

Sunday Reading.

Pictures in the Lord's Prayer.

A cottage-chamber at bedtime, Is the picture I first would show, With a mother tenderly hearing The murmured accents low...

And now, an Eastern region I see, and the people kneel Before a hideous image, And for its favor appeal...

A loved, still form lies sleeping The sleep which we cannot wake, And we rebel against that hand, Which would our darling take...

A noble soul, forgetting Its own small, selfish aim, And living all for others, And bearing others' pain...

I see a young soul, struggling Against the tempter's power, Wealth, fame and honor may be his, Earth's fullest, richest dower...

A mountain, now I fashion, Upon whose top there stands A cross, and nailed upon it, A form with outstretched hands...

A friendship true is riven, And love is cast aside, A vow is idly broken, A promise is denied...

Still I unfold the pictures, A city-bank I see, A man, with name untarnished, Looks up with pride at me...

I seek a thick, dark forest, A baby wanders there, Knowing not of the danger, While sunbeams play in her hair...

I hear a long, glad anthem, I see a mighty crowd, And the woods, the lands, the waters, Unite in singing loud...

Not Prospering; Why Not?

Mr. Parson was fortunate in being a member of one, and Mr. Elder unfortunate in belonging to another church.

After the usual salutation, Mr. Parson inquired:

'Well, my brother, how does your church prosper now?'

'Prosper!' exclaimed Mr. Elder, with a disgusted air; our church does not prosper at all.

enough; somehow or another at the last we make a bad selection, and before six months pass there is discontent and division, and that even when we have made a unanimous call.'

'What is the trouble now?' inquired Mr. Parson.

'Well, indeed,' said Mr. Elder, 'I could hardly tell you. Our pastor had some difference with the treasurer, Mr. Mark, and he has a good deal of influence in the church, and so the quarrel began.'

'No indeed; we never have a jar and we don't want one; but if you will kindly tell me how you treat your pastor I will tell you how we manage to get along without friction; for we make no secret of it.'

'I am not certain that we follow any particular method in our dealings with our pastor,' said Mr. Elder; 'we gave him an unanimous call which he accepted. Was that not sufficient?'

'Did you give him a good, hearty reception when he came among you?'

'Well y-e-e-s,' said Mr. Elder, hesitatingly, 'I should think so. Though we had no formal reception, it being the busy season, still we came out to church and all that. The truth is he seemed distant from the first and waited for the people to make the advances.'

'It is possible that he may have erred somewhat in that respect; but Mr. Elder don't you think that he was the stranger and therefore entitled to the attention of the people who were at home in their own church?'

'As regards that, we did not intend any coolness; besides his position gives him the right to notice all his hearers,' said Mr. Elder.

'Yes but you must remember that courtesy should proceed from the people,' insisted Mr. Parson.

'They know him personally long before he knows them, and there is no excuse for any member of the congregation passing by him without a bow or a "how-do-you-do." This is their way of assuring him that he is welcome among them.'

'But are you careful to pay his salary when it becomes due?'

'Oh, as for regular payment,' said Mr. Elder: 'We don't trouble ourselves with that, but he can get less or more whenever he asks for it.'

'And so you reduce your pastor to the humiliation of asking for money whenever he needs it?' said Mr. Parson, with some severity in his voice; and then he enquired: 'But do you pay him all his salary?'

'Well yes,' said Mr. Elder. 'We paid him all the first year but finding that it would be difficult to pay as much the next year we sent a committee to wait on him to see if he would not do with less. We did not think it any injustice to him for we had to offer a fair salary even beyond our ability to induce him to come to us.'

'So then you have broken faith with your pastor?' said Mr. Parson severely.

'No, no; I am prepared to deny that,' said Mr. Elder, with some feeling. 'I myself was one of that committee. Mr. Mark and I waited on him in an orderly way by regular appointment of the board, and he seemed rather snappish with us. We thought that he did not treat us as gentlemen in the discharge of our religious duty, and so the trouble began.'

'Do you ever speak to him in commendation of his preaching?' Asked Mr. Parson.

'Not very often, I should say. It is not right to flatter such men. And now I remember that they once appointed a committee to meet him, and, in a delicate and becoming manner, to ask him to preach better sermons, especially in the evening, to draw the young people. He seemed short with the gentlemen who suggested the improvement, and asked Mr. Sloum to write a few good stirring sermons, and show them to him, that he might copy after them. It was a great insult to Sloum, for though he is a deacon in the church he could not say five words or even make a prayer in public, if you offered him a kingdom for it.'

'Tell me,' said Mr. Parson, 'how do you speak of your pastor to others and particularly to those outside of your own church?'

'I can scarcely answer that question,' said Mr. Elder. 'Of course there is a great deal of gossip, and the pastor comes in for a large share of censure; and that keeps us in a perpetual ferment; we must get rid of him the best way we can.'

'So you think that getting rid of him will heal the trouble in your church?' said Mr. Parson.

'Yes, of course. Don't you think so? We will begin on new ground, you see.'

'Yes but you will have the old material to work with and when you find another pastor you will go over the very same course and come to the same end.'

'Do tell me, then, how you manage your pastor,' said Mr. Elder in hope to change the subject somewhat.

'In the first place,' Mr. Parson replied, 'we gave him a hearty call, and sent a large committee to urge his acceptance of it. When he came to us, we gave him one of the finest receptions we could get up, and all the men, women, and children attended it, and gave the pastor a warm shake-hands, and many assurances of their esteem. The treasurer was reminded that he might be scarce of money on account of moving and travel, and was ordered to pay the first quarter's salary in advance. When the new pastor made calls on our families, we made it a point to be at home to receive him, and the children were taught to feel a personal interest in him. We attend church regularly, and stand by him in any and everything which he suggests or sets on foot for the good of the church. If he should ask us to undertake any important work to-morrow for the welfare of the congregation we would unanimously join him in it, even though we should differ with him in regard to the method of carrying it on. He knows this, and never springs anything on us without first obtaining the judgement of the people on the subject by careful personal inquiries. As for his salary, it has never been mentioned to him, nor even in his presence. We send him a check every three months for the full amount then due, and he sends us a receipt through the post-office, and that's the end of that matter. If any one grumbles—you know the chronic grumbler is in every church—we invariably answer the complaint by suggesting to Mr. Grumbler that probably he could enjoy religion much better in some other church under a different pastor, and we never hear any more from him. Dear Brother Elder, go home and treat your pastor as we do ours, and you will find that you have one of the best ministers on earth, for I know him well. If you receive him with indifference at first, then pull down his support after you have entrapped him, next pick holes in his coat, after that dog his steps with committees on preaching and stipend, throw cold water on his work and speak evil of his sermons so that even strangers despise him through your misrepresentations, there is not a minister in Christendom who could be successful in your church: Let me tell you, Mr. Elder, the church makes the minister turn out good or bad, for a stingy, discontented back-biting people will kill the best minister in the world in far less than two years. You should look on your minister as your friend, and act towards him as the best man in the congregation; this will give him a place in the confidence of his people especially with the young, and it will make your church a place of worship well attended by all classes, and, at the same time, an inestimable blessing to all the community.'

'I believe you speak the truth,' admitted Mr. Elder, with generous candor, 'and I am quite sure we have done wrong to our pastor. I myself have been a leader to the disaffected, and I will promise you to begin, this new year, to use my influence for the introduction of your plan among our people. It is certainly worth an honest trial, and it may be that, by undoing the evil we have so constantly practised, we can keep our much-abused, but long-suffering, pastor after all.'—New York Observer.

The value of a pension of £2,000 a year on the life of Lord Wolsley is £28,733 6s. 8d., and on the life of Lord Leicester £20,216 18s. 4d. In Committee on the Pensions Bill, Mr. Madliver will move that those sums be paid to the noble lords in lieu of pensions.

China. FROM MISS NORWOOD. IN MY BOAT, EN ROUTE TO CHUNG LIM, Jan. 18, 1883.

I left home this afternoon for a twelve days' country trip, bringing with me Lo-ah (The Great Whiteness), the little teacher of the women in the training school, and the daughter of our ordained preacher Po Sau, who lives at Chung Lim. I am glad to give her the pleasure of visiting her home; for she is a very faithful little woman, and has been away from her friends almost a year. She is twenty-two, and unmarried,—a very unusual circumstance. But she has taken the matter in her own hands, and has declared her wish to follow the example of single missionary ladies,—live a single life, and give herself to christian work.

Hu City, January 26. On Wednesday, I took a chair, and went to Kam A, Sister Khue's village, where I spent two nights at a house belonging to her mother. It consists of one small room, used as a chapel on Sunday. I had a very delightful visit at this village, where, with Sister A Kue, I visited all our Christians in that vicinity,—about fifteen in all,—and met several women who are secret believers. I made the personal acquaintances of Sister Hong, whose persecutions are referred to in one of my printed letters. She is a most pleasing woman, and one of the happiest of Christians. She says her heart is at peace, at peace because her heavenly Father has heard her prayer, and helped her out of her troubles, so that she greatly rejoices. And well she may. Less than a year ago, her circumstances were dark indeed; and, now, she may not only worship according to her conscience, but the youngest son, a lad of seventeen, is a Christian, and in the boys' school; her daughter, betrothed in a family much displeased at her mother's becoming a Christian, worships in secret; and her old mother-in-law, who has the shaking palsy, only waits an opportunity to be baptized and unite with the church, which will soon be afforded, I hope, by Mr. Partridge visiting Chung Lim, in another week. In my visits yesterday, I found many who seemed glad to hear; and one especially, an old woman over seventy, seemed to have been prepared by the Holy Spirit to understand the truth. She said, 'Lady, I was ill in bed; but, when I heard you had come, I got up at once, though I fear being "wounded by the wind" [meaning to take cold], and, now, I want you to explain to me the doctrine.' She had already heard enough to know that there was a better doctrine than she knew of, and it was a great joy to explain it to one so eager to hear. To-day, we came by chair to Hu City, a distance of ten miles, and a delightful ride it was, through groves of mango, and other fruit trees, known only in China, loaded with blossoms, and filling the air with fragrance. We passed through or near orange orchards, many of the trees loaded to the ground with golden fruit.

Here, at Hu City, instead of living in my boat as I planned, I am comfortably located at the chapel, in the room that Miss Thompson prepared for her own use. It is quite an improvement on my last stopping-place, for the comfort of which little could be said. This morning, I concluded that two nights was the limit of my endurance; for, though the spirit was more than willing, the physical part of me rebelled. To sleep in a small close room with a Chinese woman is not the acme of comfort. But such experiences are not without their compensations, and I am glad if, by such means, I may be able to come nearer to this people and help them, as perhaps I could not, if I held myself quite aloof from them. I cannot eat their food, but I can sleep in their houses and this may be one way in which to assure them of my interest in them.—Helping Hand.

At Liverpool an industrial exhibition of work done by the scholars of the Toxeth Tabernacle and Mission Sunday schools was opened in the school-room attached to the Tabernacle on April 26. The object is to encourage habits of industry and application in the scholars, a highly praiseworthy and quite practicable purpose the pursuit of which must have exceedingly beneficial effects. The work exhibited consists of specimens of sewing, millinery, knitting, washing, cooking, baking, etc., contributed by the girls, and specimens of of joinery, decorative painting, mat-making, netting, and other industrial arts done by the boys. The exhibits this year were more numerous and of higher quality than in any previous year, and not the least interesting exhibits were specimens of baking and cooking furnished by little girls of ten, twelve and thirteen years. Mr. W. P. Lockhart said they had in addition to the Sunday school—with between 600 and 700 on the books—four mission schools in different parts of Toxeth-park, having a number of children on the books equal to the number in the Sunday school so that they had under instruction somewhere about 1,300 children and young people.

Four men were on Saturday sent to prison for a month by the Brentford magistrates for attacks on the Salvation Army at Hounslow, while two others were fined 20s. each.

A Dover labourer, who was bitten six weeks ago by a mad dog, while at work at the French end of the Channel Tunnel, has just died from hydrophobia.

Pilgrim's Progress has been translated into nearly all the languages of India, and it is as popular with Asiatics as with Europeans.

A NATIVE OF INDIA'S OPINION.—Writing in the monthly magazine Progress, a native of India thus addresses the English rulers of his country:—"You have accomplished a revolution in India greater than you know. In giving us an English education you have Anglicised our ideas. You have overturned our native institutions. Directly and indirectly you are subverting the binding us-g's and customs of a hundred ages. The toroise always has a bad time when he is changing his shell. You speak proudly of your administration and your education, your rail and your railroads. We value them mainly as aids to a consummation which, perchance, you neither dream of nor desire. They are serving to unite the nations of our continental country. Finally then, speaking for the educated classes of my country, I declare we do not know what we want, and we will never rest content until we get it. We want a free and united India, ruled by its natives. So far as you help us towards this, you will deserve and receive our thanks. We have the vision of an approaching time when, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, a free, educated, and united country will cease to be the plunder ground of aliens, and take its rightful place, the very Koh-i-noor among the nations."

THE AVERAGE MINISTER.—There is no class of men for whom I have so much respect and affection as for the average ministers of the gospel. They are not sustained in their labors by popular applause and newspaper puffs, but by the love of Christ and the souls of men. They are patient, persevering, self-denying. They endure as seeing Him who is invisible. They lay the foundations for others to build upon. They do not estimate themselves at so many thousands a year, but are willing to work even though poorly paid and not highly esteemed of men, knowing that their reward is in heaven. It is these average ministers who have extended the church over this broad continent and established missionary stations around the world. Let us honor them as God does. Let us not provoke him to anger by treating them with indifference or contempt. And if we ourselves are but average ministers in the estimation of the world, let us rejoice that God has counted us worthy; for to be his ambassador in some frontier settlement is nobler than to wear the crown of an emperor.—Dr. Rabb.

These verses relate an incident in the history of the great apostle, which has given rise to a good deal of comment and conjecture. It seems to be taken for granted by many that in complying with the advice and request of the apostle James and all the elders at Jerusalem, Paul committed a serious mistake, if, indeed, he was not guilty of something much more serious than a mere mistake, even a grave offence, and a violation of the principles of the gospel. This is a grave charge, and should not be lightly entertained. Unfortunately it involves many others besides Paul, even the apostles James and John and Peter, "who seem to have been pillars," and to whom the gospel to the Jews had been specially entrusted, and not only them, but "all the elders," without a single exception, and also the "many thousands of Jews who believed, and who were all zealous of the law." For if Paul committed an offence, and violated the principles of the gospel by complying with the urgent request of James and all the elders, they certainly were as much to blame as he was; nay, more so. For if we can imagine that Paul was so weak or so wicked as to allow himself to be led into sin, how much greater must the offences of those have been who took advantage of his feeble-mindedness, mentally and morally, to draw him into the snare? The case is not helped, but made much worse when we reflect that it was all done professedly for the most benevolent and pious purposes, since their avowed object was to remove the stigma that had been allowed to attach to one of the holiest, wisest, and most devoted of men, by a false rumor set a going by malice or by mistake, but which, if not removed, would seriously compromise the apostle among his friends, and thus not only mar his usefulness, but be a reproach to the cause of Christ, which to him and to them was far dearer than their own reputations or their lives. "Thou seest, brother," they said, "how many thousands of Jews there are that believe, and they are all zealous of the law, and they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews that are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs." Now those who censure Paul for complying with this "requisition," so "respectably" and so "numerously signed," seem to assume that this was exactly what Paul had been doing; and that this teaching was not only correct, good, sound gospel truth, but every way essential, as one of the first principles of the gospel. That is to say, according to them, a report had reached the church at Jerusalem that this esteemed servant of the Lord had been fearlessly doing his duty, declaring everywhere the whole counsel of God, and keeping back nothing that was profitable for the people, regardless both of the favor or the opposition of either Jew or Gentile, and that now, forsooth, there is a general conspiracy against him of all those elders, headed by the venerable apostle James, to extort from him a denial of all this, and to compel him ignominiously to confess, and to declare in the most solemn manner, that he had all along been grossly remiss in his duty, and had entirely failed in preaching "to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;" and also,—"tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph"—that Paul consented to make this false and monstrous avowal! But goodness! mercy! where are we? And are these your earliest and best specimens of gospel grace? and did they indeed deliberately commit such fearful abominations? Nay, God forbid! It is surely all an idle dream; all false. It is inconceivable that any such thing could have been done. Were the charge made by an avowed enemy I would answer him in the words of Nehemiah to Sanballat: "There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart." Paul was never the man to give any cause for the suspicion or supposition that he would ever have done deliberately what he knew to be either sinful, or untrue, or improper, or above all, that he would have given his sanction to what he knew to be a deliberate falsehood. Nay, I will believe any absurdity rather than believe this. Of what can men be thinking when they undertake to maintain a theory which implies that Paul would consent to tell a lie, and swear to it! and, more horrible still, that this was done at the instigation of a holy apostle

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Paul Vindicated.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON ACTS XXI. 17-26.

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