

Sunday Reading.

Comfort in Sorrow.

BY REV. J. CLARK, NICTAUX.

O Lord, our God! Thy love to us Is deep, and strong, and sure; And all our interests, in Thy hands, Are ever more secure.

In Thee we see such tenderness, Such sympathy divine, As we can never, never find In any heart but Thine.

Wise are Thy plans, though oft by man, But dimly understood; No real ill can come from Thee, Since Thou art always good.

From out the rocks beside our way, The living waters burst, That pilgrims, faint and travel worn, May quench their desert thirst.

We place our trembling hand in Thine, And journey towards the light; And know full well, whate'er our lot, That all Thy ways are right.

Amid our griefs we hear Thee speak, In accents soft and mild, As kindest mother seeks to soothe, Her weak and weary child.

O Saviour! hear our frequent prayers, Our anguish, pining see; Bestow the very grace we need, And bring us home to Thee. —London Baptist Messenger.

Scripture under the Microscope.

BY REV. W. M. BAKER, D. D.

Look at a needle under a magnifying lens, and although it be the finest a man can make, it seems like a rough shaft of steel; whereas a needle made by the hand of God, the sting, let us say, for instance, of a bee, is a miracle of smooth sharpness. Compare under a lens the finest satin with a rose leaf; while the last is the perfection of tissue, the other is as canvas. That is one proof of the fact that while every other printed page is the handiwork of man, it is God who creates every leaf, marvelous as that of a rose, of his word. Scripture will bear the microscope! Out of all the pages of man's making, as numerous almost as the leaves of the forest, there is not one that will. It has been the happy fortune of the one who writes these lines to have made during many years a close study of what are called the Ten Theophanies, that is, the ten instances in the Old Testament in which Christ anticipates his incarnation, and shows himself as a man yet God, to, now this person and then that, from Abraham to Daniel. In doing this he has had to turn upon certain passages all the light he could get especially that in very many other parts of the Bible. To him it has been a work of the keenest delight, so amazingly does Scripture, and Scripture as under the microscope, bring out, confirm, explain illustrate Scripture, and in ways the most unexpected and satisfactory. This is mentioned merely to illustrate the uses of this mode, not specify any particular point made in those Ten Theophanies.

In the Psalms, as often in the Old Testament, the people of God are represented as applying the possessive pronoun 'my' to God. 'I will also praise thee with the psalter, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp,' is but one of very many places in which David refers to his heavenly Friend. Every chord of harp and soul recurs to that one word 'my' over and over again; it is essential music of which he never wearies. Can you mention one case in which any disciple, even that John who leaned his head upon the bosom of Christ, applied to him the word 'my'? Unless I mistake, there is not one instance of this until after the death and resurrection of the Son of God. You would naturally suppose that the disciples would shrink more than ever from such a phrase after their Lord had put between himself and them the awful abyss, as it were, of his death, his three days' absence in another world, his resurrection from the dead. But no. That seemed somehow to bring them nearer to Christ, to give them an intensity and reality of personal possession never felt before. Mary is fluent enough, for instance, when she sees at the sepulcher a man whom she mistakes for the gardener. 'They have taken away my Lord,' she says. When it breaks upon her who it is, she has but this to say, as she falls at his feet, 'My Master!' On the cross Jesus had cried out, 'My God,

my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?' Now he says to her, 'I am not yet ascended to my Father. Goto my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.' So it is with Thomas. He had doubted what was told him by the disciples of the risen Redeemer. Now Jesus stands before him. He is not a spirit, He is a man, a man whom he had seen die, had seen dead; a man who urges upon him the wounds by which he had died. For the first time the Godhead of this man, with whom he had companioned all these years, breaks upon him, all his soul breaks in return through his lips toward his Lord. 'My Lord!' he exclaims 'and my God!'

Am I mistaken? Is there not a world of perhaps before unnoticed, meaning in this, that even our Lord's disciples came into a closer, more personal possession of him after and by reason of his death than before? There are many other striking uses of the microscope in studying Scripture, as full and suggestive as this. —Westminster Teacher.

Our Nearness to Heaven.

BY REV. W. W. DOW.

The apostle Paul appeals to the Christians at Rome to be faithful in service and submissive to their trials, by reminding them that their salvation is nearer than when they first believed, their completed salvation in heaven. It is an appeal that does not influence us as it should, or as it would if we prayerfully meditated upon it.

The nearness of final, complete salvation in heaven is adapted to animate and comfort the heart under its varied burdens of trial and sorrow. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but in the heaviest pressure of them there is hope of deliverance of final exemption from them, and of surpassing gracious reward in that land where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

'Now is your salvation nearer' than when you entered upon the new life. This is a comforting truth. Even now many of our appointed trials are actually over for ever. Surely we should not faint with such a prospect of the termination of all our troubles. We strive for a glorious prize. So far from being dispirited, every new trial should be met with cheerfulness, because there is one less to encounter. Every victory gives new strength and added skill. Every success makes the burden lighter the foe less to be dreaded, and the conquest easier; and we thus are the more prepared for the final struggle and the victor's triumph.

We are nearer to the prize. If we were told that the very last trial had come, how should we be braced to meet it, and especially if we were assured of success? We have that assurance. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,' in the infinite merits of the Lord Jesus. Our armor is of heavenly temper; and the Captain of our salvation is with us, the joy of the Lord is our strength. When we come to the closing conflict 'the last enemy shall be destroyed.' Death shall have no sting, and the grave no victory over us.

Let us be steadfast and patient, and hope until the end. Let us work while the day lasts, in faithful love to all with whom we have to do. The end draweth nigh! Soon the last trial will be past.

'Rejoice, O grieving heart! The hours fly fast; With each some sorrow dies, With each some shadow flies, Until at last The red dawn in the east Bids weary night depart, And pain is past. Rejoice, O grieving heart, The hours fly fast.'

The minutes of the Irish Presbyterian General Assembly have just been issued. They are growing in size, and in interest. The General Assembly just now consists of 610 ministers, 13 missionaries, and 555 congregations. The recent Assembly was attended by 469 ministers and 303 elders or 772 members in all. The families in connection with the General Assembly are 78,000; seatholders, 65,000; communicants, 102,000; ruling elders, 2,000; daily schools, 700; Sabbath schools, 1,075, in which are 8,570 teachers and 93,000 scholars.

How will it look afterwards?

BY REV. J. R. MILLER, D. D.

Life and its acts and experiences appear in very different light when looked at from different points of view. For instance, there are many things that seem sad and painful while we are passing through them, which, when we have gotten on beyond them and look back upon them, appear even beautiful. Jacob once said, as he looked at the events of his life, 'All these things are against me.' So it surely seemed at that time. But in a little while, as he turned his eyes backward, these very things appeared to be parts of a loving plan of providence preparing blessing for his old age and for his family. Many of us have had similar experiences. Things we wept over one year as calamities and losses, the next appeared to have been blessings and gains.

Then there are other things that appear pleasant as one passes through them which look repulsive or painful in the retrospect. This is especially true of all wrong actions. At the time they may bring a thrill of pleasure, and in the rapture of the moment the soul forgets all save the ecstasy. But when the emotion is past and the wrong-door turns and looks back at his deed, it seems horrible in his eyes as remorse colors the memory. Esau was quite willing to sell his birthright for a single dish of pleasant food, and perhaps he never enjoyed a dinner more, because the pangs of hunger were upon him. But afterwards his act appear as one of terrible folly which he would have given worlds to undo. Jacob thought he was making his life a great success when he was overmatching his competitors by shrewdness and sharp practice. But in his old age, when he looked back upon his past years, they seemed 'evil' to him. The trickery and double-dealing of his early life brought him no sweet memories when he sat in the shadows of his closing years. Joseph's brothers congratulated themselves as the caravan moved away that they had gotten rid of a dreamer, and had removed out of the way the chief hindrance to their own success. But afterwards we know how that deed looked to them. It imbibed all their joys. Even in their old age it flung a ghastly shadow of evil over every joy of their lives. It is always so with sin; a fairy picture as we look at it before commission, afterwards it is a horrible spectre.

It is the 'afterwards' that is the real test of life. The way anything appears after we have gone altogether past it and look back at it, is the truest view of it. This is true of those providences which at the time seem adverse, but afterwards prove full of blessing. We can never fairly judge of any work until we see it completed. Afflictions in passing are God's unfinished works, and can only be truthfully interpreted when they have wrought out their full design and reached their final results. Therefore the truest time to look at our trials is afterwards, when they have yielded their peaceable fruits of righteousness.

It is the 'afterwards' that tests all our actions. You do something at the beginning of a year which, at the time, costs you a sore struggle. It requires courage and involves self-denial or sacrifice. But looked back at from the end of the year, its contemplation fills you with pleasure, and its memory brings sweet fragrance to your heart. I need not say that the afterwards is the true one.

Then there are other things which you do. You yield to temptation. At the time it seems the more easy and pleasant thing to do. Looked at, however, from more thoughtful hours afterwards, these things appear as painful mistakes, as blotches on your life's record, as degrading your life and dishonoring God. Again the after picture is true, the other is false and illusive. The real character of actions is seen when we look at them from the side next eternity, when the light from the other world falls upon them. The way life appears in review as we stand in the shadows of the eventide and look back upon it, is its final test.

There is one point in every life at which all things appear in their true colors. It is the point of death. All illusions vanish there. There are no false estimates of deeds in the light of that hour. The things we shall wish then that we had done are the things we ought to have done. The things that will look fair and lovely as we sit in the gloaming of life's day are the things that are truly lovely. The things that will shame us there are the things that God condemns and which we ought not to have done. Why can we not learn to see all life, as we live it, as we shall see it from its end? Why should not these wiser after-thoughts become our first thoughts and shape our acts? Why should we not live continually asking, 'How will this appear from my death-hour? How will it look from the judgement-seat?' Such wisdom would greatly beautify our lives and would save us from many a bitter regret. —Illustrated Christian Weekly.

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

Bimlipatam.

Miss Hammond writes to the Link, July 12th, 1883:

MY DEAR LINK,—This is a beautiful day; recent rains have washed the appearance of hot heat from the sky, and white, soft clouds are floating airily over the deep blue, upon which, whenever my eyes fall, my heart says, "How lovely it is!"

Upon a tree in front of one of my windows are fresh, young leaves, and under it is a bit of grass so exquisitely beautiful and green, that I feel like going out to pat it, and think that blue eyed violets ought to grow there.

But wild flowers are very rare in this part of India, and the few there are are not very pretty, though they look as if they were as pretty as they could be under the circumstances. As soon as they get their heads above the hard, parched ground, the sun bends upon them his withering heat, and they seem afraid to grow any more.

Though much cooler than before the rains began, the punkah still swings above my head.

Recently we had a most pleasant visit from Mr. Clough, of Ongole; the shepherd women were gathering when he came, so he went out with me and gave them a kindly Christian address. Next Sunday Mr. Sanford has promised to speak to them. I want them to feel that we are all interested in them and anxious to do them good. We usually arrange them in classes, and spend about an hour in singing, prayer and talking.

Their houses, with low mud walls and leaf roofs, somewhat resemble a tent in form, but they are neither white nor clean, and sometimes when I go among them, I feel tempted to get away as soon as possible; but the gospel is what they need to make a change among them. As yet they are painfully indifferent to its claims upon them, though some of them listen most attentively, and we believe they think and talk about what they hear.

One day last week four of my girls and I went out to a village some fourteen miles distant, to look after a little girl we are anxious to get into our boarding school. She is the betrothed wife of one of our Christian boys, and a betrothal in this country is nearly as binding as the marriage. This engagement was of course made by the parents, when the children were perhaps five or six years old. Time passes, the boy comes within Christian influence and teaching, is led by the Holy Spirit to the Saviour, and the little girl's relatives refuse to fulfil their part of the contract. The boy, 'Upalawamy,' is attending the Seminary, and we think the girl ought to be learning as well; so we using all proper means to get possession of her. Should these fail, some papers will be signed some day, and each will go his or her own way.

We went to the little girl's house, where we were permitted to sit on the veranda. The grandfather is a more than ordinarily intelligent man; talked very little indeed, but said positively he did not want us to 'have the child. I asked where she was. He replied, "She is here; we did not hide her," which I thought they might possibly have done. He called "Sunyassee," who came out and seated herself beside him.

She is a very bright, smart looking girl, of perhaps 12 years. At first she would neither speak to me, nor let me touch her; after a little she answered my questions but not in a very sweet tempered manner.

Nellie and Miriam, two of our girls, talked to her of their house here, the school, their sewing and general daily life; sang some nice hymns, and though she looked interested, said she would not come with us. The old man heard Ruth and Cassie, two other girls, singing in another house, and remarked, as he looked at them beside me, "They are very respectable, intelligent looking girls, but we want to keep Sunyassee." He had heard a great deal about the Christian religion, said it was good for us, but it was not his destiny to accept it, and what could he do? Upalawamy attempted to speak for himself, but the young lady told him, in a very spirited manner, that she would have nothing to do with him; that when he wanted to become a Christian he had done so without consulting her, and when she was large enough she would marry some one she liked.

Her father is dead and her mother is at another village she looked at me with both temper and tears in her eyes, and asked if I would take her by force? I talked to her as gently as possible and before we left she gave me her hand and seemed less troubled. I asked the old man if he would let my boy Subriedu pray, to which he consented; and to the earnest prayer that followed they all gave good attention.

Since then, two of our helpers have been to see the mother, who says she will go to the other village, bring Sunyassee, and give her to us. What the final result will be we do not know; but we are sure that the day is coming when child marriage will be abolished, and the heathen will be brought to Christ.

Correspondence.

How to conduct a Sunday School.

An Essay prepared for, and read before, the Sabbath School Convention of the N. S. Central Baptist Association, at its late session.

BY REV. W. B. BRADSHAW.

One of the most important features of Christian work in modern times is the Sunday School. No church need expect to hold its own, much less make progress, without this important aid to its legitimate work. Our youth are environed with falsehoods and fascinating allurements to evil; and, as fallen beings, become a fruitful soil on which a harvest of sorrow and shame is rapidly produced. What an advantage to have these minds, fallen though they be, forewarned and stored with the verities of God's Word! "Train up the child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." God has set the stamp of His approval upon early religious instruction in the past. His promise will not fail now.

Nor is the Sunday School of importance to the young alone. There is no class nor age that ought to afford to be deprived of its advantages. By common consent the Sunday School is a mighty engine for good. How shall its affairs be arranged and conducted so as to retain and increase its ennobling power? This work must have a commencement. Who will undertake and lead this enterprise to a successful issue? Who ought?

It is not our purpose, in reply to this important enquiry, to write the usual history of the inception and development of Sunday School interests. We believe there is a better way, a way calculated to establish the Sunday School upon a more permanent basis, and to ensure its success in the highest degree. We contend that the Church is the party upon whom the responsibility of organization and development rests. If she does not frankly recognize it, as she manifestly does not, then let it be the duty of her membership, who do feel the pressure of this grand work, to arouse her in a legitimate way to a consciousness of her obligation and opportunity in this inviting field of Christian labor. We repeat it, the Sunday School should begin in the church. It should be employed as one of her regular agencies. Upon her shoulders should rest the burden of organization, instruction, song and whatever expense is necessary to equip the Sunday School for the best work.

Many reasons could be easily adduced to support this position. But it seems so manifest and self-evident as to appear needless to furnish any. Yet we may be pardoned for alluding to the nature of Sunday School effort. It is confessedly spiritual. Its instruction from the truth of God, in dependence upon the Spirit, for the salvation of sinners. Now the church has been called out, made to sustain a visible existence and endowed with a variety of gifts to perform this very work; and she is squarely responsible for it in all stages of its progress.

However, be it far from us to discourage individual effort and responsibility. But while every one does his own work it is certainly advisable and judicious to elicit and secure the support of the body of the church. If one's efforts to engage and hold the sympathies of the church are in vain he must gather around him such fragmentary assistance as he can command, and make the best of the situation. For teach he must in some way, if he is true to his convictions and his Master.

Perhaps it is suggested how can we make such a plan practicable? Very easily. Make it a work of the church. Let it be a matter of business and prayer in the meetings of the church. Do we adopt measures to secure the proclamation of the Gospel from the pulpit? Are we anxious and studious that the prayer meeting be sustained? That the house of God be kept appropriately furnished? That the church have a share in the maintenance of Christian work at home and in foreign lands? The matter is brought before the church. She conducts the business, and the individual members perform the work under her direction and sanction. Let the Sunday School enterprise be conducted on the same principle. If the deacons have their hands full already, appoint a committee of discreet brethren and sisters. Have them report at church meetings. Let their estimates and results be made a matter of record, and their support and success a matter of conscience. If such a plan could be inaugurated and maintained, and we see no reason why it could not, the problem of how to conduct a Sunday School successfully would not be difficult to solve.

To secure the best success of the Sunday School the majority of the membership of the church should be in

attendance. Their patronage, besides being a personal benefit, would have a marked effect upon their own families and the community at large. It would enforce the truth taught. Of course every effort should be made to induce all the youth as well to attend. No school will long prosper, or will have the best success, that has not a hearty welcome for all ages and classes.

Now we complain that Sunday School workers, for the most part, engage in this laudable work without really attending to these important matters; and the churches are willing generally to shelve the responsibility upon a few individuals. We need a radical change in the relation our Sunday Schools shall sustain to the body of the church. We come now to the more direct work of conducting a Sunday School.

The usual number and character of officers could not be advantageously changed. In a fully equipped school they usually are filled by a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Secretary and Librarian in one, Treasurer, Musical Director, and a suitable number of Teachers.

The appointment of the officers needs to be conducted with great prudence. The efficiency of the school will depend largely upon these persons, especially the Superintendent. We would suggest that the committee appointed by the church nominate the Superintendent, and that he, in conjunction with the committee, nominate the other officers and teachers, and that the several nominations be submitted to the vote of the school, to ensure harmony and cooperation. It will be necessary to place in the hands of those elected necessary apparatus, so that each may be able to do his own part without creating confusion.

We have now a school gathered, and the officers appointed. The school still needs classification. This may be a question of time in a newly-organized school. The sooner, however, it is settled the better, and an arrangement having been once matured a change should be rarely made, and then not without the very best reasons. The performance of this duty and its maintenance will devolve upon the Superintendent. He, however, will wisely seek the advice and assistance of the other officers. For practical purposes it would seem best to make a division of the school into three general departments, as Primary, Intermediate and Advanced. The Primary Department should have a room by itself after the opening exercises of the school, and should be under the control of one teacher. The Intermediate Department could be divided into classes containing from six to eight pupils, having particularly in view the capacity of the scholars and the capability of the teachers. In regard to the Advanced Department very much depends upon the past discipline and present ambition of the pupils, and also upon the ability of the teacher. In the greater number of cases it will be found more advantageous to have small classes. However, numbers in an ambitious class with a really courteous teacher, will prove no impediment.

It is expedient that music should occupy an important part in the exercises of the Sunday School. Ample provision should be made for the service of song. From one-third to one half the time the school is in session should be occupied with this service. An organ is an advantage but not a necessity. The leader should be enthusiastic in his department, so as to inspire the whole school with confidence and ambition to join the song. Frequent practice meetings will be promotive of success in this department.

A library is a necessity. In these days of Sunday School literature the securing of a good library ought to be easily accomplished. It will be well, however, to buy books with discrimination. But the time lost and confusion caused in the distribution of the books is sometimes a source of annoyance in a school. Many methods have been devised to obviate this difficulty. But we have met with no better way than, in addition to the record of books kept by the librarian, for the pupil to carry a card in his book, stating his name, class, and books he has already taken, and returned for the quarter. This card, along with the book he returns, is handed in to the librarian at the commencement of the school or on entering the building. The librarian marks the number of book returned on the card and on his record, and selects a new book, marks the number on the card and also on his record, and sets the book aside with the card upon it till the school is closed, when the pupil returns and takes his card with the book under it for the next week. If papers are distributed in addition, they can be placed in the books assigned the pupils receiving them.

The place of meeting should be