

## Pastor and People.

### "PRESSING NEARER."

Pressing nearer to His wounded side,  
Nearer to the longed-for goal,  
Hoping soon at length to glide,  
Safe from rock and shoal.

Climbing higher on the mountain face,  
Closer to the sunlit height,  
Straining on with quickened pace,  
Home and Heaven in sight.

O clinging tighter to the promised word,  
Firm to the pierced hand,  
Till the watcher's cry is heard,  
"Yonder, lo! the sun-kissed land."

Leaning harder on the arm of might,  
Trusting more the heart of Love,  
Singing on through dark or bright:  
"His will shall rule beneath, above."

Reaching forth to advent hour,  
To the joy that shall be yet,  
To His last grand pledge of power—  
Olivet, dear Olivet.  
Crosshill, Maybole. F. Gordon MacLeod.

### MOSES AND THE PENTATEUCH.

Professor A. H. Sayce, in the *Contemporary Review*, contends that recent archæology tends rather to confirm than to refute the old views of the authorship of the Pentateuch. In the course of his essay, Mr Sayce says: "Those of us who have devoted our lives to the archæology of the ancient Oriental world have been forced back into the traditional position, though doubtless with a broader basis to stand upon, and clearer views of the real significance of the Biblical text. Year by year, almost month by month, fresh discoveries are breaking in upon us, each more marvellous than the last, but all, as regards the Pentateuch, in favour of the old rather than of the new teaching. The story of the campaign of Chedor-laomer and his Babylonian allies against the Canaanitish princes has been fully confirmed, and now Mr. Pinches has found the name of Kudur-lagamar, or Chedor-laomer, as well as that of his ally, Tudghal, or Tidal. That Canaan was overrun by Babylonian arms and influence long before the age of Abraham was already known; this summer Professor Hummel has discovered that Ine-Sin, who ruled over Ur of the Chaldees centuries before the Hebrew patriarch was born there, captured the city of Zemar, in Phœnicia, while his daughter was high priestess of Anazan, or Elam, and of Northern Syria. Contract-tablets, drawn up and dated in the reigns of Eri-Aku, or Arioch of Ellasar, and of other Babylonian kings of the same period, contain Hebrew names which indicate that a Hebrew-speaking population was settled in Babylonia at the time. Nay more, the names of the Hebrew patriarchs, Abram, Jacob (-el), and Joseph (-el) have actually been met with by Mr. Pinches among those of witnesses to the deeds, while the kings of the dynasty which was governing Ur in the age of Chedor-laomer and Arioch bear names which are not Babylonian, but which are at once Hebrew and South Arabian. What a commentary this is upon the statement of Genesis that Eber begat two sons, one of whom was the ancestor of the Hebrew patriarchs, the other of the tribes of Southern Arabia!

"But Oriental archæology can go further than prove that Moses could, after all, have written the Pentateuch, and that the narratives contained in it are derived from documents contemporaneous with the events they record. It can further show that there is no one else so likely to have written it as the great leader and legislator of Israel, to whom after ages agreed in ascribing the written law.

"If I were to be asked if I believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, I should answer that such a belief seems to me to involve considerably fewer difficulties than does the contrary belief of the 'higher criticism.' Of course, such a belief does not necessarily mean that the Hebrew legislator wrote the Pentateuch precisely in the form in which

we now possess it. It does not exclude the fact of later revisions or the addition of editorial notes. But I see no reason for denying that the Pentateuch is substantially the work of Moses.

"And against the counter-evidences of archæology what has the 'higher criticism' to bring forward? Merely linguistic arguments. I have been a student of language and languages all my life, and the study has made me very sceptical as to the historical and literary conclusions that can be drawn from linguistic testimony alone. When we endeavour to extract other than linguistic conclusions from linguistic premises we generally go astray."

### HE GOT THE BLESSING.

Canon Willberforce tells a pathetic story illustrating the force of the little word "now." It was of a miner who, hearing the gospel preached, determined that if the promised blessing of immediate salvation were indeed true, he would not leave the presence of the minister who was declaring it until assured of its possession by himself. He waited, consequently, after the meeting to speak with the minister, and in his untutored way said: "Didn't ye say I could have the blessin' now?" "Yes, my friend." "Then pray with me, for I'm not goin' awa' without it." And they did pray, these two men, until the wrestling miner heard silent words of comfort and cheer. "I've got it now!" cried the miner; his face reflecting the joy within; "I've got it now!" The next day a frightful accident occurred at the mines. The same minister was called to the scene, and among the men, dead and dying, was the quivering, almost breathless body of the man who, only the night before, big and brawny, came to him to know if salvation could really be had now for the asking. There was but a fleeting moment of recognition between the two ere the miner's soul took flight; but in that moment he had time to say, in response to the minister's sympathy: "O, I don't mind, for I've got it—I've got it—it's mine!" Then the name of this poor man went into the sad list of the "killed." There was no note made of the royal inheritance of which he had but a few hours before come into possession, and all by his believing grip of the word "now."

### A STORY OF A SHOEMAKER.

Gibraltar, you know, is in Spain, but Spain has only of late years been permitted to possess an open Bible, for prior to 1868 it was almost an unknown book among the people, its circulation being forbidden by the authorities. During these dark times a Presbyterian minister, from Scotland, went for his health to Gibraltar, where, though in Spain, being under British rule, the Bible Society had a depot. While sojourning there for a considerable time, the good man used frequently to put some copies of God's Word into his pocket, and crossing over into Spanish territory, would circulate them among the people, who received them joyfully.

On one of these excursions he visited the house of a shoemaker, with whom he had an interesting conversation, from which he found that the Spanish had a meeting at his house every week to talk over public affairs and the state of the country. As the shoemaker, however, confessed that these discussions had never yielded much profit, his visitor said, "You should get the Bible, and read that; it would do you more good." "Ah!" was the reply, "I wish I could get it; but our priests won't let us have the Bible." Great was his joy when one was presented to him, with the intimation that if his friends would like copies, on his coming to a certain house in Gibraltar, a further supply could be obtained.

A few weeks afterwards, a Spaniard, in his holiday dress, knocked at the door where the minister was staying, and asking earnestly to see him, was shown into his room. He soon made himself known

as the shoemaker who had received the Bible, stated that it was regularly read at the weekly meetings, and that his friends were so anxious to have copies, he had come to beg a further supply. His request was readily granted, on which he pulled from under his arm a parcel, and said: "I have brought you a little mark of my gratitude, which I hope you will accept. I have made and brought you a pair of shoes." "It is very kind of you," said the good minister, "but I fear the shoes may not fit, and so will not be of use to me." "Try them, sir," said the other, "for I think you will find them just your size."

The trial was made, the shoes were found an excellent fit, and on the maker being asked how he had guessed the size so exactly, he replied: "I knew after you left my house you had to pass over some soft clay; so I followed you and from your footprints I took the size of your foot, and I was then able to make you the shoes, which I resolved to bring you. I hope you will wear them as a mark of gratitude from a poor Spanish shoemaker for the precious book you brought him."

### THE SIN OF TAKING OFFENCE.

No one is obliged to take offence. A readiness to do it gives evidence of deep-seated selfishness; and a habit of doing it is proof conclusive that folly reigns.

Many who are quite careful to avoid giving offence have not yet come to a full recognition of the fact that taking offence is worse. It betokens a most unhealthy tone of mind. It gives evidence of a sinful and un-Christlike spirit. It shows that the thought is fastened on *self*, the most important personage in all the universe; and this petted darling some one has had the temerity, the impudence, to insult or slight! Shall it not be promptly resented?

Yes, by the fool, by him who likes to be continually in hot water. Let him nurse his injuries, and care sedulously for his dignity, and make both himself and all around him as uncomfortable as possible. He will find no end of occasions if he is on the lookout for them; and there will be no getting along with him in any sort of peace. At the most unexpected moment he has taken mortal umbrage at something done or said with the utmost innocence. No excuse suffices; he is alienated forever; and in the course of a few years he has managed to get rid of about all who tried, in vain, to show him friendship. He has become perfectly certain that everybody is against him.

Surely there is a better way, even the way of love. He who is full of love will see things undisturbed by the blinding mists of selfishness which steam up from corruption within. He will behold realities, not appearances; facts, not fancies. He will have tender pity for the failings and weaknesses of others. He will be full of such genial kindness that no amount of ill-behavior can make him cross. He will have so much of sweetness in him that circumstances cannot sour him. Love is a little child. Love lives in sunshine. Love believes all things that make for peace, is ignorant and incredulous regarding evil, delights to humble itself before others and prefer them in honor. It does not take offence.

No one can do so without guilt. No one can do so and have that happiness which is God's gift to his children. Wise is he and truly blest, who absolutely refuses to receive the affronts that may be proffered him, who positively declines to feel aggrieved no matter who attempts to put grief upon him, who promptly and obstinately thrusts out of his thoughts the injury that some one thought to do him. We are our own masters in this matter. Our actions flow from our feelings, our feelings from our opinions, and our opinions are our own. Everything is susceptible of explanation. If we look at it awry, we shall get awry; if we look at it from the proper angle, we shall find no occasion for turmoil.—*Zion's Herald*.

### PRACTICAL SENSE.

The quality which makes largely for success in the ministry is that which, for lack of a better term, we call the practical sense—the ability to apprehend the situation, to know men, and to judge whether a proposition before a local or the general Church is desirable and feasible or visionary and impracticable. It is pitiful to see good and able ministers fail, again and again, at just this point. "What ails him?" we recently heard one minister ask of another concerning a man who was known to be a brilliant preacher, but who was never wanted for a second pastorate within the bounds of the same conference, and the answer was as quickly made: "Why, he has no practical sense." Such ministers have a decided prepossession for new schemes; they would reform and improve the Church at every point, and have in mind just the plans to make it possible. The Church to them is a sort of military organization whose business it is to hear the word of command and to promptly obey. The simple fact is never learned that the Church is an association of the disciples of Christ who can be influenced only by that which appeals favorably to intelligent and conscientious judgment. A leading question which the man of practical sense puts to all propositions that are presented to the Church is this: "Will it work?" Dr. Leighton Parks, in writing recently of Phillips Brooks, strongly enforces our thought. He declares: "It was often said before his election to the episcopate that he was not a man of affairs. But all men knew better who knew him at all. When he dealt with affairs he was so practical that you would have thought he had been bred in a counting house. He was impatient of vague theories. 'Will it work?' he had a somewhat disconcerting way of asking. When we were having one of the mild forms of ecclesiastical grip some years ago, and it was urged that the parish system was a failure and that the bishop should appoint all ministers and pay their salaries out of a common fund, he said: 'Well, that is a fine scheme. Suppose the bishop [Paddock] sent me to Acton or Ware, and the people said, 'We don't like him,' and would not come to Church nor pay, what then? I think the little Paddocks would go without shoes this winter.'" In seeking, therefore, for the qualities needed in order to insure success in the ministry, the fact should not be overlooked that the possession of practical sense is of supreme value and importance.—*Zion's Herald*.

### HOLINESS INDICATIONS.

Great triumphs of grace will fit us for continued, enlarged and daily growth. How shall we know that we are advancing in the strength of grace, and what may we rely upon as evidence of growth in grace? Some of the following indications may be suggestive:

1. Increasing distaste to all sin.
2. Greater love for our fellow men.
3. Power to resist temptation.
4. Enlarged knowledge of the Word of God, and quickening spiritual discernment.
5. Patience in tribulation.
6. Increased delight in the reading and study of the Word of God.
7. Growing love of God's house, with all the means of grace.
8. Real pleasure in the performance of Christian duty, because done for Jesus' sake.
9. Pleasure in the fellowship of the pious.
10. Delight in contemplation of, and meditation upon, the love of God, the character of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the future home of the soul.—*Bishop W. P. Hott*.

Half a million is an exceedingly liberal estimate for the number of native Christians in India, and this is only one five-hundredth part of the population. What a work yet to be done!