

Sunday Reading.

The First Green Leaf.

Oh welcome, thrice welcome, in the first green leaf,
Though small and scarce seen on the hedge;
For its first modest peep, so pure and so bright,
Of Spring is the earnest and pledge.

Thou'rt welcome, fair leaf, as the first word of love,
On hearts from which long has fled;
When friendship long buried springs forth green and true
And declares that her love is not dead.

And welcome the leaves on humanity's tree;
How lovely, fresh, tender, and bright,
The children God sends us—the hope of the Church—
God keep them from sin's deadly blight!

And sweet, too, the fresh, budding mind of a child,
As its thoughts into words it oft weaves:
O, watch them, ye parents, let dews of Christ's word
Distill on those sweet, tender leaves.

But sweeter by far is the green leaf of faith,
Just piercing through nature's dark clod;
The earnest and pledge that Christ's guiding hand
Is training the soul for its God;

That its winter has passed, and bright summer days,
Will clothe it with beauty and grace,
Till, crowned with God's smile in His garden above,
It finds in His presence its place.
Brighton. W. POOLE BALFERN.

Comforting Thoughts for Christian Workers.

BY REV. T. EVANS, MONGHYR.

Few, if any, Christian workers feel satisfied with the meagre results of their labors, for, after years of toil for the Master, they find that they have not been able to attempt one-fourth the 'work of faith and labour of love' which they had intended to undertake. They had started in the Divine life with many schemes and plans for good which they were never able to carry out, and which, it may be after years in the field, that they have been obliged reluctantly to abandon. To this must be added the depressing thought that they have not realised one half the good results from their labours which they had expected to see. They have often to adopt the lament of the prophet, 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?'

The bitter things may be all true, but it is well to have the sweet as well, lest we be overwhelmed with sorrow.

1. Our Master is so considerate that He gives His servants credit, not only for what they have done, but also for what they have wished and desired to do. This wishing to do much would go for little with an earthly master, but our Master takes note of the desires of the heart as well as the actions of the life. It is not so much the amount we accomplish that He looks to, as the way we do it, and the desire we have to do much more. David had it in his heart to build a temple to the Lord, and though it was his son Solomon who had the honour to accomplish that great work, yet David, who intended to do the work, got the credit of it, and the Lord told David that He had accepted his intentions; and He rewarded him for his desires. 'Thou didst well that it was in thine heart,' said the Lord, and He added, 'also the Lord telleth thee that He will make thee an house,' etc. What a gracious Master we serve! Yes; it is the heart that He regards, and not our works. Our work is as nothing to Him; but the desires of the loving and loyal heart He highly values.

2. Again, whether or not we prosper as we wish, God's work will be done. If we care more for the Lord's Kingdom than we do for our own personal success, we shall not be disappointed; and whether God is pleased to use us, or to make use of others to carry on His work, it should matter but little to us so long as His work is done. In fact, we have much less to do with it than we are disposed to believe. We, in the pride of our hearts, think that our skill, our services, are very necessary to the building up of God's temple on earth, while the fact is that our Lord has no real need of us at all, and He only allows us to have a hand in the work in order to teach us. Just as a kind and indulgent parent allows a little

child to have a share in a work about which it knows little or nothing and which indeed it is more likely to hinder than to help, so our Heavenly Father graciously allows His little ones to have a share in the great work which He is carrying on in this earth, to teach them lessons of love and wisdom which otherwise they could not learn.

3. Again, must not self-discipline and self-improvement be regarded as among the chief issues of life? You have laid out your life for the good of others, you have laboured and suffered much in order to benefit your fellows. Well, in this we see the Spirit of the Master. But it may be that those for whose benefit you may have given up your all have profited little by your devotion. You have worked hard for many years, and it may be that few souls have been saved, if any. What then? If those others have not benefited by your devotion to them, have you not benefited by it? Yes; and it may be, benefited more—I repeat it, more—by your want of success than if you had been very successful. When the knife is rubbed on hard steel, the impression on the steel is not perceptible; but is the labour therefore lost? No, though the material acted upon remains the same, the knife has been sharpened and fitted to be of greater use at the master's table. And so, with us, if our loving labour has not won the hearts of others, it has at least humbled our own hearts, and we feel all the better for it. Our Father knew what sort of discipline we stood in need of.

4. It is very possible that the results of our labours are far greater than we suppose them to be. Elijah was a great man and a mighty worker for his God; but he thought that nothing had been done, and in utter despair he wished to die and give up the work as hopeless. But when he needed to know what had really been done, and was spiritually fit to receive the cheering news, God told him that there were beside him, and probably through his instrumentality, no less than 7,000 men who had not bowed their knees to Baal.

5. There is another sweet thought which finds expression in the words of Paul—"Inasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." As far as men are concerned we may have "laboured in vain and spent our strength for naught"; but there is another aspect of the question, and it is by far the most important, as it has to do with the Master whom we serve, and whose glory we have made known to men. Whether men hear and obey, or turn away from the grace of God and reject His free salvation in either case our labour is "not in vain in the Lord." His character as a God of love is vindicated, and His servants who preach the Gospel of His grace faithfully shall not lose their reward because sinners have not availed themselves of the offers of God's mercy.

6. There is also another thought which has been a great comfort to my soul: it is this, that this earth is not the only, nor yet the chief place in which to serve the Master. In fact, we are here but as pupils in school, only fitting ourselves for the service of that other and brighter state where His people shall serve Him continually, and that without the failings of the flesh and the distractions of a world full of sin and sorrow. When the angelic John had a glimpse of the land of love and light, and saw there the redeemed arrayed in white robes, he was astonished; but one of the elders before the throne solved the mystery, and said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."

Dean Goulburn on Baptism.

The following words from the head-master of Rugby illustrate the honesty of English scholarship in dealing with scriptural facts, however these facts may condemn the practice of the writers. In his Bampton Lectures on the Resurrection, Dean Goulburn says: "Let us next examine a figure of resurrection supplied, not indeed by the constitution of nature, but by that which proceeds from the same author, the constitution of grace. It is a figure pointed at in those words addressed to the Colossians—'Buried with Him in baptism; wherein also ye are risen.' There can be no doubt that baptism as it is a means, when duly received, of spiritual resurrection, so, when it is administered in the primitive and most correct form, is a Divine-ly constituted emblem of bodily resurrection. And it is to be regretted that the form of administration unavoidably (if it be unavoidably) adopted in cold climates, should utterly obscure the emblematic significance of the rite, and render unintelligible to all but the educated the apostle's association of the burial and resurrection with the ordinance. Were immersion (which is the rule of our church in cases where it may be had without hazard to the health) universally practised, this association of two at present heterogeneous ideas would become intelligible to the humblest. The water closing over the entire person would then preach of the grave which yawns for every child of Adam, and which one day will engulf all of us in its drear abyss. But that abyss will be the womb and seed plot of a new life. Animation having been for one instant suspended beneath the waters (a type this of the interruption of man's energies by death), the body is lifted up again in the air, by way of expressing emblematically the new birth of resurrection."

Again, after saying that the Church of England approves most of immersion, he proceeds: "In this form, as has been said, there is a beautiful symbol, which is entirely forfeited by adopting the practice which now usually obtains of affusion. The closing of the water over the entire person—during which period of submersion animation is momentarily suspended—presents to the eye of sense an image both of that death unto sin which constitutes the grace of the sacrament, and of that final commitment to the earth whereby the dead are buried out of the sight of the living. The bringing up of the body again in a purified state, after its momentary disappearance, supplies a no less striking emblem of that spiritual renovation which involves both a change of heart, as also of the issuing forth of the Christian's body from the sepulchre at the summons of the Son of Man. It is evident then, that the outward visible sign in baptism is significant of resurrection both spiritual and physical" (pp. 18, 46).

It seems strange that a practice which "utterly obscures the emblematic significance of the rite, and renders unintelligible to all but the educated" the apostle's meaning, which "utterly forfeits the beautiful symbol" instituted by the Head of the Church, should command the respect and observance of such a man.

Ritual ceremonials are increasing in episcopal quarters in Ireland. "An interesting service" was held in a co. Cork church "for the purpose of dedicating the new font." There were present a Canon, Minor Canon, a Rural Dean, and several B.D.'s. On the bowl of the font are the words, "Suffer little children to come unto me"—words which really set aside infant baptism, for they clearly invite little children directly to Christ without the interposition of a rite.

The infidel boast that the Bible is losing its hold on the age, is strikingly contradicted by the fact that the American Bible Society has been unable of late to supply the demand for it, though making seven complete Bibles and Testaments in every minute of working time.

From Ireland.

Dr. Eccles writes from Dublin: "Come over and help us" is just now the cry from Ireland. One hundred and thirty ministers in Derry and the surrounding district have invited Dr. Somerville, the venerable and somewhat eccentric evangelist of Glasgow, to conduct a series of evangelistic services in their neighborhood. And, God willing, he is coming. A monster invitation to Messrs. Moody and Sankey is being signed all over Ireland. It asks them, on the termination of their London work, to undertake a mission in the south and west of this country.

A fact not generally known is the alarming ratio of Catholics to Protestants in Ireland. Before the potato famine it was ten to one. Since it has been gradually sinking, till now it is about three to one. The fickle Celt emigrates, the steady Protestant remains. Not long ago the Catholics were in the majority, even in Ulster. To-day Protestants are. The agencies which have brought this about in Ulster are at work in other parts of Ireland, and will effect a like change.

If we take the income tax as a guide to the wealth of a country, Ireland has certainly become richer, even while its population has been falling off. It is a complete case of "a land where wealth accumulates and men decay." Since 1860 there has been in the value of assessed incomes a rise in England of thirty-four per cent. in Scotland of fifty-four per cent., and in Ireland of seventy-one per cent. So, at least, says Professor Leone Levi. During this time the population of Ireland has diminished eight per cent.

The following occurs in a leader in the *Witness*, the peculiarly sober organ of a peculiarly sober people. We may, therefore, with joy believe it to have a very fair foundation in fact, though certainly neither I nor any of the many friends to whom I have mentioned the matter can speak so jubilantly. "The Irish people, especially in the purely Romish districts, were never so religiously awake as now, nor so open-minded and open-minded to the Gospel. The habit of thinking for themselves on any subject is certain to lead to independent thinking on the greatest of all subjects. Amongst respectable Romanists a deep sense of shame has been produced by the fact that the Invincibles, the dynamiters, and road-side assassins have all been of their Church. No people are more willing to listen to the story of the Cross than the unsophisticated, undeveloped Irish peasant, and none are more ready to accept with reverent faith the truths of Divine Redemption."

From late English Papers.

The spring is fully three weeks earlier than usual this year, and the hyacinths in Hyde Park, which share with the tulips the beds between Stanhope and Grosvenor Gates, are already at their best. In a fortnight or so the tulips will be out also. North of Grosvenor Gate will be found the pansies; they are being planted this week, and their bloom will follow that of the tulips.—*London Baptist*, March 28.

The Marquis of Lorne's article on "Provincial Home Rule in Ireland" in the *Contemporary Review* will attract as it deserves, a good deal of attention. Here is his scheme:—"Let there be two Houses in each Provincial Diet. Let the suffrage be household suffrage for the Lower House and a higher suffrage for the Second House, or Provincial Council, shall hold their seats for a given term of years. Let them manage education. Let them assess for provincial roads, for lunatic asylums, for the Church if they so please, and the Budget necessary for the payment of the provincial members and officials. Keep in the hands of an Imperial Irish Cabinet Minister and his secretariat at Dublin the militia, the police, the administration of civil and criminal law, the control of lighthouses, navigation, Customs, and excise, and all railroad matters which affect any two provinces."

Fasting in Lent is the subject of a short article in the current number of the *Rock*. It says:—"There can be no doubt that fasting is a duty, but it may be fairly asked, What kind of fasting? Is that fasting which consists in abstaining from flesh to eat good fish? Why there are some sinners to whom a fish diet is the greatest luxury. I remember a famous diner in France during Lent at which a very eminent cardinal was the honoured guest on the occasion. On the bill of fare were salmon in every appetising variety, turbot, soles, whitebait, and all kinds of fish in reason, prepared in all kinds of artistic fashions by the best of French cooks; and the wines the rarest and the most expensive."

Correspondence.

Baptist Book and Tract Society.

TO THE BAPTISTS OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES:

Dear Brethren,—The Committee of Management of the Baptist Book and Tract Society desire to lay before the Baptists of these Maritime Provinces, a clear and distinct statement of the origin and progress of the above society, hoping thereby to secure their hearty sympathy and co-operation.

At the meeting of the Central Association, held at Berwick, in 1879, a committee was appointed to consider the advisability of establishing a Baptist Book Room in Nova Scotia, and to make such arrangements as they may deem necessary, and report at the next meeting of the Association, to be held in Windsor. This committee consisted of Bros. A. P. Shand, Dr. Parker, Stephen Selden and Revs. Stephen March and J. W. Manning.

At the meeting of the Association in Windsor, in 1880, the committee made the following report, which was unanimously adopted, subject to the approval of the Convention:—

1. That a society be formed to be known by the name of the Maritime Baptist Book and Tract Society.
2. That the special object of the Society shall be to supply the Baptist body in the Maritime Provinces with denominational and general literature.
3. That the capital to carry on the enterprise shall be raised by subscription, and the aim shall be for at least \$5,000.00.
4. That every person subscribing Five Dollars and upwards shall have the right to vote at the annual meeting of the society.
5. That the Society shall hold its first annual meeting at the time and place of the Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces.
6. That at each annual meeting an Executive Committee shall be chosen to carry on the business of the Society.
7. That the Executive Committee shall report at each annual meeting.
8. That every ordained Baptist Minister in the Convention shall be considered an agent of the Society, and shall have subscriptions put to his credit at the rate of Ten Dollars for every one hundred dollars that he may obtain to the subscription list of the Society.
9. That the Society shall have a Benevolent Fund from which to supply Bibles and Religious Literature to needy families and Sunday Schools.
10. That the profits of the Society shall be added to the Capital or to the Benevolent Fund, as the Society at the annual meeting may decide.
11. That the following persons shall form the Executive Committee to carry on the work of the Society until the first annual meeting:—Revs. E. M. Saunders and J. W. Manning, Bros. A. P. Shand, A. L. Wood, David Thompson, John Nalder, J. E. Irish and John Burgoyne.

12. That any alteration or amendment to the foregoing may be made by a two-third vote at any regular annual meeting of the Society.

(Signed.)

A. P. SHAND,
J. W. MANNING,
S. SELDEN,
D. McN. PARKER.Committee of
Central Association.

At the Convention held at Hillsborough, N. B., in 1880, the Committee on establishing a Book Room, consisting of Revs. G. E. Day, J. W. Manning, D. G. McDonald, E. Hickson, T. Todd, J. W. Bancroft and J. F. Kempton, reported, recommending the passage of the following resolution:—

"Resolved, That in the opinion of this Convention the report of the Nova Scotia Central Baptist Association on the question of the Book Room should be regarded with favor, and recommended to the support of our churches." The resolution passed unanimously.

Early in 1882, the committee finding it impossible to secure the requisite capital without a thorough canvass of the churches and friends interested in the enterprise, engaged Bro. Dimock Archibald to solicit subscriptions to the Capital Fund of the Society.

In November of the same year (1882) a committee of three were appointed to ascertain if suitable premises for the Society could be obtained, and at what rate, and when it would be advisable to commence operations. The agent had reported at this time the amount of capital subscribed \$3797.00, and the amount paid to the Treasurer, A. P. Shand, Esq., \$817.00.

It was decided at this meeting of the Executive Committee to begin business as soon as the cash capital amounted to \$2,000.00. In January, 1883, the premises 104 Granville Street were engaged at a rental of \$150 per annum, and the rooms were opened for business on the 23rd.

The committee feeling the necessity of keeping the expenses down to the smallest possible figure, engaged the services of a young lady at a salary of \$5.00 per week to take charge of the rooms. At the same time a Committee of Management was appointed to conduct the business and have the general oversight of the work of the Society.

In May the business of the Book Room had so increased that the lady employed found that she had more than she could attend to, and tendered her resignation, and Mr. George A. McDonald, the present Secretary, was then engaged.

The Society held its first annual meeting at the time the Convention was in session in Halifax, August 25th, 1883, when a report of the Executive Committee was submitted and approved, and the Society formally organized, a constitution adopted, and the following officers elected for the ensuing year, viz:—

President—A. P. Shand, Esq.

Vice-Presidents—Revs. G. E. Day, J. C. Bleakney, D. G. McDonald and Edward Whitman.

Directors—Rev. J. W. Manning, Rev. E. J. Grant, C. H. Whitman, J. E. Irish, A. L. Wood, John Burgoyne, L. J. Walker, W. A. Porter, Isaac Shaw.

Committee of Management—Rev. J. W. Manning, A. L. Wood and C. H. Whitman.

Treasurer—J. Parsons.

On motion, the Board of Directors were instructed to procure an Act of Incorporation from the Legislature at its next session.

A statement of the work done by the Society was made to the Convention, when the following resolution, moved by the Rev. C. Goodspeed, was passed unanimously:—

Whereas, It is of the greatest importance that the Sunday Schools, and our people generally, be supplied with sound literature;

And whereas, At the Convention held at Hillsborough in 1880, a resolution was adopted favoring the establishing of a Baptist Book and Tract Society to supply this pressing need;

Therefore Resolved, That it is with the greatest pleasure we hear of the beginning of such a society in Halifax, of its prosperity up to the present, and of its bright prospect of ever-increasing usefulness, and we earnestly commend it to the patronage of our people as the Baptist Book and Tract Society of the Maritime Provinces. As there is also a Colportage in connection with this Society, to circulate Baptist literature, we express our gratification, and urge its managers to press on this most important work as rapidly as funds will permit, throughout the bounds of this Convention.

The following is a summary of the first year's work:—

Amount received to February for Capital account after deducting cost of collection.....	\$3,049 47
Sales from Book Room.....	\$4,861 81
" through Colporteurs.....	742 38
Total sales for the year.....	5,604 19

Total running expenses for the year, including rent, taxes, salaries, postage, stationery, light, fuel, truckage, &c., &c.....	1,115 48
Net profit on the year's business, equal to about 11% on paid up capital.....	342 56

COLPORTAGE.

Number of Colporteurs employed.....	3
Time employed—equal to 1 man for 6 months.....	

Amount paid Colporteurs, including commission on sales.....	\$217 10
Received for Colportage in paid subscriptions.....	99 19
Free grants of Tracts, &c. by Colporteurs.....	12 21
Public meetings addressed and Prayer-meetings held.....	30
Families found destitute of religious books except the Bible.....	43
Protestant families destitute of the Bible.....	3
Roman Catholic families destitute of the Bible.....	12
Protestant families who neglect, or rarely attend Evangelical preaching.....	79
Families conversed with on personal religion or prayed with.....	79
Whole number of families visited.....	1177

We have reason to believe that the labors of our brethren Sanford, Atkinson and Frail, who have been employed by the Society as Colporteurs, have not been without spiritual results, and we have reason to believe some have been led to the Saviour through their efforts. We earnestly desire to very greatly extend the colportage department of the Society's work; being assured that it is through that channel that our wholesome, truth-telling literature is to be circulated, and that money spent in that way is well expended. Will not the brethren throughout the Provinces help on this good work?

Our indefatigable Agent, Brother Dimock Archibald, has been pursuing his work of collecting subscriptions for the Capital Fund of the Society during the past year with his wonted enthusiasm. We trust that the Baptists of these Provinces will respond heartily to our brother's appeals for additional contributions, and place this Society in so strong a position, financially, that its success shall be assured. A paid up capital of ten thousand dollars is needed, if we are to do the work as it ought to be done, and the sympathy and encouragement that have been so largely accorded to us from all sections of the Maritime Provinces lead us to believe that our Baptist people are awake to the claims of this last, but not least, of our denominational enterprises.

We tender our very grateful acknowledgments to our brothers and sisters for their kind words and generous gifts, and our hearts go out in gratitude to God for the manifest tokens of His favor which we, as a Society, have received, inasmuch as the enterprise begun with "fear and trembling" has succeeded beyond what we could have reasonably anticipated.

Pastors of our churches, Superintendents of our Sunday Schools, give us your patronage. Replenish your libraries, and furnish your Schools with Lesson Helps through your own Book Room. If this be done, then at our next annual meeting we shall be able to say, and say it with gladness, "The Lord hath done great things for us."

J. W. MANNING,
A. L. WOOD,
C. H. WHITMAN,

Com. of Management.

Halifax, N. S., April 7th, 1884.