

Sunday Reading.

An Answered Prayer.

"Oh, give me a message of quiet," I asked in my morning prayer; "For the turbulent trouble within me is more than my heart can bear. Around there is strife and discord, And the storms that do not cease And the whirl of the world is on me— Thou only canst give me peace."

I opened the old, old Bible, And looked at a page of psalms, Till the wintry sea of my trouble Was smoothed by its summer calms; For the words that have helped so many, And the ages have seemed more dear, Seemed new in their power to comfort As they brought me my word of cheer, Like music of solemn singing, These words came down to me— "The Lord is slow to anger, And of mercy great is he; Each generation praiseth His work of long renown, The Lord upholdeth all that fall, And raiseth the bowed down."

That gave me the strength, I wanted I knew that the Lord was nigh; All that was making me sorry Would be better by and by; I had but to wait in patience, And keep at my Father's side, And nothing would really hurt me Whatever might betide. —Marianne Farningham.

For the Christian Messenger.

Contemplating Calvary.

BY GREME GREY.

One reason why we should cultivate the habit of thinking about the cross of Christ arises from the fact that the cross is peculiarly a place of suffering. It is a place of triumph; it is the place where a mightier work than the creation of a thousand worlds was completed; it is the grand central point in all history—the point from which radiates all light for humanity. But all this is true of the cross only because it was a place of suffering. There the Man of Sorrows suffered in our stead; there he was "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities."

A frequent contemplation of the cross as a place of suffering will be profitable for two reasons. First, it will tend to prevent our hearts from becoming hard. With advancing years and multiplying cares comes a tendency toward coldness, and a tardiness in responding to calls which ought to awaken our tenderest sympathies. The tender part of our nature seems to become seared as with a hot iron, and we are not sufficiently emotional. The peril of souls, the anxiety of sinners, the trials of saints, move us only a little. The necessity for avoiding such a state of mind is apparent. It is selfish to a large degree, and too consonant with worldly indifference. It has no part in the spirit of Christ. But if we often contemplate the cross, and earnestly endeavor to realize the scene of the crucifixion, it will not be possible for our feelings to become thus hard and cold. The soil will be watered by showers of sorrowful sympathy, and warmed by God-given love for the lovely sufferer. From Calvary we will go eagerly to the Bethanies of earth, to the sorrowful processions coming forth from the Nains, and will seek all other places where there is need of a warm heart and a helping hand.

Again, great benefit may result from such contemplation, because it will show us how trifling are the sufferings which we endure for Christ's sake. We go through no fiery furnaces, are tied to no blazing stake, are subjected to no inquisitorial "boot," and are comparatively free from the molestations of the scoffing and contemptuous. But, nevertheless, we cannot serve Christ without some denial of the flesh and the will of the heart.

"Beloved self must be denied, Ambition, envy, lust, and pride."

To yield our way, and walk in God's way; to surrender our plans for His sake; to discharge promptly and humbly the manifold duties attaching to a profession of godliness, involves some mental sufferings, at least. But what are these compared with Christ's sufferings? What is our cross compared with His? What are the slight scoffs we bear when viewed side by side with the bitter railings to which He was exposed? What is the slight darkness

into which we sometimes plunge when compared with that which added pangs to His agonized soul as He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. As we view Christ's agonies, His patience rebukes our murmurings; and we adore while we sing,— "O happy day, that fixed my choice, On Thee, my Saviour and my God; Well may this glowing heart rejoice, And tell its raptures all abroad."

The Gospel in Siam.

Siam is an intensely interesting country. Its elephants are famous, and are said to be the largest in the world. Like other Eastern countries, Siam is subject to a pure despotism, and its sovereign is regarded with superstitious reverence. Buddhism is the State religion. Every male inhabitant is compelled to serve three months in a monastery, after which he may return to his secular employment. But, though the authority of the King is supreme over all pagodas, the priesthood, which numbers over 100,000, is supported by the free-will offerings of the people, in return for which the priests profess to atone for the trespasses of the laity. The King of Siam has become the patron of American (Presbyterian) Missions. It appears that he has given 1,000,000 to one of their schools for girls, and has appointed the Rev. S. G. McFarland, D. D., principal of a royal college he has founded for the sons of princes and nobles. Something like an Edict of Toleration is in force, and thus encouraged, the missionaries have formed seven churches. The converts are numerous. Some 300 have been made out of a population of 5,000,000. Three missionaries, seven ladies, and one physician are prosecuting the good work in Siam. The Bible has been translated into the language of the country, and from the seed scattered broadcast a harvest will one day be reaped. The patronage of the missionaries by the King does not seem to interfere with his fidelity to Buddhism. He holds between two opinions, or rather helps both Christian missionaries, and heathen priests. Instability is marked on the missionary enterprise in Siam. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."

Manners in the Pew.

Reverence for the sanctuary, as the place where we go to meet and worship God, should induce quiet and decorous behavior while there. Most people would be intolerant of levity in God's house, if they thought of the place and the purpose, and regarded them in the proper light. Even choirs, which, as everybody knows—often invite criticism by their frivolity, would be ashamed to look over their music in prayer-time, write notes to each other, or exchange glances and whisper audibly, if they remembered, each young gentleman and lady individually, that they were in the court of the King. It is forgetfulness of the day, of the place and of the object, which induces presumptuous and irreverent demeanor in church on the Sabbath.

The noisy way in which many people put their hymn-books in the rack, at the conclusion of the hymn, is an offense against good taste. The sweet echoes of the song or psalm have hardly died away, when presto! there is, as it were, a rattle of musketry all over the building. The innocent books go, slam-bang, into their places, as though they were projectiles which their owners were bound to throw as far as possible.

Taking out watches, and scanning them during the sermon, is another gross piece of rudeness. No one would dream of consulting a watch during the pastor's personal call at his home. It is equally unpardonable to manifest impatience of the pulpit, and indifference to the message spoken therefrom,—regarding the impatience and the indifference simply as a breach of courtesy.*

Donning cloaks, furs, and overcoats during the doxology and benediction, as some people do, is another infringement.

*This remark may not apply to the churches in Halifax, seeing that on the firing of the gun at 12 o'clock at the Citadel, every person is accustomed to look at his watch to see if it is correct, on Sunday at church as well as on week days at other places.—Ed. C. M.]

ment of property. The whole service demands the attention of the congregation; and, during its continuance, the edifice should not be turned into a dressing-room.

Making a frantic rush for the door, the instant the minister has pronounced the final Amen, is a bit of indiscretion seldom seen in Episcopal churches, but too frequently witnessed in those of other Protestant denominations. One would suppose the building to be on fire, noticing the haste with which the occupants leave it. How much better a decent pause, a moment of silence, and then a restrained and unhurried movement through the hallowed aisles and out of the pleasant portals into the world outside.

Love for our special place of worship is as natural and as proper as love for our own homes. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning." The more dearly we cherish the house of prayer, the more chary let us be of doing aught that shall diminish our sense of its worthiness, and our feeling of the dignity of the service there performed.—Christian Intelligencer.

Bible Reading.

We are not now speaking of that modern church service which consists of attaching various Scripture texts to a theme and giving an exhortation upon each, but of the literal reading of God's word in the public service. It ought to be well done. The words are familiar and the thoughts are familiar, and there is no excuse for its being ill done. And yet, if any service in God's house, as a general thing, is made of no effect through being poorly done, this is that service.

The Scripture reading is sometimes placed among the preliminaries; and as a preliminary it is gone through with. We have sometimes listened to a man, whose oratorical powers were of a very high order, hesitating and stumbling in his speech for the first fifteen minutes or so of his address, until he came to the heart of his theme, and then—resisted a eloquence. His preliminary was weak, his after-speech powerful. So it is very often with the preliminary, the Scripture reading, and the sermon, the after-speech. A man will read God's word as if it were a perfunctory thing set down upon the list of services. He will go so read that God's word makes no impression upon the people who listen, and he himself apparently is unaffected thereby. But when he begins upon the manuscript outspread before him, all is changed; the flash of the eye, the play of the countenance, the tone of voice now make speech alive which before was dead. We submit, God's word should be read as effectively as the preacher's manuscript. It is no preliminary, it is God speaking, and the heart of the service.

How to attain to excellence in this manifestly important part of the service of God's House is a question with a great many. We have no special suggestions to offer; perhaps it would not become us so to speak. We have this to say however, which may be taken for what it is worth: If the Bible reading ranks in importance with the sermon reading; if the passage for public reading in the sanctuary is studied for delivery as faithfully as the manuscript; if the thought of God upon the printed page is mastered as thoroughly as the thought of man upon the written, there can be no conceivable reason why God's own word should not be rendered as effectively as man's.—Canadian Baptist.

Gospel for Children.

The Interior remarks, "The gospel for children, of necessity, should have a narrower range than that designed for manhood. The latter needs the principles of religion applied to a score of business, social and moral, and even intellectual interests that do not touch the sphere of a child's life. In the course of a well sustained argument on the relations of religion, for example, to questions of public morals, it would be extremely difficult to introduce a portion fitted for the children, without at the same time a failure to enlist the children, and such a break in the argument as to peril the interests of adults. Unquestionably a large part of the

discussion of the pulpit is not in close connection with the simple life of childhood, and cannot be made so except by hazarding the discussion. The direct way of getting at an audience is the best way, and while it is true that a certain class of themes admits of an application so wide as to take in all classes of hearers, yet, in general, if the preacher wants the attention of children, he must not reach them by a tangent from his subject, but by having his subject, in all its circle, fitted to their capacity and condition and addressed directly to their minds."

Speak to the Stranger.

Some years ago, on leaving home for the first long separation from the families scenes of youth, I found myself an entire stranger in a strange city quite remote from the scenes of my earliest life. I soon found my way to a church and, presenting my letter, became one of them. The bookstore which I frequented was owned by one of the deacons, and I sometimes called at the parsonage, but in the course of two years not one member of that church came forward to greet me and become acquainted in the name of the Master.

From this I went to a larger city, and there, too, I looked for a church home. I was a working-woman and my time was much occupied. The church was at the time without a pastor, and excepting two or three persons where I boarded, and perhaps two with whom professional duties led me to be associated, I made no acquaintances there. I went into the place of worship on the Sabbath, and when the service ended I walked out, receiving not a glance, nod, or word of recognition from any one.

When I went into the evening prayer-meeting in the middle of the week, weary, discouraged, lonely, wishing for the restful sympathy of these people, hungering for the human aid our mutual relations might have brought me, I found only the Helper to whom my heart called. Was it a wonder that faith grew dim after a while? Is it a wonder that the cold tide of indifference was followed by the great waves of black unbelief which came surging in after it?

I know another little church, where as a stranger many a hand was extended me in his name. Now, though far away, though scarcely well acquainted with many of its members, in the dark-est hours I find some little messenger often floating to me, seeming to bring the spirit of that entire church with it; and, were I to write an epistle to that church it would only be this: "Little children, love one another." But the spirit of the Master's words they have heard. The Lord loves them!

I have written this to urge everywhere that we see to it there are no strangers left in our church, to feel that not one of God's people cares a thought for his welfare or spiritual growth. In all our large cities there is a mass of moving humanity, men and women who have left their homes at the very verge of childhood, thrown out to drift or struggle along upon the world's tossing billows, and it may be that, entering into the house of worship many of them may meet the first true earnest greeting from a kindly heart that has been given for years. Shall we let them go away uncheered?—Advance.

A RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER.—Give up many things before you give up your religious newspaper. If any one that ought to take such a paper does not, I hope some one to whom the circumstance is known will volunteer the loan of this to him, directing his attention particularly to this article.

Who is he? A professor of religion, and not take a religious newspaper? A member of the visible Church, and voluntarily without the means of information as to what is going on in the Church. A follower of Christ, praying daily, as taught by his Master, "thy kingdom come," and yet neither knowing, nor caring to know what progress that kingdom is making.

But I must not fail to ask if this person takes a secular newspaper. Oh, certainly he does. He must know what is going on in the world, and how else is he to know it? It is pretty clear then that he takes a deeper inter-

est in the world than he does in the Church; and this being the case, it is not difficult to say where his heart is. How can a professor of religion answer for discrimination in favor of the world? Or how defend himself against the charges it involves? He cannot do it, and he had better not try, but go or write immediately for some good religious newspaper; and be certain of paying for it; let him pay in advance. There is a satisfaction when one is reading an interesting paper to reflect that it is paid for. But perhaps you take a paper and are in arrears for it. Now suppose you were the publisher, and the publisher was one of your subscribers, and in arrears to you, what would you think he ought to do in that case? I just ask the question. I don't care about the answer.—Dr. Nevins.

John Johnson Everywhere.

A Baptist pastor at Charlotte, North Carolina, got along with his church very smoothly for several years, and not until after a man named John Johnson was received into membership did the good pastor find cause of uneasiness and annoyance. At length his patience was worried out, and he resolved to seek another field of labor.

He came north to Richmond, Virginia, and there told to Dr. Jeter, his reason for desiring to leave his people. The Doctor advised him to return, saying, "I have a John Johnson in my church, but I pay no attention to his criticisms of my sermons, or his fault-finding at my remissness in not making so many visits to his family as they ought to receive. There is no vacant pastorate here or in Virginia, so far as I know."

The good man declined the advice given, and at his request Dr. Jeter gave him a letter of introduction to Dr. Staughton of Washington, in which he made a sly reference to John Johnson. When the interview was had, Dr. Staughton repeated Dr. Jeter's advice, adding that he, too, had in his church, a John Johnson who made him more trouble than all the other members put together. He did not know of any vacancy to which he could recommend him, but if he concluded to go further north he would give him a letter to Dr. Brantly, of Philadelphia. This was done, and the cue was given to the Philadelphia divine.

At Philadelphia the good man found another John Johnson was annoying Dr. Brantly, who gave him a letter to Dr. Cone, at New York. There he found the same state of things, and took a letter to Dr. Gano at Providence. There was no escape from a John Johnson, who was constantly a thorn in the flesh to Dr. Gano, who sent him to Boston with a letter to Dr. Baldwin. That shrewd man told him there was a vacancy just then at Salem, but there was a John Johnson in the Church who had been the cause of removing the late pastor.

Then it flashed upon the pulpit seeker that there was in every church a John Johnson, and he enjoyed highly the ruse practised upon him by the eminent pastors who had greeted him cordially and entertained him hospitably. On the whole, he thought the John Johnson in his church might be the least obnoxious in his Church of all the men of that name, and he returned to his people, among whom he continued his ministry acceptably and successfully until it was closed by the infirmities of old age.

MORAL.—Never try to get away from John Johnson.—Ballston Journal.

How not to help the Church.

Seldom attend the Prayer and Conference Meetings. Never take part. The excitement would be too much for your nerves, and the intellectual effort might seriously affect the brain.

If it is more convenient to attend than to stay away—if you are bound to come, leave happiness and sunshine and kindness at home. Prayer-meetings are for people of sour dispositions and long faces.

Make preparations for all church services. Instead of reading, praying or singing, read every item in the Sunday papers.

Keep well informed of what is going on. Be sure everything is according to your mind.

If anything is proposed that isn't to your liking, oppose it. Kill it. Stick to your own point of view. Everybody else is wrong. They must be.

Declare you will never submit. You will unite with another church—you know you are right.

Talk of the joys of brotherly love, the beauty of harmony, then stir up every little spark until it becomes a conflagration.

Dwell much on the unfaithfulness of the brethren, the minister, and do not forget the great duty of constantly finding fault and grumbling.

These rules never fail. Follow them, and soon you may read with joy, "This house to let."

Good can buy nearly everything in this world except that which a man wants most, viz., happiness.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

France.

Paris, Nov. 13th, 1882.

Not only enter the unforeseen generally happen in our country, but at times its records vibrate between facts and myths. Be it whether exaggeration has swollen our two grave incidents into portentous events, or there is a widely ramified and rechio conspiracy that bodes peril to the Government and danger to the Republic, is not very clear. Probably the former. There has been a serious panic—a "dynamite epidemic" in France, but, seemingly, no adequate cause for it. The attack upon a church at Montceau by a body of aggrieved miners, and the attempt to destroy a restaurant at Lyons—both by means of dynamite—were its exciting causes; Each of these conclusions has been suggested by the issue of a multitude of incendiary letters in Lyons and Paris threatening with destruction the bourgeoisie throughout France. These anonymous missives, which may have been sent by the clerical or Monarchical enemies of the Republic as well as by anarchists, having been written in very excellent French, have had the desired effect. In Lyons there has been a perfect panic among the respectable classes, and even in this city great uneasiness for a time prevailed. The Government, as became the guardians of order, have sent a garrison to Montceau, strengthened the military force at Lyons, and taken precautions against the reckless sale of dynamite. Unfortunately, these can do little to restrain the speculators and adventurers who gave the first blow to the prosperity of Lyons, and are now trying to make a profit out of a revolutionary bugbear. Evil influences of various kinds are always active enough in France; but the upper section of the working classes is distinctly averse to an alarmist agitation that points to another "saviour of society."

The Anarchists have not continued their revolutionary exploits except in so far as incendiary speeches and disorderly meetings are concerned. At Lyons and at Maacon arrests are still being made, and the public alarm is gradually subsiding. In this city the Anarchists distinguished themselves by their disorderly conduct on Sunday last at an electoral meeting at the Cirque Fernando. It was with difficulty, and only after a hand to hand fight between the "Clemenists" and the "Anarchists," that Dr. Clemenceau obtained a hearing. The violence and disorder of this meeting were symptomatic, and the various incidents of it are gravely occupying the attention of the Minister of the Interior. What a difficult thing liberty is to understand! However, in order to be on the safe side, the Government has published in the Journal Officiel a severe decree relative to the manufacture and sale of dynamite.

The cabinet makers' strike is developing. Masters and men have held several meetings, but no means of arranging matters have been found. The upholsterers have placed several leading houses on the black list.

The Boulevards, on Wednesday afternoon, were infested with individuals carrying parcels of small prints with a black border, and shouting "Death of the Empress Eugenie; her Agony and her Last Words." The streets at the time were crowded with holidaymakers, this being the Festival of All Saints, so that the vendors of this unblushing and malicious piece of false news probably drove a roaring trade. Only a few days ago men were selling what purported to be an account of the blowing up of the Church of the Sacred Heart at Montmartre. These persons might surely be put down as a common nuisance, even if they do not strictly come within the provision of the new Press Act.