

SPARKS FROM OTHER ANVILS.

Christian Guardian:—We would recommend a Bible Reading on this one word patience. It will be found most fruitful and instructive. What meaning, for instance, for many of the exigencies of life there is in the completed text that stands at the head of these paragraphs, "Ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise." Just all that that means we may not say, but it does seem to promise fruitfulness and realization through patient and enduring waiting.

Michigan Presbyterian:—The Congregational Church has always stood in the front rank among the agencies that have promoted the highest ideals of government as well as of education and religion. That church has given to the country such institutions as Yale, Harvard, and Oberlin, and such men as Beecher, Storrs, and Moody. The American Board, with its noble history is a monument to its missionary zeal. It is not pleasant, therefore, to learn that the Congregational Church is falling behind. And yet Mr. L. E. Harter, of Chicago, in addressing a young men's club in Boston, said:—"For 300 years it was the greatest church in the country, but to-day our Church is not ahead. It stands eleventh on the list, among some insignificant denominations which you have scarcely heard of." This is a rather severe stricture upon the denomination from one of its own friends, and may well lead to an inquiry into the causes that have effected the change. For one thing, it may be asked whether the pulpit rings as true to-day to the doctrines of the Bible and the Cross as it did in former generations?

Herald and Presbyter:—There is nothing to hinder anyone from being a Christian but the power and persuasions of sin. Sin influences him to procrastinate and make excuses, and reject life and salvation. God is inviting. Christ is calling. The Holy Spirit is pleading. The Church is opening wide its doors and inviting him to come. How wise it would be for every one to listen and consider, to accept, and to enter the saved and surrendered life.

THROUGH ALL THE AGES.

Through all the ages men have regarded themselves as being born only that they might die. That has always been the great melancholy plaint of life; that has been the distress which has always lain on the soul, even in its moments of happiness. This being so, is there not something great and stirring in the fact that Jesus takes up this word of death and turns it into an assurance of victory? Jesus takes the dirge and turns it into a psalm; makes it the very assertion of the glory of his existence on earth. "I was born," we hear him say, "for a great, a noble and a splendid purpose, that I might through death destroy him who hath the power of death—that is, the devil."

There is something noble in the way in which Christ thus takes these words, "We are born to die," so full of distress and pain on our lips, and turns them into the psalms that ring through the ages and glorify the world; in the way in which he takes the very tears and lamentations of our human life, and shows how at the very heart of them are victory and joy.—Phillips Brooks.

If you have gentle words and looks, my friend,

To spare for me—if you have tears to shed

That I have suffered—keep them not I pray.

Until I hear not, see not, being dead.
—Anon.

You cannot understand the purpose of God's dealings with you; but you shall hereafter, if you trust him now.

ON THE TRAIL.*

By Rev. George Pringle, B. A.

The stampede to the Klondike in '97 and '98 will live in history principally because it opened the eyes of the world in general, and Canadians in particular, to a realization of the immense reach of this Dominion of Canada, and gave intimation of the hoarded wealth that lay waiting for discovery even in the farthest and most forbidden of its borders. It will not be forgotten by those thousands who took part in it, because of the extreme novelty and intensity of the life in that long, wild race to Dawson. All the steamboats and sailing vessels of the western coast that could be spared from regular traffic were put into commission, and made many trips to the northern ports, crammed with excited gold-seekers. Those who made a living through the weakness of their fellowmen,—the gambling charke, harlot, saloon-keepers, and other grafters, followed them in crowds, tempted and preyed upon them along the trails and in the great gold camps, with a temerity and success that has never been equalled in the annals of Canada.

The Presbyterian Church, guided of God, was awakened to the needs of the situation. Chosen men were sent with the pilgrims to raise the standard of Christ among them, and contest with the cohorts of evil for the salvation of brave men from worse than death.

The pioneer missionary had hardly turned his face to the wilds, before he began to recognize that he had a lot to learn and unlearn about human nature and how to deal with it. If he hadn't a firm mental and spiritual grasp of the fundamentals, and genius enough to adapt them to new conditions, he found himself, as they say here, "up against a hard proposition."

It was hard enough at best. The first day or two on the trail, pulling his own sleigh or carrying his own pack, he had hardly a chance to think about his mission. He worked like a horse all day, and slept like a log at night, if the cramps in his muscles would let him. However, it was not long before his sinews toughened, and he had a chance to become observant of others.

Right then, if he was fit for the work, his preaching commenced, and never at any time did it cease for lack of opportunity. The gospel he proclaimed and emphasized was the gospel of practical help, acceptable anywhere, but especially appropriate on the trail. The motive of the stampede in general was selfish, although there were many noble exceptions. In the mad race, consideration for others meant delay and less chance of stake that rich claim. So there were many in trouble left unnoticed along the way. Some were in physical distress, caused mostly by inexperience,—a load too heavy, a pack too big, and everything wrong way about. Temptations were on all sides, terribly attractive, to lead men into lives of sensuality and corruption.

Men sick and dying, broken-hearted and sullen from fearful bad luck—homesick, heart-sick fellows. What would a missionary of Christ do in such circumstances? He spent little time in sermonizing; but did his best to give required help; lightened this man's load by taking some of it on his own sleigh or shoulders; brought that wanderer back from the 'ents of sin, sobered him, and gave him a new start; doctored the sick as well as he knew how, eased the last moments of the dying, cheered the homesick, and fed the hungry. When he saw the need, he gave, if he could, the thing that was needed, whether it came out of his outfit, purse, tongue, Bible, or back.

Sometimes he saw fit to remain several months in the trail camps which sprang

up at relay points and at the head of navigation. Here he followed the same methods, developed a little. He had regular Sunday services in the tent or building. When he spoke, he remembered that his hearers wanted their hearts cheered and strengthened. He played much upon the chord of memory; familiar hymns associated with the quiet Sabbaths spent among life-long friends in the churches now so far away, thoughts of home and the old folk, and then the old story of Jesus and His love. It wasn't that they did not know, but rather that they were in danger of forgetting, the ever unanswerable question, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" And so he helped men save their souls. He offset the allurements of saloon and brothel with reading-rooms, concerts, socials, personal visiting, and all the arts and accomplishments he possessed.

There was no possibility of organizing, for every one was on the move. Churches, strong and lasting, were practicable only in the permanent camp at the end of the trail in the heart of the diggings. Dawson, Atlin, and White Horse, the principal Canadian cities in the Yukon watershed, are centres of supply and government for districts whose goldfields are of undefined extent and richness. In these places the pioneer minister met, not only immediate demands, but planned for the future. He built suitable, well-equipped hospitals and churches. He sought carefully for strong men to enlist on the side of Christ, and formed them into alert and aggressive congregations with elders and trustees. They have done what Christians had much cause to do in these far-off mining camps, to guard the ancient landmarks of Christian civilization, to oppose anything that would tend to lower the moral tone of the community, and to proclaim Christ the Saviour of the world.

These missionaries of early days did not labor in vain. Hundreds can tell of the assistance rendered on the trail, but most of the story will not be known until the secrets of all hearts are revealed. The Christian sentiment, given coherence and direction by them in early days, is now a powerful, progressive influence which must be reckoned with always by those whose plans, public and private, take no account of men's souls.

LIGHT IN THE GLOOM

That little sunbeam, which so softly came
And crept in through the shutters of your room,
To-day, in letters beautiful, these words,
With golden pencil, traced upon the gloom:—

"You think me beautiful, and fondly love
My little light. Why, then, throw open wide
Those gloomy shutters, for a great bright
World of sunshine lingers just outside."

That little joy that stole unconsciously
Into your weary soul and thrilled anew
Your flagging energies one transient moment,
Said:—"There is a whole long life like this for you."

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—Feeding the hungry, John 6: 1-13.

Tues.—Seeking and Saving, Luke 19: 1-10.

Wed.—The weary Invited, Matt. 11: 20-30.

Thurs.—Hidden Treasure, Matt. 13: 44-52.

Fri.—The great test, Matt. 10: 17-27.

Sat.—Many saved, Rev. 7: 9-17.

Sun. Topic—On the Trail, Luke 10: 25-37.

*Y. P. Monthly Topic of Plan of Study April 25, 1909—Luke 10: 25-37. On the trail.