

and yet he calls on families attached to and regularly attending Methodist services and tells them "Wesley never left the Church of England, etc., thus perverting the facts of history." I would draw the attention of Methodists and those who read his letter in the *Christian Guardian* to some of the real facts of history on this question. In Wesley's sermon on the occasion of laying the foundation of City Road Chapel in 1777, there are the following expressions. "The Methodists know their calling. They weighed the matter at first, and upon mature deliberation, determined to continue in the Church. Since that time, they have not wanted temptations of every kind to alter their resolution. They have heard abundance said on the subject, perhaps all that could be said. They have read the writings of the most eminent pleaders for separation, both in the last and the present century. They have spent several days in a general conference on this very question: 'Is it expedient to separate from the Established Church?' But still they could see no sufficient cause to depart from the first resolution. They further on in the same sermon he says: 'That we do not, will not form any separate sect, but from principle remain, what we always have been, true members of the Church of England.' These quotations from Wesley's sermon preached nearly 40 years after he had formed the rules for the society called Methodists, are very plain and seem to bear out the truth of what the Church of England minister told the families he visited that Wesley never left the Church of England. But, to come down to the period of the Conference held after Mr. Wesley's death, which was at Leeds, in 1798. The address sent out to all the Methodist Societies throughout England commences thus: "Dear Brethren, we feel it our duty to send you this address, lest the insinuations of any, who are enemies to our prosperity and unity, should grieve your minds and injure the work of God. Our venerable father, who has gone to his great reward, lived and died a member and friend of the Church of England." Further on the same address, this entreaty is found: "But we entreat our societies at large to continue as usual, in connection with the Church of England; and we shall, with great cheerfulness and contentment labor among them according to that simple, original plan of Methodism, established and left us by our venerable friend."

The History of Wesleyan Methodism, written by Geo. Smith, L.L.D., F.A.S., London, 1858, and which was a Text Book, thirty years ago, for all candidates for the Wesleyan Methodist Ministry, says, Vol. II., page 8, "Wesley, as his conduct proved, was conscientiously attached to the Church of England, and to the end of his days regarded himself as one of her most devoted sons. As such, he availed himself of his position to induce his preachers and people to follow his example." If Methodism would but rejoice that the Church of England ministers attended revival services and visited from house to house, he would come nearer the spirit of the Founder of Methodism, and assist more in bringing about unity in the Protestant Churches, than to wrongly impeach him with perverting the facts of history.

Lachute Mills, Dec. 18th, 1886. F. C. IRELAND.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

3RD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. JANUARY 23RD, 1887.
The Hardened Heart.

Passage to be read.—Exodus ix. 18 21.

In the last lesson we saw the successive manifestations of God's power in the first eight plagues on the water, the dust, the air, the cattle of the Egyptians, their persons, the sky and the wind, until the people, and even the magicians, recognized "The Finger of God."

Now we are to consider how one man was affected by all this, and what lessons we and our scholars may learn from his conduct and its results?

I. *Pharaoh's resistance.*—When Moses, at Mount Horeb, received God's message to His oppressed people, his first request was for credentials to the Israelites—his fear, that they would not believe him to be a messenger sent by God. We have seen how mercifully God listened to his doubts and furnished him with ample proofs of his divine commission. "They shall hearken," he said, "to my voice" (chap. iii. 18); and so it came to pass (chap. iv. 31). But of Pharaoh, God said, "I am sure that the King of Egypt will not let you go;" and you remember how defiantly he received the message. Pride—"I know not the Lord." Obstinacy—"Neither will I let Israel go" (chap. v. 2).

His resistance was:—

(1) *Deliberate.* The very first plague gave him a week to consider whether he would persist in defying the Almighty (chap. vii. 25), and the other plagues of which we have so far read must have occupied some days, probably weeks, yet still he held to his resolve.

(2) *Active.* No sooner had he received the first message than he set himself to "fight against God." The command was,— "Let My people go." Pharaoh's

answer,— "Let there be more work laid upon the men." When the plagues began he called upon the magicians to withstand Moses and Aaron, and continued to employ them until they acknowledged themselves vanquished.

(3) *Deceitful.* When the frogs overran the land, he said "Entreat the Lord . . . and I will let the people go" (chap. viii. 8); so after the fourth (viii. 28), the seventh (ix. 28), and the ninth plagues (x. 24). But each time he sought to make conditions (viii. 25-28; x. 10 11, 24), and broke his promise when the plague was removed (viii. 15, 32; ix. 35; x. 20, 27), though his servants at last urged him to submit (x. 7).

II. *The Effect of Pharaoh's Resistance.*—(1). *Upon Egypt.* We have seen in the two last lessons its effect upon the comfort, the health, the property and the persons of the Egyptians. But more terrible judgment is yet to come. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

(2) *Upon Pharaoh himself.* God foreknew that Pharaoh would resist him. In chap. iii. 19 he says, "I know that the King of Egypt will not let you go," and in iv. 21, "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." So in vii. 13; ix. 12; x. 20-27, and xi. 10, it is said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, though in viii. 15, 32, and ix. 34 we are told that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. How shall we understand this? God is not the author of sin (St. James i. 13, 14; St. John iii. 8). He "desireth not the death of a sinner." "His will is that all men should be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4). Why then is it said that God "hardened Pharaoh's heart?" Good authorities answer the question thus: "The cause of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was his own self-will, not the forbearance and long-suffering of God. But, inasmuch as the Divine mercy which waited for his repentance became the occasion of his hardness, and the means by which his obduracy was discovered and manifested, God is said to have hardened his heart. So parental indulgence makes a child wayward, because it manifests and draws out that waywardness and obstinacy which is in him (S. P. C. K. Commentary)."

"The word 'harden' cannot signify anything else as God's act than it signifies as the act of Pharaoh, when it is said that he hardened himself. When a man has wilfully quenched the light he has received, and when he persists in giving himself up to his evil instincts, there comes a time when God withdraws from him the beneficent action of His grace. He is thenceforth like a horse with the bit in his teeth, running blindly to his destruction. From being the end he is degraded to the rank of means. (GODER on the Epistle to the Romans, ch. ix. 18)."

ALGOMA.

SIR,—Will you allow me to state, through your columns, that I have just received from a Toronto Churchman a most generous proposition to the effect that he will contribute \$200 a year, for three years, towards the stipend of a clergyman to take charge of a tract of country, between thirty and forty miles in length (in the district of Parry Sound), within which the Church has hitherto been wholly unrepresented, save by a few occasional services, and where a number of Church families are to be found, who, if any longer neglected, must either be absorbed by other religious communions, or else drift out into the gulf of practical infidelity. If, however, I am to avail myself of this generous offer, at least \$550 more will be needed per annum to render the stipend at all adequate. May I not confidently appeal to your readers to assist me in utilizing this providential opportunity of repairing the neglects of the past in the territory referred to, and of caring for the souls of brethren, who, till now, have been, so far as their own Church is concerned, as "sheep scattered abroad having no Shepherd."

It is hoped that responses to this appeal may be given on the same terms as the original proposition, viz., for three years, dating from January 1st, 1887.

E. ALGOMA.

Family Reading.

BEAUTIFUL CHURCH.

Beautiful Church of Christ below,
Beautiful in this world of woe,
Beautiful gate to Heaven above,
Beautiful house of God I love;
He who was slain on Calvary
He built this beautiful Church for me.

Beautiful round our festival year,
Beautiful all its scenes appear,
Beautiful Feast when Christ was born,
Beautiful light the Easter morn;
With Christmas wreaths and Easter flowers,
Thank God this beautiful Church is ours.

Beautiful Baptism, Christ its light;
Beautiful infant robed in white;
Beautiful chants we love to sing;
Beautiful hymns to Christ our King;
The paths that saints and martyrs trod,
The Church that leads us home to God.

Beautiful Church of Christ our King,
Beautiful offerings let us bring,
Beautiful lives the Church to adorn,
Beautiful love to Heaven's First Born;
With hearts of faith the Saviour see,
Come to this beautiful Church with me.

REV. EDWARD L. D. ROWN

THE PAINS OF WRONG-DOING.

"The lines of suffering on almost every human countenance have been deepened, if not traced there by unfaithfulness to conscience by departures from duty. To do wrong is the surest way to bring suffering: no wrong deed ever failed to bring it. Those sins which are followed by no palpable pain are yet terribly avenged, even in this life. They spoli us of the armour of a pure conscience and of trust in God, without which we are naked amid hosts of foes. Thus to do wrong is to inflict the surest injury on our own peace. No enemy can do us equal harm with what we do ourselves, whenever or however we violate any moral or religious obligation."—Channing.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPERS.

Good housekeeping should be built upon the strong foundations of self-respect, comfort and system.

Were not these foundations more considered some years ago than they are at present?

I am not a pessimist, yet I think it requires great strength of will and purpose in an individual to withstand the tendency of the period. The period is fond of show, of exterior adornment, of sumptuous living.

Our temptation, is to the putting of the best foot forward, always. Our boys and girls at school are not usually brave enough to acknowledge that they cannot afford whatever is possible for their companions. For example, each succeeding season finds the cost of graduation a tax which not unfrequently obliges the plain mechanic or workingman to withdraw his daughter from the high school in which she is entitled to her diploma, before the advent of the day in which she is to receive it.

I have seen a little girl of fourteen sent to the public school, on the final day of the summer, arrayed in finery, from top to toe, including fleecy robes, white kid gloves, satin shoes and bouquet, the whole requiring a carriage to convey the small princess, (the daughter of a dry goods clerk or bookkeeper, growing gray on a small salary) the half-dozen blocks between her home and the school. Her mother thought it necessary, because "we couldn't let our Fanny look inferior to the other girls."

Some of the other girls were the children of millionnaires, but republican simplicity shuddered and grew faint at the mere thought that they should outshine narrow means by any excess of splendour.

This is only a straw, but it shows the bend of the time. Much of our own housekeeping is made harder than it might be, because of our living beyond our means, and, in consequence, dragging everywhere a clanking, slowly lengthening chain of debt.

I defy the most sunshiny temperament, if trained in the traditions of honesty, and coming of good stock, to continue so long if there be an everlasting worry over ways and means. Far better might be the living of the plainest, the shelter of the lowliest, the apparent style of the severest simplicity, than that some of us should go as we do through years of life in an incessant fret over the inability to maintain the style we desire, and also to maintain our integrity.

Good housekeeping in the exercise of a wise economy, tolerates no waste, and makes the most of all its resources. A dollar in the hands of a good housekeeper goes as far as a dollar and a half in the hands of a poor or shiftless one.