

## Sunday Reading.

Matthew XII. 20.

In Zion's courts of old,  
The High Priest walked his rounds and  
trimmed,  
The shining lamps of gold;  
And if perchance the flame burned low,  
By fresh oil vainly drenched,  
He cleansed it from the socket, so  
The smoking flax was quenched.

But thou who walkest priest Most High,  
Thy golden lamps among;  
What things are weak and near to die,  
Thou makest fresh and strong;  
Thou breathest on the trembling spark,  
That else would soon expire,  
And straight it shoots up through the dark,  
A brilliant spear of fire.

The ancient shepherd as he strayed  
Among his flock at noon,  
On reedy pipe soft music made,  
In many a pastoral tune;  
But if perchance the reed were crushed,  
And could no more be used,  
His mellow music waned and hushed,  
He brake it when so bruised.

But thou, good Shepherd, who dost lead,  
Thy flock in pastures green,  
Thou dost not break the bruised reed,  
That sorely crushed hath been;  
The heart that dumb in anguish lies,  
Or yields but notes of woe,  
Thou dost return to harmonies,  
More sweet than angels know.

Lord, once my love was all ablaze,  
But now it burns so dim;  
My life was praise, but now my days  
Make a poor broken hymn;  
Yet ne'er by thee am I forgot,  
But helped in sorest need;  
The smoking flax thou quenchest not,  
Nor break'st the bruised reed.

God knew for whom they prayed.

We were coming from prayer-meeting one cold night, and had spoken of the faithful ones there, when the question was asked,

"Do you know how Mrs. (call her Brown) was converted?"

"No," was the reply, "but I would like to hear. She seems to be a most thorough Christian."

"Well, it is rather a strange story. Some years ago a number of us, members of the different churches, held a six o'clock prayer-meeting Sabbath evenings in a room some distance from the places of worship. One evening Mrs. Brown, who was not a member came to the meeting; about the same time another lady who attended another church came in. We had not seen her there before, nor did we know whether or not she was a member of the church. Of course we were glad to see them, and probably would not have thought much more about their presence, had not one of the gentlemen early in the meeting handed the leader a request for prayer for an unconverted woman in the room.

"Some of us supposed, that Mrs. Brown was meant, though the gentleman was from another church than ours. Others from the other church felt sure that the lady attending their services was intended; they prayed for her and we for Mrs. Brown. It mattered little; God knew for whom each of us was interested."

"How did Mrs. Brown seem to like being prayed for in that public way? An unconverted woman of her spirit would hardly be pleased, I imagine."

"Of course she said nothing, and we were so much interested in the services that we hardly thought of it beyond an anxiety for her conversion, though I confess it did seem questionable in the gentleman to make such a request at that time, especially in regard to a lady like Mrs. Brown. But the wisdom of an act can better be told by its result than by the impression it gives us.

"Mrs. Brown waited until the meeting closed, and then hastily left the room—why we could not tell, but some of us feared that she was angry. The other lady left almost as hurriedly; neither gave us an opportunity to say a word to them. But we had prayed for them, and the hearts of the Christians had become fully awake to do what we could for the conversion of the two. We now learned that the one who asked prayers knew nothing about Mrs. Brown, but meant the other lady. It mattered little; we had begun to pray for her now; we did not cease. Neither of them was at the next meeting, nor the next; but it was not many weeks before we learned more about that prayer-meeting.

Both had gone away angry, Mrs.

Brown intensely so. She was offended at us, and regarded the person who sent up the request as one of our own church, and believed, so at least she tried to persuade herself, that it was intended as a personal insult. At first she determined not to go to our church again, and was angry at us all; but second thoughts are usually best. After a time she began to think why we had prayed; it must be because we wished her to become a Christian. Then she felt that she did need a Saviour as she saw herself a sinner. But I need not tell the rest. She soon became a Christian, and has ever since been what you see her now, a faithful child of God. What is more, the other lady also became a Christian; both were awakened by first being made angry at Christians for praying for them. I regard it, however, as a direct answer to prayer. God knew for whom we prayed, and answered both prayers.

"How did Mrs. Brown feel when she learned that she was not meant by the request?"

"She did not know until she told us that she had given her heart to the Lord and related her experience. Of course you can imagine her reply when told, 'What a foolish woman I was to be angry at my best friends. But the Lord used my very follies to win me to himself.'"

The reader need not be told that this incident is related as nearly as possible as it was told the writer, and that it is strictly true. While from it one would hardly draw the lesson that it is well to ask prayers for unconverted ones when they are present, and are likely to think themselves intended, we may receive the suggestion that God knows for whom we pray, whether or not others do, and he answers that prayer, too. Nor need we always fear to offend by our anxiety for their souls the ones for whom we pray. The very anger caused may start thought; and if we can but induce sinners to think about their souls, the half of their work in seeking Christ is done. Perhaps we may offend, and possibly thus keep some away from the Saviour; but it is to be feared that more souls are lost through neglect to warn and pray for them than through offense caused by doing duty. We are too fearful of offending when the salvation of a soul is in question. If it were a matter of business we would not hesitate because we might give offense; we would simply go forward and do the business as quietly as possible, trying to cause no offense, and then leaving the matter there. Do we make our fear of causing trouble an excuse for neglecting duty? Which is the wiser, to risk offending a soul for a few days, it may be years, or to risk offending it for eternity? What is Christ's will? Do we serve him? Then we need ask no other questions, but simply do our work in the most careful manner possible and leave results with him.—*Illustrated Christian Weekly.*

## Work and Workers.

There was a time, not so long ago, when the great concern of every man was believed to be his own salvation. But that is past. The Christian is now imperatively required to be a worker. If he works his irregular attendance or non-attendance at church, communion, and prayer meeting is regarded as the merest peccadillo, if not a positive virtue. He stands upon a lofty pinnacle, raised far above all carnal criticism. Now this is an advance. It is the somewhat crude expression of a Divine principle. We can only correct what is defective in it by doing full justice to the truth that underlies it. The age spirit has carried the workers off their feet. They carried a light weight to begin with, and even that they gradually cast away. All they needed was ballast. The Christian must not expend all his resources upon his own salvation. Most certainly not. It is a poor enough kind of salvation which is the reward of a well calculated selfishness. Selfishness is itself one of the things to be saved from. The worker has reached that point. Salvation is not selfishness, it is life and love, and being so he is under the necessity of working for the good of others. Therefore he works with the energy of a whirlwind, and produces most remarkable results too. It ap-

pears then, that the Divine principle of self-sacrificing love is the root of this abounding or super-abounding activity, and that the eccentricities, numerous enough in all truth, are due to the error of giving unrestrained licence to the age spirit, an admirable servant but a dangerous master. We stand by the worker and defend him, he is the hope of the future, but we take the liberty of warning him that if he would drive the chariot of the sun he must know how to manage and control the horses.

It may be remarked that no explanation has been given of the meaning assigned to work. We have used it in a kind of technical sense, well understood by most. This, of course, is a very inadequate application of that most comprehensive word. Christian work covers every thing that is an inspiration of Christian love. Wherever the love is present, the product is a work, a beautiful work of God. Every act inspired by love is a treasure laid up in heaven. We have not been thinking of that, but of efforts for the good of others, specially for the salvation of their souls. We live in a world of souls—for the most part lost. Like some poor little child that we may have met wearied and hungry, far away from any human dwelling, its little dress all torn, and its hands and face all bemired, hatless, shoeless, where? whence? we ask—when suddenly we see some ornament, some delicate fancy work hanging on to the tattered dress, and learn by the accent of the voice that our conjecture was right. The little thing has wandered from yon distant palace, whose high towers are lost amid the falling shadows. Who would not at any expenditure of time and labour take the wanderer home? This saving of the lost is a Divine employment. The angels have no higher. The word "lost" has a kindly suggestion in it. It is a sad enough condition, but full of hope. The wandered soul has some faded ornaments upon it, some touching memorials of a royal home left far, far in the distance, and if only some one would cross its path able and willing to save! It has a home somewhere and a Father. The lost are not in hell—God knows who are there, some who never expected to be doubtless among the number—they are here, our parents, children, brothers, sisters, they are lost. Shall we judge unfairly, or sneer at any, who even in an eccentric way—which we don't defend—out of a true inspiration of love, make it the business of their lives to save such? No wonder the age spirit plays strange freaks with earnest workers, and tempts them to produce too rapidly to the sad detriment of the quality of the results. Most earnestly do we plead then of every Christian to become a worker in this contracted sense as well as in the wider. The soul of the Son of Man is in travail. When He looks around his Father's house He sees room enough, and to spare—so many empty places that might be filled—and when he looks outside, can He weep still? What a sight presents itself! souls for which He died—for which He would die again—in every variety of pitiful conditions, but all lost, doing everything, making martyrs, and slaves, and brutes of themselves; doing everything but coming to Him that they might have an eternity of bliss made theirs. Work! Christ helping us, shall we not, until all the lost are gathered in?

## The White dead Nettle.

BY THE REV. J. HUNT COOKE.

God has given us two Bibles. The one we call Holy Scripture, the other Nature. Both are divided into books and chapters. Generally we read from Holy Scripture. Our Lord taught us to learn also from Nature. We select the most common hedge flower known in this country for our lesson. It is taken from the book, the country; chapter, flowers; verse, dead nettle. This flower is like a beautiful parian vase. At the bottom, inside, is placed a little drop of honey; just above there is a fringe of hairs to prevent insects getting at it. It is intended for a particular kind of bee, the one called the humble bee, which has a trunk just long enough to reach to the bottom. If this jar were not so deep other bees could get the honey. There is another species of dead nettle with a red vase,

that is intended for another class of bees with shorter trunks; and there is yet another species with purple flower, deeper still; this is intended for bees with longer trunks still. The bees have some important work to do for their living, and it is necessary to explain what this is. They have to carry pollen from one flower to another. Inside the vase are fine stalks, called stamens, and the pollen is on the head of the stamens. It is like a fine powder, which, when examined by a microscope, looks like thousands of little eggs, and they are the eggs of seeds. Inside the vase also there is the pistil. This is a fine tube which leads down to the seed vessel at the bottom of the flower. When one of these little pollen eggs is placed on top of the pistil it goes down and makes the seed. Now, one great peculiarity of flowers is this—that to make good seed it is the law that the pollen, that is to say the seed eggs, should come from another flower. Therefore, the pistil is not ready to receive the pollen at the same time that it is ripe on the stamens of the same flower. It needs to have the pollen or egg seed brought from some other flower, else there will be no seeds. This is the business of the bee. There is a little standing-place just outside the flower. On that the bee alights and places her head inside the white vase to get the honey. Her weight presses the top of the flower down. The stamens touch her back and scatter upon it a quantity of pollen. She takes the honey and flies away. Looking around in the sunshine she sees another white flower a good way off. "Oh," she says, "there is another jar with honey." She makes straight for the next white dead nettle, and, perhaps, alights on one in which the pistil is just ripe to receive the pollen—some seed eggs. Stepping on the ledge her weight brings the pistil down curving on her back, its gummy points take up some of the pollen there, so the end is attained. The hood that reaches over serves to protect the flower from the rain. So it is found by those who study it that every part is wisely and wonderfully made with a clear design. There is no such thing as chance. Design implies a designer. So this little common flower tells us there is a great and wise God. It tells us more.

It teaches that the eternal God regards little things. When we contemplate the mighty stars our hearts shrink at thoughts of our insignificance, but, when we look at the flowers, our spirits revive. We are not too small to be beneath His notice. If He so cares for the blossoms of the wayside hedge in their brief, apparently insignificant existence, how much more will He care for us?

The humblest flower is a poem by Him Who dwells midst the blazing cherubim.  
Read it well,  
It has something to tell.

In rhythm of colour it will confess  
God loveth beauty and gentleness:  
Marvellous are all His works, and each,  
If you will but hearken, some lesson will teach.

The lowliest life a poem may be,  
Pleasing to God by a soul that is free.  
Child of light,  
Be holy and bright.

That so by a noble life and true  
You may be to God what a flower is to you:  
A blossom of song for the garland sublime  
He is gathering in from the garden of time.

## Church Sociability.

"Be social. A young man comes to your church; he is a perfect stranger to a majority of those he meets; his home is far away; his church he left behind. He listens attentively to the service, and is pleased and profited by what he hears. The service over, he goes out. Although many know him to be a stranger, yet no one extends the friendly hand or in any way notices him. He is somewhat discouraged, a little homesickness steals over him, but he resolves to go there once more. He goes with the same result. Discouraged, he seeks another sanctuary, where the warm grasp of the hand, information about the evening-meeting, invitation to the Sunday School, and the interest taken by the members of the church in his welfare, at once decides his course. The result is a zealous worker is gained by one church and lost by another, and simply because the young men were social. Young men and young women of our churches, never let a stranger go away without notice; never let that chilling feeling of loneliness come over any person in the house of God. It should be our pleasure to make every stranger at home. Try it and your reward will be speedy.

## Associational Sermon.

The Secret of "much Fruit!"

PREACHED BEFORE THE N. S. EASTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, ON MONDAY, JULY 14, 1884.

BY REV. P. S. MCGREGOR.

Published by special request.

"He that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing."—John xv. 5.

By the help of the beloved John we can look into the "upper room" and see Jesus, His heart overflowing with love for His disciples, dropping precious words of comfort into the secret storehouse of their heart. At a certain point in the discourse there is a movement among the little company, and we hear Him say, "Arise, let us go hence." But before they go on their lonely moonlight walk to the Garden of Gethsemane, we see them lingering around their Lord, eager to hear more of those words which are so precious and wonderful to them. Once more He speaks, and among the words He utters we find our text: "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing."

In these words the secret of abundance of spiritual fruit is treasured up, not only for the eleven to whom they were first spoken, but for Christ's Church in all time to come. It was our Lord's earnest desire that much of the fruit, which is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, should be manifested in the lives of all His people, and that through their silent influence, their words and their works, the perishing multitude should be saved, and with them bear fruit to the glory of God His Father.

In the text special attention is called to the fact that without Christ it is impossible to do anything to promote His cause. "Apart from Me ye can do nothing." Nourishment for spiritual fruit cannot be derived from natural or sinful sources. It cannot be obtained from human wealth, power or wisdom.

A great society might be formed, and its members have all the help that the chief rulers of the nation can bestow upon them, and all the influence of statesmen, politicians, poets and musicians, but without Christ that society cannot do anything which will, in the highest and truest sense, benefit themselves or the world in which they live. In addition, that society may command the help of all the Christless scholars and professors in the world, and then they cannot do anything to lead men from sin to holiness, and fit them for a home with God. The best they can do is to help men to go to perdition in a respectable way. Paul's challenge to the wise men of his day is yet unanswered. Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Who can give men the true and saving knowledge of God.

"After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the preaching of (what they called) 'foolishness,' to save them that believe." God is the source of true and saving knowledge, and only through Christ can this knowledge be obtained. We must not forget that the words, "Without me ye can do nothing," were first uttered by our Lord to warn His disciples from undertaking to do anything in their own strength. It is possible that a large part of the labor of even Christian people is lost because they go to work trusting too much in their own wisdom or power, not realizing that the hardest labor is, in the main, without the presence and help of Jesus. It is power received from God through union with Christ back of creeds, however orthodox; of sermons, however well studied; of preaching, however eloquent; of labor, however earnest, which gives the Church of Christ success in the work which God has given her to do.

II. Let the conditions of the text be complete in a church, or single person, and abundance of spiritual fruit will be the result.

In order to have these conditions complete there must be a living, intimate, twofold and abiding union with Christ. This union, like that which exists between God the Father and God the Son, is in some respect be-

hind our comprehension; but we know that he who is in Christ has an interest in Christ's atoning work, and if Christ is in him he will have peace, strength and courage to labor for Him, because Christ is working in him by His Spirit which He has given him.

There may be some union with Christ without the conditions of the text being fulfilled. There was some union between Christ and the church at Laodicea, when the message which John received from the one who stood in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks was delivered to them. They were members of the visible Church of Christ, and they thought they were "rich and increased in goods." But they were told that they were "lukewarm, and wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." We are certain that the conditions of the text were not complete in that Church, for Christ was not in the church, He was only "at the door."

The union between Christ and the church at Ephesus was more real than the union between Him and the church at Laodicea, but it was not what it should have been for they left their "first love." Had the conditions of the text been complete they would be bearing "much fruit," instead of being in danger of losing their visibility. Looking forward to the day of Pentecost, Christ said to His disciples, (John 14, 20): "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me and I in you." We too may know that the union of the text was complete with the church of that day, for they were enabled to bear fruit which was an eternal blessing to the generation in which they lived, and which shall continue to enrich the church and bring glory to God to the end of time. The great source from which they obtained nourishment to enable them to bear "much fruit" is as full of love, peace, holiness, wisdom and power as at the day of Pentecost, and if the union of the church is to-day what it should be and may be, abundance of fruit will be the result. I am not prepared to prove that the day of miracles has not passed in the realm of matter, but I am prepared to prove that if the conditions of the text are fulfilled in the church of the present day, that she shall be enabled to do that which is only possible to the Omnipotent.

But one need not wait until the union of the text is complete in all the members of the church, "the same" means *this one*, or the same as we have it translated in the authorized version. It is emphasized in the Greek. Whatever others will do *this one* will bear "much fruit."

Not long since I was taking a passage in a steamboat. We were going up the harbor near the mouth of a river. The wind and the tide, and the current of the river were against the boat. I could see other shipping on the right and on the left, driven by the wind and carried by the tide out to sea, but our steamer made sure progress on its way. The secret of its success was that it did not depend on the wind or tide, there was a power within which enabled it to go forward in spite of the adverse circumstances. So shall it be with the man in whose heart Christ is "dwelling by faith," and who is "strengthened with might in the inner man by His Spirit." He shall move steadily forward in spite of every influence which may oppose him, blessing his fellow-men and bringing glory to God. Send such a man to Samaria, Corinth, or Rome, and he will not only enjoy the fruit of the Spirit in his own life, but will bear much fruit in winning many souls to the knowledge of the truth. Send him even to a place as full of false philosophy, conceit and other gods as Athens, and his labor shall not be altogether in vain. "Send him down to a place where he will be surrounded by professors of religion who have a name to live while they are dead, and who are depending on forms for salvation, and he will conduct himself in such a way that the Master will say of him, 'He shall walk with me in white for he is worthy.'" Send him to prison, and he will sing the jailor to repentance, or he will send through the windows fruit which will be a source of comfort and strength to the Church of Christ to the end of the world. It may be that, like the men who attend the