

Pastor and People.

WHY IT WAS.

In that gracious after season
I shall know—
When the clouds that now enfold me
Outward flow ;
Why it was the way was thorny,
Rough and steep,
Leading often through the darkness
And the deep ;
Why it was that friendship faltered
By the way ;
Why that love was unrequited
Yesterday ;
Why the hand of God should take him—
Mournful fate—
Him, my soul's beloved, falling
At the gate.
O, those questions oft perplexing
To my soul—
Who shall give me answer, and my
Grief condole ?
"Sometimes," hear the Master whisper
From the throne—
"Sometimes thou shalt clasp forever
All thine own.
"Sometime all thy doubts and questions,
All thy fears,
All thy seeming sad misgivings,
All thy tears,
"Shall be swept away like spectres
Of the night ;
And thy soul shall bask forever
In the light."
family circle

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

GRATITUDE IN SORROW.

BY REV. R. E. KNOWLES, B.A., OTTAWA.

There has, of course, been sorrow in this congregation during the year that has gone. Faces which were here last Thanksgiving Day, are now before the throne of God ; voices heard not long ago, now mingle with the melody of Heaven. But the rainbow has shone athwart the clouds ; joy has laid her calm hand upon the troubled heart to make it beat exultantly. No home has been blighted ; no dark-winged raven of irrevocable sorrow has come tapping at your household door ; no wail of hopeless grief has marred the strain of home's sweet melody.

And what church has not had its dark days of congregational life ? But what of it ? One swallow does not make a summer ; one snowflake does not make a winter ; one robin's chirp does not bespeak the rosy march of spring. So one poor audience does not mean decline ; one pigmy collection does not betoken bankruptcy ; one note of discord is not the prelude to perpetual strife ; one case of apathy is not a symptom of the indifference of death. No, struggle is not failure. There is a gloaming which precedes the dawn, as well as that which precedes the density of midnight, and shady days do often the most assist honest labour and generate earnest, kindly thought. We want no church that never knows the discipline of difficulty. The Old Testament Church came to peace through war ; the New Testament Church reached renown through obliquity. Iron was never welded save by blows ; no web was ever woven in its beauty but by the fierceness of the shuttle ; no gold was ever gained to man except by crushing. Thank God for the adverse winds, if they make us better sailors. And, in your single, secret life, have you not come to know the sweet effectiveness of sorrow's ministry ? Has Time made no chinks in the cottage of life through which there has come the hal- lowed light of later years, and gentler thought ?

Has no sable hand ever set a crown upon your head, the crown all the brighter because the hand which placed it there was dark- some ? Have you never been down so low that you could see the tranquil stars of Hope which shone above ? I do not ask you what that sorrows was. Each cloud has its peculiar tint ; each child its heart-born cry ; each soul its own unspoken grief. But has it brought its revelation ? Has it made you speak simple language of your deepest need ? Has the tide of tribulation borne your wonder- ing life toward God ? If so, thank God for trouble, and cherish well the precious fruits which bloom only in the garden of Gethse- mane.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.
ST. PAUL'S COMMERCIAL PRIN-
CIPLES.

BY GEORGE W. ARMSTRONG, LONDON.

St. Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles combines the duties of a Christian mission- ary with the honorable duties of a secular calling, and wherever he went he toiled with his hands and worked unceasingly to advance the kingdom of God and spread the gospel of His Son.

Apart from his occupation, which he en- gaged in, as a tent maker, he allies himself with commercial pursuits by the principles he enjoins upon those who embrace the truths he taught ; and it would be well if the business men of to-day contemplated seriously and practiced in their ordinary business life these principles. For inst- ance :—

1. In writing to the church at Rome he enjoins upon all its members *commercial diligence*. "Not slothful in business, ferv- ent in spirit, serving the Lord."

2. In writing to the church of the Thes- salonians he advises its members not to be meddlesome in the affairs of others, but to mind their own business. "And that ye study to be quiet, and do your own business, and to work with your own hands as we command you."

3. In his second epistle to the Thes- salonians he combines work with susten- ance and makes the one contingent upon the other. "For even when we were with you this we commanded you, that if any would not work neither should he eat."

4. In writing to Timothy he points out the impossibility of any man being a Chris- tian who does not diligently work for the support of those dependent upon him. "But if any provide not for his own, especi- ally for those of his own household, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel."

5. Paul, like all his brethren of the Israelitish race, had a keen eye for good bargains and large profits, hence after mature deliberation he says : "Godliness is profitable unto all things having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8). "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. vi. 6).

6. Paul was a shrewd mathematician and does not shrink from grappling with profound arithmetical problems, and so he sums up the result of a life's experiences— a life of godly enterprise, persecution and suffering :—"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be com- pared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (Romans viii. 18).

Paul thus by example and precept, unites himself with business and physical toil.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

SPIRITUAL CARE AND CULTURE.

BY REV. JOSEPH HAMILTON.

Some time ago I was in a highly cul- tivated garden, and saw a great variety of rare and expensive flowers. But the flowers were mostly out of bloom at the time, so they had not much attraction for me. The gardener, however, never loses interest in his flowers, for he knows that with care and culture they will bloom again in due season. In the case I speak of the gardener had to do all the work with his own hands, for he can hire no one who knows the flowers as he does, or who will tend them with the same interest. He had lately employed a man to help him ; but the man did not know flowers from weeds because the flowers were not in bloom ; so he destroyed more in an hour than would pay his work for a week. That rough labourer had therefore to be sent out of the garden into the field, where he could do less harm. And so it is in the garden of the Lord, where His own tender and delicate flowers are growing. It takes spiritual discrimination here to know the flowers from the weeds, for the flowers are not always in bloom. But the Lord knows His own flowers ; He sees the promise of beauty where we see none ; and He tends

His delicate flowers with a patience and hopefulness which often we sadly lack. So He would have us to be careful how we go to work in His garden. We must have some discrimination between flowers and weeds, even when the flowers are not in bloom ; and every flower of His planting must be carefully nourished. And if we cannot do this more delicate work we must be content to do the coarser and rougher work, like the labourer who could not be trusted in the garden, but who might be very useful in the field.

Toronto.

LETTER FROM FORMOSA.

The following extracts from a letter from Formosa by Mr. Gauld kindly supplied by our Foreign Mission secretary will be inter- esting and encouraging to all who are con- tributing to and taking an interest in that mission.—[ED]

DEAR MR. MACKAY.—Although China is engaged in war and foreigners in conse- quence have suffered in other parts we in North Formosa are unmolested.

The Commander-in-chief of the forces, a Mohammedan, is very friendly towards foreigners. Not being able to procure a suit- able house in the Chinese town we lent him Oxford College, not being in use, and he has shown himself very grateful and friendly.

"A man's foes shall be they of his own household." A short time ago, at Teug- saug-khoe, a village in North Formosa, a certain man, a heathen, died and left a widow and four sons, one of whom is a Christian. According to their custom the heathen mem- bers of the family feasted, and worshipped the spirit of the dead, and called on the Christian to join with them. He declined. His heathen brothers beat him severely, his mother and wife sanctioning the harsh treat- ment. He still remained firm, and all joined in turning him adrift from the household. The property of the deceased was divided, and the heathen members of the family re- fused to allow the Christian to share with them. Against all this treatment he did not complain, but his wife went further than merely joining with the others in turning him out, she determined to marry another man, and, of course, take her little boy, an only child of two or three summers, along with her. The heart of the father could no longer quietly submit. He wrote to Rev. Giam Cheng Kioa, asking his advice and assist- ance. On Saturday, Sept. 25th., pastor Giam went to Teug-saug-khoe. First he met the Christian member of the family, who told him that he sought no compensation for the beating he had received, nor for being turned out ; nor did he ask to share the property left by his father. However, he could not give up his little child without an effort. His wife seemed determined to marry another man. This he could not very well prevent, as it seemed to him ; so, if in accordance with the law of Christ, he would first give her a writing of divorce. Still he was not very clear with regard to his duties as a Christian, therefore wished to be taught. Mr. Giam told him that first they must very earnestly endeavor to persuade his wife to return to him ; and if this failed to then con- sider what further course to pursue. After this Mr. Giam went to visit the three brothers in succession, taking care to leave the worst till the last. His first thought was not to interfere with the property ; but as he pondered on the nature of the situation a little longer, he thought that it would be proper to reward the unselfish conduct of the Chris- tian, if possible, by a share of the patrimony, as well as by a renewed enjoyment of the state of matrimony. He came to brother No. 1, who thought their Christian brother should not share the patrimony with them ; but ex- pressed himself as willing to have him do so if the other brothers were of like mind, and asked pastor Giam to interview these others. Brother No. 2 expressed himself in like man- ner, and asked the pastor to see No. 3. No. 3 was very bitter ; he told Mr. Giam that it was no affair of his. "Oh, yes it is," was the answer, "for your brother is also our brother, and we have a right to help him to

obtain justice." No. 3 told him that as their Christian brother did not honor the spirit of the dead father, he could not be allowed to share the father's estate. "Whose law are you propounding" was the reply, "the Em- peror's or your own ?" But talking would not prevail, so Mr. Giam warned him that if by Monday morning he was not prepared, ac- cording to the law of China, to share the prop- erty with his Christian brother, the case would be put into the hands of the District Magistrate. Then he left the man, and sent two small officials to interview him, and warn him of the law. This they did, and even shut him in prison, without avail. So on Monday morning, Sept. 17th., all started for the Kelung Yamen. They had proceeded scarcely a mile when the man's courage, rather boastfulness, failed him. He expressed himself as now willing to make amends for the past and entreated them to return. Mr. Giam expressed himself as now unwilling to go back, so they went on about one-third of a mile further. Then the two other heathen brothers came running, and entreated mercy. At length all returned. The necessary writ- ings were drawn out, and the property shar- ed among all brothers alike, the Christian included. After this, Mr. Giam went to in- terview the Christian's wife. At first she would not see him ; but along with her hus- band he followed her to the kitchen ; and began to speak first sternly. He spoke to her of the relative duties of husband and wife in such a way that she was soon melted, and accompanied them to the front room, where many heathen had assembled to see and hear. Here the talk was continued ; and all the heathen present pronounced what the Christian teacher said, to be excellent doctrine. The wife was prevailed on to take the old torn and soiled clothes her husband was wearing, to wash and mend ; and to give him in return clean and whole gar- ments. When pastor Giam left, which he did that same day, everything seemed in a fair way to a satisfactory, peaceable settle- ment.

I need not comment on the above inci- dent. Were there here no such examples of faithfulness, the preacher of the Gospel of the grace of God should still persevere in mak- ing known the truth. However, the know- ledge of such cases, coming to us from time to time, greatly helps to increase our happi- ness in the work to which we have been appointed.

One of the early converts, an elder of Siam-tian congregation, has recently died. From his first acceptance of the faith of Christ, he proved himself true to his Master ; ready to endure persecution and loss, for the Lord's sake. I should like to give you a short sketch of his Christian life, but shall defer till a future time. We have all good health. Very sincerely yours,

W. GAULD.

SUPPORTING THE CHURCH.

A pastor requests an immediate answer to this question :—"What should a church do with members who have means, and will not contribute to the support of the church ?"

We can tell what some churches have done in such cases. A church of six hundred members, in a small town, had only one hundred and sixty, all told, who contributed anything, either personally, or through the heads of the families. For the church held the old-fashioned ground that the head of the family is the "head," and, when he gave, all the members of his family were counted among the contributors. But, count- ing thus, only one hundred and sixty gave anything.

Once a quarter, on Sunday morning, when the whole church was there to hear, the treasurer read out the names of those who had contributed to church expenses that quarter. He did not give the amounts, but only the names. In that small town every- body knew everybody else, and knew who belonged to the church.

Not one word was said about those who had not contributed. They could not say anything because the names of others were read ; and, the result was, that at the end of the year, every one of those six hundred members are contributing to church ex- penses.—*Western Recorder*.