

Sunday Reading.

Not Mine.

BY MRS. JULIA C. R. DORR.

It is not mine to run With eager feet, Along life's crowded ways My Lord to meet.

It is not mine to pour The oil and wine, Or bring the purple robe And linen fine.

It is not mine to break At His dear feet The alabaster-box Of ointment sweet.

It is not mine to bear His heavy cross, Or suffer, for His sake, All pain and loss.

It is not mine to walk Through valleys dim, Or climb far mountain-heights Alone with Him!

He hath no need of me In grand affairs, Where fields are lost or crowns Won unawares.

Yet, Master, if I may Make one pale flower Bloom brighter, for Thy sake, Through one short hour;

If I, in harvest fields Where strong ones reap, May bind one golden sheaf For Love to keep;

May speak one quiet word When all is still, Helping some fainting heart To bear Thy will;

Or sing one high, clear song, On which may soar Some glad soul heavenward, I ask no more!

The Ministry of Song.

BY REV. T. HARLEY.

Two centuries ago Andrew Fletcher a Scotch politician, writing to the Marquis of Montrose, alluded to a very wise man, who believed that if one were permitted to make all the ballads of a nation he need not care who should make the laws

The wide currency which this simple observation has since obtained is sufficient evidence of its wisdom and truth. Laws have accomplished much towards the amelioration of mortal misery, but songs have wrought far more. Even the law of the Lord has possessed a new sweetness when His statutes have been the songs of His people in the house of their pilgrimage. Go wherever we may, in every land and in every language, the genius of melody is a magician whose mystic incantations raise the dormant spirits of departed joys, and people the earth with visitants from a better land. From the matin of the lark and the vesper of the nightingale to the chorus of the saints and the carol of the angels the exuberance of song is the fittest expression of these motions of every living thing.

The English ploughboy sings as he follows the furrows across the field; the Scotch lassie sings as she pursues her pathway along the echoing glen; the blithe Irish lad sings as his jaunting car goes jolting over the rugged road; the Spanish muletter meets the rising morn with a merry canticle; the Sicilian vintager, within sight of Etna's lurid glare, hums his evening hymn; the fisherman of Naples chants his canzonet, the boat beating time to the tune, as he skims the surface of the beautiful blue bay; the gondolier of Venice warbles his midnight serenade as he glides, spirit-like, among the marble palaces of that matchless city; the Alpine shepherd renders the Swiss valleys vocal with the vibrations of his pastoral; the Canadian raftsmen row down the rapids to the accompaniment of his boatsong; the negro in the cotton patch picks the fleecy staple to the air of his plantation ditty; and the Californian gold-digger drives his pick and spade with the impetus of some familiar glee. The sailor on the watch, the soldier in the bivouac, the belated traveller on the prairie, and the bleeding sufferer on the amputating table, all mitigate the gloom or mollify the pain by the merciful ministry of song.

Ever-blessed ballads of the people! there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard, making new melody in desolate hearts, and adding new feathers to aid the upward flight of poor drooping humanity.

Personal Communion.

In every age it is the men who go up into the mount of most direct personal communion with Christ, whom Christ inspires with his own spirit, and sends down into the plain with a message direct from himself for human hearts. With that message from him they move up and down among their fellows as his servants, guiding the perplexed, helping the weak, comforting the sorrowful, befriending the lonely and the bereaved, and, instrumentally, saving the lost. Thus rise, O man, by faith and prayer, into the mount of direct fellowship with your Lord. Rise into the interior central light of the heavenly vision, that from thence you may come forth into your daily tasks on earth inspired with fresh love, and zeal, and power for your Master's work. May God himself help you thus to work! Then, however humble your lot on earth may be, you will belong in spirit to that divinest brotherhood of men—the men of spiritual vision and power—to whom, under God, we are primarily indebted, not only for all that is spiritually pure and good in the life of the world, but also for all in it that is morally and intellectually progressive.—Christian at Work.

Broken Alabaster Boxes.

BY REV. E. BLAKESLEE.

"She hath done what she could"—Mark xiv. 8.

In the estimation of Christ, Mary's alabaster box of precious ointment was worth most when broken. She was troubled, doubtless, when she heard the disciples murmur, and Judas called her offering a waste. She thought perhaps that she had made a mistake, and wished that her costly gift was back again in an unbroken box. So do we sometimes, when our most costly offerings of love and devotion, of sympathy and self-surrender, are neglected or despised of men. But when Mary caught the Lord's eye, she saw in it naught but love, and when she heard his voice, it declared her deed so worthy that it should be told in all the world and to the end of time.

Let us not mistake. It is only as our alabaster boxes of this world's good are broken in Christ's service that their fragrance becomes treasure laid up in heaven; unbroken, we may cling to them, but they will never get beyond this world any more than do the precious things that are clasped in the cold hands of Egyptian mummies. If our motives have been high and pure, if our service has been loving and true, however much men may criticise, we need not fear but that when we catch the Master's eye it will glow with love, and when we hear his voice, it will speak a "well done" which the eternal ages will remember.

THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH.—Mr. Spurgeon, in referring to the annual meeting of his church, remarks:—The heavy losses suffered by the church during the year in the deaths of two deacons and four elders, and many members, added unusual solemnity to the proceedings of the meeting; but a spirit of devout thankfulness and cheerful hopefulness pervaded the whole assembly. The statistics for the year were as follows:—Increase—by baptism, 267; letter, 116; profession (those who have been previously baptized), 57; restoration, 4. Decrease—by dismissions, 140; persons who joined other churches without letters, 45; names removed for non-attendance, 57; for other causes, 5; emigration, 15; deaths, 65; making a net increase of 117, and bringing up the number of members on the roll to 5,427. It is our joy and honour to be a church in which the working class and the poor abound; but this fact tries our finances sternly. The annual meeting was of the most cheering character. Pastors, officers, and people work for the Lord with a warmheartiness which makes fellowship real and delightful. How grateful we ought to be that, on entering upon the thirtieth year of the same pastorate, the same affection is displayed all around as at the first; and, what is better still, the same blessing rests upon the labours of the church!

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson IV.—APRIL 22, 1883.

SAUL PREACHING CHRIST.

Acts ix. 19-31.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 20-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He who persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he persecuted."—Gal. i. 23.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson, Acts ix. 19-31. T. Persecutor and Preacher, Gal. i. 11-24. W. Rejection at Jerusalem, Acts xxii. 17-30. T. Preaching Christ, Acts xxvi. 19-32. F. Perils for Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 21-33. S. Blinded Jews, 2 Cor. ch. iii. S. The Gospel Paul Preached, 1 Cor. xv. 1-11.

THE JEWS REJECT THE TESTIMONY OF SAUL.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Persecutor Becomes a Preacher, Vss. 19-22, 29. II. Rejected at Damascus, Vss. 23-25. III. Rejected at Jerusalem, Vss. 26-30.

QUESTIONS.—Vss. 19-22, 29.—Where was Saul? Whose company did he seek? What did he do at once do? With what effect on himself? On opposers? On all who heard?

Vss. 23-25.—In what capacity did Saul labor at first? Where did he soon go? Gal. i. 17. What for? What did he labor after his return to Damascus? How did Saul escape?

Vss. 26-30.—Why were the disciples at Jerusalem afraid of Saul? Who introduced him to the apostles? How did the Jews at Jerusalem treat Saul? What did this show?

Scripture Searchings.—Find proofs that Jesus is Son of God and Messiah, in the Old Testament, as to his birth—his divine nature—his atoning death.

NOTES.—I. Saul in Damascus, (Vss. 19-25).

Vs. 19-21.—Received meat. New Version, took food. Concerning the fasting, see vs. 9. Certain days. How long, it is not known, but probably only a few days. With the disciples. In contact with them in a far different way from what either he or they had anticipated, and enjoying the first blessedness of Christian association. He preached Christ, that Jesus, who was the Christ, was the Son of God. Peter had preached that Jesus was the servant of God, and that he was exalted at the right hand of God, and made both Lord and Christ; but Jesus' own personal glory and Godhead are here fully proclaimed by Paul as the foundation of the gospel which he preached. In the synagogues. He had set out from Jerusalem to use the synagogues for a purpose just the opposite (vs. 2).

Vs. 22.—Increased the more in strength. As all will, who, like Saul, begin at once to testify boldly for Jesus. He increased in the ardor of his convictions, in his clearness of view of divine truth by the study of the Old Testament Scriptures, and by meditation and prayer. Confounded the Jews. He showed a wider and clearer insight into their Scriptures than they had; and quoted passage after passage, comparing the prophecies with the events of Christ's career, and proving that this is very Christ.

Vs. 23-25.—After many days. It is thought that his retirement to Arabia for the "three years" of Gal. i. 17, 18, is included in these many days. The three years are, probably, to be taken according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, which counts the parts of three distinctive years as three years. There he gave himself to study and prayer, and received revelations from the Lord (Gal. i. 11, 12), and then returned to Damascus before going to Jerusalem. See Gal. i. 17, 18, as above. Thus, the more fully equipped, he doubtless began preaching again with still greater power in Damascus, and so enraged the Jews, who were unable to answer him, that they took counsel to kill him. But their laying wait (New Version, plot) was known of Saul through some one friendly to the Christians. Watched the gates. The government in sympathy with, and conniving at the dastardly plot. Let him down by the wall in a basket. See Paul's fuller account of this in 2 Cor. xi. 33.

II. Saul at Jerusalem, (Vss. 26-31.) Vs. 26, 27.—According to Gal. i. 18, the object of Saul's visit to Jerusalem was to see Peter, with whom he stayed fifteen days. Though he did not receive his gospel from the apostles (Gal. i. 12), it was natural that he should desire association with them. Even the Christians hesitated about receiving him, for they were afraid of him, believing that his profession of conversion was false,

and only made to get into their councils to betray them. Barnabas. Spoken of in iv. 36, as a model of self-denial and generous love, in contrast with the covetous Ananias. Brought him to the apostles, i. e., to Peter, and James "the Lord's brother." See Gal. i. 19. The others seem to have been absent. To these he told the story of Saul's conversion, and also how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus, thus fully committing himself to the Christian faith.

Vss. 28-31.—Thus introduced, Saul was in familiar intercourse with the Jerusalem saints during the fifteen days of his stay. And, like as at Damascus, the fire burned within him, and he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians, the Grecian Jews. Jews of foreign birth residing in Jerusalem. To their synagogues, where he had reviled the name of Jesus, he now returned to honor it. Went about to slay him. All the more hating him, because he seemed to them an apostate and renegade. Cesarea. A seaport of the Mediterranean. Rest, i. e., from persecution; owing partly to the conversion of Saul, and partly to the attention of the Jews being at that time engrossed with the attempt of the Emperor Caligula to have his own image set up in the temple of Jerusalem—a matter which, according to Josephus, caused great excitement. Edified. Built up in faith and piety. See Paul's use of the word in 1 Cor. viii. 1; xiv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 11; etc. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and comfort of the Holy Ghost. A beautiful picture of reverent and happy living. What a world of meaning in the word comfort. Were multiplied. Increased in numbers, as a necessary result of such a holy and joyous course.

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

Saul gave evidence of his conversion by seeking the society of Christians; by giving testimony for Christ; by increasing in spiritual strength. These "signs" are for all times.

Saul was fitted by education and ability to begin preaching in the synagogues "straightway." This is not the case with all young converts, but all may begin at once somewhere.

THE YOUNG CONVERT.

Seek Christian Society. Vs. 19-26. Testify for Christ. Vs. 20, 29. Grow in Grace. Increase in Strength. Vs. 22. Be Called to Suffer for Christ's Sake. Vs. 28, 29.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

LESSON THOUGHT.—Walking in the light.

TRUTHS TO BE TAUGHT.—1. Divine light a source of strength. 2. Of deliverance. 3. Of confidence. 4. Of comfort.

Our last lesson taught us the power of God in changing Saul from a wicked persecutor, to an obedient follower of Jesus. Saul had been in great darkness. Suddenly he came into a knowledge of the truth. At once he turned away from his wickedness, and steadily kept in the light of God's love. By that light he obtained strength. How did he get strength? (Read vs. 19 and 22. The people who heard Saul were amazed, we are told. (Read vs. 21). It is always wonderful to see such a great change in a person as that which God makes when we take him into our heart, and walk in his light. Not only Strength, but DELIVERANCE came by the light. Then Saul went to Jerusalem and met more trouble. The disciples were afraid of him, as well they might be, and would not believe that he was a true convert. (Read vs. 25.) Saul went in and out among the disciples without any fear. He had sweet fellowship with them. He spoke boldly in the name of Jesus and reasoned with those who opposed him. (Read vs. 28, 29). Here again we find deliverance from evil. Walking in the light brings comfort. Such comfort always comes to those who truly follow Jesus.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SERVED HIM RIGHT.—On a late Saturday afternoon an amusing scene was witnessed in a street leading from the Old-road, Stepney, London. A costermonger who was standing there selling vegetables was noticed by some women to have a piece of putty underneath the scoop end of the scales he was using, so as to make them weigh very considerably against the purchaser. She communicated her discovery to about a dozen others, and presently the whole bevy made a sudden descent upon the dishonest tradesman, scratching and cuffing him most unmercifully, and compelling him to seek refuge in flight. They then overturned his barrow, and scattered his stock about the road, and it was with some difficulty that his wife managed to save anything from the wreck.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

From India.

BY REV. GEORGE CHURCHILL.

MOOGARDA, Jan. 28, 1883.

Sitting in my tent alone this evening, contrasting a Sunday in our own Christian land, with the Sunday I have just spent in this land of idols and idolatry, it has occurred to me that some of the experiences of the day might be interesting to the readers of the Messenger. Along with this thought however has arisen the query as to whether it was right to spend Sunday evening in this way.

I have settled the matter to my own satisfaction, by asking myself if it would be wrong for me to speak of these things, if I could meet with those, who in our own land at this hour, are meeting together for Christian worship. If I could enjoy the privilege, I would like to speak of what I have seen and heard to-day, in such a way as would arouse and deepen the interest of our people in this work.

My tent is pitched near a large village of two thousand two hundred people. A few words as to how we got here from yesterday's stopping-place may not be amiss, as showing how things are done here. We are only four miles distant from where our tent was pitched yesterday, but it took us from half-past four to half-past nine to make that distance. I had planned to start at three o'clock, but the bandy, that was to have come at twelve, did not come till four. After getting everything packed and the bandies started, I and the native helpers came on ahead to a village on the road. We had visited it in the morning, but had found only the Brahmins at home. The common people were nearly all out at work in the fields. Usually the Brahmins are a very unsatisfactory class to talk with. But I rather gained the favor of these by showing them my watch, my compass and magnet, and also by lifting a heavy round stone which the strong men in the village try to lift for practice.

We had quite a large audience and they listened very well. As we came through the village in the evening, a large crowd of the lower caste people gathered around, and to them we spoke for nearly two hours. While talking the bandies came along, and I ordered one of the village watchmen to go on with these to show the way. Instead of doing so, he sent the bandies on and stopped to go with us. I did not know this till we were ready to start. Then instead of taking us along the same road the bandies had gone, he took us by another, and when after having gone far enough to overtake them, I asked where they were, he said they were far away on another road. Meanwhile the bandy men had taken the wrong road, and when we found them the guide undertook to show us a short cut, which led us into a deep slough and through a miry tank, where one of the bandies stuck fast for a long time. As if this were not enough, he took us by another wrong road and had it not been for some men we found watching their sugar cane, we should have had to stay out in the fields till morning. By the time we got our tents pitched, it was after eleven o'clock and we were all tired enough.

Sunday morning, I sent Kotiah and Kamiah away to one village and taking Suesiah with me, started for another. On our way we had to cross two or three small canals, in one of which, the pony got mired and came very near tumbling me in head-first. The first village visited was near the river. Close upon the bank, which the river is rapidly undermining, we found a large, very old temple. The people could not tell when, or by whom it was built.

The space in front of the holy place or shrine, is raised three or four feet. Upon this raised platform, which is I should think, about thirty feet wide by forty in length, are four rows of carved stone pillars about eight feet high. Upon these pillars are laid stone beams and upon these beams is laid the roof of stone slabs each about two feet wide, by nine or ten feet long. Into this covered space we were allowed to enter followed by a great crowd. Only caste people were allowed to come inside, the pariah standing outside. I commenced by showing my curiosities, such as my watch, pocket compass and magnet, the latter, especially, exciting wonder. This opened the way for the preaching, but for a good while it was hard uphill work. It almost seemed as if the evil spirit worshipped here, had control of the place. After a while, however, the crowd lessened, and those who remained listened well. It was the plain simple story of salvation that they heard. That a contrast between the religion of Christ

and the worship practised in this temple—the one of light, the other of darkness—the one seeking ever, by purest teaching and holiest example, to lead the worshipper upward, nearer and nearer to the eternal, holy God—the other seeking to satisfy the soul's longings, or stifle the fears of a guilty conscience, by fixing the attention and the hopes of the worshipper upon a block of stone, associated with impure thoughts and practices. We were not allowed to enter the holy place where the idol is, if idol it may be called, so I cannot describe this one from sight. But I presume it is the same as others I have seen in temples devoted to the worship of Siva. It is simply a piece of stone in the shape of a cylinder, from a few inches, to a foot and a half in height, and from three or four to nine inches in diameter. This is set on end in the middle of the holy place and upon this flowers and leaves are placed each morning. Milk is also brought and placed upon it while the worshipper is engaged in worship and then it is taken and drunk. The place inside is quite dark, except that a lamp was burning. In front of the door were too small stone bulls; very well carved. To this, as a specially holy place, the people come from miles around to worship. I've tried to show them and convince them, that all places are alike to the true worshipper of God, and repeated over and over again our Lord's words as to the true worship acceptable in His sight. Some listened well and assented to what we said. As we came away I looked again at the high river bank, crumbling away almost from under the very foundation of this idol temple, making its destruction only a question of time unless something special is done to preserve it. Will anything be done? Probably not unless the so-called Christian governor of India steps in. Most likely things will be allowed to take their course and the whole thing will in course of time fall into the river.

May we not regard this as an apt symbol of what is taking place in India at the present time. As the river is slowly but surely undermining the temple, so the stream of enterprise and energy, constantly flowing into the country from other lands, is slowly but surely undermining the system of religion which built the temple. A few more years of gradual undermining by the river, then some extraordinary flood and the temple is in ruins. So this other work must go on. Influences at present at work, along with others, ever increasing in number and in energy, will break down first one support and then another of this hoary old system of caste and idolatry, then will come a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the whole will crumble and fall. Does it require a prophet to foresee this result? Just above the temple in full sight, is where the new railroad is to cross the river. Just think of two such incongruous objects as a railroad and an idol temple existing so near together—the one a representative of the rapid progress of the present age, the other of the petrified belief of twenty centuries ago.

As we crossed the river to visit another village, we passed two other small temples. One of these was also devoted to the worship of Siva. Though partly in ruins, some one had been there to perform worship, for the stone was covered with flowers. In the other temple were three wooden idols, roughly hewn from logs of wood and most grotesque in appearance. A Brahmin passing at the time, declared that they were really gods. This temple is devoted to the worship of a goddess called Ummah Tallee. The name means grandmother, and it is very much the work of a village grandmother that she is supposed to do. She is expected to take care of cattle and people. If sickness comes, she is supposed to be offended and then she must be propitiated by the sacrifice of a chicken or goat or a gift of something else. The offering is not lost, but is taken away afterwards and eaten.

In the second village we were soon surrounded by a large crowd anxious to see the strange things I had to show. Even the curiosity of the Brahmins proved stronger than their pride, and they too crowded around getting sadly mixed up with the others. When we began to talk to the people, some of the Brahmins tried to hinder us by asking hard questions and saying things to make the people laugh, but they soon got tired and we had a very good hearing.

In the afternoon we went into the village near the tent. Finding a new temple in the middle of the village, we took possession of the verandah and were soon surrounded by hundreds of people, not one in a hundred of whom had probably ever seen a white face. The temple in which we were sitting was rather a nice one, while just across the street, was the school house, an old