

The Home Mission Journal.

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All money letters should be addressed to
REV. J. H. HUGHES,
Carleton, St. John.

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Paul Crandal's Charge.

BY HOPE DARING.

CHAPTER VII.

A SEARCHING TEST.

Paul Crandal grew very pale. His voice was low, but firm. "Deacon Hardy, I believe I was sent here to work for God. If these evils of which we are speaking exist here, I shall lift my hand and voice against them."

There was silence for a moment. Mrs. Hardy and Carrie exchanged troubled glances. The Deacon was about to speak when Paul raised one hand pleadingly.

"Let us think and pray over it before we say more. I am sure you never thought of the matter in the light I see it in, and I know too little about the state of affairs here to carry on an argument."

There was no reply. Deacon Hardy began to fear that this devout but impulsive young man was not the proper minister for Danesville. As for Paul, he was pained, yet confident that the right would triumph.

He preached that evening to a smaller congregation than in the morning. Evidently the curiosity of non-churchgoers was appeased.

Paul spent all the time he could spare from superintending the settling of the parsonage in getting acquainted with his people. Many of the discoveries he made were unpleasant ones.

He found few willing to accept Amos Shedd's change of heart without, at least, a cutting allusion to his misspent past. He also learned that while the saloon was a constant menace to the safety and happiness of the village, there was little open opposition to it. The church membership was small and included very few young people.

Paul was not disheartened. He was sure these Christians had not really lost their interest in Christ; they had only grown careless. He had asked for work, and this was the answer to his prayer.

On Friday morning he was to leave for Detroit. The evening before, as he was going for the last time through the house to make sure that everything was in readiness for the coming of his mother, a rap sounded on the door, and he opened it to admit Mrs. West.

"I have come to call upon the parsonage," she said, cheerily. Then, as he led her, with a little pardonable pride at his own handiwork, through the cosy rooms, she went on.

"Leave the key with me, Mr. Crandal, and I will have supper ready for your mother when you return. She will be glad to come at once to her own home."

He thanked her. Perhaps neither of them could have told how it came about, but in a few minutes they were telling each other of their impressions regarding the work to be done in Danesville.

Marion West told her story simply. "I am glad we see alike," she said, her eyes fixed upon the western sky, where the setting sun was tinting the dull gray clouds with faint pinks and yellows. "Oh, thank God that he enables me to see the beauty of both living and dying in these last few days!"

Paul turned aside his head. God's power was plainly manifested here.

It was fast growing dark on Saturday evening when Paul and his mother reached their new home. The air was chill and raw, but there were fires in the different rooms, the tea table was neatly spread, on a pretty oak stand stood a

chrysanthemum loaded with snowy blossoms, and at Mrs. Crandal's plate was a bunch of scarlet geraniums.

There was no one in the house. Mrs. West had softly closed the back door after her when she heard steps on the walk. She understood that it would be better for mother and son to be alone in the first hour.

It was not until she stood in the pretty parlor room which her son had prepared for her that Mrs. Crandal spoke. She noted the attention which he had paid to her particular tastes, from the fire blazing in the wee stove to the beloved "Imitation of Christ" on the table. Then she turned to Paul, and, looking into the eyes so like her own, said:

"I am very, very happy, my son." Two months sped by. Paul found a serious impediment to the work he had undertaken in a quarter totally unexpected—in the church.

It was "French's" that made the trouble. Paul talked, preached and prayed against that place. This brought upon his head much opposition from Deacon Hardy and his followers. They talked of the beauty of charity, but the minister refused to consider as charity the silence which passed without a word of reproof so glaring an evil.

One evening, early in December, Paul was returning from a call upon Amos Shedd. His way led him past the saloon, and when just opposite it his attention was arrested by a crowd at the door. There was a burst of rude laughter as a slender figure, which seemed to be the center of the group, staggered and fell to the ground.

Mr. Crandal stopped and watched the boy, for he was little else, as he struggled to his feet and staggered across the street. It was Milo Baxter, the brother of Lucie.

Milo was only a few paces from the minister when he again fell heavily. Paul stepped forward and helped him up. Then he saw that the youth was too far overcome by liquor to reach his home unassisted.

Paul Crandal did not pause to consider the propriety of his next act. Drawing Milo's hand through his arm, he steadied the boy's unsteady steps. They soon reached the home of the Baxters, and when half-way up the walk the door opened and Mr. Baxter came out.

TO BE CONTINUED.

An Imprisoned Soul.

BY REV. G. FLUVEL HUMPHREYS.

SOME one has said, "When we can begin a psalm with crying, we may hope to close it with singing. The voice of prayer soon awakens the voice of praise." There is a pathetic note in the 142d Psalm that touches the experience of many souls. There is running through it the undertone of great affliction. David knew where to go in his trouble. He had learned that in certain experiences in life there was no help in man; refuge failed him; no man cared for his soul. How insistent is his cry, "Bring my soul out of prison." There is no physical imprisonment that can compare with the imprisonment of a soul. "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage." Paul and Silas were the freest men in the prison, although their feet were fast in the stocks. The jailer had an imprisoned soul, and not until its shackles were removed was he truly free.

The world is full of imprisoned souls. Their unconscious cry often is, "Bring my soul out of prison." Some of these are in great trouble. This was David's case. It was a great crisis in his life. He was alone. No man could help him now. He was conscious of soul loneliness. He felt isolated and cut off from the sympathy and help of man. The sacredness of a great affliction had shut him in. He is kin to us in this experience. We can sympathize with him. We have entered that spiritual prison-room and sat down within its dark walls. A homeless, friendless refugee voices the heart-cry of multitudes, "Bring my soul out of prison." It speaks a common language, it touches the depths of a common pain. The disciples of God are as various as individuals; in many of them we are learning something of the bitterness of that cry of our

Lord, "I have trodden the wine-press alone."

Nothing discovers the fibre and strength of the soul like trouble. The Great Chemist tests the man, that he may see what alien element may be present. We hardly ever get acquainted with ourselves until we are shut in by some of the mysterious disciplines of God. With this knowledge perhaps will come the consciousness that there is but one Deliverer that can unloose the bars and let the soul go free.

The sinner is not only in prison—his feet are fast in the stocks. He does not know how to get out. He does not know to whom to appeal. Not until the Holy Spirit convicts and enlightens the soul can this prayer be put up for help. To every imprisoned soul, imprisoned by unfor-given sin, there comes One mighty to save. We go through no darker room than he went through before us. He would have us unbind the chains of evil habit, come out of the dungeon of sinful life and become free men in Christ Jesus. Dark and ill-smelling and dreary is the prison-room where the sinner dwells. He is not only a prisoner, he is a slave, and he cannot escape save by the hand of the Son of God. Let every such an one appeal to the Mighty Conqueror of death and the grave, and offer up this prayer so many centuries old, "Bring my soul out of prison." If you realize you are in prison, if you want to come out, if you are willing to follow your Deliverer, it will not be in vain that you call on the risen Son of God.

Unity in Worship.

THE charm of a service depends on the impression which is left on the mind and heart. There may be many strong and excellent features, but

if they are so arranged or are so diverse in character as to annul their influence the service is a failure. We have attended many churches where sufficient thought and force was put into the worship to make an effective impression on the minds of the congregation, but the arrangement of the parts was so unhappy as to dissipate all reverent feelings. It reminded one of the old story about a preacher who delivered the tender invitation of the Lord Jesus, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," with the same energy and gestures with which Luther drove the devil from his room at Wartburg.

A pleasing illustration of unity in worship was furnished in a recent service at the Judson Memorial in New York. The subject of the sermon was the beautiful and inspiring forty-sixth Psalm. Early in the service the version of the Psalm as given in the Book of Common Prayer, was chanted. For the Scripture lesson the revised version was read. The hymn before the sermon was Luther's magnificent rendering of the same Psalm, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Then the Psalm was analyzed and its beauties and lesson of trust in trouble clearly set forth with the charm which those who have heard Dr. Judson so well remember. The closing hymn was Isaac Watt's comforting and strengthening version of the Psalm, "God Is the Refuge of His Saints."

We are sure that the forty-sixth Psalm, will mean more to every member of the congregation for all the rest of their lives. The service added something of help and comfort which they will never forget. It is a mistake to think that the sermon only is of importance. Too often this is the theory of our services, and the prayer, which should lead all hearts to the very throne of God, is left to the spur of the moment, and the hymns are hastily selected just in time to hand to the organist before going into the pulpit.

If pastors would devote more time and thought to what are commonly but erroneously considered the minor features of their public services, they would find the total impression of the service more weighty and lasting, and retain in their congregations and church membership many who are alienated by the too common bareness and incongruity of our church services.

The new regulation of the Boston and Maine railroad that card playing by employees in all places owned by the company must cease, is a witness against the practice not by fanatical Puritans, but by hard-headed business men.