

## Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

### PRAYER MEETING IN THE CITY.

Some time ago you gave an outline of a "Prayer Meeting in the Country." I would like to give you a sketch of one that I have visited in the city. The minister is in early, and is able to shake hands all round as the people come in. At the hour he gives out a psalm or hymn, which is heartily sung. He then leads shortly and pointedly in prayer; then he and the people read alternate verses of the Sabbath school lesson for the following Sabbath. This is followed by singing, and prayer of the same hearty kind as before. The meeting is then open for any person to read a passage of Scripture. Five or six usually read, and as each passage is announced every person looks up the passage in his or her Bible. As soon as found it is read in a clear voice. The minister follows each passage by a short comment, pointing out the leading idea in simple language. Then another hymn, followed by a brief time spent in silent devotion, the Holy Spirit being left to lead each heart. After this the leader gives a short, clear and pointed commentary on the Sabbath school lesson, any person being at liberty to speak or ask questions. After another season of prayer and singing comes the doxology and benediction, followed by greetings and a general hand-shaking. During the whole no person is called by name to take any part. All is voluntary. Those who attend say they would not miss it for anything. Try it.

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS.

Are we hindering in any way the positive development of our Christian brethren's lives, be it by word or deed, by an unsanctified pride, or by an unwise indulgence? Nothing is plainer than that not a few who bade fair for the kingdom of heaven have had their spiritual life deadened almost to extinction by occasional excess. Let us take care, at the very least, of doing anything to minister to their downfall. We are our brother's keepers. We must consider his condition and peril. We must put ourselves in his place. The spiritual advancement of those who are in Christ, or profess to be (for we cannot get behind profession) should be of first importance in our view. If brethren are falling, we must see how they are falling, and secure that the stumbling-block is taken away.

But there is one point on which we have not touched. Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones—these children—that believe on Me. It may be young believers, or actual children who have believed, as I prefer to consider it. Aye, we are responsible not only for the immediate, but for the ultimate effect of our acts. What of the children of those who have stumbled and fallen—gone out into the world with the brand of a drunkard's shame? What of the young lives struggling into the light, yea seizing it, but held back by diseased constitutions, or inherited impulses, or crippled from all active healthful work? Every stunted life is seen by Christ. Every imperfectly developed character is understood, as to the degree it has fallen short of possible attainment. In each case what might have been, and what is, are accurately discerned. And who is to blame, and how far he is to blame, that also is seen.

Ah, we rise here above all human measures. We are in presence of eternal realities. We have to do with Him who shall take to do with us in the last great day. May we have grace given to soar to some apprehension of the unseen, to lay hold on eternal distinctions, so as to make them the governing principles of our life here. It is needful we should. In these days of the dying year, do you not hear the throb of time's ocean on eternity's shore? We are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. A few years ago this world knew us not. A few more, and it shall have forgotten it ever knew. But we are in the thought of God from eternity, and we go to live in the presence of God in and to eternity. What have we to do with a godless order of things, with worldly conceptions of duty and proportions of value, which one touch of eternity would reduce to nothing? Live in God, since you travel unto Him. Live in God, since you came from Him. Live in God, since even now in Him you live and move.

There is one question which I must ask, ere I sit down. If to cause loss to one believing soul, if to be the occasion of one seeking, struggling sinner's falling into ruin, is such an evil, even in a life that otherwise is marked by good, that Christ wished that that life had never come to be,—what of those who deliberately ruin themselves, who do evil with both hands diligently, in spite of every invitation and appeal? Oh, brethren, the vengeance of God is a reality. It is the obverse of His love, infinite with the infinitude of His desire for human welfare, uncompromising as the measureless mercy which did not spare even His only Son that there might be a full redemption for all the sons of men.

But Jesus here talks specially to His own. He speaks in these stern tones that He might rouse us to fuller, stronger, brotherly love. May we no longer

need such threats as these to keep us to our duty; but imitating Jesus, putting ourselves in our brother's place, may we do every one good to his neighbour, provoking one another to love and good works, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.—*Rev. John Smith, M.A., Edinburgh.*

### A SONG AND A SOUL.

#### AN INCIDENT OF GOSPEL WORK.

Full sweetly on the evening air  
Rang out the well-known strains:  
"There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains,"

Thus sang a little company,  
Whose hearts by grace renewed,  
Had gathered in an upper room  
To tell their gratitude  
To Him, by whose atoning love  
Their sins had been subdued.

A weary man who passed that way,  
Bowed down with weight of sin,  
Who long had asked how such as he  
Relief and rest might win,  
Heard the glad sound, so sweet, so clear,  
Amid the city's din.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day,  
And there may I—O what is this,  
A thief, a thief, they say?  
'And there may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away.'"

As thus he speaks, the room he finds,  
And, ere in prayer they bow,  
He cries: "Oh, friends, for me so lost,  
Plead you for mercy now."  
They bid him pray: "Alas," he says,  
"To pray, I know not how."

But, taught by loving lips the way,  
He learns to pray at last,  
And, on the Saviour of the lost,  
His weight of guilt to cast;  
As from his contrite heart goes up  
The prayer of ages past:

"Oh, God, be merciful to me;  
A sinner, Lord, am I;  
In my despair and helplessness,  
To Thee, my God, I cry.  
Lost, helpless, ruined, hear my prayer,  
Lord, save me, or I die."

The God who heard the publican,  
Heard this heart's honest prayer,  
And he who came, a child of wrath,  
In sorrow and despair,  
Went forth a free and happy man,  
And God's own child and heir.

O ye who have the art of song,  
The talent ye possess,  
Ye well may consecrate to God;  
How would you dare do less?  
If used for Him, oh I who can say  
How greatly He may bless?

—*R. M. Offord, in New York Observer.*

### A SABBATH AT INTERLAKEN.

The little town of Interlaken we found charmingly situated in a small flat valley, with precipitous hills close behind and mountains in front, and with the lakes of Thun and Brienz on either side. Among the mountains in front, and yet distinct from all others, is the beautiful Jungfrau, with its top and sides covered with the whitest of snow, which shines so radiantly in the midday sun as almost to prevent the mountain being looked upon by the unprotected eye.

In our hotel we were delighted to find a placard announcing that services were still being conducted in the Free Church of Scotland's station, and that the preacher for the time being was Professor Laidlaw. To the little church accordingly we determined to make our way next morning.

Interlaken is a small and secluded town compared with Geneva, yet here we found that, with hardly an exception, the shops are open from early morning to late at night of the Lord's Day, and that a concert is held during the day and evening at the only place of entertainment in the town. It is only too true that, while sojourning in such a town, many of our fellow countrymen and countrywomen fall in readily with the doubtful or even evil ways of the place, especially in the matter of non-observance of the Sabbath. We were accordingly prepared, notwithstanding that we knew there were many English-speaking people in the town, to find a very small attendance at the Sabbath services, and were very agreeably disappointed to find matters as we saw them.

Up a short avenue, at the east end of the town, we found quite a colony of little churches grouped to-

gether. We had our Free Church station, an English chapel, a French Protestant church, and a Roman Catholic chapel.

Entering by the small door, we find ourselves in a very comfortable, if not very light, little vault like chapel, perhaps fifteen yards long by eight yards wide, and capable of accommodating comfortably rather over 100 persons. The door is at one end, and there are no windows at either of the sides; but at the end opposite to the door there is a large window divided into three parts, which lights up fairly well the whole of the little church. Around the sides of the window, and hanging down in front of it, are the tendrils of vines and other creeping plants, which give a pleasing freshness and airiness to the little building. The seats are of ordinary white wood, and, if plain, are nevertheless tasteful-looking and very comfortable. A reading desk, on a raised platform, stands in front of the window; and behind the platform is accommodated a harmonium, which assists very appreciably in the praise portion of the service.

In the forenoon the little church was quite filled with a congregation comprising evidently other Scotch people besides ourselves, but composed also of English Nonconformists and of Americans of various denominations. In the afternoon, the numbers were again large, though less than in the forenoon. At both services, the preacher, as was to be expected of him, delivered addresses which maintained his own high reputation, as well as the reputation of the Church to which he belongs. Among the congregation there was a quiet and restful attention, which showed that they appreciated and enjoyed the few hours of retirement from the hurry of sightseeing and the unaccustomed and unpleasant surroundings of the Sabbath in a strange land.

There was evidently also aroused that feeling of brotherly kindness which such circumstances are fitted to give rise to, and which constrain persons, though entire strangers to one another, to extend the hand or exchange some kind words. One gentleman, whom the writer spoke to, and accompanied on the way from church, stated that, though an Englishman (belonging to the Congregational body), he did not understand the services of the Church of England, but that he appreciated and had enjoyed the services of our Church; and there can be no doubt that by all who were present, the thoughtfulness and energy of the Continental Committee of the Free Church in providing such services were thoroughly appreciated.

The services in the little church were now to be discontinued for the season, so far at least as the conducting of them by Free Church clergymen was concerned, and the communion was accordingly celebrated in the afternoon, as a fitting close to the work of the day and of the summer. Thereafter, the little company dispersed, refreshed and strengthened for meeting the fatigues and temptations and dangers of another week, and with grateful thoughts to be lastingly cherished in their minds, of the pleasant meetings in the little church they were now leaving, and in most cases no doubt for ever.—*Free Church Record.*

### GIVING IN THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

That careful training in Christian benevolence is needed will be readily admitted, and in no place is such training so important as in the Sunday school. There lives and characters are being shaped and moulded; and, if the training be right, the results will tell all through life.

Let the scholars feel that they are giving; guide them in the choice of objects to which they give; inform them about these objects, so they may give intelligently; bring back to them, as far as possible, reports of the good done by their gifts; select objects covering all classes of Christian duty and benevolence, including the regular contributions to the support of the parent Church; impress upon them that giving means self-sacrifice, that it is not merely a mechanical form; that thoughtlessly asking papa or mamma for a penny for the Sunday school is not true giving; that giving is a duty to God from each individual, which cannot be done by somebody else; that it is not the amount that makes the value in the sight of God, but the spirit which prompts the gift, and the years will show results that cannot fail to benefit mankind.—*S. S. Times.*

### TEMPTATIONS OF MINISTERS.

Besides those common to all men, ministers have their peculiar temptations. The ambition to be popular for popularity's own sake is one of the most common and fatal. It is a Delilah in whose lap many a strong man has been shorn of his strength. Akin to this is the ambition to say sharp things and smart things, and be amusing. But a minister of the Gospel is not a peddler nor a show man, to display wares and exhibit curiosities. Another, and not unlike the former, is envy and jealousy, on account of the popularity of others. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after love, patience, meekness; fight the good fight of faith whereunto thou art called."