

Sunday Reading.

He Careth for All.

Far out to sea a little bird,
In wild confusion, flew.
The red sun set, star after star
Came into view,
And still the fluttering wings in vain
Essayed to win the nest again.

The distant worlds, through boundless space,
Unswerving kept their way;
The whirling earth sped on without
Change or delay;
Old spheres burned out; new ones, that
night,
Flashed into brilliancy of light.

One eye supreme the rhythmic march
Of planets thus controlled.
One hand there was whose hollow palm
Could all enfold.
And yet, from where each cry is heard,
That eye beheld the fainting bird;

And, guided by that mighty hand,
Across the billows dark
It flew, and sank to rest upon
A passing bark.
Think'at thou, O storm-tossed soul! that He
Doth not thy weary fluttering see?
V. B. HARRISON.

Egypt

is in the northern part of 'the great dark continent,' the portion of the world now receiving and likely to secure more of the attention of civilized nations than any other for some decades yet. Dr. H. M. King, of Albany, N. Y., gives the readers of the October Missionary Magazine 'A Missionary Lesson,' in which he treats of Africa and more particularly of Egypt. He says:

We do not forget that Northern Africa was the seat of an ancient civilization, where art, architecture, and learning were greatly promoted. Alexandria and Carthage were cities of great splendor and influence, second only to Rome itself. The former, which had been founded by Alexander the Great 332 B. C., was, according to Pliny, fifteen miles in circumference: it was the centre of Eastern commerce, and was distinguished for its schools of Grecian philosophy. The latter was founded one hundred years before the founding of Rome, and for several centuries was its powerful rival.

In this part of Africa, Christianity early took root, and bore abundant fruit. By whose hand it was planted there, it may never be positively known. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, he had among his hearers, dwellers in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene. Some of these may have been among the three thousand converts, and may have carried back to their homes the saving truths which they had received. We are not informed as to the consequences which resulted from the conversion of the Ethiopian treasurer under the providential instruction of deacon Philip. A faith so ready and obedient must have found, it would seem, frequent expression; and a joy so great must have told its story wherever listeners could be gathered in far-away Meroe.

There is an ancient tradition which names the evangelist Mark as the founder of the church in Alexandria; and, according to the historian Eusebius, vast numbers were converted to Christianity through his labors in that city. This we know for a certainty, that by the middle of the second century, the Christian religion had spread well-nigh over all of Northern Africa; and, at a synod held about the middle of the third century, not less than eighty-seven bishops were present. For it was in Northern Africa that great church-councils were held; and there great teachers and preachers were raised up, who have been the instructors of the Church of Christ in all ages. Clement, called 'the philosopher of the early Church'; Origen, 'the greatest Christian mind of the ante-Nicene age'; Athanasius, to whom it is said it was 'Mainly owing that the Christian faith was preserved in its integrity'; Augustine, 'whose lips seem to have been touched with holy fire from the altar of God'; Tertullian, styled 'the Christian Hannibal,' whose mental character is thus set forth by Neander: 'Tertullian's mind had acuteness, depth, and dialectic dexterity but no logical clearness, repose, and arrangement: it was profound and fruitful, but not harmonious'; and Cyprian too of whom it has been said, 'There were bishops before him, there were bishops after him; but never has one

so magnified the office as this Bishop of Carthage,'—all of these eminent teachers and preachers lived within the first four centuries of the Christian era, and within the limits of Northern Africa; and represented churches that were large and numerous and influential, whose light should have, in due time, penetrated and dissipated the darkness that stretched beyond their southern horizon, and the savor of whose salt should have preserved the continent. What was the secret of their failure? Why did their own light go out in darkness? and why is Africa the darkest continent on the face of the globe today?

The descendants of the early Egyptian Christians are known at the present time as the Copts. They are few in number, possibly a hundred and fifty thousand, or less than one-fourteenth of the present population of Egypt, and are steadily diminishing. Their Christianity, if it may be called such, is in a very degraded condition, hardly discernible amid the gross heresies and superstitions into which it has sunk. Mohammedism is to day the prevailing religion of Northern Africa, and its influence has extended very considerably among the more southern and central tribes. It is estimated that one-half of the population of Soudan are followers of the false prophet. But by far the greater portion of the untold millions of Central Africa are still living in the heathenish beliefs and inhuman practices of their remote ancestors. And yet this is the continent which early received the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and within whose borders for a time, Christianity made rapid progress, and won some of its most splendid triumphs. How can we account for the present condition of things?

Bishop Wilberforce in an eloquent address on missions, once used the following suggestive words: 'There was a time when the whole of that northern belt of Africa was bright with Christian light. There was a time when Cyprian and Augustine knelt and prayed, and wept and suffered, and ruled, in the great churches of Northern Africa. . . . Then troublous times began to come, and we can now see why they came. We can see that that belt of Africa was contented to be a belt; that she thought she had the light of the gospel for herself; that she stood there, and made no sign to the heathen people below her; that she did not gather them into the church, . . . and left the native tribes unconverted,—a wall of darkness edging the light of Christ's truth; a wall of barbarians lying beyond the irrigated district of civilization which Christianity had so abundantly watered.'

What a lesson for the churches of Christ in all lands and ages, and also for the individual Christian! Africa to-day might be blooming and happy under a Christian civilization, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Cape of Good Hope, and from the mouth of the Gambia to Zanzibar, had the northern churches been true to Christ and their sacred mission, and made their light penetrate the southern darkness. But proving false to their solemn trust, not only the gross darkness remained unlighted upon the savage tribes which they neglected, but they have suffered the penalty of their guilt in the extinction of their own light. Mohammedanism swept down upon the land with its blighting curse, and the home of Cyprian and Athanasius and Augustine contains hardly a vestige of the Christian faith.

The lesson of history is in exact accord with the teaching of God's word: 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than it meet, but it tendeth to poverty.' 'Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.'

It is reported that an Episcopal clergyman in China, a missionary connected with one of the American societies, Rev. G. H. Appleton, has followed the example set to missionaries by Adoniram Judson, and been baptized. He was recently received by Dr. M. T. Yates, of the Southern Baptist Board, by vote of a little native Baptist church, after giving the reasons why he had adopted adult baptism and immersion. He is said to have joined the Baptist mission in Japan.

The Divine Sufferer.

BY REV. S. R. FORD, LL. D.,

In reading, or even in thinking about the atonement, we are so apt to consider it as apart from us, as an objective theme to be discussed or illustrated, that there is need of constantly asking ourselves the question, What has this to do with me? and how does it really and experimentally affect my soul, my peace, my assurance of present and eternal salvation?

In answering these questions from the heart, as the answers are learned from God's Word and Spirit, it will be found—

I. Christ's death was an offering to God as an equivalent for my punishment as a transgressor of the law.

It is thus presented to us in the divine oracles. 'Christ suffered the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God.'

Conscious as I am of guilt, knowing that I have broken the law, certain that the guilty cannot go unpunished, and that the penalty to which sin exposes is eternal death, it is the revealed fact that he offered himself as a sacrifice for me; that he bore my sins in his own body on the tree—it is this that makes the doctrine of the atonement of personal and eternal moment; it is this that makes the cross of Christ my glory and my joy.

Christ's death was an offering. He made his soul an offering for sin. He is declared the Melchisedec—Priest of the Most High God.

'For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.'—Heb. v. 1.

Here it is stated: (1) That the high priest is ordained or appointed for men; (2) that his office work is in things pertaining to God; (3) that he must offer to God and for men 'both gifts and sacrifices'; (4) and that these gifts and sacrifices are 'for sins.'

I have broken the law, am certain that the guilty cannot go unpunished, and that the penalty to which I am exposed is eternal death. It is the revealed fact that Christ offered himself a sacrifice for me; that he bore my sins in his own body on the tree—it is this that makes the cross of Christ my glory and my joy.

He made his soul an offering for sin. He is declared the Melchisedec, King of Peace, and Priest of the Most High God. 'For every priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.' This is Christ's priesthood. He was ordained for men who without this were eternally lost. It was 'in things pertaining to God' 'FOR MEN.' These things for men were 'gifts and sacrifices for sins.' His death was an offering. He was a priest. To act as a priest is to offer—sacrifice. He offered himself. 'He loved the church and gave himself for it.' 'The blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.'

But Christ was not merely or only a passive offering or willing sacrifice. He offered himself. He was the offerer as well as the offering—the priest as well as the victim. He did not die as human nature dies, overpowered, exhausted, crushed beneath the wheel of law or destiny. He died as no human being ever died, by his own permission, his own will and action, without which death could have no power over him. He laid down his life; none could take it from him. He did not die a mere passive victim; he died a victor. He triumphed over death through bloody sweat and agony and soul-travail and darkness and horrors—prevailed over all, and lived to proclaim. 'It is finished!' This was the cry of the conqueror, the note of triumph, the cross became the victor's chariot. He did it; He offered himself. He officiated as the priest. He offered himself—body, soul and divinity—HIMSELF.

It is said in Hebrews of the Redeemer, 'Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.' These two verses are introduced by the asseveration of Christ's priesthood. The reiteration of his effective, priestly

office follows. 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.' It is to show that the active agency of Christ in his death—that is, his priestly offering of himself—was in answer to his strong crying and tears to him who was able to save him from death. He prayed to be saved from death. He prayed to be saved from death. 'He was heard in that he feared.' He did not pray to be saved from dying—but evidently from the power of death. And, he was heard. He received strength to die in the conscious active function of his office as priest offering himself to God—and not as the crushed, overborne, helpless, strengthless victim. His priestly function and offering went on uninterrupted by agony and death until his triumphant cry, 'It is finished!' And then he gave up or dismissed his spirit—laid down his life himself, no man, and no power taking it from him. It is this that gives the cross, the crucifixion, the death of Christ, its glory and its power. 'THE LOGOS OF THE CROSS IS THE POWER OF GOD.'

HE OFFERED HIMSELF TO GOD.
His death was not towards or before men, as a spectacle, and example, a confirmation of his doctrine, or an exhibition of self-denial, or of vicarious sacrifice, as a universal law of being. Christ offered himself without spot to God. It was therefore not for himself, not to crown his life as a seer or teacher—it was in answer to the demands of law, he was offered to the offended Law-giver. Therefore, 'he offered himself to God.'

And this offering was for men. 'Every high-priest taken from among men, is ordained for men, in things pertaining to God. So Christ was ordained an High Priest for men.' He died for our sins—not sin abstractly but for our sins, Christ hath once suffered for sins.' This, 'said Jesus is the blood of the New Testament (or covenant) in my blood shed for many for the remission of sins.'

Here is the power of the blood of Christ, and its preciousness and its value are revealed to my soul by faith—meeting the penalty due to my transgression, and thereby cancelling, remitting, blotting out my sins for ever. 'How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit (through his divine nature sustaining him in the priestly action of death) purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.' 'We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.'

These passages show that such was the value of his death, the efficacy of the sacrifice of that divine person who gave himself for us, that we are made the very 'Righteousness of God in him.'

The believer in Jesus Christ changes places with him. 'He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' That is, Christ who knew no sin, was made sin, who knew no righteousness, might be made righteous. 'Thus the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin.'

The question need scarcely be asked, Who was he, whose blood has this virtue? What kind of a PERSON was he who offered himself without spot to God. We pause not to speak of his human nature as distinct from his divine nature. There is no need of proof that Deity could not suffer physical or mental pain. The proper question is, Who was Christ—who was the person who offered himself in priestly action, and triumphed over death and hell in that glorious act? The Apostle says, 'The Lord of glory' was crucified. It was the divine personality—for there was no human personality—the Son of God who offered himself in glorious triumphant priestly action to God for me. Precious blood! glorious sacrifice! Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died—the Lord of glory—God's own Son.—Monthly Repository.

Despise not any man, and do not spurn anything; for there is no man that hath not his hour, nor is there anything that hath not its place.

There are few things in life more interesting than an unrestricted interchange of ideas with a congenial spirit, and there are few things more rare.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.
Incidents of Ministerial Life.

A TALE AND SOMETHING MORE.

CHAPTER XVI.

Mr. Charis had been invited to Taxis that he might take part in the annual missionary meeting. He spent the following day in company with Mr. Alethes. As the two wandered round the beautiful hills of the place, they realized the truth of the inspired proverb: 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.' Conversation stirs the intellect, until often the countenance of our friend almost expresses the sentiment of his heart; and as, in more private intercourse, we see our own opinions reflected, our diligence is often quickened in proclaiming the truth in public. Mr. Alethes was very positive in his opinion on things in general; but he was glad to have his views affirmed or corrected, by a brother, having the advantage of age and experience. With candour and kindness it is incredible what advantages may be derived by two ministers engaged in vigorous converse on any important subject touching their interests as servants of Christ.

When the brethren returned to the parsonage they met Mr. and Mrs. Prudens at the tea table, and afterward the three men spent the evening in social intercourse. Mrs. Alethes and her mother took their needle-work and joined them as soon as possible.

'You were telling me this afternoon,' said Mr. Alethes to his friend, 'about the troubles you had seen in settling the disputes of church members at business meetings. How vexing to think that the greatest difficulties of this kind should generally arise from the smallest circumstances.'

'Yes,' replied Mr. Charis, 'I have often looked around on the scene and exclaimed, Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! The result of a faithful pastor's labours seem to be consumed in a week or two, he himself seriously hurt, and his successor finds the ground unproductive for years.'

'I remember,' said Deacon Prudens, 'that the city of Chicago was burnt to the ground through the upsetting of a kerosene lamp which a woman had placed near the heels of a cow she was milking. I have seen church members do things as foolish as that, and the consequence has been similar. Since I have been connected with the church in this place it has been part of my business to attend to small matters. God's service may be done in putting our foot on a spark without making it appear that any particular notice is taken of it. If our people were careful about these trifles, as they are called, we should everywhere enjoy that harmony in the churches which you desire.'

'That is my mind, deacon, exactly,' said Mr. Charis, 'and you indicate a bright light in this cloud. Our people are nearly always united on more important matters, because it is easy for all to see their bearing upon our interests. It requires cultivation of heart and intellect, to bear with small things, and to perceive their relation to graver consequences. By the grace of God and the greater enlightenment of the people, through general education, we shall yet have the harmony desired. Still, some extent of commotion must serve a purpose in our churches, or the devil would not be allowed in.'

Mr. Alethes said, 'I have heard that some of our ministers are mere children in managing church troubles, especially when called upon to preside at stormy meetings.'

'In some measure you may have been rightly informed,' replied Mr. Charis, 'but it is as true that some who are thought children, are really strong men in disguise. A sea captain is not expected to control a storm; if he bring his ship through it without damage, he is worthy of praise. Then again, these meetings are sometimes held on such mere trifles that it is impossible for a Christian minister to get up any enthusiasm. If it were not for the disgrace of the whole affair, most ministers would sit in the chair with great amusement to see—

'The ocean into tempest tost,
To waft a feather or drown a fly.'

I have been around considerable in my time, but have never known a pastor, with any pretence to a training, who has failed in presiding over an assembly of Christian men. Young ministers made no calculation of officiating in what the president of a college once designated an ecclesiastical bear garden.'

'I am glad to think this kind of thing very exceptional in our denomination,' said Mr. Alethes.

'And I,' Mr. Charis said, 'am grieved that it takes place at all. I would not lay rude hands on the ark, and I do not tremble for its safety; but it is necessary that we be fully aware of our defects and their consequences. We may live to see an ecclesiastical struggle that may shake and sift the whole of Christendom. Already the abettors of State churchism are searching in heaven above and in the earth beneath for arguments, to support their tottering fabric, which ere long will come down. These persons like to fetch their arguments from countries where all religion is free. They point to four defects with supreme contempt, and say, 'such is free-churchism and your voluntary principle.' Our condition, as a whole, will bear reference well enough anywhere; but the defects of Baptists, especially, are prominent, whether they be small or great.'

Mr. Alethes turned the points of conversation and the train of thought started on another track, when he said to Mr. Charis, 'I think you spent a year or two in the earlier part of your ministry at a place where you had to collect your own salary. Tell us how you got along with the business.'

'Not very well,' said he, 'but it seemed worth a hundred dollars to get the insight into human character that the opportunity afforded.'

Among all the works of men nothing is so interesting and useful as the study of man himself. If all our ministers had the opportunity, skill and courage to study their people individually, and deal with them accordingly, their influence for good would be enormous. We have to work on men too much in the mass, and our influence in some instances is scarcely felt. This is vexing, especially when we consider the appliances we have in the Holy Scriptures which were evidently prepared by one who, to the fullest extent knew what was in man.

When it is understood that the pastor's financial interests depend upon the spontaneous contributions of the people, directly handed to him, their hearts are very much exposed to his view. Our people usually give as much to the pastor's salary as to any other purpose, and it is not more the amount than the manner in which it is given that we wish to know.

Now it is intensely interesting to compare what is thus given with a person's religious profession and his temporal means. This opens up his mind, and enables you to look down into his heart. It must not be forgotten here that a man's religion is the greater part of him, or it is nothing.'

'These are very serious matters,' said Mrs. Prudens, 'and I wish all Christians would ponder them.'

Mr. Charis continued, 'Nothing can exceed the courtesy, promptitude and kindness by which many minister to the pastor's necessities, and most do well, but if saving faith is to be estimated by a man's works, some flaming professors of religion will be found on the left hand of the Judge when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory. Some will like to say at that day, 'Lord, the ministers were not good-looking, eloquent, or learned.' Then shall he answer them saying, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.'

(To be continued.)

For the Christian Messenger.
The Omnipresent Word.

BY E. M. CHESLEY.

St. John tells us in the inspired visions of the Apocalypse: 'And his name is called the Word of God.' (Rev. xix. 13). It is because of the essential and spiritual identity of the Christ and the Word or wisdom of God that so much importance is everywhere in the Sacred Scriptures attached to the words or teaching of our Lord. The words spoken by the Christ are the Divine will or mind towards man, are a part of the universal Wisdom. The Word endures and has ever in it power of regeneration and sanctification. For the very life of God is in the quickening Word which is the Truth. The Christ says: 'The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life' (John vi. 63). And again he says: 'Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.' (John xv. 3).

'Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.' (John xiv. 23-25).

The grain of wheat has in it the vital principle, whereby it lives and causes growth and produces fruit. This fine principle, this force of life, escapes us,