

JOHN'S "WEEK OF SILENCE."

BY HELEN PEARSON BARNARD.

North Parish was to hold prayer-meetings the first week in January. Pastor Wilbur hoped for much from these; "if"—he told his wife—"John Alexander don't kill them. Just as sure as he gets upon his feet, the service is doomed."

"He's had hints enough lately from the leader of the meeting," said Mrs. Wilbur. "The other night, when you begged the brethren to be brief, to give short testimonies, I thought he'd surely take it to himself; but no! up he popped, and spoke with great satisfaction for nearly half an hour. Several smiled. I should have, only I knew it troubled you. He has such an exasperating way of seeming to close," continued the lady. "He acts as if he were about to seat himself. One is intensely relieved, thinking what a nice place it is for him to stop, but suddenly he revives, to go on indefinitely."

The pastor was too perplexed to smile. Some men he could have labored with, but John was "peculiar!" So, although John had become the bore of the service, the terror of the leader,—a veritable prayer-meeting killer, his pastor, as yet, rebuked him not. But often, in his devotions, he pleaded that none might unwittingly blight the seed sown during the Week of Prayer. Later John met him.

"Seems as though it's more'n we deserve, a whole week o' meetin's, parson. Hope everybody'll tend up to 'em; stand' up 'n' testify what the Lord's done fur 'em. You can depend upon me, parson."

He paused, expectantly, as if for praise. A shadow passed over the still brightness of the minister's face, but he held his peace.

Well, the first meeting came, and so did John Alexander. The pastor, after the preliminaries, put it "into the hands of the brethren," with fear and trembling. But that night, to his intense relief, John did not rise; neither on the next, nor the next! He sat motionless, his head resting on his hand. He was not asleep, for often tears glittered in the eyes under his shaggy brows. The interest was deepening with each session; many asked that the meetings might be continued.

When Saturday night came, John rose for the first time.

"Brethren," said he, slowly and with unwonted hesitancy, "this has been a precious week to me,—this week of silence on my part. I've learned much 'n' suffered much in sperrit. I feel to say that you've borne with me too many times in this vestry; you've had the charity that 'suffereth long and is kind.' You see, brethren, you spoiled me when I was converted. We both took it to be a great thing when the scoffer come out on the Lord's side. When I testified you listened as if I was some great divinity, till I got to thinking I could speak putty well, and, jest like a spiled child, I held forth every chance!"

John's confession came in broken sentences.

"I don't s'pose any on ye was more tickled than me, when Mr. Wilbur give notice o' these meetings a week ago last Friday night," pursued John, as simply as if he were not talking to a room full.

"All the way to Bald Hill I studied up what I'd say here, 'n' I got Sunday night putty well laid out in my mind when I reached home. I was putty tired, 'n' felt as if my rheumatics was comin' on. Belinda said the liniment man had been there with a rheumatic cure. She wanted me to try it right away. She thought he said it must be hot, so we put it on the stove. My friends," continued John, with a solemnity that dispelled the ludicrousness, "it was a marcy that we both left,—Belinda for flannel and I to lock the barn; for that liniment wa'n't made to be hot, and it exploded, spilling the hull kitchen! I never heered such a report!" Such was the magnetism of his earnestness that no one smiled, even when he added, "Belinda said she should alluz hev blamed herself if anything had happened us."

"Mebbe that's why I hed a curious experience that night. Belinda says I drempt. All at once I see Grandther Alexander,—you all knew him; he was one o' the salt o' the earth! His hands was folded, 'n' his eyes closed; he was prayin', as I've seen him often. It used to rebuke my swearin' more'n anything, to feel that he was communin' with the Almighty! Then a veil passed over his prayin' face, like a cloud

over the sun, and a dark presence stood over me. It was the Angel o' Death. I trembled, but plucked up desp'rite courage. 'I aint half done with earth!' says I. "Your time's come!" says he, sternly. I left the body and went with him,—how, and where, is not quite clear. Then we stood at the City gate—I knew it by the Revelation—and says he, 'Knock.' And a voice within answers, 'Who comes there?' And says I, 'I'm known on earth as John Alexander.' 'John Alexander!' says the voice, 'you cannot enter here!'"

John paused to control himself. Then, after a moment, huskily,—

"Friends, I never was so took back. I couldn't argue in that solemn brightness, but I cast about for the reason why my title to heaven wasn't clear.

"All of a sudden, I seemed to be in this 'ere vestry amongst you all. The meeting was solemn; I could see into each soul; many was longin' for a blessin'. But spilin' it all, a stumblin' block to sinners, a weariness to saints, was—John Alexander! Up he gets and talks till I cried out, 'O man, man, why don't you think more, pray more, 'n' keep silence?' I could hear ye all sighin' in spirit; the Parson was prayin' to God to deliver the meetin', but John Alexander kep' right on, boomin' away. I see my mistake then, with anguish. Souls were hungry for God's Word, but I kep' thunderin' my words into their ears.

"No wonder the gatekeeper would not let me into heaven; there'd be no rest for the weary, no peace for the saints! 'Oh, for only one more chance!' I thought, and waked to find that I was still in the body. I've talked too long to-night, brethren,—longer than I mean to in the future. I only wish you could have seen what I saw."

John resumed his seat, burying his face again.

"My friends," said Pastor Wilbur, breaking the silence that followed, "our brother's vision speaks to us all. Let us pray more and talk less. Shall we bow in silent prayer?"

With one accord the congregation bowed. Not a rustle or movement marred the deep quiet. Into this came the spirit of prayer, opening for an instant, to John Alexander, at least, that closed gate of the heavenly inheritance; his soul was flooded with holy joy, the fruit of his first "week of silence."

—Watchman.

THE RESUSCITATION OF THE DROWNED.

On a beautiful summer day last year, a horseman on a foam-covered steed rode at full speed to my house with the news that on a large estate, lying more than two miles distant, the only son of the owner (a widow) had fallen into the pond and was drowned. She begged me to come to her as swiftly as possible. I had my horses at once harnessed and drove thither as fast as the team could run, yet entirely without hope of being able to give any aid, for I could hardly reach the place and scene of the misfortune in less than two hours after its occurrence. As I arrived the rejoicing mother brought me the news that the boy was saved!

The following tale was then narrated to me: The wild, ten-year old boy had, in spite of a prohibition, climbed into a skiff that lay on a deep pond in the grounds, and had, as children delight in doing, rocked it back and forth, until the skiff upset and he fell into the water. A gardener who was working in the neighborhood sprang immediately into the pond, but it was ten minutes before he succeeded in fetching the boy from the bottom of the pond. When the mother reached there and saw the boy deathly pale and lifeless on the brink of the water she gave way to wildest despair. The call for medical assistance was for the moment vain. The dwellers upon the estate hastened thither from all sides, among them an aged shepherd who had the reputation of possessing all sorts of medical knowledge. He proposed at once to attempt resuscitation.

Then a young lady stepped forward, who had been a governess in the house for only a few weeks, and modestly, but with great determination, objected to the shepherd's directions. She had only a short time before shared the instruction in a Samaritan school, and there had learned how one should carry out attempts at resuscitation upon the apparently drowned; she said that what the shepherd advised was entirely injudicious. If they would allow her to apply the knowledge she had gained she

hoped that it might be possible to recall the child to life.

The composure and confidence with which the young girl spoke aroused the mother to new hope. She begged the governess to do whatever she thought necessary. Her first advice was to dispatch a swift messenger to the city for a physician; and the second, to have a woollen blanket heated. Then she herself took hold, whereat the intelligent housemaid also offered to lend her aid. With a few cuts of the shears she divided the jacket and shirt and completely stripped the garments from the upper part of the body. With a handkerchief she removed the slime from the mouth, drew the tongue out and bound the tip of it on the chin with the handkerchief, then she began to carry out with the housemaid the skilful artificial respiration which she had learned in the Samaritan school. Continually, in exact time, the arms were lifted above the head, the little chest expanded as widely as possible, and then again, through depression of the arms and pressure on the sides of the chest, the breast was forced down. With distinct, audible noise the current of air flowed in and out; but the child lay pallid and lifeless if the two young women exhausted with the effort momentarily suspended their exertions. One quarter of an hour after another passed; constantly lower sank the hope of the mother and bystanders. At last, after the motions had been kept up more than an hour, suddenly the young girl cried out, "It succeeds! He begins to breathe!" And see! as she discontinued the movements, the little breast rose of itself, and a delicate flush tinged the wan cheeks! Loud rejoicing rose from the bystanders; yet the two helpers did not stop and sit down but, though almost completely exhausted, unremittingly prolonged their efforts until the cheeks reddened and the little fellow suddenly opened his eyes.

Now, at the bidding of the young Samaritan, the heated blanket was brought, in which the boy, after the removal of his other garments, was wrapped in and with which he was then energetically rubbed. The boy began to speak, and desired something to drink. They prepared him some warm tea, and carried him wrapped up in blankets into the house and put him in bed, where he soon fell into a deep sound sleep; and when I went to his bed, two hours later, he complained of nothing further.—Prof. F. Esenarch, Samaritan Letters.

WE MAY SAY that partly from our own badness and partly from theirs, all mankind, kindred and strangers, are a trial to our patience in some way or other. When we are engaged with others in any kind of work, or are constantly in society of others, our patience is often exercised. We encounter stupid, ill-tempered, or importunate people, and we do not remember to look at each such meeting as a gift from God, who is going to watch how we behave, and visit us accordingly.—F. W. Faber.

Question Corner.—No. 8.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. The inhabitants of what city were commended for their knowledge of the Scriptures?
2. To what city did Paul and Barnabas escape when persecuted at Antioch?
3. In what city was Paul stoned and left for dead?
4. In what city did Peter raise Tabitha to life.
5. Of what city was Paul a native?
6. Where was the home of Jason?
7. What city was the scene of a touching farewell in the life of Paul?

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 7.

1. Antioch in Syria. Acts 11: 26.
2. Antioch in Pisidia. Acts 13: 14-50.
3. Athens. Acts 17: 22-31.
4. Camsarea. Acts 10: 1.
5. Corinth. Acts 18: 1, 2.
6. Ephesus. Acts 19: 27.

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