thy will is just; To Thee we leave them, Lord, in trust, And thank Thee for the love which gave Thy Son to fill a human grave, That none might fear the world to see Where all are living unto Thee.

O Breather into man of breath, O Holder of the keys of death, O Giver of the life within, Save us from death, the death of sin; That body, soul and spirit be For ever living unto Thee.

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