

Sunday Reading.

Week-Night Services.

All over Christendom, on Friday nights, or Thursday nights, or Wednesday nights, people assemble in churches for religious service. Is not the Sunday service enough? Why invade the week-nights with the church meeting? Many Christians do not appreciate it. Indeed, it is a great waste of time, unless there be some positive advantage to be gained. The French nation at one time tried having a Sunday only once in ten days. The intelligent Christian finds he needs a Sunday every three or four days, and so builds a brief one on the shore of a week day in the shape of an extra religious service. He sets grace on Sunday to bridge the chasm of worldlyness between that and the next Sunday, but finds the arch of the bridge very great, and runs up a pier midway to help sustain the pressure. There are 168 hours in a week, and but two hours of public religious service on Sunday. What chance have two hours in the battle with 166? A week-night meeting allows larger membership attendance. A minister cannot know how to preach unless, in a conference meeting, he finds the religious state of the people. He feels the pulse before giving the medicine. Otherwise, he will not know whether it ought to be a sedative or a stimulant. Every Christian ought to have something to say. Every man is a walking eternity. The plainest man has omnipotence to defend him, omniscience to watch him, infinite goodness to provide for him. The tamest religious experience has its poems, tragedies, histories, liads, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. Ought not such an one to have something to say? If you were ever in the army, you know what it is to see an officer on horseback dash swiftly past carrying a dispatch. You wondered as he went, what the news was. Was the army to advance or was an enemy coming?

So every Christian carries with him a dispatch from God to the world. Let him ride swiftly and deliver it. The army is to advance and the enemy is coming. Go out and fulfill your mission, and you may have a letter committed to your care, and after some days you find it in one of your pockets and you forget to deliver it. Great was your chagrin when you found that it pertained to some sickness or trouble. God gives to every man a letter of warning or invitation to carry, and what will be your chagrin in the judgment to find that you had forgotten it. A week-night meeting widens the pulpit until all the people can stand on it. Such a service tests one's piety. No credit for going to church on Sunday. Places of amusement are shut closed. There is no money to be made. But week nights, every kind of temptation and opportunity spreads before a man, and it he goes to a praying circle he must give them up. A man who goes to the weekly service regularly, through moonlight and pitch darkness, through good walking and slush ankle deep, will, in the book of judgment, find it set down to his credit. He will have a better seat in heaven than the man who went only when the walking was good and the weather comfortable and the service attractive and his health perfect. That service which calls for nothing, God counts for nothing. A week-night service also thrusts religion into the secularities of the week. It is as much as to say, "This is God's Wednesday, or God's Thursday, or God's Friday, or God's week." You would not give much for a property, the possession of which is now, if while we are one-seventh of the time, and God does not want that man whose service he can have only on the Sabbath. If you paid full wages to a man, and found out that six-sevenths of his time he was serving a rival house, you would be indignant, and the man who takes God's goodness and gives six-sevenths of his time to the world, the flesh and the devil, is an abomination to the world. The whole week ought to be a temple of seven rooms dedicated to God. You may, if you will, make one room the Holy of Holies, but let the temple be consecrated. The week-day service gives additional opportunity for religious culture, and we find it so difficult to do right and be right that we cannot afford to miss any opportunity.

Such a service is a lunch between the Sunday meals, and if we do not take it, we get weak and faint. A truth coming to us then ought to be especially effective. If you are in a railroad train, and stop at the depot, and a boy comes in with a telegram, all the passengers lean forward and wonder if it is for them. It may be news from home. It must be urgent, or it would not be brought there. Now, if while we are rushing on in the whirl of everyday excitement, a message from God meets us, it must be an urgent and important message. If God speaks to us in a meeting mid-week, it is because there is something that needs to be said before next Sunday.

A Christian Work in Russia: An exquisitely beautiful work, so unostentatious that few people outside of St. Petersburg know of its existence, has been carried on in that city for some time by two ladies. The motive for the work originated in New York. Several years ago, Miss Grundberg and Miss Wennberg were strolling up Fourth Avenue one Sunday morning and entered a church there. They were Swedish ladies who were engaged in teaching in New York and had been drawn together when they first met in this city by the similarity of their circumstances, both being of Swedish nationality and both having been orphaned in early life. Neither was a Christian, but both went to church occasionally. The preacher that morning, a perfect stranger to them, preached on John 3:16, and his words were blessed of God to the ultimate conversion of both ladies. They shortly afterwards returned to Sweden, and thence went to Russia, settling in St. Petersburg. There they united with the American-English Church under the pastorate of Mr.

Kilburn, and looked around for some work to do for Christ. By Mr. Kilburn's advice they distributed tracts among the poor of the city and talked with them. The police, however, ordered this work discontinued. They then began a work among friendless girls seeking to save them from the temptations of the capital, in which they were successful in protecting many from falling and finding them suitable positions in which they could earn a livelihood. Again, however, the police interfered, always on the same plea of heretical teaching, and the temporary home they had opened had to be closed. The next effort was a home for orphan children in which they gathered twenty-one little waifs. The police interfered again, but by this time the story of their persecution had been told in Court circles, and one of the Grand-duchesses laid their case before the Czar himself. He promptly stopped the police proceedings and gave the ladies his sanction to their work. Since that time they have been unmolested, and their Christian labors among the poor and friendless have extended and have been greatly blessed. The work has been carried on in absolute dependence on God; and money has been provided in answer to prayer, as every need arose. God's promise has been fulfilled in their experience.

The Song of an Escaped Captive. A summer's sun flooded the church with glorious light, throwing rich shades of gold, green and purple across the chancel pavement, tracing in dark shadows the form of a rude cross. One ray of light glanced across the altar, lighting with a strange radiance the form of a young priest kneeling there, with clasped hands and earnest face upraised in adoration. The stillness of the church was broken only by the sweet, soft tones of the organ, tremblingly calling on the worshippers to remember the sacrifice and renunciation they were celebrating. The gentle tones died and were followed by a solemn hush, whilst every head was bent in silent adoration of God.

Through the stillness there rose a burst of melody, so thrilling, so soul-inspiring that every face was raised to see the unknown songster. On, on he sang, telling, not of pains and penalties, but of life and happiness. Higher yet and higher swelled his notes, as he proclaimed his gratitude for the sunshine and joy of life. He sang of woods and streams, of running brooks and meadows full of sweet flowers. Then in low sad notes he sang of narrow cages, of cruel men, of small stifling dens, where wild woodland birds are kept in sorrow and misery. He told of the agonies of slow death from pining and weary longings for fresh air and freedom.

But the stream of people trampled under foot the shade of the cross as they passed the pictured agony of Him who valued the sparrows were swept by silks and satins, for the people thought not. The organ pealed forth the grand strains of the "Agnus Dei." The clear notes of the boy choristers rose high above, and for a moment the bird's song ceased. Grand pleading for sympathy and aid from those who by their patronage condemned his brethren to the loss of what, to them, is dearer far than life—their liberty. The sound of the organ died away; the congregation bent their heads. With fluttering wings the songster flew to the altar, alighting on the cross. Then with only one long wailing cry of Peace—blessed peace to enjoy untroubled the beatitudes of air and sunlight, his song ceased and he folded his wings. At last he had obtained from God the birthright of freedom of which he had been robbed by man.

The white-robed choristers left the chancel, the priest passed from the altar, the congregation rustled forth. The dead bird was left alone beneath the cross. Christians, shall its pleadings to your God remain unheeded?

Jugs in Church Walls.

One of the most singular features of the older churches in England and Western Europe is the presence in the walls of large numbers of jars. They are embedded in the masonry with the neck turned toward the interior of the church, and the mouth opening into the place. For a long time the openings were supposed to be holes in the walls, but a closer examination a number of years ago, of one or two of these old buildings, disclosed the fact that the openings were the necks of jugs. Most of the old churches erected from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries have them, and in some they are present in great numbers. A church in Leeds has over fifty, while the number is considerable in some of the old French churches, nearly two hundred having been counted in the Cathedral of Angoulême. The explanation of their presence is easy. They were placed in the walls with a view of bettering the acoustic properties of the building. The efficiency of this strange device is certainly open to question.

To Get Out of a Difficulty.

My first sermon (says a correspondent) was preached near Northampton. I had carefully memorized the discourse, and went into the pulpit without notes. I was running the sermon rapidly off the reel, and was about half through when suddenly I lost the thread. What was I to do? At that very moment I caught sight of a couple of boys in the end gallery enjoying a quiet conversation. I commenced a solemn lecture to the lads on the sin of wrong behavior in church. I went on lecturing, and fishing at the same time, casting about for the lost thread. Presently I found it, and continued without further mishap to the end. That happened thirty years ago, but ever since, when I have seen lads talking or playing in church, I have mentally ejaculated: "Heaven bless the boys."

Messages of Help for the Week.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.—Rev. 2:29.

"Hear ye deaf; and look ye blind, that ye may see who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come."—Isaiah, 42:18, 23.

"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."—Isaiah, 43:1.

"When thou passest through the water, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flames kindled upon thee."—2nd verse.

"Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men; neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever and ever."—Isaiah 51:7, 8.

"He redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."—Isaiah 51:11.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth."—Isaiah, 62:7.

A Fresh Bride Every Year.

The Rev. T. B. Pandian, of the Baptist Mission, Madras, who has been interviewed by the Christian Commonwealth on the woes of the Pariah, mentioned as one of the saddest needs of the Pariah the need of a wife. Polygamy is rampant, and the ignorant Pariah craves for a fresh bride every year, and he never troubles his head as to what becomes of his old wives when he takes a new one. Likewise, the wife no longer cares a jot what becomes of the husband when he has taken unto himself another wife, trying to marry again herself. And they both leave the children of their marriage almost as waifs and strays. Another misfortune, Mr. Pandian went on to say, was the cheap labour exacted of the Pariahs by the landlords and Zemindars. The Pariah is made to work everywhere—in the garden, the field, by the well side, in the cowshed, in the stables, in sumptuous banquet—everywhere. Their pay is simply miserable, and it is a problem how some of them manage to exist. They seldom ply a trade, and abject slavery seems to be their fate. Separate schools should be provided for these people, taught and inspected either by Christians or men of their own class. Caste people should have nothing to do with them. Industrial schools should also be established in convenient localities. In order to elevate these people two things are necessary: First, emancipation from the disabilities under which they now labour; and, second, educational facilities, both intellectual and industrial, must be placed within their reach, untrammelled by the interference of hostile officials.

The Boy Missionary.

At a recent Convention, Dr. Phillips, one of the missionaries supported by the Sunday School Union in India, related that a native scholar in his class, a lad remarkable for his lively and mischievous spirit, one day begged to be allowed to go home. His home was in the jungle forty miles away, and Dr. Phillips refused permission. But the lad resisted, until the missionary asked his reason. The boy replied, "I was like a bear cub, and knew nothing but how to eat until you taught me to pray. Now," said he, pointing to the jungle, "my mother and my sisters and brothers are there, and they worship devils, and don't know anything of Jesus; but I have learned to love him, and I want to tell them." The boy at once started on his journey. After a few days he returned; and Dr. Phillips asked him, "Do you think your mother and sisters will leave the worship of devils?" The lad drew himself up, and answered, "I have taught mother to pray to Jesus, and she will love him, too." Three months later, Dr. Phillips pitched his tent under a tree in a village across the jungle. A woman came out; he thought she was sick and had come for medicine, but she replied, "I'm not sick, doctor. I've got good news. I'm the mother of that boy whom you sent to teach us about Jesus, and I want to tell you that we heard the good word and have loved God ever since."

The Bite of Sin.

In some parts of England a queer custom is still in vogue, which is repeated whenever a death occurs. It is called the "bite of sin," and whenever some one in the house dies a piece of bread is laid on the breast of the corpse, which some passer-by is persuaded to eat for a good sum of money. In this way it is believed that the sins of the dead are transferred to the living, who in turn can pass them off, together with his own, by a similar ceremony, when his life comes to an end.

On the Sandwich Islands the widows have the names of their departed husbands tattooed on their tongues, but it is not known how often they turn over the sweet morsel of wily devotion when they enter again the matrimonial state.

Death of a Cholera Nurse.

Sister Saint Paulin, who has just died at Oregon, for thirty years bravely held her post on the battlefield of sickness. She nursed the sick during the cholera of 1867, the typhus of 1868, the cholera of 1884, and the great pestilence of 1892, and in the intervals of these great campaigns she never quitted her work of mercy. In 1885 she received the Cross of the Legion of Honor. In her last illness the doctor said to her, "Courage, you will yet wear your cross for many a year." "No," she replied, "I am going to wear another Cross, the true one; my work here is ended. Good bye, or rather au revoir [I'll meet again], for whatever you may think we shall meet again in eternity."

Women as Choristers.

A surprised choir of women is to be found in London, at St. James', Westminster, where the women chorists, wearing cassocks, surplices, and collegiate caps, took their places in the choir for the first time on Sunday, the 3rd of July, 1892. Surprised choirs of women chorists have also been installed at churches in Manchester, Birmingham, Wakefield, and Winchester. Surprised women choir singers have just been introduced into the Epiphany church choir in Washington. They wear plain gowns of white, with flowing sleeves and deep edges of black. On their heads they wear simple toques, with tassels of cord. The Rev. H. Hutchings, Kilcooney Rectory, Markhill, Armagh, Ireland, has lately built at his own expense an abbey in the rectory grounds, and formed a female choir as a special feature of its services. The choir consists of about twenty ladies, each of them wearing a robe and girdle of white lined with a Bishop's cap. At the late Canon Elliott's church at White Roding, Essex, the choir entirely consisted of little girls, dressed in white robes and caps.

Earning a Bible.

How children in Asia Minor who are too poor to pay the price of a Bible yet who desire one are able to earn the book, is told by Miss E. G. Bates of the American Board's Mission at Hadjin. She writes: "For some years past, through the kindness of the Bible Society, we have had a number of Bibles to give away to poor children. Our plan has been to have each child earn his Bible by committing to memory and repeating 300 verses. The preciousness of a Bible thus earned is very much greater than of one given without any effort made on the part of the child himself, while the treasure of Bible words thus stored in the memory is so much more gain. The pleasure and eagerness with which the children receive their books are very great. The children, by earning their Bibles are from nine to thirteen years of age, and of course only the very poor, for whom it is impossible to find the fifteen pence to buy one."

Not many persons, probably, are aware that there is now on a visit to this country a Zulu Princess of some notoriety, who is accompanied by her English husband, a gentleman of the name of Meek. Both have been engaged for some years in missionary work in Zululand, and the Princess Jeje, who is said to be a woman of great natural ability, has the reputation of having been very successful in converting her countrywomen to Christianity. The Princess is a cousin of the late King Cetewayo.

Dr. Thornhill Webber, Anglican Bishop of Brisbane, who is now in London, has apparently given himself unlimited leave of absence from his diocese. The following brief, business-like interview took place just as his steamer was about to start away from Australia:—

"What are you going home for?"

"To collect £50,000."

"When are you coming back?"

"When I have collected it."

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PERFECTLY WELL.



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