

Sunday Reading.

For the Christian Messenger. An Evening Song.

Hush and go to sleep, my birdies, Shadows gather round the nest, Softly fade the hues of evening, Where the sun has sunk to rest. Yonder shines the pretty new moon, Watchful stars begin to peep, And they say, dear little birdies, Shut your eyes and go to sleep. On the morrow when the sun shines, And the grove with gladness rings, In the elm tree's spreading branches, My sweet birds shall try their wings. Hark, I hear a mother singing, In yon cottage warm and bright, She is singing to her birdies, Happy rest and sweet good night. Now the cares of day are ended, Come sweet rest and silence deep, One, two, three, four little birdies, Nestled close and all asleep. S. S.

A Revival Desired.

You say that you greatly desire to see a revival of religion. That is well, but ask yourself the following questions: 1. Do I desire it enough to pray earnestly and constantly for it? 2. Do I desire it enough to search my own heart and beg God to cast out from it all that is displeasing to Him? 3. Do I desire it enough to attend the meetings for prayer, and to bear my part in them, even at the sacrifice of pride, comfort or convenience? 4. Do I desire it enough to seek opportunities to converse and pray with the unconverted? 5. Do I desire it enough to continue in labor and in prayer for it, even though the answer may not be given at once? Unless you can reply to those questions in the affirmative, be assured that you are mistaken in thinking that you sincerely desire to see a revival of religion.

A Revival that broke out.

It occurred more than fifty years ago, in one of the small towns of New Hampshire, and began in this way. Two plain farmers one summer day were at work in the same field. As they worked, they talked—not about the crops or the weather, but on the subject nearest and dearest to their hearts, the progress of Christ's kingdom. In several of the neighbouring towns there had been extensive revivals, while their own town seemed to them to have been passed by. The love of Christians had grown cold, while sin and wickedness abounded, unrepented. They lamented, as only true Christians can, the low state of religion about them, and in looking for the reason of such coldness were led to faithfully consider their own personal responsibility. They resolved to plead with God more earnestly than ever before for the outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon their church and town, and as they parted, agreed to meet for prayer the same evening at the school-house, midway between their dwellings. At the set hour each took his lantern and went silently out to the appointed place. Of the fervency of their prayers, or holy gladness of their songs of praise at that meeting, we may never know. It must, however, have seemed good to them to be there, for as they separated, another meeting was appointed for the next week. During the hour of the second meeting, a neighbour chanced to go by, and seeing a light in the school-house went in to ascertain the reason. Thus the prayer-meeting of two became that evening a prayer-meeting of three. At the third meeting the school-house was filled to overflowing. The Holy Spirit was manifestly present, and sinners were heard earnestly asking, "What shall I do to be saved?" The good work continued and spread rapidly from district to district, with a pentecostal ingathering of souls that made it the most remarkable revival ever known in the town. From among the converts, four became preachers of the gospel and went forth to do faithful service in Christ's vineyard. The far-reaching results of the prayers of faith of those two Christian men, met together in Christ's name, can never be fully known until revealed in the light of eternity.

Yet they only claimed the promises of our Lord, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

The promises of Christ remain sure. The prayer of faith is "a power with God" that prevails. Then why do we not oftener in the present day see revivals of the kind that "break out"?

Composition in Dreams.

Condorcet is said to have attained the conclusion of some of his most abstruse unfinished calculations in his dreams. Franklin made a similar admission concerning some of his political projects, which in his waking moments sorely puzzled him. Herschel composed the following lines in a dream: "Throw thyself on God, nor mock him with feeble denial; Sure of his love, and oh! sure of his mercy at last; Bitter and deep though the draught, yet drain thou the cup of thy trial And in its healing effect smile at the bitterness past." Goethe says in his "Memoirs," "The objects which had occupied my attention during the day often appeared at night in connected dreams. On awakening a new composition or a portion of one I had already commenced, presented itself to my mind." Coleridge composed his poem to the "Abyssinian Maid" during a dream. Cockburn says of Lord Jeffrey: "He had a fancy that though he went to bed stuffed with the names, dates and details of various causes, they were all in order in the morning; which he accounted for by saying that during sleep they all crystallized round their proper centres."

Safety in Conflict.

BY G. H. SPURGEON.

The way that God keeps His people in security is not by shutting out their enemies from attacking them, but by sustaining them while engaged in conflict. It is not much to preserve oneself behind a wall which cannot be scaled, but to stand where arrows are flying thick as hail, where lances are being pushed with fury, where the sword-cuts are falling on every part, and in the midst of all to prove invulnerable, invincible, immortal, this is to wear a divine life which cannot be conquered by human power. Such is the calling of the Christian. God will put us where we must be tried and tempted. If we are not tried, there is no honor to Him who preserves us; and if we are not tempted, there is no gratitude to His grace who delivers us out of temptations. The Lord does not put his plants into a hot house, as some gardeners do; no, He sets them out in the open air, and if the frost is coming, He says, "Ah! but no frost can kill them, and they will be all the sturdier in the summer for the cold in the winter." He does not shelter them either from the heat of the sun or from the chills of the night. In this world we must have tribulation, and we must have much of it too, for it is through much tribulation we inherit the kingdom. What God does for His people is this; He keeps them in tribulation, preserves them in temptation, and brings them joyfully out of all their trials. So Christian, you may rejoice in your security; but you must not think that you are not to be attacked; you are like a stream from Lebanon, to be dashed down many a cascade, to be broken over many a rough rock, to be stopped up with many a huge stone, to be impeded by many a fallen tree; but you are to dash forward with the irresistible force of God, sweeping everything away, till you find at last the place of your perfect rest.

A torn Gospel of Mark, given in Orissa to a man who could not read, was one of the most important links in the chain through which the church at Khundiur was formed, which has been in existence some forty years, and from which some of the best Orissa preachers have come. A tract, the "True Refuge," received at Chittagong, led to the formation of the church at Comillah, in Eastern Bengal. This same tract has led many others to Christ. Tract distribution lay at the foundation of the great work in Backergunge. The "Jewel Mine of Salvation," and other tracts, have been wonderfully blessed in Orissa. A Gospel and tracts have been wonderfully blessed in Orissa. A Gospel and tract given on a tour in Assam to a Garo man led to his conversion, and eventually to the commencement of that promising work of the American Baptists in the Garo Hills, where there are now, we believe, a thousand church members or more.—G. H. Rouse.

Sir Richard Temple on Baptist Missions in India.

Among the so-called May Anniversaries held in London, but few are filled with deeper interest than the Annual Soiree of the Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, which this year was held in the Cannon Street Hotel, on Tuesday, April 25th. Sir Richard Temple was in the chair, and after the opening prayer, proceeded to say, he had felt it his peculiar duty to be present on this occasion because as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal he had been peculiarly acquainted with the Baptist missions in that province. The names of Carey and Ward and Marshman which you read about are to me living memories, and not only to me, but to thousands of my fellow-countrymen in the East, and what is more to many millions of natives, memories of men who are the pioneers of civilisation and of human refinement. The earliest propagators of Christian literature amongst the heathen, the results indeed of their work were to be counted among the peaceful glories of England, and a portion of the national heritage which was splendid in the highest sense of that term. Again, the Serampore College, which we see mentioned in the earlier publications and in the later reports of this session, is to me a familiar sight, a place where I have distributed prizes, and where I have addressed meetings, not so great as this, but still meetings inspired with equal enthusiasm. I have thought it my duty to appear at this meeting, because I know that of all the Protestant denominations in the East there is not one that, according to its means, its numbers, and its opportunities, does more than the Baptist denomination. Of all the Protestant denominations I have often said the Free Church of Scotland is equalled by few and surpassed by none; but there is one by which it is equalled at least, and that is the Baptist denomination. Considering your numbers and your wealth in this country you must indeed be possessed with a real zeal for religion—for consider not only your stations in Asia and in the East, but also in every part of the world. Look at the map of the world and you will see your stations dotted from hemisphere to hemisphere, from one quarter of the world to another, with little bright spots which are indeed the foci of religious light, and I venture to say that this meeting that is so influentially and so numerously attended is an earnest of the zeal which animates the community. I have seen many missionary meetings in all the chief cities of the north and west held on behalf of the Church of England and of other Protestant denominations, but nowhere have I seen a meeting which showed greater signs of real earnestness than the meeting I have the honour to address. And India presents the greatest of all fields for missionary exertion, greater even than China; for the reduction recently made in Chinese population statistics shows that India is greater than China as regards numbers of population, and as regards their moral responsibilities before God and man. It is a country which of all others we are bound to enlighten with religious truth. It is a happy thing that all the various Protestant denominations are acting all together in brotherly sympathy. All their little difficulties about church organisation and the like are sunk before the heathen in the presence of the sovereign truths of the Gospel; and happily we may say that our spears are spiritual lances, all pointed in one direction. I have just returned from a pilgrimage in Palestine, and toiling laboriously from sunrise to sunset among the rocky paths of that mountainous region, I have seen the very landscape upon which the Divine eyes of the Saviour gazed, the very roads which His sacred feet trod, and the very rocks which echoed the words of more than mortal eloquence. And I ask you my brother Christians whether, of all the commands He issued to us, there is any command more explicit than that we should preach the Gospel to all the world. If you believe in the Bible, if you are resolved to obey its splendid dictates, then I ask you whether you are not bound collectively and individually to do your utmost to spread over the world to its very utmost regions and among its most degraded tribes and

classes that help which emanated from Palestine. Look around and see whether there are any of the nations of the earth upon whom the responsibility more obviously and manifestly rests than upon the people of the United Kingdom. For remember, we are proud of our empire and our fleets, maritime and naval, which cover the seas. We not only administer a vast empire directly, but over the Chinese Empire we exercise almost commercial superiority. We take Asiatic Turkey under our protection. We have now spread our benign sway over Egypt. We dispute with other powers the valley of the Congo. We have establishments on the Niger. We take the South African tribes, the Zulus, Basutos, Bechuanas, and the Transvaal frontier under our protection. We establish a new East India Company, so to speak, in the Island of Borneo, and now we are inclined to rejoice over the prospect of taking over New Guinea. We are spread over various islands in the Pacific Ocean. We are carrying communications right across North America, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, as I have recently visited. We do all these things. You may say whether it is right or wrong, but it is done, and I ask you, do you believe that the act of Providence which permits us to do these things allows it merely for our national, or temporal, or secular aggrandisement? Can you believe it is permitted for any purpose but one, viz., the ultimate spread of the enlightenment of truth and as Christians we believe that all ultimate truth must consist in religious truth. I press this argument, not for the purpose of exciting imperial ideas in your minds, but merely for the purpose of enforcing upon your consciences the religious obligations under which you lie. It is a matter of thankfulness to us to find that our grand British qualities, our valour, and genius, and statecraft, and policy, are, under Providence, overruled for the good of the human race, and on that good, I venture to think, as a man of the world, as a politician, that among the good one of the most potent instruments consists of these missionary exertions, which we are here assembled to advocate and to encourage. I am not going to trouble you with statistics of the wonderful progress of missionary operations in the world. I would refer you first to the decennial report that was published ten years ago in India, and now to the still more interesting report recently published of the proceedings to the end of 1882. You will see from such reports a really mighty progress to be measured by hundreds of thousands of persons gathered into the field of Christ. Progress such as that is found in India, and I know that these reports are true, that entire efficiency is secured in India from one end to the other for the missionary cause, and from this I infer, with the utmost confidence, that great results are also secured for you in China, in the West Indies, in Africa, in Australasia, and to whatever region your missionaries extend. Very often among Protestant denominations doubts are cast upon the utility of missions, and many people who ought to know better come back from the East and bring disparaging reports. I am thankful to hear that these doubts do not exist among the Baptists, and at all events our Baptist countrymen who come back from the East bring true reports, and their reports being true, I know myself must necessarily and inevitably be favourable. Caste no doubt still holds its rule over the masses of India; but it no longer exists as a religious institution—it is purely a political institution. It binds with iron fetters still, no doubt, but these fetters are secular rather than religious. The character of your missionaries is everything, permit me to assure you, everything you could reasonably desire. I know people will say, Where is the agency of Carey and of Marshman now? Well, gentlemen, individual genius is an exceptional thing in all departments of public and of private life as well as in missionary life, but I venture to say that the probability is that the average of Protestant missionaries in India is improving year by year, and why do I say so but that there is greater zeal now than there was in the last generation? The native Christians in India, now to be numbered by hundreds of thousands, and ere long to be numbered by millions, send their child-

ren to school without any exception whatsoever. The attendance upon their churches the native Christian congregations are not surpassed in regularity of attendance by any congregations in Europe whatsoever. You will also find statistically that the proportion of communicants is remarkably great. Take them all in all, these humble and unpretending people set an example worthy of consideration by their Christian brethren in Europe. They support their ministry each and all. Though they are poor yet they are industrious. They are people who never drink, who never run into any excess, who have their small savings. Female education by the State has made not only a beginning but a considerable progress. Ladies, especially ladies present, I particularly commend to your attention the cause of the zenana mission. The schools of which I have been speaking have been for the humbler kinds of girls, but the operations for which I venture to bespeak your best exertions, ladies, are those of the zenana missions, which work not in the villages but in the busy streets of the towns, but in the houses in the apartments of the middle classes and of the wealthy. It is most important that that enlightenment should spread among the upper classes of the women in order that it may be the leaven which shall affect the whole mass of female education throughout British India. You may be also confident when I appeal for your pecuniary support that the results are fully commensurate with the expenditure. As an old finance minister of India I ought to know, if anybody does, when the money's worth is got by any operations, and myself having also administered provinces which contain from first to last 105,000,000 of British subjects, that is nearly half British India, I say that of all the departments I have ever administered I never saw one more efficient than the missionary department, and of all the hundreds and thousands of officers I had under my command, European officers and gentlemen, I have never seen a better body of men than the Protestant missionaries. For all the statistics that are published by the missionaries, you have absolute official information that the census of the native Christians of India is as trustworthy as the census of the population of British India itself. As regards the evidence, you have that of all the greatest administrators, the bravest soldiers, and the most skillful politicians that have ever adorned the annals of the world. I wish that some of them could be present upon this platform to bear witness of what they have seen and known. They are men accustomed to make responsible statements which shall command the trust of their countrymen, and even the reliance of the Government itself having been cast among the troubles and difficulties of almost every part of British India, from north to south, from east to west, I have thought it my duty without claiming any credit whatever for myself to stand before you and give you my personal testimony, and to add to that testimony whatever weight I could by presiding over your deliberations this evening.

BE CAUTIOUS.—Don't judge a man by the clothes he wears. God made one and the tailor the other.

Don't judge him by his family relations, for Cain belonged to a good family.

Don't judge a man by his speech, for a parrot talks, but the tongue is but an instrument of sound.

Don't judge a man by his failure in life, for many a man fails because he is too honest to succeed.

Don't judge a man by the house he lives in, for the lizard and the rat often inhabit the grandest structures.

When a man dies they who survive him ask what property he has left behind. The angel who bends over the dying man asks what good deeds he has sent before him.

FREE FROM GUILT.—Neither rich furniture, nor abundance of gold, nor a descent from an illustrious family, nor greatness of authority, nor eloquence and all the charms of speaking can procure so great a serenity of life as a mind free from guilt, kept untainted, not only from actions, but purposes, that are wicked.

Lost wealth may be replaced by industry; lost knowledge by study; lost health by temperance or medicine; but lost time is gone forever.—Samuel Smiles.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Councils and the Interdependence of the Churches.

BY REV. C. GOODFELLOW.

This is a subject of no small importance. It is a sad fact that some of our churches are torn by dissensions. Judging from the past, we cannot but suppose that others will have a like unfortunate experience in the future. Whether one party in the difference be altogether wrong, which is not usual, whether one be altogether right, which is very unusual, or whether both are measurably blameworthy, which is most probable, the consequences are ever most injurious. Instead of massing all their force against evil, the opposing parties expend it upon each other, and play into the devil's hands. Unhallowed feelings are aroused; the irreligious look on to wonder and scoff. The seeds of distrust of religion are sown broadcast, to produce a harvest of hardened indifference and bitter scepticism in due time. Thus the Lord is wounded in the house of his friends. The results of dissensions in churches being so beneficial, how to treat them becomes a question of great moment, about which there is some difference of opinion. There is a feeling abroad among some that each church, by virtue of its independence, must be left to settle its own internal troubles. "Nay, some go so far as to suppose that this independence makes it necessary not only to resist all imposition of decisions from without as an unwarrantable interference, but it precludes them from referring, of their own free will, their internal difficulties to any external tribunal, even though called into being by themselves. Some will ask dispassionate brethren to advise, but to agree to accept the decision reached they feel they cannot, nay, they must not. It is this question, whether dissensions in churches can be best treated by the churches themselves in which they are doing their evil work, or by a Council of discreet brethren, that we propose to discuss. At the outset it may be stated that no one believes it needful to have recourse to a Council in all instances. When the case is so clear that the great body of the church is agreed, this might be a useless trouble. But even here, as the case is clear, the decision of dispassionate brethren would be easily foreseen, and their judgment would help to silence clamorous tongues. But when the case is not so clear, as is evidenced by the fact that a large minority dissent from the ruling of the majority, is it not better to submit the matter to a Council of disinterested, dispassionate brethren for decision? In the first place, it is evident that a Council of brethren who have no personal connection with the difficulties they are to examine, is in a better position to reach a righteous decision than either party in the church can be. It is almost inconceivable that a burning difference, such as splits a church into opposing parties, can exist, and there be no prejudice to blind and bias. The trouble usually begins between individuals. These have relatives and friends who are inclined to favor each, respectively. Many others commit themselves to either party on partial knowledge, through a one-sided statement of the facts, and when once committed are no longer in a position to open their eyes fully to additional light. This is almost sure to be true, because those who are the most heated and extreme do the most of the talking, by which others are induced to take sides. There is little opportunity to hear a fair statement, and so most of those who unite with either party are prejudiced from the onset. Besides, each side is inclined to make the most of the opposite, and the best of their own. Wrong feelings in one party stir their like in the other, and there are suspicions and heart-burnings, and bad blood. While all these distorting influences do not operate in all cases, we believe they always do in sufficient force, where a church is pretty equally divided over a difficulty, to bias and warp the judgment too generally and too much to permit her to be in a position to give the most reliable decision.