

Sunday Reading.

Psalms XLVI.

What other refuge half so sweet,
What other strength so strong;
What help so near to weary feet,
That flee from grief and wrong?

Madagascar and the French.

The work of missions in Madagascar
as related in the visits of the late Mr.
Ellis, and successively reported in the
accounts of the London Missionary
Society, have deeply interested all who
desire the advancement of the Kingdom
of Christ. We have read of the early
struggles and reverses; how, in 1836,
persons suspected of being Christians
were required to prove their innocence
by drinking the poisonous Tangena
water, how, hunted into dreary caverns,
solitary forests, and abandoned to
slavery, disciples of Christ found in
hardships and miseries ample fulfilment
of the words "In the world ye shall
have tribulation"; how, in martyr suffer-
ing, fourteen were buried from the
rock, eighteen cruelly put to death in
different ways, and four were burnt for
declining to take the idolatrous oath.
We have marked how persecution, as
of old, over-reached itself; how by
faithful endurance attention was drawn
to Christianity, and the uncomplaining
spirit of patience won upon others, and
led them to seek the fellowship of the
smitten. Clouds returned after the
rain, yet the marvellous successes of
late years have been an abundant re-
compense for money and labor, a grand
answer to prayer, and Madagascar has
formed one of the chief scenes of the
efforts of the noble society, who
have there thirty missionaries, and a
large number of churches and members.
In short, Madagascar stands in the first
rank of mission enterprise, and attracts
the sympathy and earnest wishes of all
true lovers of Christ.
It is with regret, therefore, that we
have heard of difficulties of a new kind
coming upon that interesting island.
Dark and sinister measures loom in the
horizon that are, if unchecked, ominous
of evil. The facts, so far as reported
are briefly these: Madagascar is threat-
ened by the shadow of French aggres-
sion, which appears wishful to intrude
its interference there as it lately has in
other parts of the world. Claim is made
to certain territory on the north-west
coast which had been conquered by the
Hova Sovereign Radama I. in 1824,
and ceded to France in 1839. It might
well be imagined that this claim would
never be enforced, as, from the last date
until the present time, no attempt has
been made by the French to urge any
rights, nor was any reference made to
such in the Franco-Malagassy Treaty
of 1866. But the unexpected is often
the thing that happens, and so, through
the boasting of a Sakalava chief of the
Queen's flag, at which the French took
offense, the spirit of grasping has made
a demand. So far do they seem dis-
posed to press their claim, that M.
Grévy refuses to see an embassy sent
by the Island Government, unless they
yield, as preliminary to further exactions, the right alleged on the one hand
but strenuously denied on the other.
Such a claim if not resisted may have
unhappy issues, especially as affecting
mission interests and the progress of
Protestantism among the people.
Who does not know that Jesuit influ-

ence is promoted by France, and that
in many quarters its pernicious hin-
derances have blocked the way of
advancement? It may be true that
infidel French statesmen, consuls, and
naval commanders care not one fraction
for Jesuit or Romish priests as such;
but they will gladly welcome all the
intrigues they can for furthering French
interests; and Jesuits, on the other hand,
while detesting the atheism of French
officials, will use them in any way to
secure advancement to their Church;
and between them they will scruple at
no means, fair or foul, to crush all civil
and religious liberty. In Tahiti, French
conquest has been used for Jesuit bene-
fit, so that for years no English Protes-
tant missionary has been allowed to live
in the island, except one who is chaplain
to the foreign residents. In the Loyalty
Islands and the New Hebrides, the
position of Protestant missionaries is be-
coming more and more difficult, and one
of the latest communications from the
Rev. J. Jones, of Maré, was to say that
he had received a kind of ultimatum from
the French Government of New Caledonia
threatening his removal. Add to this
that Mr. Ellis, and others, of Lifu and
Uvea, have suffered; mission property
has been destroyed, and inoffensive
people shot down by French marines;
while in Eastern Polynesia, only within
the last few months, the French have
been visiting all the islands, threatening
the people, and telling them that England
has agreed to their becoming French.
What that will mean for Protestantism
is clear enough, by what is done in the
Gambier Islands of the Tramotu Archipelago,
where no Protestant missionary is
allowed to teach at all. The tendency
of aggression in Madagascar, therefore,
if allowed to proceed, we may fairly
anticipate. Certainly malignant opposi-
tion would arise and much of the work
of the past would be destroyed.
It should be remembered in review-
ing this, that all assumed French rights
in Madagascar, previous to 1810,
passed into English hands on the con-
quest of Mauritius and Bourbon, of
which the three or four military posts
on the east coast of the Island were
considered as dependencies; and they
were made over by us to Radama in
1820, together with supplies of arms and
ammunition, by which he was able to
establish his supremacy over the other
tribes, as one of the conditions of his
relinquishing the slave trade. Further,
it is an undoubted fact that for several
years past, since the time when the late
Earl Clarendon was Foreign Secretary
there has been an understanding be-
tween the English and French Govern-
ments that each nation should respect
the independence of Madagascar. This
was referred to in some questions put
to Sir Charles Dilke in February last
year in the House of Commons by Mr.
Henry Lee, M. P., and this good
understanding was apparently undisturbed.
Such action, then, as appears to be
contemplated by France ought to be
resisted in all the methods that protest,
mediation, and remonstrance can devise.
English Liberalism ought not to stand
idly by and suffer the hand of greed to
accomplish its selfish designs, nor permit
civil and religious freedom to be
curtailed. These things ought not to
be. It is not a moment too early to
take steps that shall be appropriate, for
pressure upon the present embassa-
y in France may have disastrous
effects. Either by way of public or
special representation to Lord Granville
and the Prime Minister a public feeling
should be sought to be created on the
point, and the help of the Government
in defence of the right enlisted. We
hope that those who have influence will
bring it to bear, and that our friends
of the society whose anxieties are so justly
excited may find that sympathy and co-
operation which their great and divinely
blessed work deserves. All Christians
also should remember in whose hands
the hearts of men are, and seek, where
it may be so effectively exerted, inter-
vention that may check the plans of
evil. We shall be gratified to find that,
attention being called to the subject,
endeavours may be made that shall be
successful and to the satisfaction of
those concerned.—London Freeman.

An Enemy turned into a Friend.
During Luther's journey a noble
knight of the vicinity, learning that he
was to tarry at a certain place, and
yearning for the honours and emolu-
ments that would accrue could he be
safely caught up and transported to
Rome, resolved to hazard the attempt.
He ordered his armed retinue to pre-
pare hastily, for there was no time to
be lost, the aspiring noble being urged
and commended to the task by his con-
fessor, who assured him that he would
be doing a good work; and would save
many souls. He set out at early dawn,
making his way along the picturesque
Berge-Strasse, or mountain road, that
skirts the forests of the Odenwald, be-
tween Darmstadt and Heidelberg. Ar-
riving at the gates of Miltenberg in the
evening, he found the city illuminated,
and the town itself full of people, who
had come thither to hear and see
Luther.
More indignant than ever was the
noble knight; indignation grew to rage
when, arriving at his hotel, the host
greeted him, "Well, well, Sir Count,
has Luther brought you here too?
Pity you are too late. You should
have heard him. The people cannot
cease praising him." In no mood for
eulogy, the knight sought the privacy
of his room. Awakened in the morn-
ing by the matin bell of the chapel,
sleep had assuaged his ire, and his
thoughts were at home, where he had
left an infant daughter at the point
of death. As he drew aside his curtain
he saw the flicker of a candle in the
window opposite, and waiting a moment
heard a deep, manly voice utter the
words, "In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy
Ghost. Amen." He heard the voice
further continuing in a strong, fervent
petition for the whole Christian church
and the victory of the holy gospel over
sin and the world.
Being a devout man, his interest was
aroused, and donning his armour he
enquired of the landlord who that earnest
man was that he heard across the
street. "That earnest man," responded
the landlord, "is the arch heretic
Luther himself. Has your grace a
message for him?" "Ay," said the
knight, "but I will deliver it with my
own lips," and with a dubious shake of
the head he crossed the street, entered
the house, and in a moment stood before
the object of his search. Luther in-
sistently arose from his chair, sur-
prised and not a little disconcerted by
the sudden appearance of a stalwart
armed knight, perhaps having an un-
pleasant suspicion of his errand. "What
is the object of this visit?" enquired
Luther. Twice and thrice he repeated
his question before receiving a reply.
At length the knight, having recovered
somewhat from the spell upon him,
said, "Sir, you are far better than I.
God forgive me for intending to harm
you. I came here to make you a
prisoner; you have made a prisoner of
me instead. It is impossible for a man
who can pray as you pray to be an
enemy of the holy church, a heretic."
"God be praised," said Luther, now
relieved from his suspicions; "it is his
Word and Spirit that has subdued you,
not mine, though I may be chosen to
bring his word to honour in Christen-
dom. Go now your way, therefore, in
peace, my lord. He that hath begun
a good work in you will perform it to
Christ's coming. If it be God's will,
you shall yet behold miracles; how the
Lord will break many swords like
yours, and cut the spear in sunder, as
he has to-day." Convinced and con-
firmed, the knight lost no time in
making his way homeward, atured
by his retinue, now still more curious
to know the object of this hasty expedi-
tion. Arriving at the bedside of his
daughter, he found her now conva-
lescent and out of danger, and falling
on his knees he thanked God for all that
had happened. A few years later,
when Luther confessed his faith before
Charles V., among the assembled nobles
who stood on Luther's side was this
knight, who had once thought to over-
throw and destroy him.—Sword and
Trowel.

Poverty is uncomfortable, as I can
testify; but nine times out of ten the
best thing that can happen to a young
man is to be tossed overboard and com-
pelled to sink or swim for himself. In
all my acquaintance, I never knew a
man to be drowned who was worth
saving.—James A. Garfield.

Jacob's partiality for his Son
Joseph.
'Israel loved Joseph more than all
his children, because he was the son of
his old age.' Gen. xxxvii. 3. Joseph
was born when Jacob was ninety years
old; but as Benjamin was born sixteen
years later, this was a strong reason
for his being loved more than Joseph.
The Hebrew text only says, 'because
he was the son of the elders,' or son-
tore; that is, because he was their
disciple. Onkelos and the ancient trans-
lators of the Chaldee, Persian, Arabic,
and Samaritan, translate it 'a wise and
prudent son,' old age being often men-
tioned as a token of prudence and
sagacity. It is right in the MS. It
means that when he was a child he was
grave and discreet, as if he had been
an old man, and wise as a senator;
wisdom being a quality that makes
parents love their children, and prefer
them to their brethren who are not so
wise.—Mistranslated Passages in our
Bible, by Rev. J. H. Murray.

The Literature of the Gallows.
It seems shocking, almost ludicrous,
to speak of a young man going through
a course of reading as a preparation for
the gallows, and yet it is literally true
that impure reading has, before now,
landed its victim on the last stage of
the road to ruin. In the year 1829 a
murderer named Stratford was executed
at Norwich, and the following is the
testimony, given at the time by a Chris-
tian friend who visited the convict in
prison: Again and again he assured me
that his falling into vicious and criminal
practices was the consequence of his
having imbibed mental poison from bad
books—and the same assertion he re-
peated to several other persons. An
infidel publication, long since notorious
for its fatal influences over the human
mind, became the companion of his
private hours. He read it, and adopted
its principles. He rejected the Holy
Scriptures, looked upon their contents
as a cunningly devised fable, and to use
his own expressions, gave up his faith
in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus was
he left without compass or rudder,
whereby to steer his course aright
through the ocean of life.—Sword and
Trowel.

The Church began to sing at the in-
stitution of the Supper, when, before
that little circle separated, our Lord
Himself joined in the hymn, whose
rich melody had scarcely died away
before the anguish of Calvary began.
And since that hour the singing has
never ceased; but in gloomy cata-
combs, within dungeon walls, beneath
vaulted domes of cathedrals, in humble
sanctuaries, and on plain and mountain,
wherever believers have met together,
under bright skies or in the dark and
stormy days, the songs of Zion have
been a comfort, a strength, an inspira-
tion. And the prayer-meeting must be
brightened by hymns of praise, for
much of our work for Christ is too
burden of all joy and enthusiasm, and
we need the cheer of praise. The
English plough-boy sings as he drives
his team; the Scotch Highlander sings
as he labours in glen or moor; the
fisherman of Naples sings as he rows;
and the vintager of Sicily has his
evening hymn. When Napoleon came
to a pass in the Alps where the rocks
seemed impassable for the ammunition
waggons, he bade the leader of the
band strike up an inspiring march, and
over the rocks on a wave of enthusiasm
went the heavy waggons. Earthly
battlefields have resounded with praises
from bleeding Christian soldiers, and
pain has been forgotten as the lips of
the dying have sung, "When I can
read my title clear," and "How sweet
the name of Jesus sounds." Martin
Luther has well said, "The devil cannot
bear singing," and we know that
David's harp drove the evil spirit out
of King Saul. If Christians sang more,
temptations would have less power;
the feet would be lighter in the sowing
and reaping; there would be more sunlight
in our daily pathways; and the Church
would easily surmount the giant rocks
of seeming impossibilities. Fill the
prayer-meeting with songs of praise,
and it cannot be dull, nor lacking in
the fruits of comfort and inspiration.
Not a hymn of four or five verses, but
one verse at a time—thrown in between
positions and remarks.—Rev. A. E.
Kittredge, D. D.

A Chinaman's Faith in Prayer.
BY REV. GEORGE L. MASON.
At Si-u, twenty miles south of Ning-
po, we have a church member, baptized
by Mr. Goddard, whose name is Yin-
kwong, which means "wisdom and
light." Though the man is poor and
unlearned, the name is fitting; for he is
well known as an upright, downright,
conscientious Christian. A marked
characteristic is his simple and practi-
cal confidence that God answers prayer
—as the following facts illustrate:—
Last year, having hired a piece of
ground, and planted some beans, rabbits
began to dig up the seed. Adjoining
fields of his unbelieving neighbors were
ravaged in the same way, Yin-kwong
betook himself to prayer. The ravages
ceased entirely in his field. The neigh-
bors kept replanting; but, even by
soaking the seed in petroleum, they
could not prevent its being repeatedly
dug up and devoured.
The fields here are usually small
parallelograms, in size from a quarter
to a half acre or more, and separated
from other fields only by narrow foot-
paths. Last year, when the rice-plants
were in blossom, Yin-kwong's little
patch looked very unpromising. The
stalks were shorter and thinner than in
the adjoining fields of his heathen
neighbors. Whereupon they reviled
him, and said his prospect of a meagre
crop was a judgment on him for leaving
his native religion and trusting "a fore-
ign God." He sought refuge in prayer
that God would not let his crop fail.
Later in the season, a blight began to
work in Yin-kwong's field, and also in
another field near by. Yin-kwong
prayed, and the progress of the blight
was arrested; but it continued in an
adjoining field. Finally harvest-time
came, and the believer in God was vin-
dicated before the scoffers. With the
same kind of soil, with the same rain
and sunshine and the same culture,
and reaped at the same time, Yin-
kwong's field produced thirty-three per
cent more grain to the acre than any of
the adjoining fields, though early in the
season the heathen said that the Chris-
tian's crop would be a failure.
After the rice is threshed out by
beating, it is spread out to dry on pieces
of matting about twelve feet square.
Yin-kwong's grain, along with that of
his neighbors, was spread out thus to
dry. A violent wind came, and blew
away not a little of their rice; but Yin-
kwong's was unmoved by the storm.
"This poor man cried, and the Lord
heard him, and saveth him out of all
his troubles."

Inner Life.
That inner life which is best worth
knowing, lies deep down below the
surface imbedded like gold in the solid
rock. To be found it must be diligently
sought. Every young man, therefore,
should be a student. Whether his work
in life be mechanical, commercial or
professional, he must pore over prin-
ciples and familiarize himself with facts.
But, after all, the acquisition of knowl-
edge is chiefly conditioned upon faith.
There is a realm which neither reason
nor observation nor study can explore
and which can only be entered by a
personal faith in Christ. And he who
would know that which he most needs
to know, must eschew his own infinite
in wisdom as well as might. He who
leaves God out of his education can
never attain a right result.—Rev. Dr.
Holmes.

That Old Question.
If you ask me that old question, Why
are good men tried as by fire, their
property destroyed, their homes broken
up, their good names befouled, their
bodies racked by disease? I cannot tell
you if you will not look beyond this life
to the spiritual and eternal. For, if
this life be all, the very least that we
could ask of God would be that He
should see to it that goodness received
its reward here and wickedness its
doom likewise. But we do find an
answer when the Bible tells us. Your
life consisteth not of the abundance of
the things which you possess. Your
life is hid with Christ in God. The
favor of the Lord is better than life, and
His loving kindness than all riches.—
Rev. J. H. Eob.

Dead Heads.
"Dead heads," in the church! How
large the number embraced in this
class! They are well-known. They
seldom come to the prayer or class-
meeting, and only occasionally attend
public worship on the Sabbath, contri-
buting only very little for the support
of the gospel. In the line of finding
fault and stirring up strife they seem to
be quite active. The church cannot
afford to carry them; but how to get
rid of them is the question. Get them
converted, and then they will be right.
Dead in head, they are dead in heart;
they need conversion. Let special
effort be made for their conversion;
none need the work of grace more.

Baptists and Baptism.
BAPTISTS IN IRELAND IN THE 17TH
CENTURY.
In the biography of the Rev. John
Rogers, it is recorded that, about the
year 1651: "The Anabaptists were
now very powerful in Ireland, and Mr.
Thomas Patient, one of their preachers
who had been an army chaplain under
Cromwell, and had settled at Waterford,
created a schism in Rogers' congrega-
tion on the question of adult baptism.
Rogers was willing to concede a great
deal, but he never would allow that it
was necessary to re-baptize those who
had been already baptized as infants.
Patient, on the other hand, and the
Waterford Anabaptists, sent a letter by
the hands of Adjutant-General Allen,
and Captain Vernon to divers of the
Christ Church congregation, urging
them to admit none to communion who
allowed infant baptism: 'The Jews,'