# Sunday Reading.

THE GOSPEL IN PRISONS.

There are One Million of People in Prison in Europe

The following respecting the gospel in prisons, by Evangelist Charles Cook, is very interesting :-

In running through Canada and the West on my recent evangelistic tour, I could not help noticing that the churches were superior in construction, convenience and comfort to any others I had ever seen. I have been laboring amongst Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists, and found a brotherly, loving spirit manifested, less occupied by doctrine than duty. Every opportunity was afforded of addressing the different ministerial associations and colleges. All were busy and occupied in chur h work and the alleviation of sorrow and distress.

I was surprised to find little or no openair work and, in some cases, after-meetings were not held. In Canada one minister said, "We need education on open-air work."

In Chicago, I found Mr. Moody and his workers very busy, many theatres, tents and churches being pressed into service. 75,000 persons were present at the Sunday evening meetings. Among the helpers present whom I knew were Mr. Henry Varley, Rev. John McNeill, Dr. Arthur Pierson, Rev. Geo. Needham, Lord Kin-nard, Lord Bennett and Geo. Inglis. John McNeill's meetings were specially crowded, he preaching four times on Sundays and Mr. Moody likewise.

Ordinary church life and work seemed somewhat upset by the interest caused by the World's Fair. One of the Isading ministers said to me, "While my church is crowded on Sunday, it is difficult to get an audience on week nights. Our church work seems somewhat demoralized for the time being." The churches on my route I found occupied with christian work, and had large attendances wherever I preached. penitentiaries, I found much to admire, but there are some things which call for reform. Canada seems especially blessed with good wardens who are doing their utmost to bring about the prison reforms that are needed. They are trying to abolish the association system, and are loud in are the smallest in the world, being 8 feet long and only 28 inches wide. This calls for special comment. They are hoping to do away with this inhumanity and have already begun to build larger cells. Concerning the American prisons which I visited, I found them clean and comfortable. Most of the prisoners were engaged in some kind of work, although, in some instances, men were idle, which is a still in existence, is about to be undertaken

on State account. As an instance of liberality accorded to me when preaching anong the prisoners, I may mention that a Roman Catholic priest in one prison brought in his own flock, desirous that I should speak to them also, while addressing the Protestant prisoners. He also elected himself to stay as an audi-

The gathering together of so many thousands in Chicago, has naturally brought together a vast number of criminals, and crime has during the last six months wonderfully increased. When I visited the Cook County Jail, 600 men were confined there. I found 300 prisoners together smoking, reaping and talking, among them many dangerous murderers, and I asked the official who conducted me around, what class of criminals they principally were. He said, "mostly murderers. They are as guilty of robbing each other here, as committing robbery outside." One man recently murdered another, and another lost \$36 out of his pocket while sleeping in the same cell with a second prisoner.

A pathetic incident happened in a Canadian prison. In a hymn book which I took up, the following lines were found: "Mary Douglas left Scotland, July, 1881, reached Canada, August, 1881, once a father's pet and a mother's joy, but now a poor drunk-ard, but God will save me yet." Mary has been advertised for, but they have not

as yet heard from her. Of these "outcasts of society," men and women unable to help themselves, there are thousands in many lands whe rarely hear the Gospel except through such visits.
Giving them New Testaments and holding simple services in the prisons, is a work which should commend itself to thoughtful I was before I went among heathen coun-Christian people. Having government credentials from many of the authorities of different countries, I have been able to enter prisons which would be closed to most men, There are at least one million people in prison in Europe alone, and the majority of them are without the Gospel of Christ.

Calling the Flock.

An illustration of a passage of Scripture not generally understood was witnessed in the province of Aran, Northern Africa, by Mr. Barrow, a missionary to the Jews. He writes: "I was travelling in the dilias we jumped out of the diligence. There thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Psalm was no one in sight until suddenly an Arab 81, 7-10. the town, took out from the folds of his on high, because he hath known my name. one direction, some goats from another, 91, 14-16. and from all directions they came and gathered round the man. It was the voice of the shepherd calling the flock to him, that the Lord." Psalm, 31-25.

And the secret of politeness is to love.

Love cannot behave itself unseemly. You can take the most untutored persons and the Lord." Psalm, 31-25.

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he might lead it out to pasture. When the whole flock was gathered he led them away, walking before them until he disappeared beyond our vision. As I watched the shepherd I realized for the first time the meaning of Zech. 10:8 that prophecy so dear to my people which, correctly in-terpreted, reads: 'I will pipe for them and gather them,' and it refers to the action of the shepherd who pipes sweet music to his flock calling them to him."

#### SWEET TEMPERS.

No Amount of Natural Talent can Account for a Sour Disposition.

It pays to keep sweet-that is, sweet in temper and disposition, writes Rev. H. A. Ott. "Nothing is so distressing as a soured disposition, sour words, sour glances, sour actions. Nobody can afford to be sour. It does not pay to say unkind things to your next door neighbor. No one can afford to be snappish, churlish, cross or ugly when something is done which fails to please. Such a course soon creates a sour disposition, and it it is cherished, in the course of time we get soured against everybody and everybody's heel is lifted up against us. We cannot afford to be sour, because of the effect it has on our hap-

No amount of natural talent, education, or the highest culture, can atone for a sour disposition and make us lovable precisely in proportion as we are sweet in temper and loving in act and deed. If we take no interest in anybody, we need not expect them to take any interest in us. If we are unsocial in our life, repelling on account of our cutting words, we need not be surprised it the world treats us coldly and indifferently. "He that hath friends must show himself friendly."

Sour people can aid a pastor very little. When he wants a new member visited, or a sick person cheered, he puts to work the amiable, tender and affectionate. Indeed, he trembles lest the new members be discouraged and disheartened by lack of cordiality. Let us keep sweet, be sociable and sympathetic, be loving and lovable, for then in the highest degree can the In making a tour of Canadian prisons and Master use us, and we can be serviceable in his cause.

#### Conversion of a Play Writer.

"Parisian literary society," says the Paris correspondent of the London Daily News, "is greatly exercized at present over a remarkable change through which one of their number, Mr. Albin Valabregue, has praise of the American principle of "indeterminate sentences." Many of the cells lately passed. His triends, who generally belong to a brilliant but tast set, have noticed with astonishment his all but complete disappearance from their literary haunts and his evident distaste for certain of their frivolities. Their astonishment has grown into amazement on learning that the merry author of several scores of comedies and farces, as broad as the playreader would allow, is about to publish a book called "The Word of God." M. Valabregue, mistake. The system of convict contracts who was not particularly qualified for a is hardly fair to outside labor and the work theologian either by birth—he is a jew—or in Joliet Penitentiary, where the system is by his education, which was that of Free Thought, has, to use his own words, "received the revelation of Christian mysteries in their sublime truth, not only in a state of wakefulness, but in a state of absolute calm and reason." The author of the 'Premier Mari de France, a farce of the most audacious description, which is having an extraordinary run at the Varieties, intends to show that the true God is Christ, and that never such another Word will enlighten this planet."

## Confession of a Traveller.

As remarks disparaging foreign mission work are often published by the daily press the wide publication of the following fact is but common justice: "Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop, whose writings, especially her two volumes on Unbeaten tracks in Japan, have interested a multitude of readers, has recently spoken of her change of views in regard to missionary work, of which she has seen so much, She has not merely passed through, but has lived in several lands where missionary work has been carried on, and has seen all sides of it, and her testimony is as clear as it is gratifying. She says: 'I am a convert to missions through seeing missions and the need of them. Some years ago I took no interest whatever in the condition of the heathen. I had heard much ridicule cast upon Christian missions, and perhaps imbibed some of the unhallowed spirit. But the missionaries, by their lives and character and by the work they are doing wherever I have seen them, have produed to my mimd such a change and such an enthusiasm, as I might almost express it, in favor of Christian missions, that cannot go anywhere without speaking about them and trying to influence others

Messages of Help for the Week. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what

the spirit saith unto the churches." Rev.

"Consider and hear me, O Lord my God! Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of

death." Psalm, 13-3. "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak." Psalm, 6-2.

"Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my tootsteps slip not." Psalm, 17-5. "Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered gence from a place inland to a town on the | thee; I answered thee in the sacred place coast. All was quiet in that little place of thunder. I am the Lord thy God. Open

appeared, and planting himself in the mid-dle of the street of houses which formed therefore will I deliver him. I will set him robe a little bamboo whistle or pipe, and He shall call upon me, and I will answer began to play upon it. I could not think him; I will be with him in trouble, and eant, but as he piped I saw to honor him. With long life will I satisfy truffes, writes Rev. Dr. Drummond. Courmy astonishment some cows coming from him. and show him my salvation." Psalm tesy has been defined as love in little things.

RELIGIOUS DEBATES IN RUSSIA. Priests and Stundists Engage in Public Discussion of Dectrine.

Recent reports from Russia have referred to public discussions between the priests of the Russo-Greek church and the leaders of the Stundists. People familiar with the religious situation in Russia have been sceptical as to these discussions. knowing well how carefully the Stundists avoid publicity, especially such as will attract the attention of the church. It appears, however, that the discussions do take place and are arousing much interest. In Moscow they are field in the Kaistsin House which is situated in the quarter of the city where Stundists are numerous. The scene at these meetings is a strange The room in which they are held is low and long. Near the centre is an arched projection, on one side of which is a rostrum for the president and his colleagues. Father Tikhon a leading divine of Moscow usually presides, and he is accompanied by some younger men, who are scholars and experienced debaters. Massive candlesticks stand on the rostrum, from which the light of candles is shed on the table, where theological works are piled for use in the debate. It is an unequal combat, as a rule, for the Stundists are poor and unlearned, while the priests have been well-taught. In Biblical know- "Alexander the Great lies below; Alexander ledge, however, the priests are no match | the greater lies above." for the Stundists who are emphatically men of the one book. It often happens, a Stundist will insist on a passage from the Bible being the final authority on the point in dispute.

The Stundists now number about 200,000 out their sentences for heresy. There are many who have thus suffered, though they are generally accused of some other offence at their trial, so as to bring them under the civil law. It is not difficult to do this because it is a statutable offence under Russian law for the members of any church besides the national church to make converts. The Russian Government boasts that there is religious liberty for all sects in Kussia, and it is so; but every convert from the A recent letter from a Russian Stundist explains how these unusual debates have occurred. It is, he says, a common practise for the priests to enter any house in which a Stundist meeting is being held and controvert the teaching of the preacher. and the debates are continued to a late hour. Out of these informal discussions have developed the larger assemblages in

the Kasitsin House and other places. The audiences generally include mer-chants, peasants and office-holders of all classes, many of them belonging to the national church, as well as a fair proportion of Stundists. The debate is tree to all and ranges over the whole field of Christian doctrine. It is followed with keen interest by the audience; and the police officers who are always in attendance, watch the sympathy in the various faces with a view to future legal proceedings. The impression cannot be eradicated from the official mind that of disloyalty to the Czar. As a matter of fact, however, the Czar has no subjects more loyal, or more law-abiding than he has in the Stundists.

## Church Going Selfishness.

A lady remarked the other day: "I don't go to church now, because in no church in my neighborhood can I get any comfort." This lady seems to have thought that the only reason for going to church was in order to get something. Another and better reason for going would be to give something and to do something. We should go to church in order to obey this command, and to do an act of service that is pleasing to God. This cultivates our religious feelings and prepares us for the duties of the week. Then we give something to our fellow-men by going. Our example benefits him, and his devotion is warmed by ours. A number of sticks burn better together than one alone. So long as we hold the what-can-I-get theory of church-going, we shall get little by going to church. We shall merely sit in the seat of the scornful. and criticize the preacher and the choir. If one goes to church with the true devotional spirit of christian service in the heart, there will be no room left for selfishness. The words of the preacher will then come to our spiritual ears tipped with living fire, and the music will be rapturous to our souls. There will be no need of complaining that one "cannot get any comfort out of the services."

## Bible Criticized.

A certain man placed a fountain by the wayside, and he hung a cup near it by a little chain. He was told some time afterward that a great art critic had found much fault with his design as being lacking in the artistic quality, being in fact a blemish on the landscape. "But," he said, "do many persons drink at it?" Then they told him that thousands of people—men, women and children—slaked their thirst at the fountain. He smiled, and answered, that he was little troubled by the critic's observations, only that he hoped that on some sultry summer's day, the critic himself might fill the cup and be refreshed. Something like this the the bible has to undergo. Learned men complain of many things in it, point out that it is unscientific, although it does not profess to teach science, and point out other deficiencies in it; but it satisfies the spiritual thirst of millions and those are happiest who do not criticize it but drink of its living waters.

'Tis Better to be Courteous.

Politeness has been defined as love in And the secret of politeness is to love. as a reservoir in their heart, they will not behave themselves unseemly. They simply cannot do it. Carlyle said of Robert Burns that there was no truer gentleman in Europe than the ploughman-poet. It was because he lived to love everything—the mouse, and the daisy, and all the things, great and small that God made; and so he could go into any society of the day. We heard the other day from one speaker on a certain platform about the meaning of the word "gentleman." It means a gentle man -a man who does things gently, with love. 'Love doth not behave itself unseemly."

#### Above and Below.

The late Professor Dr. Graham, of the Presbyterian College, London, was inimitable for his wit. One of his many palpable hits was once made upon a fellow-traveller who, along with other professionals, accompanied him to the Holy Land. On their return journey, by way of Greece, they had decided to visit the grave of Alexander the Great. On their way to it this ministerial brother, who bore the christain name of Alexander, had been narrating to the Pro-tessor a remarkable—might it not be even miraculous?-experience he had passed through when he was in the desert; how in fact, his life had been saved through a spider, whose web had intercepted and arrested his fall when visiting some of the ruins there. By Graham, as by others, such stories from this truthful brother needed to be taken with a grain or two of salt; but, as they were standing by the grave, Graham

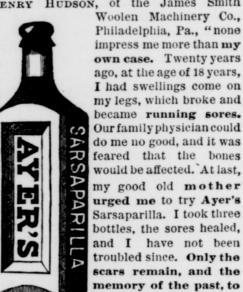
#### What One Bible Leaf Did.

A poor man who had spent a life of ignorance and sin, was found by a London clergyman apparently dying in a miserable garret. He was in great anxiety of mind in all Russia, including those who have been from an apparently accidental cause. A sent to Siberia and the Caucasus to serve | stray leaf torn from a Testament had caught his eye. It was part of Rom. iii. He had read the vivid description of the ungodly man which that chapter contains, and saw its application to his own case. But where was the remedy, and where the Gospel? Alas! the paper was torn off in the middle of the 21st verse, "But now the righteousness of God without the law . . . . .

"Is what !"said the anxious man. "Do the next words give any hope of such a sinner as I." The remainder of the chap-Greek Church to the Stundist faith is a ter was read and explained simply to him, source of peril to the congregation he joins. and the Gospel was "as cold water to a thirsty soul.

## Only the Scars Remain.

see in regard to certain medicines performing cures, cleansing the blood, etc.," writes HENRY HUDSON, of the James Smith Woolen Machinery Co.,



own case. Twenty years ago, at the age of 18 years, I had swellings come on my legs, which broke and became running sores. Our family physician could do me no good, and it was feared that the bones would be affected. At last, my good old mother urged me to try Ayer's Sarsaparilla. I took three bottles, the sores healed, and I have not been troubled since. Only the scars remain, and the memory of the past, to

remind me of the good Ayer's Sarsaparilla has done me. I now weigh two hundred and twenty pounds, and am in the best of health. I have been on the road for the past twelve years, have noticed Ayer's Sarsaparilla advertised in all parts of the United States, and always take pleasure in telling what good it did for me." For the cure of all diseases originating in

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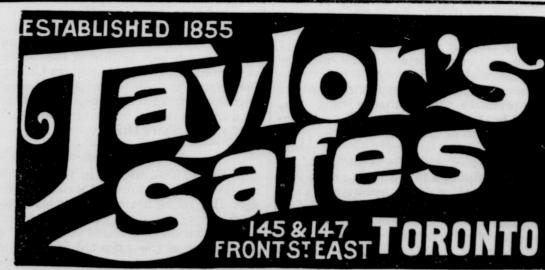
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