NOTIONS OF A YANKEE PARSON

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John B. Clark.

With the love of many

happy years

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BY

GEORGE L. CLARK

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TO

THE PARSON'S WIFE

SUNNY, HIGH-HEARTED, FINER EVERY YEAR

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

PREFACE

A venture, even so unlike a sermon as the present little hazard, by a parson, without opening up the text, would be like a house without a doorstep.

Notions extend from conceptions of the Milky Way to devices for milking a cow; from the lay-out of the golden streets to carving a wedding chest. "Yankee Notions" suggests also dry goods, in dealing with which the New England Yankee is a proverbial expert; hence, perhaps, the idea is apt in a title for this book.

The occupations of a Yankee parson are so manifold,—from starting plants for the Paradise gardens to planting potatoes, from setting the pace for adolescent saints to setting hens, that you might possibly imagine that a seasoned Yankee parson would have a few notions if his mind has not gone altogether to seed.

These notions, now coyly offered, may be caught up for a moment, or left to wither like so many other tender things in this frosty world. Whatever their fate, the parson with becoming humility cherishes the alluring hope that no pulpit tone will stale them, that while some of the topics discussed are serious, the treatment will not be found monotonous or sanctimonious, that someone, somewhere, may find in the varied bill of fare a crumb of pleasure or a relish of healthy cheer. If he gets nothing else, may he catch the

flavor of a happy life now looking evenward, the life of a man who rejoices more and more that he is a parson,—and especially a Yankee parson.

G. L. C.

Wethersfield, Connecticut.

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I

SPIRITUAL GYMNASTICS

One of the most interesting phases of these agile and inventive days is the ease with which ancient faiths are set aside as dying or dead; elderly doctrines tossed overboard, new religions invented, Christ's teachings so moulded that that the apostles would not recognize them, and the gospel narrative reduced to the commonplace level of our prosaic times Benighted Uzzah fared badly for trying to steady the arkwagon; now scores are applauded for trying to tip it over.

Perhaps some one will discover how to season, sterilize, predigest the heavenly manna, modify the spiritual milk, administer absent treatment for the disease of sin, hypnotize evil out of a man, extract iniquity painlessly, remove wickedness with all the neatness (if not the dispatch) with which a good surgeon cuts out your appendix, widen the narrow gate a trifle, and macadamize the straight and narrow way.

What is there which this sprightly age cannot achieve? Would we travel? Ready-to-start excursions to Jerusalem, Pyramids and Taj Mahal invite us. Are we musical? Ready-to-grind phonographs and pianolas pour forth Mozart and Bach by the hour. Are we fagged? A tablet or a toxin slays the microbe. Do we long for college

and are unable to attend an intellectual department store? Education by correspondence offers us thorough training in science, engineering and theology, graded to Brahman or Filipino. Do we long for a home? An advertisement brings a photograph of the coy lady, and ready-to-live-in flats are near, fitted to meet purse and hygiene. Do you crave a dainty? Drop in your penny, push in the plunger, and munch your peanuts or chew your pepsin-gum. Hungry for culture, you find a ready-made library, less than two yards long, so wisely selected that a daily revel of ten minutes in it guarantees a cultivated mind.

And what is this new prize-package? A formula for the "Religion of the Future" the versatile author calls it, "without authority, individuality," or any of the "pagan superstitions of Christianity." There is much that is true in this essay of President Eliot, in which he seeks to gather "the tenderest and loveliest teachings that have come down to us from the past." It must have been quite a responsibility. One would shrink from it, fearing that he might leave out something essential, or put in something which an Utopian in the year three thousand would feel the need of.

Near the opening he says religion is "fluent, and among educated people should change from century to century." This is about the only admission of a lack of confidence in his ability to give the final word. Toward the end that is mod-

ified when he says that the new religion is very simple, "and therefore possesses an important element of durability. It is complicated things that get out of order." It surely is simple if we understand it. Perhaps the simplicity will make up for the loss of some things which have seemed to be of some value, such as the forgiveness of sin, the divine Savior, and, last, the Holy Ghost, whom the author classes with "a host of tutelary deities." The author says: "The ordinary consolations of institutional Christianity no longer satisfy intelligent people whose lives are broken by the sickness or the premature death of those they love." We shall be ashamed to be caught reading the fourteenth chapter of John after this!

President Eliot prefers what Jesus said about love and the heavenly Father to His teachings about sin and its punishment and the justice of God. "The new religion will magnify and laud God's love and compassion, and will not venture to state what the justice of God may, or may not, require of Himself, or of any of His creatures." That is going to make a difference with those who have been taught by a "paganized Christianity" that justice is an essential element in any decent religion, or in anything else that appeals to serious minds.

Toward the end he seems to doubt a little whether his religion will "prove as efficient to deter men from doing wrong and to encourage them to do right as the prevailing religions have

been." Time will tell. He is grateful for the lovely things he has gathered from the out-of-date religions, and is sure that the "new religion affords an infinite scope or range for progress and development." It is to be regretted that "the great mass of the people, attached to the traditional churches, are likely to remain so,—partly because of the tender associations with the churches at grave crises of life, and partly because their present mental condition still permits them to accept beliefs they have inherited or have been taught while young." If we cannot make a clean sweep, and substitute the new for the old, we cannot be too thankful that the new religion will "modify the creeds and existing practices of all existing churches, and change their symbolism and their teachings concerning the conduct of life. It will exert a strong uniting influence among men."

We are sorry that the author seems ignorant of many important things about historical Christianity which good scholars could have told him, but we must not expect too much of one man. We overlook this and a number of other things he speaks so well of Jesus even if "they didn't know everything down in Judee." A sentence at the close calls forth our gratitude, a sentence which may mean a great deal: "The revelation He gave to mankind thus becomes more wonderful than ever." It certainly has furnished some valuable suggestions to the author of the "Religion of the Future."

This formula is the best thing of the kind we have seen for several weeks. We had been looking for a long time for a new religion,—a religion we could get into our system without joggling the nerve-cells, loss of an hour's sleep, or a meal; a religion with beautiful ideas, elective, vague, antiseptic, chemically-pure, progressive, pragmatic, scholarly, optimistic, far superior to the worn-out religions of fear, gloom and consolation. It ought to have a good run. Its vagueness and abstractness fall in with much of the thinking of our time. It will prove interesting to those intelligent enough to understand it who have no religion of their own. It may run its course like golfing, automobiling, bridge-whist, picture post-cards and Teddy-bears. Possibly it will not last always, this Religion of the Future; hoop-skirts, croquet and bicycles are out of date. One beauty of the formula is that it costs so little, only fifty cents,—not much for a new religion. We can save somewhere else; any family can do without meat for a day, or stay away from the theatre for once for a new religion. Still, in these days of high prices we must economize somewhere; perhaps we would better wait a little before purchasing. In six months we may be able to get another formula equally good for a quarter.

This prescription is very attractive, especially for our times. It boasts of no back-bone of authority, so it will be easy to swallow; religion ought to go down like a Blue Point or a lump of

jelly. There is a methodical, business-like air about it which we like. It is a little short in justice, poetry, imagination, music, and a grasp of those lofty views of God which used to be regarded as necessary in a life of reverential love; but it is long in generalities, sweet philanthropies and gentle idealisms. A dash of pantheism gives it an air of encouraging mysteriousness.

We had not supposed that religion could be formulated and labelled like specimens in a museum; that faith, hope and love could be examined as a biologist watches the growth of a tadpole's tail; that justice could be thrown out of court altogether; but we are never too old to learn. It certainly will be economical after the formula is paid for. Churches cost money, preaching comes high, quartettes are expensive.

Under the old religion, which has done fairly well for eighteen centuries, marriage seemed like a sacrament. We heard the words of Christ at weddings, we asked the presence of Him who gave joy at the marriage at Cana to be a constant guest in the new home, and the poor superstition seemed appropriate and helpful. We shall miss that delusion in the new religion. The justice of peace may be as solemn as the minister, and the town clerk or a passing constable can sign as witness.

It will not be necessary to pull down the churches at present. They will be useful for gymnasiums, pleasant afternoons, lectures, read-

ing-rooms, under control of physical directors, doctors, dentists and philanthropists.

There seems to be quite a call for new religions just now. One man is bored by the Te Deum and the repetitions in the Kyrie, and sees no reality in creeds. Others are conscious of no response to appeals for love and aspiration through a sacrificial and ever-present Saviour. Others have been so busy dissecting the body of the Scriptures that the spirit has escaped. Others of exceptional genius declare that they have a religion, but it is without form and comeliness and they shrink from exhibiting it. To all these almost any religion is interesting, especially if it lets them do as they please.

The idea of a new religion is attractive, quieting to the conscience, suggesting that the old one is defective or threadbare, and surely not indispensable.

As these and similar thoughts were passing through my mind, a new idea struck me. President Eliot cannot be serious; he is too wise and scholarly a man for that. What he means is in the magic words "Spiritual Gymnastics." He would not think for a moment that he was capable of defining the elements of the religion of the future. He only expected to scare people a little, wake them up, so that they will exercise their spiritual legs. He is a shrewd man and knew his little essay would not do much harm. A few timid saints would whisper with bated breath,

"Isn't it awful?" But the clearer-headed ones, who have a little logic and know something of history, would say as Dr. Johnson said of ghosts: "I do not believe in them, I have seen so many of them." What a load was lifted from our minds when the beautiful and magic phrase "Spiritual Gymnastics" slowly dawned!

Blessings never come singly. Here is another prize; a gifted mind, neighbor of President Eliot, steals a little time from the absorbing interests of a great city church to discuss a principle which has always been regarded as close to the heart of Christianity,—the out-flow of God's mercy in unusual ways of compassionate love in connection with redemption.

We open the book expecting to find marks of thorough study, careful preparation, clear logic, and sound thinking. We look for luminous definition and some adequate conception of the bearings of this subject upon our comprehension of Christ as the supreme revelation of the Father. We find a lack of lucid definition, logic, and comprehension of the historic place of miracles in the Christian system. If the author has discovered ground for displacing and eliminating the events which the greatest thinkers of the Church have always regarded as supernatural, he fails to make them appear.

The chase for simplicity in the end leads into a deeper complexity. There is a good deal of special pleading, a warm flow of sweetness, but more

light on the author than on the subject in hand. Dr. Gordon fails to show how we can cut out miracles and have left unimpaired the New Testament conception of Christ and the teachings interwoven with the miracles. The book is made up of a course of lectures delivered at Yale Divinity School last year on the Nathaniel W. Taylor foundation and is distinctly apologetic and altruistic. It is not easy to tell exactly where the author stands, but it is possible to guess which way he leans. Dr. Gordon seems a little scared to be found in the company of such naughty boys as Schmiedel and Cheyne, and good boy that he is, he tries to swear as they do and seem almost as bad, but without much heart, and this is to his credit.

He seeks at the outset to propitiate the shade of that vigorous old warhorse of the Evangelical faith, Dr. N. W. Taylor. We have not heard whether the champion of the last century accepted the apology of the twentieth century lecturer at his beloved school or not. We suspect that the lectures gave him a bad half-hour even in heaven. This reflection throws doubt on the notion that saints in glory are acquainted with the capers of us frisky mortals.

Dr. Taylor was not unrhetorical, but he was a clear, logical thinker. What has become of his mantle?

Here is a sample from the book:

"The recorded gospel, the recorded Christ, we

leave behind as the swift years roll, as the great centuries pass. That divine life in Galilee and in Judea is far away from our time. We may weep that it is receding from the successive generations of men; but we must not forget that it is part of the history of the race, that it is the abiding and the supreme memorial, and the glorious deep of the Holy Ghost goes forward with us; it is under the keel of the ship."

This and similar passages disturbed me a little at first. I was not sure what the author meant, though I could see that he evidently was saying more than a commonplace. The imagery is of an ocean voyage. It seemed as though he were throwing overboard something more substantial than the run-away prophet. But when the thought of "Spiritual Gymnastics" came, all was clear. Dr. Gordon thinks we are going away from the recorded Christ and the further we get the more we must throw away, that we may go light and make speed. The closing words of the passage illuminate the subject wonderfully, "The glorious deep of the Holy Ghost is under the keel of the ship." How stupid not to see at the first glance that Spiritual Gymnastics had taken to water!

Here is a boat-race. Dr. Gordon cannot be serious, he is getting up a little gymnastic exercise to develop the wings or the fins of the saints that when they come to difficulties they may be able to fly over them or dive under them. Then this boating practice is taken to that clearing-house of in-

teresting speculations, the religious newspaper. A symposium is arranged by the editor, to which professors, ministers and an occasional layman contribute. They snatch a little time from their busy lives to explain how they feel about the subject. All is done with due regard to the feelings of the honored preacher. The result is summed up by the editor, who then passes calmly on to discuss the shirtwaist strike and the future of the House of Lords. The result of the symposium is labelled and filed away in the archives with the results of the councils of Jerusalem, Nice, and Trent, near the alcove where the works of Augustine, Calvin, Edwards, and Taylor are calmly reposing.

All this disturbs the minds of the thoughtful until they reflect that it is a kind of holy base-ball practice to wake up drowsy saints that they may grasp the emaciated grip-sack of their faith and march vigorously forward toward the gates of pearl, hoping that they will get there before those ancient portals dissolve into an iridescent dream.

There is a certain amiable plausibleness in the book so far as there is any clear reasoning. We heartily admire the intention of the author; he does long to help some people who would like to embrace Christianity if they are not obliged to take too much of it. The milk of the Word is pretty strong if taken clear. Some of the elect, partly out of regard for the eloquent author, may be led to try to believe in a divine Savior

who left no remarkable signs of his divinity except some excellent ideas of a dead man, ideas out of which some early and gifted followers tried to make a case; a sacrificial Master who perhaps neither died nor rose, and possibly was not born in a way to suit finicky minds; a reigning King who gave no marks of kingliness apart from the mythical teachings except a rather superior humanity, if we can trust the legends. And if we play as fast and loose with the records about that as has been done with the stories about the miracles, in a year or two we shall not have ground for faith in Christ as hardly a real and respectable man.

The fact that Jesus laid less stress on the evidence from miracles than on the proof from His teachings is the sheet-anchor in this swimming-tank practice, to use a nautical figure. This gives some slight excuse for plunging into the position that miracles should be left out of the account altogether. Since some are not convinced by the miracle-tales, no one should be antiquated enough to believe that there ever were any miracles. Since all are not persuaded, no one is. The logic halts a little, or rather flies,—I mean dives,—but what of that in this swift age! It is true a good deal of exercise is required of congregations used to the old-fashioned preaching. The people have to "step lively, please," to keep up with the nimble parsons.

We saw an amateur in high vaulting the other

day; he leaped gracefully over difficulties which have taxed the most powerful minds and rose with a pleasant smile. He leaped back to the myth theory, which many have supposed was drying up in the museum of theological antiquities, and when he was asked how the myths about Christ could have gathered in that keen age, he seemed to think the question answered when he said: "Myths are gathering about Abraham Lincoln." Urged to give a few, he said: "I do not remember any now, but Lincoln could never have told so many funny stories." I should call that light dumb-bell practice.

We are reminded of a brilliant effort in our town to get a bed-ridden woman, whose only disease was chronic weariness, upon her feet. A board was pulled out of the floor, and a brisk fire of shaving was started in the cellar below. The woman thought the house was on fire and ran a mile before she stopped.

We are looking for remarkable results in the spiritual life of our churches before long. There is much variety in this pious practice-business. A few years ago there was a stirring gymnastic exercise over second probation. Some kindly souls, anxious to give the heathen a chance at the gospel loaf, timidly, and sometimes even boldly, suggested that God might throw the poor wretches a few crumbs after death. "No, no, it would cut the nerve of missions. What is the use of spending so much money and sending out

heroic souls if the heathen are not passing at the rate of (I forget how many every minute) into misery?" The gymnasts had it out in symposiums and wordy discussions. One part was worried lest the heathen fail of a chance of salvation, and the other lest they have one. This athletic tournament is about as interesting now as a last year's swallow's nest.

Thirty years ago it was feared by some devout and timid people that prayer had received a death-blow when the famous prayer-guage was thrown at it by Prof. Tyndall. Distinguished biologists began to lecture on a subject for which their training prepared them about as well as shovelling snow prepares a man for running a locomotive. This was the plan proposed; a certain ward in a hospital was to be exempted from the prayers of people who are simple enough to pray at all. Heartfelt petitions were to assail the upper regions for all the rest, but the unfortunates in those quarantined beds were to be exposed to the tender mercies of doctors and nurses, unaided by the elderly superstition of prayer. Thus the Almighty, if I remember aright, without being consulted, was to be put to the trial,—prayer submitted to a scientific test almost as searching as any in the laboratory, and its value settled forever.

We used to hesitate whether to wonder more at the irreverence or the humor of this bowling-alley contest, whose fatal weakness as a test is exposed

by one question. How can we be sure that some humble, and perhaps illiterate saint, ignorant of the historic test, or saddened by the thought that any one should fail to be "bound by gold chains about the feet of God," should pray for that ward with the rest?

We ought to be thankful for this variety of exercise offered in the Spiritual gymnasium. We were getting a little tired of hearing of Joshua's sun and Jonah's sub-marine. For several years the sun has gone over lonely Gibeon at his usual rapid gait, and the dwellers in the pleasant valley of Aijalon have had to be content with the same amount of moonshine the rest of us enjoy, though there has been a surplus in some quarters. Jonah has gone into a retirement better ventilated than the interior of a fish, whose juicy body is in cold-storage to await higher prices.

There is one practice-feat given in a multitude of words with highly ingenious rhetoric, original and striking grammar, and daring flights of eloquence, to prove that there is no such thing as pain except in a mind confused and darkened. This is a spiritual rowing-weight exercise, because you pull forever without getting anywhere.

There is one thing about this horizontal-bar, boat race, swinging-ring exercise which disturbs me. There are many good, honest people, more distinguished for piety than for a keen sense of humor, who will fail to find either food, consolation or gymnastics in these lively and merry prac-

ticings. I have spoken of the agile advocates of spiritual swinging-rings in book, press and pulpit. Readers and hearers must be equally athletic; the older saints must strain every nerve to get much good out of moving through the air with only an occasional foot upon the ground, and the chances are that the adolescent saints will not get any.

But these things do less harm than we feared at first. Plain people with common sense are slow to leap into a swimming-tank, unless there appears some way of getting out. It looks deeper than it is. It takes time to get an idea into their sturdy minds, and before the latest invention has settled in, another appears, so it seems better to hold by the old-fashioned faith. It is a little homely and out of style, but we know whither it has led a good many people. Some of them think for themselves and have their opinion of a religion without mystery and a Savior who does nothing beyond the commonplace.

People are remarkably patient with this rough foot-ball practice. They love their ministers and hope that they will soon get through these diseases of an immature mind; then it is rather interesting to watch an acrobat for a time.

While we must admit that the motives which have led to the invention of Spiritual Gymnastics are high up in the second class and the results most promising for those who have nerve and vigor, it is rather trying for ordinary mortals

who have been taught to believe that in a matter so vast and momentous as the relation of the soul with God, and in the conquest over an evil so fearful and corrupting as sin, they would expect to find profound mysteries. They do not take kindly to any penny-in-the-slot arrangement as medicine for a diseased and burdened heart. They love the sacraments, and the dear, familiar words, which tell of a holy Father revealing Himself in great historic movements, of a Savior who came clothed with glorious power, who gave His life for us, rose, reigns, sends His Spirit, and dwells within His children. When passing through trials, they have been comforted as they have felt that the Jesus of Mary and Martha was their Savior. The grave has lost most of its terrors when they believe that Jesus rose from it triumphant. They cannot and will not believe that all this is gone.

They would feel homesick in the new religion-flat, though hygienic, lighted by an aurora and piped for gas. Christ seems to them as an eternal and loving figure, reaching out His hands of divine sympathy and power, with forgiveness and infinite blessing. Christianity seems to them a rescue from the power of sin and restoration to the divine fellowship, and they prefer to take their exercise in a humble and obedient following of Jesus as so many others have done. As they look out on the world they see a condition of selfishness and depravity which seems to them to call

for a divine interposition, and they doubt whether a mild wash of sentimental idealism will meet the case. Some have heard the warning of Professor Fisher: "Look out for that old devil pantheism. He is always trying to steal in."

We have yet to see the fallacy in Canon Westcott's position, "The resurrection is a miracle or an illusion. There is no alternative and no ambiguity." When the disciples laid the body of Jesus in Joseph's tomb, they had no expectation of seeing him alive again. Arthur slept in the dark shades of Avalon, Barbarossa was concealed in a subterraneum cavern, Don Sebastian went into obscure captivity, but Jesus was dead. The soldiers and the disciples knew that He was dead. His enemies dwelt more on His promise to rise than did His friends. Two days later the lacerated body had changed into an engine of spiritual power. How could the case be more clearly stated than in these words by James Freeman Clark?

"The main fact that Jesus, after His death, came again to His disciples in visible form, and created a faith in immortality which transfigured their whole being, seems to me undeniable. Without some such event Christianity would have been buried forever in the grave; the resurrection of Christ was the resurrection of Christianity. With all respect for those who believe that the disciples imagined that they saw the Master and that this self-delusion was the foundation on which their religion was built, which converted Europe to a faith in a Jewish Messiah, the supposition appears to me historically incredible. The house which is to stand

must be founded on the rock of reality, not on the sand of delusion."

Sin is historical; it must be met by a historical remedy. Dreamers may enjoy revelling in abstractions, but the great Christian thinkers of the past and the multitudes who have found Christ real, have believed that the human soul, burdened, perplexed, tortured, filled with remorse, needs more than vague phrases of a pantheistic ethical idealism. Sin is concrete, aggressive, terrific. Redemption must be concrete, positive, divine.

The periods of greatest spiritual power in the past have been the times when men faced the problems of life with an absolute faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world whom God sent to teach, to die, to rise, to reign, to bestow His Spirit, to come again.

Either Christianity is a supernatural religion or it is nothing which commands our respect. The supernatural is not a subordinate theme in God's great work of saving sinful men. Believing in Christ as the power of God unto salvation, we find Him a brotherly Savior and a Master clothed with all power in heaven and earth.

Despite here and there one who drifting upon the sands of pantheism, thinks of Christianity as little better than an ethical idealism, the great body of believers has confessed with St. Ambrose for a thousand years, saying, "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ. Thou art the ever-

lasting Son of the Father. When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb. When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father."

II

THE PARSON IN HIS GARDEN

If there is any time when the country parson is most sorely tempted to indulge in worldly pride and to look down in pity upon his less fortunate though more famous city brothers, it is when he goes out into his garden.

Hope, joy and triumph attend him through the long season. He has the land ploughed early, to form a mulch which shall help retain the moisture, and after plough and harrow have done their work he places tenderly in the mellow soil the seeds which by a kind of miracle are to enable him a few months later to go out morning by morning and pluck from the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, a dozen ears of sweet, tender corn, a mess of peas or beans, a basket of tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, beets, radishes. The foraging is not complete without a visit to the strawberry bed, which he is careful to renew every spring, or the row of raspberries, or the blackberry corner.

A peculiar interest gathers about every part of the parson's life in the garden as everywhere else. If he digs a hill of potatoes there is a mystery about it; he wonders whether the tubers will be large or small, many or few; if he is the right kind of a man he expects a fine yield from every

hill, and he is thankful if he gets any; but in any case he has something of the excitement of the broker who watches tremulously the rise or fall of stocks, without the risk. Then when he calls upon the hens, there is a wholesome feeling of expectancy to see whether their songs mean that they have laid or lied.

From ancient days the country minister has been noted for his skill with the hoe. Some early theologians of New England wrote up in winter twenty or thirty sermons ahead that the cruise of oil might not fail or the barrel be empty in the sultry months of July and August. One of these provident souls made a mistake, a rare thing for a minister, and died in April, and among his assets was a firkin of unpreached sermons. Sermons in those days were evidently prepared as ship-builders in Maine were formerly said to build ships,—by the mile, and cut off as needed. Some of those early parsons were very skilful in fretting the soil until it brought forth lavishly. One of them persuaded his apple trees to yield so much fruit that he sold two hundred dollars' worth. "But do not tell my people," he whispered, "they may lower my salary."

It is reported of one jovial parson that on the Sunday following the rolling of thirty barrels of cider into the cellar, he invited his people to come and share the bounty, in these words in his prayer: "We thank thee, O Lord, for all the good cider vouchsafed to us."

Two farmers from different parishes were once discussing their pastors. One said, "Wall, our minister is a nice man, and in winter time his sermons are pretty good, but he works so hard on his farm that he gives pretty poor fodder in plantin' and hoein' time, but in caterpillar time he is mighty movin' in prayer."

Some of the ancient parsons were remarkably thrifty with cows, hens and bees, and the tradition is that it was not easy to outwit them in a horse trade. It was on the farm that their boys were taught to curb their coltish fury, and if they knew nothing of the swift baseball, and were not trained to tumble in a heap upon the fascinating pigskin, they could toss potatoes, turnips and cabbages, or catch a shower of cream and cheese as they followed the milky way.

The Connecticut Valley has long been celebrated for the cultivation of a fragrant delicacy, and long before the fertile acres of intervale were given up to tobacco, the onion was raised in large quantities.

My first venture with this vegetable was after this wise: Calling on a parishioner one autumn day I found him in the perfumed presence of a fine array of Wethersfield Reds. We fell to discussing the pleasures, trials and profits of this famous crop, these smooth, silky, glistening globes of pungent brainfood. My farmer-friend, with a cheerful optimism and perhaps a desire to see his pastor more often on his knees, encouraged me to a new enterprise.

As we talked, the Reds at our feet turned up their beaming faces and said through their smiles, "Was there ever anything more winsome? Tickle the sacred soil of the parsonage lot, drop in a few seeds, and our children will greet you with a song." My heart was touched, my ambition fired; I determined to join the illustrious procession which for years has wrestled with wire-grass and pigweed in the onion-beds.

If, through the short-comings of my predecessors, I could not fill the cellar with cider, I might perhaps cause my modest field to be like a tree planted by the streams of water. I knew that I should succeed only by the sweat of my brow, but I knew that the "trees of the Lord are full of sap." I was encouraged also by my next neighbor, who had left the excitements of his farm down river and had moved into the house next to the parsonage, knowing, in his philosophic mind, that it would be a good place in which to grow in grace, ripen for heaven, and raise a few onions.

This kind neighbor, whose temper nothing but pusley could ruffle, said many times in the early stages of the growth that he did not think that the onions would amount to much, though he admitted that he had raised onions for years and never failed of a crop, but this year they looked sad and discouraged. I turned away to conceal a smile, for had I not heard such dismal lamentations on my ancestral farm? When a small boy, and unfamiliar with a beautiful New England

trait, visions of the poorhouse would rise before my childish mind as, from early spring on through several months I heard the farmers say that if the rain did not cease, or the clouds continued economical, there would be little grass, small potatoes or meager corn.

I have not told you of another reason for raising onions,—the virtuous desire to encourage a young relative who had set his heart on a rifle. In my inexperience I thought that weeding the succulent bulbs would help him financially, and I fondly but vainly hoped that in the process he would acquire a more humble spirit. After the plough had turned in some highly perfumed compost and a few bales of tobacco stems, my one indulgence with the weed, and harrow and rake had levelled the surface of the brown loam, some more concentrated plant-food was scattered upon the land, and then the little black seeds were put to sleep in their soft and pleasant bed. I went into the house to prepare a sermon on the text, "In your patience ye shall win your souls."

Two weeks went by and nothing like an onion appeared. One man said he had seen onions growing on that land some fifty years before, but had the long vacation destroyed the ancient virtue? Had the onion goddess been chloroformed by the parsons as they paced the field, lamenting the placidness of slumbering professors, or training their pious minds for the task similar to that of Kipling's drill-master, "But 'e works 'm,

works 'em, works 'em, till 'e feels 'm take the bit."

The long sunny days and shady nights went by, and at length one morning, ornamented with jewels, in air sweet as the ambrosia of Olympus, there appeared a shaft of green, not as tall as the Washington monument but quite as interesting to me just then as I reflected that it was in the midst of the Wethersfield onion beds that the Father of his country, Rochambeau and the rest gathered mental stimulus and courage from Connecticut River shad and Wethersfield Reds to arrange in our famous Webb House for the campaign which resulted in Yorktown. Was it possible that the little green spear was an onion? I leaned over and inhaled the odor, more delicate than the perfume of Araby the blest. O happy moment! O passion of hope fulfilled! Seldom since the morning stars gave their primeval serenade has such pleasure been awakened as was then mine. As a fond mother sees a Lincoln or a Nogi in the cradle, so I saw the benevolent countenance of a delicious onion shining up at me from that little thread.

Then came the days of weeding. My cheerful friend who started me on this mad career, with a countenance as bland and benevolent as Franklin's, had advised me to rake the ground over at an early stage and thus escape all weedings but one. I watched for that psychological moment for weeks, but it escaped me. Perhaps that plan will not work in soil in which successive genera-

tions of parsons' sons have sown their wild oats.

Mondays, the prophets' holidays, were my favorite time for agricultural strenuosity. About four in the morning, as soon as I could distinguish onions from wiregrass, my work began. The robins were singing their morning anthems, the merry milk-wagons went rattling by,—the apple trees filled the air with beauty and fragrance, and cheered by a good conscience I went on my humble and virtuous way.

After a time I found the onions a little thin. My bump of thrift, always abnormal, towered like lonely Nebo, and after drinking at a fountain of wisdom in the neighborhood, I set out some youthful pepper plants among the onions and in every fourth row some celery.

"The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil"

brought the harvest-day.

The onions were pulled and stripped, and over sixty bushels lay beaming upon the ground.

And the peppers! One day in September I went out like Isaac to muse at eventide, and saw a charming scarlet globe among the green leaves. I found scores of green balls of stinging beauty hanging in clusters. Twelve bushels were gathered in one day, and unwilling to spoil the beautiful dispositions of the dwellers in the parsonage with too much pepper, I sold them. When

the money came in, the humble feeder on locusts and wild honey was almost overpowered. More peppers came in later, and early in November, the celery was put into pits to bleach and to cheer with its crispy sweetness through the long winter until in April the plough should open the soil for another crop.

The secret of raising celery is to have the soil rich enough to force the growth, and the process of pitting it is easy; a trench, the width of a spade and deep enough to take in the plants, is covered with a roof made in sections two feet long of boards a foot wide nailed together at right angles; when the weather grows cool and the Thanksgiving turkey ceases its cheerful gobble forever, a covering of hay or leaves preserves the tender stems, which furnish a delicious combination of vegetable and confectionery.

The rest of the garden did its part; about the twentieth of April, as soon as the land was ploughed, I put in peas, Crosby and Cory corn, wax, horticultural and lima beans besides the smaller seeds, and every two weeks until the middle of July, about forty hills of corn. Some find it hard to woo the timid lima from the soil, and the seed receives all sorts of treatment, but when the beans are flung into the freshly ploughed soil, the tonic moisture soon sends forth the tender plant.

Fifteen bushels of yellow corn were gathered, and it all went down the orange throats of the

Rhode Island Reds to be changed into delicate eggs and flesh. Some of it was transformed into wish-bones which brought good luck to us all. And the pop-corn—five bushels—hung in colonies on the stalks. Two months after husking we began to pop it, and chilly is the day which passes without a pan of its snowy, tender and fragrant crackle.

Before I bring this agricultural chapter to a close, let me, after the manner of the papers, give a few timely hints. One is as to the value of frequent hoeing. It kills the weeds, forms a dust mulch which protects against drought and is worth more than a handful of phosphate to a hill of beans. When I was a boy I used to wonder why weeds were allowed by an all-wise Providence to prosper, and in my childish philosophy, I thought that some spirit of evil must have a hand in the game. I now see that I was in the wrong, for I have learned that we lazy people would not stir the soil sufficiently were it not for the invasion of this skilful and persistent army, and that weeds are really blessings upside down. Some of them are homely enough to be enemies. How hideous the smile of the faithful pusley, which crawls in every direction upon its greasy paws! What a leer in the eye of the cunning snake-grass wriggling along in its swift way. Be not angry with these humble companions. Arise while the shadows still linger in the valleys, go down upon thy knees, and the wilderness and solitary place shall be glad.

You have heard of the ancient proverb, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise." The modern proverb bids us go to the onion for knowledge and to the tomato for instruction. Study the microbes' airy flight; fill the soil with nitrogen; scatter lime, copper, arsenic and salt; so shall thy potatoes break into a mealy smile, thy cucumbers shall cease to torment thee, and thy potato bugs shall go to Jericho. Inoculate thy soil with bacilli; harass the ground with the tireless hoe; so shall thy corn pop like the bombs at Port Arthur, and thy celery shall pour forth its fragrant brain-food. Feed thy hens with balanced rations, and if they feel well-disposed, they will sing their cheerful lay.

The end of the whole matter is this: When food-prices soar to the height of Hermon, when cold-storage plants are swollen with eggs and meat, the country parson smileth at Satan's rage and in calm contentment faces a frowning world.

III

THE WEATHER

Of all the conditions that surround us, no other is more talked about, praised, blamed, abused, enjoyed, cursed, than the weather. This is not strange, for it stands open to the wise and the foolish. No intellect is too weak, no observation too superficial, to criticise it. It is always with us. It is up before we rise, attends us through the hours, be they swift or slow, freezing or sultry; it watches while we sleep. Nothing else opens so many conversations, interrupts so many plans, aids so many enterprises, and offers such opportunity for patience and self-control.

Rufus Choate used to say that in New England there is not a month in the year in which a man is not liable to be struck by lightning, his hired man sun-struck, and his crop bitten by the frost. Stern winter, heavy storms, rapid changes, temper and discipline the soul to a forethought and courage unknown in the tropics. It is strange that minds, usually sensible, should be so often unbalanced in treatment of the weather. There are people who almost lose their Christian hope in a high wind; while a protracted storm is as a scarlet rag flaunted before an angry bull, stirring them up to mutiny and rage. Yet in a zone like ours, amid such currents and delicate cloud-bal-

ancings, we must expect rapid changes in the weather.

Most of us prefer New England to New Zealand, though we might there sleep on a mat under the moon, and get our breakfast from a wild date-tree. What a wealth of nature is disclosed by the changes in the weather! What sunrises, if we are fortunate enough to see them! Beautiful as the gates of Paradise are some of the displays in the eastern sky on mornings in June. It is true that he who rises early enough to see them exposes himself to the gibe of John Stuart Mill, who said he had always noticed that the early riser was conceited all the forenoon, stupid in the afternoon and intolerable in the evening; but one prefers to expose himself to such dire consequences rather than lose such radiance.

Festus is more to the parson's mind when he says,

> "I am an early riser and love to hail
> The dreamy struggle of the stars with dawn,
> And kiss the foot of morning as she walks
> In dreamy light along the odorous hills."

There was a time when our farmers imagined that the moon had a good deal to do with the weather. That notion is now obsolete. The opinion of eminent astronomers that the Czar of Russia has about as much to do with the changes in the weather as the moon, has sifted into most minds; but the notion that the weather is arranged by some equally irresponsible agency, called

"Providence," lingers here and there. An English minister was calling on a parishioner whose farming was attended by all sorts of disasters, and when the spiritual adviser sought to steady the poor fellow's nerves by suggesting that Providence was responsible, the discouraged man broke out thus: "Providence, Providence, I hate Providence. But there is One above Who will make it all right sometime."

Perhaps we should get on more calmly if our ideas were less confused on this subject. The weather often is trying, its uncertainty perplexing, its draughts or down-pours, its variety or sameness, baffle our minds, rack our nerves, and set at naught our plans. One man rejoices in a mild December, which carries Indian Summer on until Christmas bells begin to ring; his thin coat is still sufficient, his coal bin almost full. Another longs for skating; another laments the heavy goods unsold.

Formerly the weather furnished an inviting field for achievement for the faith of the saints. It was proper, but risky, for the minister to pray in the pulpit for atmospheric changes, not because there was much doubt as to the efficiency of such prayers, but because the changes in the weather thus secured might not be satisfactory to all of the people.

Early in the last century two processions of peasants climbed to the top of Peter's Berg, one composed of vine-dressers who wished to return

thanks for sunshine and to pray for its continuance; the other was from a corn district, longing for the drought to cease. Each was eager to get possession of the shrine of St. Peters' Chapel before the other, to secure the good saint's offices. They came to blows with fists and sticks, much to the amusement of the Protestant heretics in Bonn.

The summer of 1860 was a wet one in England. Rain fell almost incessantly for three months; farmers were in distress, and the clergy began to use the prayer against rain. The cholera had long been threatening England, and the rain, which people in their ignorance feared would bring disaster, was exactly what was needed to produce conditions of health. It cleansed the drains, swept away the refuse and gave the poor an abundance of sweet, clean water. It was a notable fact that while the people were crying out against rain and the parsons were praying for a stay in the downpour, doctors, druggists and nurses had very little to do.

There is a story of a London boy, who when the family was praying for clear weather for the annual excursion, protested that it was not right to do so, as some farmers around the city might be in need of moisture. "How shall we pray?" they asked. And this youthful theologian replied, "Ask that we may have wisdom to select one of God's fine days."

How brilliant the ingenuity which finds fault with the weather! "What a succession of beauti-

ful days we are having," a minister remarked to a parishioner. "Yes. So many they are getting monotonous," was the reply. "How mild and pleasant these January days." "Yes, but we shall have to pay for them next June when our crops are frosted." "Pleasant, but unseasonable" is another stroke of genius. How many fail to gather the full glory of a day because it is regarded as a weather-breeder! How the parson hates that word!

A few reflections should help us to wisdom and peace in our treatment of this perplexing subject. One is to give the Author the benefit of the doubt and consider Him innocent until He is proved guilty; to remember that He may be as wise and considerate as we are. We cannot sharply criticize Him or His weather without irreverence. There are many places on the planet where those who dislike sudden changes can find steady warmth or cold. An intellect that complains of the weather may be of the wholesale grade, but it is doing retail business. The saint may be eminent in many graces, but the oil of his anointing is scanty when he descends from the peaks of heavenliness to scold about a drizzly day. Any weather is better than we deserve. The task of constructing a world with weather pleasing to everybody would baffle even our minds. Rarely is subtle egotism absent from the mind that presumes to judge the Almighty for weather which does not meet our ideas.

Another reflection is that trying weather is ample field for the development of character. What prodigies of holiness we would be if we could have everything to our mind! How enduring our patience if it were never tried! How serene our steadfastness if no head-winds ever ruffled our calmness. Our testing is less conspicuous than that of the early Christians, but quite as thorough. The insidious temptation to murmur about the weather assails as shrewdly as did the curling flames in those fierce days. It is well to remember that no other day has been just like this day since the world began, and that it is a swift gift of God sent us as an arena for achievement. Every day brings its treasure. It says, "Here I come, a gift from heaven." If the casket be leaden, the jewel within is richer for him who has the skill to turn the key. How seldom do we get the full benefit of a day! How seldom do we think of it as bringing us opportunities for service, self-denial, calmness and hope. Who does not look back on past days with keen regret because he did not appreciate what they brought, opportunities to be cheerful, high-minded, gentle; to restrain the biting word, smother the scorching taunt, lift the discouraged, strengthen the weak. Cling to the sunny side of doubt. The present has its shadowed hours and wearisome cares, but from coming years we may look back upon these days as among the happiest and best in our lives. What would we not give if we could bring back days in

which we gave pain instead of joy, and failed to meet the call for courage and patience!

We seldom know how well off we are. We do not live today in the fulness of its beauty. The future with its grim forebodings, the past with its dismal regrets, are ever encroaching on this fleet day and robbing it of its charm. Emerson was never wiser than when he said:

"'Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day is doom's day. To-day is a king in disguise. To-day always looks mean to the thoughtless in face of the uniform experience that all good, great, and happy actions are made up precisely of these blank to-days. Let us not be deceived. Let us unmask the king as he passes."

As I write, the zero weather calls forth many a wail, but the peach-growers rejoice, for it is just the thing to check premature growth and ensure a fine crop. Every day is a gift of God, a telescope to see heaven by.

Stanley said he did not fear lions in the African wilds, but he did fear the giggers, which burrowed beneath the nails and laid some of his best servants under the sod.

This is the receipt for a fine day almost four hundred times in a year: Equal parts of courage, kindness and patience, preserved in a crystal vial of purity, taken every morning before breakfast whether the sun shines or the clouds frown.

IV

THE GOOD OLD TIMES

No one else hears more about the good old times than does the country parson. Kind, elderly friends gently remind him of days when the church was crowded to the doors, when the prayer room was thronged with the old guard and new recruits, when family worship flourished in every home, when the Sabbath was observed with Puritan strictness, and children were nourished on Bible and catechism. The parson is tempted to say, "A living dog is better than a dead lion," but he refrains. These dear souls enjoy so keenly this fascinating retrospect which grows brighter with every passing year, that he shrinks from chilling the flowers of wonder and praise by whispering that a clearer knowledge scatters many a delusion, and admiration for the good old times is a symptom of advancing years.

For milleniums people have been sighing for the good old times. The earliest records of Egypt in manuscript form that have come down to us tell the same story. The Prisse papyrus, sometimes spoken of as the oldest book in the world, dating probably before the building of the Pyramids, contains a wail over the passing of the good old times. The civilization of Egypt was then regarded as past its prime. Men were tiring of

the degenerate epoch in which they lived, and were looking back to the good old days when, as it seemed to them, the Egyptians were a great people. It is a curious irony of fate that it should have preserved a lament heard in every century since that distant time, for a German scholar examined many writers in the centuries running back twenty-five hundred years, and he found the complaint over the passing of the good old times scattered all along the way.

I take from my bookcase a volume of sermons by Nathaniel Emmons, and I find that on Fast Day, April 2, 1823, he preached of "The Departure of a People from God." I quote the following:

"Do people in general practice that strict family government and devout family religion which were once generally practiced in this country? All professors of religion and many others once brought up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They taught them to read the Bible, to call upon God in secret, and to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. They gave them religious instruction, and restrained them from every species of licentiousness. But how few parents and heads of families now daily call their children and households together to hear the word of God and join in social worship!

"They have slidden back by a perpetual and increasing backsliding in respect to family government and family religion. If we may judge of other places by this, these primary duties, which lie at the foundation of all virtue and piety, have become almost extinct. The Sabbath was once generally sanctified in this country, and scarcely one

open Sabbath-breaker was to be seen; what road can you now find entirely free from travellers, visitors and men of business? They treat the Sabbath as a common day, in defiance of all the laws of God and man. Though there are many individual Christians who constantly and devoutly attend public worship, yet what multitudes everywhere are seldom or never seen in the house of God. They spend the day in slumbering or idleness, or in secular business or vain amusements. This is the case in town and country through the United States, and is an awful backsliding from the pure practice of our forefathers.

"The time was when no one could be found here, that called in question the inspiration of the Scriptures, or the precious truths and doctrines of the Bible. But how many now deny the inspiration and divine authority of the Bible, and disbelieve and discard the great and precious truths of the Gospel, and use every effort to diffuse errors and the most corrupt and fatal sentiments through the land! And how many, not only in the higher, but lower ranks of the people, are driven away by the present flood of error and infidelity!

"It is in the memory of some now living, when cursing and swearing and every species of profane and impure language were nowhere to be heard, but how has profaneness now spread everywhere among young and old, high and low!

"Prodigality is spreading rapidly through the country, checking the wealth, peace and prosperity of the nation. Look no further back than fifty years and you will be astonished at the rapid increase of prodigality among rich and poor, high and low. The swearer, the Sabbath-breaker, the tippler, the worldling, the scoffer, the infidel laugh at the shaking of the spear."

We go back one hundred years further and find Jonathan Edwards saying:

"Just after my grandfather's death (1729) it seemed to be a time of extraordinary dulness in religion. Licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town; they were many of them very much addicted to night-walking and frequenting the tavern and lewd practices, wherein some by their example exceedingly contaminated others.

"It was their manner very frequently to get together in conventions of both sexes for mirth and jollity, which they call frolics, and they would spend the greater part of the night in them.

"And indeed family government did too much fail in town. It was become very customary with many of our young people to be indecent in their carriage at meeting. There had also long prevailed in town a spirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided."

Contentions seem to have been a large field for diversion in those prosy days, and no more inviting occasion could be found than in the building of a meeting-house. In 1779 the first action toward building a new church in the town of Newington was taken. It was 1798 before the structure was completed; most of the time was occupied in controversy over the site.

In another Connecticut town, fourteen years were occupied in struggles over the location, and so acute was the contest that a brother rose in a church meeting and moved that the further celebration of the Lord's Supper be deferred until after the quarrels over the meeting house had

ended. In May, 1712, Rev. Timothy Edwards, father of Jonathan, preached on a condition of irreligion which impelled the ministers of Windsor, Hartford and Farmington unitedly to protest against "irreverence in the worship of God, the profanation of His glorious name by ceaseless imprecations and false swearing." In 1730, Rev. William Russell of Middletown said in a sermon: "Vanity, worldliness, injustice, griping usury, law-courts, a readiness to take one another by the throat, prevail. In 1714 Samuel Whitman of Farmington complained that "religion was on the wane; its ordinances degenerated; pride in apparel, and haughtiness rampant; the errand of the fathers forgotten."

So the dreary story drags along. The "Half-way Covenant," which was introduced 1657-1662, was laying its spiritual paralysis upon the churches, and intemperance, lying, slander, bundling, licentiousness, and quarrelling were common. Here is a description of New Haven when President Dwight was manfully and successfully leading the sons of Eli into a new era of faith at the opening of the nineteenth century:

"Darkness seemed to cover the church. The means of grace were little valued, public peace was broken by disorderly and riotous conduct. Our midnight slumbers were disturbed by obscene songs and drunken revels. The laws were trampled on with seeming impunity. Magistrates were defied and abashed. The holy Sabbath was violated palpably and openly. So hardened, so bold, so daring

were the sons of Belial, that the most solemn scenes were exhibited in mockery, and the darkest symptom of all was that the disciples of Jesus were all this while asleep."

In those days, days before Carrie Nation brought us parsons to our senses and our duty, one godly minister would raise rye, another convert it into rum, and all the ministers in the neighborhood drink it together.

The revivals of a century ago are often referred to as far deeper, more powerful and effective than the musical and organized campaigns of the present. One cannot read the accounts which have come down without being impressed with the depth of feeling awakened by stern, penetrating sermons. Some were terrified by fear of going to hell; others softened and grieved as they felt that they were sinning against infinite goodness. Some could not tell what was the matter with them, yet were filled with alarm. Some feared God would not receive them if they went to Him. Some feared they had committed the unpardonable sin, they had so often grieved the Spirit. Conviction was with some moderate and quiet; with others unspeakably sharp, pungent and distressing.

Months were supposed to be needed for a thorough case of conversion. Prof. Samuel Harris used to tell us that in his early life six weeks were needed for a healthy conversion, and that his mother said that in her early days three months

were required. Prof. Fisher used to tell a story of a student in college who was asked how he was getting along in conversion. "Pretty well, thank you. I hate God now," he said.

Here is the case of a Farmington man, thirty years old, a respected, intelligent, praying man with a formal type of religion. In February, 1799 he was convicted of sin; weeks passed amid tears, self-examination, and horror at the depth of his wickedness. Early in April he could eat and sleep but little. For two months he slept no more than an hour a night; in some instances he spent the whole night without sleep and in great agony. He could no longer work, and went to a physician. He could not attend church; thought he did not love his friends. He would gladly have given ten thousand worlds to be deprived of his reason. His conscience so stung him that he would gladly have been changed into the vilest reptile, or held his feet in flames. This continued till late in September, when he began to entertain some hope that he was reconciled to God, and at length a sermon from the text, "My grace is sufficient for thee," gave him comfort and peace, so that at times thereafter he had a faltering hope that he was saved.

A man in Durham was supposed to be a Christian, but one night a dream startled him. His distress was so great that he said that to hold his finger in the flame of a candle and let it burn off would be less than what he suffered. For a long

time he was in despair, until one day he went into a field with little expectation of ever returning. He thought that he would soon be plunged into eternal woe, when suddenly he seemed to feel a stroke in the back; his distress left him. He saw a bunch of flowers which seemed to him beautiful beyond expression, and on returning home his friends saw the change had come.

It is clear that we have moved a long distance from those days, and we are glad of it, however superficial our religious experiences may now seem. Perhaps the world is none the worse for the fact that stern men a century ago laid hold of the Eternal with a violence which sometimes seemed to do violence to the throne, and fearlessly hurled the rocks of Sinai at sinful men to drive them toward Calvary.

Perhaps we do need a little more of the seriousness of the former days, even if the people were a good deal more interested in getting out of hell and into heaven than they were in carrying the Gospel to the heathen world; but when we hear eulogies on the "good old times," let us be at least intelligent.

V

THE CHRISTIANITY NEEDED TODAY

The gravity of the changes now taking place in our religious thought and experience demands that we look the situation in the face, and discover, if possible, what is needed to meet it.

Our consideration of the timely and important subject to be discussed in this chapter will lead us in two lines: *first*, the conditions which now prevail in the religious world; *second*, the Christianity which the times require.

I. The "today" of our topic opens a wide and fascinating field. Some call it an age of doubt, others the transition to a new period of spiritual power. It is a questioning age. Everything is scrutinized. It is not an age of indifference, but of ethical earnestness, and, while nature has a predominant appeal, and science lords it over us, morals and religion, especially in their social aspects, win eager thought. The personality of God, the Trinity, the person of Christ, are more alive than thirty years ago in the thought of the world. Religion is being studied scientifically. The claims of Christ are being faced fairly and intelligently. Think of the lives of Christ, the apologetics, the studies in the philosophy of religion and comparative religion that have been published during the past

sixty-five years! The age is commercial, industrial, inventive, humane, headlong for reality, eager for truth. It is a practical age, which challenges all comers with the question, "What is the use?" Reverence for old creeds and religious forms has largely disappeared. It is an age of the "Priesthood of the People." Even Westcott says of the Thirty-nine Articles, "I object to them altogether." Nothing is received on authority. The minds of many are swept and garnished. We are reminded of a wide expanse of sand left bare by the retreating tide. Here is a little pool in which a few unfortunate fish are gasping. There is an empty peach-basket, an orange-crate, or an old coat, cast overboard by swift ships, now far beyond the horizon. The low, sullen wash of the departing tide, the dreary expanse, discourage us. Look! onward sweeps the ocean towards us—mighty and triumphant rushes in the main.

The age is weak in spiritual achievements, as is every questioning age. A warrior does not strike hard while uncertain about his footing, polishing his hilt, or whetting his sword. Paltry results attend the great organized churches, though reinforced by the promised Spirit and the Saviour's intercession. Look into the life of the average Christian. How little peace, contentment, joy, and hope are there! How slight his hold upon the power of intercession! How restless, easily startled and alarmed he is! How

painful and constant his consciousness of duties unfulfilled! How weak the temperament of prayer! How vivid the display of spiritual poverty! How evident the lack of sorrow for sin and repentance therefor! Think of our missionary enterprises, which struggle to meet the needs of the widening fields, whitening into a dazzling radiance of invitation. Hear the cry of discouraged pastors over unfilled pews, and loneliness in the prayer-room. Is the reason for so scant an expression of spiritual life due to mental sloth, soul-poverty, or because we have passed to a stage beyond that implied in the Saviour's promise to the two or three gathered in His name? We are met on every side by the question, "Why do not young men go to church?" Is it because the pulpit is playing Rip van Winkle, or because it is unwilling to give a wash like that of the Sunday paper, spicy anecdotes, a tang of scandal, a sparkling discussion of the times, the fruit of the camera? Why the melancholy dirge:

> "In the world's broad field of battle,
> In the bivouac of life,
> You shall see the Christian soldier
> Represented by his wife."

A Baptist minister in a large New England city calls crowds together by lecturing Sunday evenings on such topics as this, "The Lover's Kiss." A Congregational minister in the same city gathered hungry souls together by a course

of illustrated Sunday evening lectures on the wonders of the West, and scores of couples of affectionate young people, in the thick religious darkness, enjoyed—the pictures. These playful schemes for luring a sinful world to the Cross one does not dare to characterize. Will not some artist give us a series of slides on the Day of Judgment? Philip and Andrew are conducting fairs or managing rummage sales to buy a carpet for the upper room. Paul and Silas are organizing ball teams to challenge all comers, or adapting the Isthmian games to illustrate the race of life, or are putting their heads together to arrange a musical program, an advertised and winsome rehearsal for the song of Moses and the Lamb.

There is another and more attractive side to our present life. Stanley Hall, Starbuck, and Leuba are studying conversion and the contents of the religious consciousness with as much zeal as Darwin studied the earthworm, and are telling us that it is as important for a youth to be deselfed by conversion as that he should be grounded in mathematics. The agnosticism of thirty years ago has lost its jaunty air, as we have come to see that it is another name for skepticism. Geo. H. Romanes, after twenty-five years of prayerlessness, returns to a vital Christian faith. Herbert Spencer grimly smiled at Christianity while in the flush of manly vigor, and summed up his faith in God by saying,

"There is an infinite and eternal source of energy from which all things proceed." But when old age came, he admitted his sympathy with the great Christian creeds of the ages, and declared his belief that the sphere of religion can never remain unfilled.

The evolution we used to dread ceases to terrify any save the ignorant. None but the blind can deny that growth is the method of God's onward movement. The clearest American interpreter of evolution, John Fiske, declares that among its implications "the very deepest and strongest is the everlasting permanence of religion." The best thinkers in the church, and out of it, are no longer shrinking from evolution any more than from gravitation. No one believes that either has reached its final statement, but the sooner a minister acknowledges himself a Christian evolutionist the better. Rev. R. J. Campbell was asked in Northfield how he got along with truth and evolution. "Truth *and* evolution? Evolution *is* truth." An evolutionist is not necessarily a Darwinian; the trend is now toward the opinion that fresh accessions of power may come at any time from the living God to nature and living men. Another favorable change is the passing of the mechanical notion of inspiration. The higher critics are helping us to clearer views of God and the progressive nature of his revelation. There has been some loss of faith as a result. The coming of the lo-

comotive threw old stage coaches to the scrap pile. A better faith will come after we have adapted ourselves to the facts. To oppose the movement of higher criticism were like trying to block the spring by killing the robins. Higher criticism had to come, and it does a thousand times as much good as harm. Those who have passed beyond the fear of surprise from evolution or criticism are like those who have safely escaped the terrors of whooping cough and measles, or have outlived the dread occasioned by mention of bogies by an old nurse. The last census gives us one hundred and forty-seven religious denominations, ranging from the lordly Presbyterians to the "Old Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists." Some are saying, "If there are so many ways of getting to heaven perhaps there is one more just outside of any church, for there are church members and church members." Shallow enough is this, yet plausible to the heedless. Still men hunger for God, and so bewildered are they sometimes that the charlatan deludes many by his fakes, which run up into the scores. Many are the devices to help us live "in tune with the Infinite." India is ransacked for her ancient half truths, and we may be gently wafted toward mental paralysis and a spiritual vacuum by the sonorous phrases of theosophy. The Granite State offers the mild confusions and puzzling contradictions of Mother Eddy, who, with shrewd, vague, high-

sounding words at three dollars and sixteen cents a volume, deludes the sentimental. There are other places sacred to many where submission of the will, rather than an athletic and scholarly faith, is fostered. There are hothouse methods of religious culture which nurture placid feelings rather than a courageous life.

Many are seeking with greater or less earnestness to cultivate the spiritual life without Christ. The older faith emphasized knowing the truth as the porch to the temple of truth; the new trend is toward *being—character*. Many have been tortured and put to death for refusing to subscribe to a creed. Many now are denying the need of any creed. Religion is often regarded now as a better life, high thinking, lofty phrasing, sometimes with not a little self-conceit. Few are in danger now from the mistake of Amiel, who may have confused the aches of a dyspeptic stomach with a longing after holiness. He said that from three to four in the afternoon he suffered most, and was the prey of a vague anxiety. "It is a sense of void and anguish; a sense of something lacking. What? Love, peace, God; perhaps." The hour of lowest psycho-physiological activity is, in general, from three to four. The good man was in the tortures of indigestion.

Let me quote from a study of the contents of the religious consciousness, by Prof. James H. Leuba:

"The God who rises before the Protestant An-

glo-Saxon in his religious moods does not ordinarily throw him upon His knees. God has remained for him the bestower of the things he wants. He uses Him with the bluntness of the aggressive child of a domineering century, well-nigh stranger to the emotions of fear, awe, and reverence. He is used sometimes as meat-purveyor, as moral support, as friend, as object of love. If He proves Himself useful His right to remain in the service of man is vindicated. Not God but *life*—life, larger, richer, more satisfying life is, in the last analysis, the end of religion."

There is much in this to appeal to the average mind of today. The fallacy lies in what is omitted, and what the history of the race has proved indispensable to the abiding in the richest and fullest life. The race is coming to a decided consciousness of the value and importance of the individual, and has not quite co-ordinated this notion with some other truths. Thought, like life, is rhythmic. Just now, man is ahead. Later, we shall see that life can be kept strong and true only by vital friendship with God in Christ. This is seen by clear thinkers like Prof. Wm. James, who sums up the conclusions of his great book, "Varieties of Religious Experience," in these words:

"We and God have business with each other, and in opening ourselves to His influence our deepest destiny is fulfilled. By being religious we establish ourselves in possession of ultimate reality at the only points at which reality is given us to guard. Let us agree that religion, occupying herself with

personal destiny, and keeping thus in contact with the only absolute revelation which we know, must play an eternal part in human history."

II. This leads us to consider the Christianity needed to-day. Personal religious experience touching the larger self which lies about us and beyond has often created a mysticism which plumes itself upon dissolving all barriers between the individual and the Absolute, and becomes an achievement of the feeling which finds expression in the confession, "I have nothing, I can do nothing, I am nothing," — the submission of a slave rather than the resignation of a soldier. It is one-sided, strained, unbalanced. It broods over its own experiences; studies feelings rather than conduct. That is imperfect, because it lacks intelligent and historical contents, vigor, courage, aggressive action, and is liable to lead one into a dreamy and sentimental realm of unreality and langour. We are in danger from a Christianity of this kind now. It is already among us, for the mind reacts from the chilling materialism of the past, and longs for God. We need more meditation; we need an escape from the rush and shallowness of this swift age in union with the every-day, practical Christ. Every experience is imperfect which does not bring us into personal fellowship with Jesus Christ, who alone reveals the two indispensable elements of final religion, filial confidence, and a sense of human brotherhood. There is a mysti-

cal element in all true religion, eager for absorption in the universal soul. False mysticism is egoistic—solitary. True Christianity finds God in nature, friendship, every form of existence. Science is honored because God is found as really in the stars as in the soul. True Christianity is trustful and social. It has contents, reason, body, for it is the reaction of the soul upon the reality that surrounds it, and is fed by the indwelling of Christ, who alone creates within the soul an assurance of God as present, forgiving, reconciling, sympathizing, loving; and it is constantly seeking expression in action.

"This is eternal life—to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ." Our only safety lies in cultivating a faith like Christ's, a perfect harmony of love for God, service for men, and a realization of personal manhood. No unknown gods will long meet the need. No vague emotion, or self-satisfied reverie, or passionless dreaming, will stand the test of a practical age, or content the soul that hungers for the living God. Facts and truths which the mind can grasp and see the reason for and the results of in the life, which the experience proves real, are found only in the Evangel.

The true Christian faith must contain at least these three elements: *It must be intelligent, practical,* and *personal* in fellowship with the Son of God.

1. It must be *intelligent.* Mental confusion,

brain paralysis, blind obedience to authority, or to the past, must not be canonized. It is too late to stifle the most exacting examination of the Bible—too late to fear the bugbears of evolution or higher criticism. If Christianity is to be the world faith, it must welcome truth from every quarter and face every challenge of a scientific age. The stages of "Yes, No, Yes" must be traversed with calmness and courage. Explorations, criticisms, sharpest probings should go on. The more thorough the better in the end. The truth will shine the brighter, later, and fear give place to a "peace not like that of Lethe's deadly calm." A true faith has for its field not only feelings, but also the reason, the judgment, clear insight, larger vision.

2. It must be *practical.* We must have a faith which works by love, scorns shams, hates hypocrisy, and loaths selfish revery. In this time of stress and storm, the tendency to emphasize character, good deeds, an honorable life, is a good sign, and a clear prophecy of better days. We must learn, as De Witt Hyde tells us in his Practical Idealism, "to see life clear and see it whole; to feel the presence of the Infinite in its lowliest and humblest finite forms; to do the daily duty and fulfill the homely task, as the particular points where our hearts greet the universal love, and our wills unite with the divine." We hail the dawn of the new day as we look upon the missionary and philanthropic enterprises

springing up on every side. A faith that does not lead one to follow Christ in a passionate energy and tireless thoughtfulness in doing good is weak and pitiful.

3. It must be *personal* in its fellowship with Christ. We are in immediate contact with God through Christ, and history shows that only as we keep our faith in Christ living and real, will our religion be strong, well-balanced, and permanent in its grasp upon the known and the unknown. Christ is the heart of Christianity. Without His teachings to guide and correct, our faith becomes a dream, our prayer a soliloquy, our spiritual life unreal. Religious faith without forgiveness of sins were a house on the sand. A spiritual kingdom without adoration and service of the King were anarchy. Henry Churchill King puts it thus in his Reconstruction of Theology: "There is no greater need in religious living and theological thinking to-day than a thorough-going and consistent hold on Christ's thought of religion as a personal relation with God." "Vital" is the word which best expresses Prof. W. N. Clark's conception of the redeeming work of Christ. "Religion," as Lotze taught us, "is a *deed*."

The Christian faith we need is intelligent, practical, and personal in our deepening friendship with Christ, with its surrender, His and ours; with mutual trust, constant fellowship, responsive love, so real and inspiring that it shall

make us strong. We need not so much a faith in a past resurrection, though our faith must be linked with history, and joined with an event which created Christianity out of the lacerated and marble contents of Joseph's tomb; nor so much a confidence that Jesus is to come by and by, necessary as is that to keep the hope serene: we need a faith in a Saviour who rises in us daily, is with us here and now, with words and spirit of life, and treasures of immortality. With that consciousness of the presence of the living Master the gospel will cease to be a "tale of little meaning though the words are strong," our daily conduct will be spiritual: God's life the light of our consciences, perfect in joy and love. Then shall our Christian faith, our spiritual vision, our hidden and conquering strength, grandly meet the needs of to-day and go out with calmness and courage to welcome the problems and overcome the perils of to-morrow.

VI

A MINISTER AND HIS PEOPLE

My story is of a minister who was with a church in penetrating and abiding influence. It was a good church, and the ministry had been devoted and true, but a singular and beautiful era came when this good friend of Jesus became the pastor in Shiloh. Will you read the tale?

The minister had a fresh conviction of the fact that he went to that people as one whom Jesus Christ had sent with a definite message from God, a message of warning against the sinfulness, the delusiveness, the danger of sin, and with this, a burning conviction of the redeeming power of the gospel of a crucified Saviour and a life-giving Spirit. He did not hesitate to use sometimes those dark, fearful words which the Scriptures contain to describe the perils which threaten the impenitent, but he always did it so tenderly and gently that he seemed like a loving father warning his children. With warning he always coupled hope, and it was fine to see his face light up as it always did when he spoke of the love of Christ, whose salvation ever seemed to be to him a glad and wonderful surprise.

The whole service in church was a good stage heavenward, partly because every one came to expect it, partly because the people went to

church believing that their minister would give them a message straight from the heart of Christ, made living in his own experience, and also because he put meaning into every part of the service. He firmly believed that the Spirit uses a hymn, a prayer, a passage of Scripture as well as a sermon to help float a congregation Godward. He remembered Spurgeon's saying that he knew of two persons led to Jesus by the reading of a hymn. He sometimes read the hymns and sometimes not, for he shrank from the stereotyped, but he always put heart, love, and enthusiasm into the minutest detail; even the offering came to be a service to God, as though Christ were there to receive the money in his scarred hand. Some one said once, "It would be an inspiration to hear George William Curtis repeat the multiplication table." This clear-headed minister gave distinction even to the "notices." A prayer service became a goal to be taken by violence, and a sewing society as privileged as "the upper room"; nickel changed to silver, and copper shone with golden hue under the spell of his thoughtful and finished sentences.

He broke away from the feeling that the ministry is a profession. On Sunday morning, after careful preparation for the devotions in church and for the sermon, he would go aside and lie down for a little, to gain rest and poise and to gather strength for the coming service. He well knew that his best was demanded and that the

service would carry joy to men and angels. He used to say to Jesus before going into the pulpit: "Now, Master, it is your own work and these dear souls are all yours. You must be sure to go with me today. I wish my sermon were in better shape, but I have tried to receive just what you had for me today, and it is wholly for you and yours. I know you can use me today to help some one who needs comfort, warning or inspiration:"—and the living Saviour never failed him.

There was much variety in his preaching. Sometimes he took a doctrine, but he made it so concrete and vivid that when the people went away they never said, "I hate to hear a doctrinal sermon." The doctrine was in such thorough solution in his clear and impassioned address that Deacon Hart said one day to a neighbor: "How clearly our minister pictures God as Father; Jesus as our infinite Saviour; the Holy Spirit as the creative author of life, and the fatal misery and penalty of sin as a truth which appeals to us all;" and Fred Harris, the lively Yale sophomore, said, "That sermon on prayer made me feel that praying is about the best thing a fellow can do. It may be a fine kind of coaching."

Knowing that people think in pictures, or, dulled and wearied by abstractions, pass into dreamland, he made much use of imagery, often telling what the gospel is like, going into every-

day life, the shop, the kitchen, and the garden for illustrations. He remembered how Wendell Phillips used to carry his audience captive by vivid pictures, concrete instances. Sometimes he took a book of the Bible for a study, and people would go away with a fadeless vision of Hosea, or would say, "How inspiring that Paul could write from prison such a letter as that to the Philippians!" He remembered what Dr. William Adams used to say to his students, "Do not feed your people always with crumbs,—give them good slices." Sometimes he would take a chapter or ten verses for text, and the people would say, "We've had a rich slice of the bread of life today." He did not forget that he was an apostle of the twentieth century, yet he never awakened the remark, "Our minister preaches to the times and not to the eternities." Moral reforms had a place in his sermons, but he used to say, "What is the use of stirring up trouble unless one is likely to do good?" He was a student, and every morning found him among his books, and he instructed his people on the bearing of religion upon science and criticism, for he thought it better that they should be well grounded and intelligent concerning the sources of faith, and ready with a clear answer to the shallow critic, than exposed to surprise and dismay at captious remarks; but he never forgot that he was called of God to be a good minister of the gospel of salvation, and he never dreamed that salvation spelled criticism.

There was a stirring note of joy in his preaching. He found the keynote of the Bible to be joy, and he used to say, "We are rehearsing for the heavenly anthem." One hearer said, "I've been in the Christian life thirty years and I never before realized what a glorious thing it is to be a Christian." He never preached a sermon without definite aim and without expecting that that sermon would be an event in some life for which he had been praying. He preached much on the great themes, and always moved on a high level of thought, though never without a deep sympathy with the burdened and the obscure. Whenever tempted to drop beneath the level of noble thought and refined feeling, he brought himself back like lightning as he reflected that Jesus was in the pulpit with him.

He used to say that his most effective work was organized work,—one sermon linked to another, to create a definite and cumulative impression. He was careful to address the will, but always by awakening the emotions and driving home the truth, as the old warriors used to drive the glittering edge of polished steel with all their might. He used to say he had three rules for speaking which he learned from his great teacher, Prof. R. D. Hitchcock. As to clearness, find out what you would say and say it. Beauty is nothing put on, but the flash of thought. Force is putting will into it. He liked to write his sermons through at one heat,

and then he spent all the time he could spare in polishing, condensing, and strengthening the sentences, that they might carry the message to the mind with the least possible friction. He used to say, "The longer I live the more I am impressed with two facts: that it makes much difference how a thing is put, and also the power of an impassioned will gathering the energies of the soul together to launch the truth." Being a puritan, he had a conscience, and he took for granted that his hearers were similarly endowed. He used to say sometimes, "I have a conscience as well as you. It is no better than yours, but it is all I have."

He never preached in the minor key but always with a fine ring of triumph. He was always careful to close with the expectant note. He was careful to cultivate his own soul. Among his books of devotion, Richard Cecil easily stood next the Bible, and he used to read over and over these words of that English minister of a century ago, "The grand aim of a minister must be the exhibition of gospel truth. His first duty is to call on his hearers to turn to the Lord. Men who lean toward the extreme of evangelical privileges do much more than they who lean toward the extreme of requirements. To know Jesus Christ for ourselves is to make Him consolation, delight, strength, righteousness, companion, and end."

I must not invade his secret life to tell you

how he daily talked with God; sometimes sitting in his study with an empty chair near by, which was not empty to him, or standing for a moment as he was about to go out,—for another eager word with Jesus. He regarded prayer for his people as important as calling or preaching.

In this minister's prayers in the pulpit, he seemed like a father gathering his dear children together around the throne of heavenly bounty, and people would say, "The prayer was a sacrament, we were in the holy of holies."

It was clear that conversation with Christ was a daily practice and that he left neither objects nor language of public prayer to the hour in the pulpit. Some one said once, "I believe our pastor must have a book where he writes prayers when life is at high tide, to inspire when the ebb lingers wearily on the beach."

His manner was serious yet cheerful; noble yet sympathetic. Not believing it necessary to canonize solemnity at the risk of dullness, he was not afraid to call up a smile, though he ever talked as a living man to living men.

What shall I say of his daily life? There rang through his soul the words of a charge given him at his ordination, "So live that when people see you in the street they shall think that you are walking with Christ."

It was a joy to him to be with his people in their homes. He went to them as a friend, and more, as a good shepherd, eager to feed, restrain,

guide, quicken any who needed his wise counsels. On returning from an afternoon in the parish he could neither study nor read, so weary and burdened was he. He thought much of the needs of his people. His prayer list kept changing, as one by one the repentant took the place of the indifferent. He felt a keen responsibility for the conversion and growth of every one under his care and once a year at least he sought in some way to bring the gospel personally to every impenitent life. In calling, he ever sought the guidance of the Good Shepherd, and he never declined when the voice said, "Let us go thither, rather than yonder." His calls were always friendly, but not always purely social, for he went as an artist of the spiritual life with mind enraptured with eternal realities. He entered with sympathy into the lives of his people, but never as a meddler or busybody; —now becoming a burdened father anxious for his son; now a merry schoolboy; now a weary sufferer. He had no rule about praying in the homes, but he was on the lookout for the best way to mingle the spiritual life with common tasks, and when he knelt for a moment of audible prayer it seemed as natural as the jest which fell as a pearl from his pure lips. After praying he went right away, as Maclaren says, "Bidding his people good-by before the throne of grace, and in the very presence of the Lord."

He had a warm place in the love of his people because he gave so freely to them all he was.

They felt they could pour out their cares and he would keep their confidence as sacred as his life.

The ministry was his calling and not his business, yet he made a business of his ministry. He was careful in the use of time, yet he never seemed in a hurry. There was a fine dignity in him which sometimes asserted itself. One day he called at an office. "Call again, an hour is nothing to a minister," said the business man. There flew to his lips Cecil's words, "An hour nothing to a minister! You little understand the nature of our profession. One hour of a minister's time, rightly employed, sir, is worth more to him than all the gains of your merchandise."

Was this good minister never disheartened? Yes, and at such times he liked to read Cecil's words, "Perhaps it is a greater energy of divine power which keeps the Christian from day to day, praying, hoping, believing, than that which bears him up for an hour at the stake;" and Emerson's great message to the preacher, "Discharge to them the priestly office, and present or absent you shall be followed by their love as an angel. The true preacher is known by this, that he deals out to people his life." So much for this effective minister who received the truth at first hand from the Bible and the Spirit and gave it forth through his own life as current coin in the King's realm where he moved in royal gentleness.

The people! It is they who were largely responsible for the best results of this ministry. Their charity and devotion, their readiness to respond and to do their part created a watered garden in which the minister's graces flourished. There is something in what Gladstone says, "Eloquence is a giving back in rain what the speaker receives in mist." There is much in the saying, "A responsive and praying people call forth the best that is in their minister." Those Christians in Shiloh knew the Bible and human nature, and that united faith, sympathy, and hard work form a mighty church. They took religion seriously; put thought and time into it; most of them believed that morning prayer is as important as breakfast, and the prayer-meeting as valuable as a bridge-whist party. They went to church in the spirit of Emerson's thought, "We come to church properly for self-examination; for approach to principles; to see how it stands with *us* with the deep and dear facts of life and love." Whenever the sermon was less finished and strong than usual, they said nothing but words of kindness, and remembered that no clock strikes twelve every hour; that on some days bread is heavy and the cake falls. Whenever he made a blunder, they had sense enough to recall the fact that they lived in houses of crystal. When a brother faltered they acted on Burke's words, "Applaud us when we run; console us when we fall; cheer us when we recover,

but let us pass on—for God's sake, let us pass on."

They noticed that the church in Sodom Valley was usually in trouble; ministers were fleeting, and a Shiloh deacon said, "The Sodom folks shrink from a straight message, and they turn the dinner hour on Sunday into a forum to discuss the minister in sharp criticism." The Shiloh people felt about unkind scrutiny of their minister as you would feel about bitter words concerning your mother. They remembered that Jesus had called them to be skilful and winsome "fishers," not critics. As the minister gave his best to them so they gave their best to him. His salary was paid generously, gladly and promptly. They went to church so joyfully and welcomed strangers so cordially that the service came to be thought of as a festival of friendliness and holiness. They were clear that the business of the church is fourfold: worship, instruction, inspiration, and service.

Over in Gomorrah, the people thought that the minister was hired to do the praying as well as the preaching, and the minister's wife was an unpaid, economical helper,—not so in Shiloh, where the people felt that they were called and ordained almost as really as the minister.

So the years went by in happy Shiloh; beautiful years. The whole town was enriched with kindness, fairness, courage, and love. Many entered the kingdom; many were trained in char-

acter; the downcast were strengthened by visions and rich truth. The minister said, "I would not exchange my church for any other in the world," and the people said, "Our minister makes God seem so near, the kingdom so real, and daily life so rich in occasions for royal service, that we wonder if heaven can be much better."

VII

SOME THINGS TO EMPHASIZE IN PREACHING

We look first at the preacher's task, which is to build up character in Christian principle. We ministers stand before our people, knowing that in the moments of public worship we bring them "the deep and dear facts of life and love, the great lines of destiny."

Sharp criticisms from every side disturb our ease. Says Prof. Momerie, "If the church is to live, not merely as an establishment, but in any form at all, preaching must be either abolished or reformed." People say they want preaching, but their state of mind reminds us of a recruit in Coxey's army who said "We don't know what we want, but we want something awful bad, and we want it awful quick."

In our perplexity and dismay we sometimes feel, as we think of our sermons, as an amateur artist felt when he asked a friend how much he ought to get for his picture, and the candid friend replied, "about six months." One urges, "preach the old Gospel," and omits an explanation how to make it new. A distinguished minister said his mother exacted from him a promise to preach so that every sermon would contain a call to Christ. That cannot mean a repetition of dear, familiar

phrases. What would you think of a professor of engineering who should tell his classes that since all discoveries in mathematics depend on a clear knowledge of first principles he would refuse to cater to the restlessness of the present and a love for novelty and content himself every day by reciting the old truths of the multiplication table.

We all agree that the business of the minister is to preach Christ; he is a minister of the gospel, God's revelation of eternal life; a gospel which meets every need of human life, rebuilds manhood and prepares for a long career. We are called to enter every field of thought, use any subject, truth or argument which shall establish men in Christian character and the practice of Christian principle. The minister knows no secular field which should not be penetrated by the gospel. It is a vast area sweeping on past the judgment; but our business is with seriousness, tenderness and awe to insist that eternal sanctions and laws must control our daily living and regulate our decisions and conduct.

We must deal with questions of the hour. We cannot hope to interest the people if we do not; they live in the present. There is a danger of catering to the present. A minister of the Church of England in a floating Bethel, whose zeal surpassed his controversial reading, was asked whether his Bethel was High Church or Low Church, replied, "That depends entirely on the tide." We must watch the tide and control it.

It requires a level head, a sense of humor, and no end of Christian principle, to handle the truths which ought to be presented in the light of the Bible and the present Christ. We really ought to be fine, broad, noble-hearted men; and we *must* interest people else they may repeat to us the lines of Crabbe's Convert.

"That from your meetings I refrain, 'tis true;
I meet with nothing pleasant, nothing new,
But the same proofs that not one thing explain,
And the same lights when all things dark remain."

Our dryness is not always due to the depravity of the people who slumber before us, but sometimes to shadows of puritanism upon us which overlook the grace of humor and that sunny side of our nature which is as divine as solemnity.

The preacher is the only orator in the world who neglects the power of laughter in pleading for life and death.

We are fishers of men. Dullness is an unpardonable sin. Questions of the hour need discussion in the light of Christ and common sense; any other notion would imply that the gospel is a system of barren abstractions with no bearing on daily life. Our fear should be, not that we shall widen the field too much, but that we shall make it too narrow. If a sinful practice is going on in the community and the preacher does not strike it, he fails in duty. Beecher said: "It seems to me to be a very dangerous thing to preach Christ so that your preaching shall not be a constant re-

buke to all the evil in the community." What interest of a man is aloof from the gospel? And if we do not so use the moments of worship that the secular life shall be more intelligently Christ-like, pure, rich, strong, of what value is preaching?

Preaching is building Christian character.

The first fact we face is the idea of evolution. A half century ago Darwin published the "Origin of Species" and the thought of our time is filled with its spirit to such a degree that it is hard to believe that we cannot outgrow even sin. This widespread principle tends to weaken the sense of responsibility even more than the strict determinism of a century and a half since. Heredity and environment are held responsible for evil, and the moral sense is poisoned at its source. Many think that evils will disappear if only society can be reorganized; the fact of sin in the individual as the seat of all evil is overlooked, and a false optimism encouraged which leads men to believe that sin will be left behind in the onward march of civilization.

Another fact which deserves careful attention is this, that we have broken loose from tradition and must readjust many of our habits. The old methods of thinking of the Bible, observing the Sabbath, and amusements have passed away. Formerly there were certain unwritten laws in Christian communities about novel-reading, dancing, and many other "worldly" pleasures. Secular

papers and books, letter-writing, and driving, except to church, were contraband on the Sabbath. These theories have passed away. Every one must now find out how to keep the day, with the result that it is seldom kept at all. The word "worldly" has almost ceased to be used. Freedom to think and live as one may choose often passes into license, and there is need of a deep, broad view of the principles of the kingdom in this age of reconstruction.

A third fact is this, that we are living in an age of great material wealth; many are content to repeat Parker Pilsbury's dying words to Thoreau who asked him what new idea he had caught of the coming life, as he stood on the margin, "Henry, one world is enough at a time." The pulpit must stand for a broader view than that. Our hearers should say when returning from church, "There are interests more valuable than money; my fears have been removed; my hopes strengthened; my ideals elevated; my weakness and discouragements lessened; Christ seems more real and kingly; heaven nearer; a life of courage and honor grander; there is an eternal life of righteousness and blessedness which dwarfs my petty ambitions."

This leads us to ask, where should we put our emphasis?

First of all on the positive message of Christ as the infinite Son of God and able to meet every human need. Believing that all men are God's

children, whom Christ restores to the Father, our message should be given with the downward slide.

It is time for the pulpit interrogation mark to hear the sunset gun. The upward inflection tires. The affirmative, the positive are needed today. People have doubts enough of their own. The best apologetic is a clear, straight message. A powerful gospel is iron in the blood, certainty in the voice, conviction in the soul.

If we really believe that sin is dangerous, cruel, deadly, and that Christ delivers, how can we be other than positive preachers? Men and women burdened, discouraged, indifferent, perplexed, look to their minister to float them heavenward; equip for temptation; strengthen for struggle; prepare them to face the near and distant future with a cheer.

The minister needs to have with every sermon the conviction that the truth it conveys comes straight from the Christ of the twentieth century for the need of the passing hour to form an event in some life. This will give that sense of newness and vitality which the apostles had. They believed that they went straight with the living Christ, in the grace of Christ to the people, and whenever the sense of newness has weakened the gospel has lost power. Said John McNeill, "God give us to preach a perpetual sense of a glad and wonderful surprise at our own salvation."

The pathetic picture of a cross rising afar above the dreary flats of time must not dim our

eyes to the view of Jesus Christ as very God, who hates saloons, graft, ill-temper, evil-speaking, and meanness of every kind as He does the Prince of Darkness, and offers a royal welcome to every penitent soul whom He would build up into royal character.

The expression of this message will vary in form, but there must be a passage of the clear light of infinite truth living in the eternal Son of God through the preacher's mind to human souls, or the pulpit confuses and hurts.

The preacher may not always be able wisely and conclusively to apply the truth to social unrest, commercial injustice, and intellectual doubt; but he must believe absolutely that there is in the republic of heavenly brotherhood an answer for every question, a solution for every difficulty, a medicine for every hurt, a tonic for every weakness. Christ's ambassador is a thinking lens for the passage of gospel light. Strange if some one some time does not enter the Kingdom while the sermon flashes the heavenly gleam.

A second thing for emphasis is the practicalness of the Kingdom. The clearest definition of the Kingdom I have seen is "the world of invisible laws by which God is ruling and blessing His creatures."

It is the business of the preacher to so live in the Kingdom and explain it that its principles shall appear as real as gravitation, the laws of the state or government bonds. He must see the

lostness of an impenitent life, and agree with Canon Liddon when he says, "If our age has outgrown the phrase 'the salvation of the soul,' so much the worse for the age." The minister is not a moral policeman, or a conductor on a trunk line to heaven, or a superintendent of a cyclopedia of mild and beneficent endeavors.

In our reaction from the "other-worldliness" idea and our eagerness to keep abreast of the latest fad, we should avoid the temptation to think that psychotherapy is on a level with repentance; alleviation of insomnia in the same class with faith in Christ; and conducting a swimming tank as important as baptism. A holy life is natural and happy. Sin is unnatural, the Kingdom's invisible laws are here, and its resources ample for the humbled, footsore, hungry children of the Father.

The Christian ideal of life and conduct needs applying to the workshop, the mill, the home; it is meant for employer and employed. Many bear the burden of "duty unfulfilled" because they are not sure what their duty is. The minister who clearly, convincingly, and practically applies spiritual laws to every day life; who helps people to see exactly what it is for them to be Christians; who preaches "as though Christ were the head of the firm," is doing the work to which he is called. Many care as much for Moses as for Julius Cæsar, and for David as for Peter the Hermit, but all are facing a stern, hard, delusive world, and it is the preacher's task to show the friendli-

ness of Jesus, the fulness of His helpfulness for every hour, and the bearing of the Kingdom upon the whole of life. Charles Ferguson says, "It is a superficial judgment that this is a sordid and God-forgetting age, because it is occupied with questions of board and clothes, and bent on getting them settled right. It is the greatness of the age that it is engrossed in economics, and that it sees in tangible things wrought by the labor of men, sacramental values, and the materials of religion. This is the beginning of a new order of things more beautiful and joyous than has yet been on the earth." I believe that this is absolutely true and the pulpit is the opportunity for a clear-sighted, deep-thinking, warm-hearted man to bring the eternal laws and sanctions of the Kingdom into the despairing, perplexing, sinful ways of men.

The last point for emphasis I will mention is summoning men to face God in their present responsibility. Reacting from the preaching which called men to meet an angry judge armed with deathless terrors, we must fear lest we present God as a mild and fatherly old gentleman, too polite to hurt any one. Our theology is defective if we think that human fatherhood is deep and broad enough to represent the Fatherhood of One who is our Creator and the infinite Reason as well as Father. We are untrue to the Bible, the intrenched sins and defiant moods of selfish men if the pulpit does not become a frequent rehearsal

of what used to be described as a standing before the great white throne. Flowers and rose water will not take the place of pressing home to the conscience the sinfulness and peril of an impenitent life. A breeze from Sinai must play about the mountain of Beatitudes. Tenderness, a keen insight into our own lives and sympathy with our tempted, faltering brothers are needed to place the righteous and loving God before evasive, ingenious and careless men so that they shall give the Kingdom first place in conscience and practice. God is skillful in using strange sermons if the heart of the preacher be sincere, but forensic pictures, dramatic arraignments, in which sternness overshadows reasonableness, lie not level to many a man we should gladly win. God's patience must be sorely taxed with the "eternally feminine" note which calls to Jesus because it is healthy to be a Christian. There must be a way of pushing the danger of a sinful life home upon the conscience which is scriptural and up to date if we have earnestness and courage to find and use it. It certainly must be preached so that men shall say "That is true; if I do not repent, my pastor has been faithful." Perhaps the best verse to suggest our work here is "As a man soweth so shall he reap." But the preacher stands forth as a representative of the Father's throne. The world expects him to be true to the call; and laughs, pities and passes by if he is weak or short-sighted enough to flinch. Sin is dangerous and unfor-

saken it must be punished. We may use modern terms to describe the peril of the great refusal, but if the pulpit does not call a sharp halt to unrighteousness and lead men to see that they are on the right road or the wrong road, that eternity is long, life precious, and the human will free and responsibile for character and destiny, the gospel loses its ring of power.

A treatise would relate other points of emphasis, but these are the ones which seem to me to stand in the first class, a clear, positive message from God to a sinful, redeemed world, the practicalness of the Kingdom for every human experience, and a summons to a present judgment for sin.

VIII

EARTHQUAKES AND GOD

We are in a world which daily challenges our faith in God's Providence, and sometimes a calamity befalls which with strenuous urgency insists on explanation. Not because it is unlike in kind frequent occurrences, but because it is so extensive, so dismal, so terrific, that we are obliged to take up afresh the old question we have so often and so earnestly tried to settle,—does God send trouble? Does He approve of anguish? There is plenty of distress. One is reminded of John Stuart Mill's scathing indictment: "Nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and justice, with hurricane and pestilence, overmatch anarchy and the reign of terror in injustice, ruin and death. We are also reminded of Tennyson's famous stanza:

"Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love creation's final law,
Though nature red with tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieked against his creed."

Explosions, tornadoes, tidal-waves, conflagrations, angry volcanoes, earthquakes, pestilences, hurry multitudes out of the world, and leave as many more crushed, maimed, heart-broken. Hecker estimates that the Black Death in the

fourteenth century slaughtered twenty-five millions; the earthquake in Lisbon slew fifty thousand, the Messina-Reggio earthquake, two hundred thousand.

Biology reveals the astonishing fact that numberless destructive living creatures besiege us,—bacteria, bacilli, germs of all kinds, malignant, watchful, deadly, an army which never sleeps, is never off guard. Without music or banners it is always ready, always marshalled by skilful and energetic officers. It is swift, gallant, determined. You bruise your finger, and the advance guard is on the quivering flesh in an instant, ready for battle. There is no sound of a trumpet, but there is the nerve of a Farragut and the doggedness of a Grant. In twenty-four hours one little soldier has a family of sixteen millions born in a day, and every one as fierce and resolute as he.

Whether the lightning or the diptheria strikes your child, or a wave at Galveston sweeps away six thousand in an hour, the problem is the same. We read that seventeen thousand persons are killed or injured every year in the mills, the workshops and on the railroads of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. We try to think that the story is an exaggeration, and with a quiver of pain pass on to the next item. But when the earth rises like a giant awakening from sleep, and a noble city falls in dust and flames we ask "Why?" So surfeited with marvels are we, so accustomed to disaster, that we need the terrific to make us thought-

ful. What are we to think of earthquakes and God, calamities and Providence?

1. Not that disasters are judgments. They may be, but we are not wise enough for the judgment seat which decides on such momentous issues. We are more at home in the seats of the scornful. The theory of judgment was struck hard by the clear refutal of Job's antiquated friends, and swept away by Christ's denial that the people crushed by Siloam's tower were worse than others. Saints and sinners are partners in trouble. The babe sleeping in its cradle, the convict swearing in his cell, the church and the brothel, the home and the rumshop are equally exposed to disaster. Like sunshine and rain, calamity falls on the evil and the good.

2. We cannot think that there is no meaning in harsh events, that God is unfeeling, that Providence is only a cold, pitiless force, running on age after age, mangling, crushing, killing, with no ear for shrieks and groans,—a vast machine, stern, powerful, heartless, terrific. One Who knows more than we about the inner side of Providence, assures us that the twitter of the fallen sparrow calls forth a throb of sympathy in the heart of God.

3. We must try to see the world in a large way, and in the light of its purpose. The world is the training-ground of character. For aught we know it is the best possible world for this purpose. Who will venture to say that it is

not? When Leibnitz insisted that it is the best possible world, with accent on possible, he meant that the alternative was between a world with trouble and evil and a world with no free intelligences. We know too little about world-making to judge very accurately. We are not even amateurs. We must believe that God is wise and good, and is in all and over all, and we find ourselves in a very trying world. We wish disasters would skip us and our folks, but they will not always do so, and when they come we must try to be men. We must remember that in a world large enough to have an atmosphere, there must be vast oceans, mighty currents, delicate cloud-balancings, and if an occasional tornado or cloudburst works havoc, we should feel thankful that the unwelcome visitor stayed away so long. We are on a globe of molten metal and seething minerals, and as we slowly creep over the thin crust, the marvel is that things are as pleasant as they are. A shrinking globe has to bend and crinkle a little now and then where the crust is tender, and the rock layers are so placed as to slip over one another, and it is unsafe to live in that quarter, though the oranges are sweet there and the air balmy and perfumed with spices. On the whole the old globe does very well. It is the best we know for the present, and it provides a fairly good home for us now in our extreme youth. We are assured there is something more substantial ahead.

We have spasms of shallowness when we ask why God does not interfere to prevent grievous loss. Why not ventilate Vesuvious quietly? Why not shore up the western edge of California? Why not convert a tornado into a sweet and soothing zephyr? Why not change cyclones into lullabies, and thunderbolts into auroras? Why did He not at His own expense repair the rotten timbers of the General Slocum, and render fireproof, without cost to greedy men, a theater firetrap? He could do any of these things as easily as a mother can run into the street and rescue her child from the swift automobile.

He could paralyze the arm of every assassin, pierce unto death every malignant microbe, arrest every tidal wave, smother every threatening flame, render every dangerous river slow and ropy, and convert the world into a state of mild and inoffensive monotony. In such a world one would sympathize with Byron's lines:

"With pleasure drugged, he almost longed for woe—
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below!"

Without danger and possible disaster watchfulness would cease, struggle die into sloth, inventive genius sleep, zeal for attainment fade away. Laziness is a vice of the uncivilized; men are awakened to effort by fears, storms, disappointments. Mankind has to be exploded, burned,

crushed into progress. God might have made us all after the fashion of Coleridge's "Painted ship upon a painted ocean," but He preferred men who can move and He knows how to keep us moving.

A few years ago the railroads were told that they ought to put on the Westinghouse brake and Miller platform, and directors shrugged their portly shoulders. What are a few deaths a month compared with fat dividends! But when the Revere horror sent scores of valuable lives along the way of dusky death and nearly ruined the Eastern Railroad, changes were made which save lives and property.

Physicians may fill the magazines with articles on sanitary drainage, and mayors and aldermen will call them "scientific fools," until cholera or typhoid appears; then trenches are opened, pipes laid, and the "fool's" statue is placed in the heart of the city. Terror is needed to startle the selfish and the sluggish. Disaster calls forth from ashes a better Boston, Chicago, Baltimore, San Francisco.

Science, art, reform, manhood, are forced onward by pain and fear. It is doubtful if the colonists would have conquered Britain had not a century and a half of Indian wars trained them. Nature is a stern but effective teacher. Fear crushes many and calls out resolution in those who win. Pain tortures, and at length chloroform and ether appear. Charity and mildness pauperize; trial and hardship stiffen the will. Says an ancient

writer, "When a difficulty falls upon you, remember that God, like a trainer of wrestlers, has matched you with a rough man that you may become an Olympic conqueror. But it is not accomplished without sweat."

Disaster challenges our motives and tests our character. A sudden calamity calls on the business world to halt in its swift career of trade and ambition. Questions rise which must be faced. Who are we? What is life? In what does our well-being consist?

Our small minds have scant space for ideas of God and man through centuries, milleniums. The goal is far away. In his poem on the destruction of Lisbon, Voltaire gives the conclusion of religion thus:

> "All will one day be well, we fondly hope:
> All that is well to-day is but the dream
> Of erring men, however wise they seem,
> And God alone is right."

It is unfair, childish, to judge of a work before it is complete. Our wisest teacher assures us that the enthronement of character through testing is the goal of this stormy period. We catch glimpses of the coronation in the heroism, charity, brotherliness, which in a naughty world shine out against a dark background of anguish. The call to kindness, sympathy, skill, courage, patience, and self-sacrifice, rings through a world of need and torture. A world with no fevers, shipwrecks, earthquakes, would lull and soothe,

but there would be no Florence Nightingales, or Grace Darlings, or Clara Bartons.

This gold-enraptured age may need the rebuke of the keen upward inflection to send haughty criminals like stricken serpents to die of shame, and of the loud voice of God in volcano and earthquake bidding it pause and consider. Were this world all and anything less than an immortal character the goal, our faith were sometimes in sore straits, but if death from a falling wall opens a gateway into a richer life, there is little to choose between such an exit and the stifling of pneumonia. The problem rests easier in our thoughts as we think of the eternal years. The question, How is disaster related to Providence,— will long puzzle the narrow minds of men. Apparent inequalities, excessive hardships, biting winds, the very stars raining calamity, the earth rising to destroy, the ocean lifting up its billows, unspeakable agony, unutterable sorrow, dim our eyes, so that we fail to see the deeper truth, or gain a glimpse of the wider view. But they whose lives are smooth and sheltered are apt to be rather trying, and sorest hearts are often fullest of praise.

Happy are they who learn somewhere to hasten for refuge to the hope set before them. Fifty years ago, the Pemberton mill in Lawrence fell, and the factory girls, pinned in by timbers, found themselves cut off by flames from rescue. Instead of screaming in terror, they sang, "Nearer my

God to Thee," and smothering the crackle of the blaze went heavenward in a chariot of fire. Whatever the storm or stress, if we can believe that a wise and loving Father is over all, and that He must have time in which to perfect the characters of beings such as we are, we may win peace.

There are days when the intrepid soul falters where it firmly trod, but what can we do? We are here in a world of stern denials, heart-breaking refusals, sharp rebuffs. What can we do? We must live. As men we dare not break off the game ourselves. We must be true men. What can we do but

> "Stretch lame hands of faith, and grope
> And gather dust and chaff, and call
> To what we feel is Lord of all,
> And faintly trust the larger hope."

Some of us can do better, and "march breast forward." All of us may abide in the kingdom which cannot be shaken.

In the "Legend of Jubal" we are told of old, sweet, pleasant days before men knew death. They played, danced, and sang in a life without seriousness or greatness. But after sorrow came, friends and families lived in a tender light, earth seemed lovelier when they knew they were soon to leave it, the idea of death which was soon to claim them, bade them live in earnest, and tragedy and sorrow led to depth, heroism, and faith unknown before.

IX

THE USE OF THE REMAINDERS

In nothing else are we more extravagant than in our use of the remainders; odds and ends, remnants, broken lots,—we sell them for a song, fifty cents on a dollar; throw them on a counter for a bargain sale. Well enough in a store, but folly in the use of the fag ends of better times, fortune, health and courage. At Poitiers the Black Prince with his ragged, famished, weary fragment, hemmed in by a full-fed enemy five times larger, turned defeat to victory. William of Orange won success for the Netherlands because through three-fourths of his career he knew how to handle the remainder. At Marston Moor the Parliamentary troops were broken. But look! yonder are Cromwell and Fairfax with the Ironsides calmly singing a Psalm. The remnant swept the field. At Waterloo the allies were beaten at first. Wellington said to Crevy at Brussels after the fight: "It has been the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life. Blucher lost fourteen thousand men Friday night, and got so licked I could not find him in the morning." But the remainder—

The grippe strikes you hard; a remnant from coal-tar slays the microbe. Cotton seed was once a wasted remainder, now it sells for millions. Tons of hornblende are crushed to find a piece of radium

you can push through the eye of a needle, but that bit of energy revolutionizes science. The margin crowns the winner. The runner who can fling fresh courage into the final spurt, the orator who can marshal new resources, the physician with another remedy, the lawyer with another proof, gain the day. Said Webster, "Go as deep as you will, you will always find that Jeremiah Mason is below you."

Happy is the man who forbids the fiercest storm to destroy the remainder of his courage. Here is a man with fortune down, eating a crust and a cold potato from a tin plate, but there is a smile on his face. "What are you thinking of, my cheerful friend?" "Of the time when I shall dine on turkey from a Haviland." The turkey may linger in cold storage for years, and the quails fly in joyous freedom, but he has something finer than they,—a brave, unconquerable spirit.

You have lost your health; you are nervous, sleepless, haunted by fears. Your wise physician says, "Nature works towards recovery. Twenty-five million millions of red corpuscles are swift and eager in artery, nerve, vein and muscle. Every breath invites health." "But I cannot sleep," you moan, and this wise physician smiles gently and says: "Do not worry about that; you will not die if you lose several nights of sleep. Sleep is like a gentle dove, which flies away if you frantically try to clutch it. Ask God to help you serve Him with a quiet mind, and before you know

it the dove of sleep may fly to your pillow. God's universe rallies to help you."

You break an arm; a million corpuscles are marshalled to mend it. Typhoid catches you; trust in God and in your good physician; be calm. It is a part of your life-experience. There will be less fever if you do not worry. If the gate opens a little earlier than you expected into the finer country, you will be better off than the rest of us left in dust or mud, chilled by bleak winds, tossed by fierce tempests. A cottage in the heavenly country is better than Windsor Castle.

You lose your fortune, every dollar; but integrity and courage stay by. "I have made a mistake," you lament. You don't expect to be always wise, do you? Perhaps it was not a mistake. A "voyage-letter" read in mid-ocean by a father with a genius for worrying read thus, "Don't worry, father. Perhaps it is not so."

See that man, calm, strong, confident; he went through stormy days and dreary nights and did not scorn the remainder. Suppose Frederick the Great had lost his nerve or drawn the stopper from that bottle of corrosive sublimate at the close of the sixth campaign of the Seven Years' War. The land was desolate; over half a million men had perished in battle, misery, and ravage. Where were fresh men and horses to come from? His courage and sense of duty did not falter, and in a little while the Empress Elizabeth of Russia died and her nephew, who received the crown, was

an admirer of Frederick; Mr. Pitt retired from office; England and France paired off; Turkey with one hundred thousand men threatened Austria from the south. The war was over.

Said a prisoner, "Had I not been arrested and convicted I should today be a hopeless drunkard; now I know Christ as my Savior." Paul went to Rome in a tempest, and "some on planks, and some on other things from the ship, and so it came to pass that they all escaped safe to land." You are having a hard time amid business reverses, poverty, ill-health; lift up your head, cherish the remainders of faith and courage. A stormy passage, but the home port is near, "and every wave is charmed." There may be much good in the remainder.

The best of life may be in the remainder. It should be; heavy winds mastered; follies of youth past; flighty nerves steadied; hard lessons learned; we ought to enter calm wisdom, a tranquil and collected mind, the majesty of an undaunted spirit. Life's choicest treasure may be in the remainder. The fever and strain are over; many illusions have disappeared, and in their place are maturity, steadfastness and fortitude. Not only in the last fragments of life, but in the remnants which are scattered along the way, do we often find our richest treasure. In seasons of recreation; in resting hours amid the busy weeks, when friend meets friend; when the fever of business is hushed; when the mart of trade is de-

serted, the office closed; when mind plays freely upon mind; when we seem to be doing nothing; in quiet evenings, vacation days,—the best of life may be found in these unassuming remainders.

When busy with our regular work we lay the foundations and raise the walls, but the design, lofty or humble, a palace or a hovel, is found in the remainder. We hasten hither and thither; we struggle and toil, we joke and laugh and achieve, but in the remnants we hear the music which nerves and cheers for victory.

We must not forget that the remainder tests the character most sharply.

Not when the bank account overflows, but when poverty threatens, do we show most clearly what we are made of. Not when friends smile, when trade is good, crops are heavy, but in seasons of trial, disappointment and want, when panic smites, drought withers, stocks shrink and customers pass by, do we show the quality of our characters.

"When our light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle, and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of being slow,"

does the sharpest test come.

Not when we are in the full tide of victorious strength, not when we are in the blaze of noonday struggle, but in the still hours, when the candle burns dimly, when the tide ebbs, when health and fortune wane, friends scatter, disappointments gather, sorrows multiply, applause dies down and

gladness hides her face, then in the solemn remainders we show what manner of men we are.

Wealth is a searching test, but when fire or flood sweeps it away, the probe pierces deeper. When your vigor has lost its note of gladness will your spirit rise to assert the supremacy of your characer? We admire Scott's genius; Marmion and Ivanhoe gleam with an unfading beauty. But braver than the knight of the nameless shield was the spirit which used the remainder of a majestic life to pay a debt of honor, and drove the pen with feverish speed till the work was done and the tired hand rested at last in the coffin.

There is nothing in Vicksburg finer than Grant's use of the remainder of his life, when to place his family beyond want he resisted disease inch by inch, with a courage as fine as that which gives Appomatox its lustre. Lamb's "Elia" calls forth our admiration, but admiration rises to praise as we think of him walking hand in hand with his sister as the clouds of delirium gathered in her bewildered brain.

George Herbert, famous in English pulpit and song, planned and trained for a distinguished career at the court of King James. The death of the king and other friends blighted his prospects; he went into retirement for a little at Kent, gathered together his energies for a fresh endeavor, and came forth to make the remainder rich and fruitful. It would not be easy to find in the proud annals of England a more commanding

genius than Richard Hooker. An unhappy marriage made a retired parish grateful, but the remainder was more enduring than the splendors of Canterbury, as he wrote of law "whose seat is the bosom of God, and her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage,—the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power."

John Milton, poet and trumpet of the Puritans, when told by his physician that if he persisted in writing he would lose the use of the remaining eye, believing that his country needed his pen, did not flinch for a moment and passed into utter blindness. A vigorous man told me some time ago that almost a generation ago four doctors told him he could only live a few months; only one of those doctors is now alive. He faced the remainder and won.

We seldom know enough to be able to say that the case is hopeless provided there is a powerful will. Whoever has that is

> "Patient in toil, serene amidst alarms;
> Inflexible in faith; inflexible in arms."

We are here to play the game to the finish, to find the treasure in every part of life, and to use it, man-fashion. How painful the reflection as we look back on our life-work in retrospect! How good to think that the fragment that remains may be like the boy's loaves and fishes. "It's maest o't tinsel wark," said a village critic of

Brown of Haddington's early sermons. Later he said "It's a' gowd noo." Whatever the past, the richest jewel of the whole life may be found in the remainder if we have grace to find it.

X

THE LATER YEARS

It is singular that the one business for which we have the longest and most insistent training, about which we are lectured at, preached to, and exhorted with a monotony untiring, should be so poorly done. We have heard from many quarters that many of us who are getting near the evening are almost as trying as those in callow youth. We read with fear and trembling Stevenson's keen arraignment of "crabbed age," in which we tend to become cowardly, niggardly and suspicious. Holmes is scarcely less severe when he compares oldish people with pears over-ripe,—mellow, sweetish, insipid.

The fact that one's character is well-established and one's integrity admired for years does not guarantee fidelity to the end. An undergrowth of selfishness may trip him yet. He has been in the straight and narrow path so long that he may come unconsciously to think that he can go alone; hence he ceases to watch and pray. Moses was elderly when he spoke unadvisedly with his lips; David was no longer a youth when he fell into grievous sin; and Asa must have been in the sixties when he led Israel to her first foreign alliance and with gold from palace and temple bought the friendship of Ben-hadad; and when the prophet

rebuked him for his lack of faith and courage the king shut up the daring censor in prison. Court records contain many names of oldish rascals who had kept outwardly straight for half a century.

Then there is a world of petty sins,—habits of speech and conduct that do not send men to the penitentiary, but threaten to send those who have to live with them to the insane asylum,—which the later years bring out in beautiful profusion, such as ill-temper, fretfulness, worry, sharp-dealing, cynicism, uncharity, niggardliness. Were some things said before marriage which are said in the later years, many a man would pause on the edge of the precipice, many a woman would respond to the momentous question, "Thank you, I'll try a little longer the fortunes of single blessedness." A jaded couple were going along the street one hot day in July. They were evidently on the shady side of fifty, and the man said to the woman, "Oh you are always fussing and stewing!" Few would guess that they were in their honey-moon.

Patience is a jewel partly because it is rare, and it does not always increase in brilliancy in the later years. How easy to let the temper grow disagreeable, the disposition sour, the tongue sharp, when one is beyond sixty; to exchange youthful rashness for elderly peevishness, early extravagance for late parsimony, juvenile freshness for ancient acidity. A child in a passion is not especially beautiful, but he is an angel com-

pared to an old man in a fit of ill temper. A pettish girl is a trial, but a fretful old lady is an avalanche of discomfort. A saucy boy may be a jewel in the rough, but a cross-grained old fellow is a dispensation of woe. There is hope that the coltish fury of a youth may be curbed and a steady family steed appear, but an oldish chap prancing foolishly about like a spoiled child makes angels weep. Said an old lady, "Any one past seventy should no longer be the target for criticism." The remark has a value, but it were better not to reckon too much on the immunity. Elderly people are sometimes tempted to take it for granted that they are privileged to say or do what they please: their reputation is firmly established, either as so well-to-do as to be above criticism, or as so poor and unfortunate as to be beneath it, and they are not always charming companions. They may be brusque to rudeness, plain-spoken to impoliteness, cautious to a chronic opposition to everything they do not initiate. It was an oldish man whose favorite form of church work was to raise an objection. The older brother in the famous parable did not repent of his ill-temper, and no doubt there were days when the younger son longed for the grunting of the pigs.

One reason for this dismal state of things is that after the flush of youth is over and the sturdy vigor of middle life is spent, failing strength exposes one to germs of selfishness

against which he had been immune before. There is less power to resist the malaria of fault-finding and petty complaining. Nerve-fiber seems plentier and nearer the surface. A person who never knew that he had any nerves, now calls his associates to witness that he has nothing else. Sleep is lighter; buoyancy is on the wane; the world has lost the flush of heaven which lies about us in our infancy, and the glorious battlements which ought to cast a light on eager faces are hidden behind a fog-bank of worry. Zeal and enthusiasm have died down; disappointments have frightened away our ideals, conscience has lost its snap, integrity is frayed at the edges, good temper is worn threadbare, and we who once were sunny optimists do well if we keep ourselves a part of the time in the class of cheerful pessimists.

A prince amid these rulers of darkness among the elderly is ill-temper. Nothing is more dangerous or more common. It does not waste money, break banks, tread down chastity, or carry one reeling down the street but who shall say it is not as evil as profanity or petty larceny? It converts many a happy home into a premature purgatory. There is a menagerie of wild animals in ill-temper, hyenas, tigers, serpents,—such as jealousy, anger, pride, cruelty, bitterness, uncharity, sulkiness, touchiness, doggedness, self-conceit, envy, revenge. How we hate it when we see it in others! Many a man who would not lie

or swear is ill-tempered. "He is a good man, but a little cross-grained," we say, and there comes to mind the drastic proverb about the dead flies in the apothecary's ointment.

In Sir Nowell Paton's paintings there is a trick of art by which he enhances the effect of the design by contrast. On the corner of the canvas which is adorned with knights, ladies, fairies and children, may be seen a toad, lizard, or slimy snail. In ancient sculpture, griffins and gorgons grin and threaten among faces of angels and saints on cathedral walls. So in many a home, otherwise as happy as the fields of Paradise, there squats the demon of ill-temper ready with bitter sneer, the chilly sleet of frosty criticism, the keen word of an Iago, sharp as a dagger, to create an atmosphere of gloom and depression. It is in the church, and a score of prodigals will run away from sour saintliness.

It is a solemnizing thought that one may be sliding into these miserable ways without realizing it. Who of us sees himself as he is? He who is ripening off well does not realize it. We exaggerate our defects as much as our friends do the virtues which they imagine we possess. We who look at our lives from the inside are so painfully conscious of our shortcomings that what our indulgent friends call success we call failure. Many a noble soul is so painfully conscious of things left undone that he will not admit to himself that he does anything worth doing. While this is true,

while our judgment of our condition is not very reliable, it is all we have, and we are bound to use it as best we may. Habit is so insidious and so bewildering, it is so natural to look for excuses for our conduct, that before we know it we are Pharisees, self-deceived, self-satisfied, while our friends are saying, "Poor old fellow, he does not seem to realize how disagreeable he is."

There are a few things which ought to cheer those who are on the edge of the evening. One is that we take our point of view along with us. Some one asked a keen old lawyer how it seemed to be at his time of life, "Just the same as always before, only there are no old men." Who of us does not remember with pain the first time he was given to understand that he was in the class of the elderly. I was walking one day with a young fellow, little dreaming that my forty-five years entitled me to the dignity of the oldish. I said, "You take a pretty lively gait." "Yes, and you walk pretty well for an old gentleman." We get used to the new situation after a while. The man of eighty-nine declares he does not feel a minute older than he did when he was eighty.

The day when one finds that he is a grandfather is a momentous date for him. The world is never quite the same, for he realizes slowly that another generation has appeared, and before very long he must quit the stage. He gathers himself together after a little, reflects that only great-grandparents are really aged, but the blow has been given and the scar remains.

Another reflection is that there is a blessing in age as well as in youth. After one gets his second wind and passes beyond the depression he expected to find in the later years, he discovers many crumbs of comfort he never nibbled before. He rejoices that he has got along so far without serious calamity or open shame, that he has paid his bills and kept out of jail, that he is no crazier than his neighbors, and hears the wolf of famine and distress only from a distance. Much of the fever and strain are over. He has seen so many formidable combinations dissolve that he begins to hope that he will get through without downfall. As Plato says in his fine way, "Certainly old age has a great sense of calm and freedom, when the passions relax their hold and you have escaped from the control, not of one master, but of many."

A wealth of experience, a steadiness of judgment, a maturity of character, give singular weight to the later years. Browning's Asolando with its charge to "Greet the unseen with a cheer" is the fruit of the later years. Suppose Titian had thought that ninety was the dead line,—the "Battle of Lepanto" would not have been completed at ninety-eight.

The man of seventy cannot run as fast as the man of sixteen, but his opinion is worth more when he gets there. We owe a large debt to Dr. Osler for telling us that "the effective, moving, vitalizing work of the world is done between the

ages of twenty-five and forty," because he stimulated an inquiry which has led us to see that it is not so. The great doctor was stirring up young men to hard work and he hit us older fellows harder than he intended, but good has come out of the discussion. There never was a time when the older men were sought more eagerly in important churches than today; the older lawyers and doctors are not laid on the shelf, provided they keep their courage and chloroform the hookworm. Dr. Dorland studied the careers of four hundred famous men and summed up the result thus, "Provided that health and optimism remain, the man of fifty can command success as readily as the man of thirty."

Only three Presidents of the United States were under fifty when inaugurated; most of them had passed their sixtieth birthday. Bismark created the German Empire at fifty-six, and arranged the Triple Alliance at seventy-one. Von Molkte was past seventy at the time of the Franco-Prussian war. Thiers saved the French Republic at seventy-seven, and Gladstone was once more Prime Minister at eighty-three. It is good to be in such company as we approach evening.

When Numa was offered the crown he said: "Every change of human life has its dangers. I have drawn others to the worship of the gods, to mutual offices of friendship, and to spend the rest of their time in tilling the ground and in feeding cattle." It was not easy to persuade him to fore-

go the pleasures of rustic life. Numa has few successors in modern days, but the wisdom of his words will not pass.

The later years have their own wealth and opportunity for calm thoughts, the simple joys of friendship and peace of mind, and throwing the riches of experience into younger lives. We certainly find some of the value of the later years if we gain a gentleness of spirit and the poise which comes to those who see life in its larger, deeper bearings. We may not go so far as did Edmund Burke, who said when his son Richard died, "I greatly deceive myself, if in this hard season I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honor in the world," but we would like to win a poise, a breadth, a dignity unabashed. We would like to pass into that period which is so close to some of us after the noble fashion of old Thomas Newcome: "At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat time; and just as the last bell struck, a peculiar, sweet smile shone on his face and he lifted up his head a little and quietly said, 'Adsum,' and fell back. It was the word we used at school when names were called: and lo, he whose heart was as that of a little child had answered to his name and stood in the presence of his Master."

XI

THE UNREMEMBERED

No one else has a better opportunity than the country parson to see and appreciate the quiet, modest people who, without any parade take their places and do the indispensable things. It is these who, by their faithfulness and straightforward loyalty to duty, give weight and substance to church and state. "The backbone of the army is the non-commissioned man." Mr. Lincoln said God must think a good deal of common people, He made so many of them. It is these "who do great things unconscious they are great."

As we look back through our New England history how seldom we think of the thousands who made up the rank and file of the armies, who stood on guard while officers slept, whose marches were long and wearisome, who handled flintlock and Winchester with an accuracy gained in forests and cornfields. Few gained the chair of professor, legislator or judge, but the men knew how to milk a cow, swing axe and scythe, wield rake and hoe, raise corn, rye, oats and beans, and how to face death with unflinching courage. They were the bone and sinew of the land. When Boston was beleaguered, the valley of the Connecticut sent its treasures of grain to suffering fellow-patriots with a ringing word of courage, and when

the call came for soldiers the farmers did not hesitate.

Only a few men stand out in clear and brilliant outline on the page of history; it was the many lowly and persistent souls who cut down trees, made roads, followed the plough, cast votes in the plain town meeting, built home, church and schoolhouse, and in simple faith and unassuming ways laid the foundations of the republic. Ceaseless honor to the self-denying, resolute, courageous men who in cold and heat, darkness and light, pain, storm and disappointment, fought the good fight and finished their course! Without them, the Hookers, Shermans, Davenports and Putnams were a swift and fleeting dream.

How scant the record of the toils and triumphs of the years! A few names are indelible, the rest soon fade away. Every school boy knows of the Boston "Tea-party," but Connecticut was as clear and strong on the question of taxation as was Massachusetts, though less dramatic in method. In 1765 the patriots about Hartford learned that Jared Ingersoll, stamp-collector for the Crown, was coming up river. Arrangements were made for several hundred men to meet him a few miles below Wethersfield and conduct him to the old tavern on Broad Street, Wethersfield, where he was compelled to resign his office. He was then conducted to Hartford, where he was obliged to read his resignation in front of the government building. On the back of his white horse as he

ambled pensively along, Jared evidently did some thinking, for when he was asked afterward how he felt with his mounted escort of gleeful patriots, he said, "I never before understood the meaning of that passage in the Revelation which speaks of 'Death on a pale horse with Hell following after.' "

We hear much of La Fayette and Rochambeau, but quite as important was the work of Baron Steuben, a soldier of Frederick the Great, through the Seven Years' War. He was persuaded to come to America in 1777, and the next year was appointed major-general and inspector-general of the army. He changed the mob of keen and energetic but unorganized men into a disciplined force after the models of the great Frederick, whose aide he had been. He taught the men the use of the bayonet and arranged an efficient staff.

How came we to gain the invaluable services of this man? In the autumn of 1775 the proposition was discussed in Congress of sending a man of energy and business capacity to France to secure foreign sympathy and aid. There was one man in Congress singularly fitted for this daring and strategic advance. Naturally the man who advocated it most confidently was the man to be sent by the committee, of which Franklin and Morris were members; he was a country storekeeper, Silas Deane of Wethersfield. He contracted for military supplies which reached this

country in time for Saratoga, and arranged with Steuben, Lafayette, and DeKalb to enlist in the American cause. By a strange fatality a cloud passed over this able and skilful diplomat, this true and unselfish patriot. There have been many who have whipped on the nimble lies which his enemies told about him, which plunged him into poverty and obscurity. The day has not dawned for the fulfilment of Robert Morris's prophecy of the universal acknowledgment of his merit. It is one of the ironies of history that this man, who deserves a place with Franklin and Washington, should rest in an unmarked grave in a little graveyard on the coast of England.

And what shall be said of the women? We read little of them in the histories, but since that day in the autumn in 1636 when agile Rachel Stiles pushed ahead of clumsy men discussing precedence and was the first to reach the shore and plant her foot on the soil of Windsor, women have had a large share in the struggle with the wolves, bears, Indians, hardships and trials of New England. When brave men shouldered their muskets or rifles and went against the Dutch, Narragansetts, British, and rebels, who were more dauntless than the mothers, wives and sisters, who with sad hearts and intrepid faces, spun the yarn, wove the cloth, and made the butternut coat, filled the knapsack, and with a kiss and a trembling, thrilling word, sent those men of nerve on their way of duty and death? It was harder, it re-

quired more patience and fortitude, to hold fast to faith and hope in the lonely home, through long, tiresome days and longer, restless nights, than to go out on an expedition which demanded grit and heroism, but it was the lot of the women to stay at home, take care of children and farm, pray to the God of battles, and send messages of strength and courage to the brave defenders.

They did stay, they made bread, washed dishes, tried out lard, made soap, salted down beef and pork, converted crabbed apples and golden pumpkins into glorious pies for the young patriots around the table. How steadily worked the old, creaking loom! How swiftly flew the spinning-wheel! They milked the cows, fed the pigs, coaxed the coy pullets to lay, and, with a sharp eye for wolf and Indian, planted the garden and helped get in the hay. When voices grew harsh and tempestuous, who could make peace like a woman? Who could so wisely deal with the stormy delirium of adolescence! The benighted creatures had not heard of the modern methods; the only use they had for a club was to knock over a bear with. They were quite as likely to use the imperative as the subjective mood even if thy did joggle the nerve-cells a little too severely, but they knew how to do the work. Who drilled the Catechism into the children and made Connecticut the birthplace of clockmakers and theologians? What a roll, the two Edwardses, Hopkins, Bellamy, Beecher and Seth Thomas!

These clear-sighted women found time to give a touch of beauty to the humble home; they trained the sweet honeysuckle about the door, they planted the brilliant hollyhock. First and last in loving and thoughtful service were women, whose pleasant voices mingled with the rumble and roar of fathers and brothers and lifted old Antioch to the rafters, while with glancing eyes they wooed bashful youths toward Heaven. When the saints sat in the zero meeting houses and swallowed frozen chunks of theology or patiently watched "ninthly" and "tenthly" pour forth from the lips of the parson in frosty outline, who helped the tithingman quiet restive children and awakened the husband who was freezing to death? Whose flying fingers knit the many stockings, mittens and mufflers, and made the coats which an old-fashioned winter could not penetrate? Who fed the minister in his pastoral round and cheered his drooping spirits with a good, square meal?

Then the sewing circle! The tongue of an angel were needed to sing its praises. Woman was the queen in that kingdom of work and recreation. It was newspaper, theater, club, lyceum, business exchange, market-place, all in one. It relieved the monotony of a hard grind, scattered the blues, promoted sociability and made matches. How could the church have existed or theology have sifted into people's minds, or the paths toward freedom and reform been opened without it? When the meeting house needed shingling, or

the question of displacing footstoves with larger gear is up, when a carpet or an organ must be secured, the modern Paul thinks instinctively of the modern Persis, and the inventive Dorcas. When hymnbooks are required for the vestry, or the parish expenses overlap the income, the shrewd Prisca will find some way to pry open Aquila's pocketbook with a beanpod or an oyster-shell. Fair is chicken pie, rich and fragrant are baked beans, magical is pumpkin pie, pleasant as manna are jelly and doughnuts. We have heard of a church built of onions, and in the good old days the women did most of the weeding amid the fragrant bulbs. Many a chapel has been decorated with scalloped oysters and pink tea. People must have recreation, and before the gentle game of football was invented, there were huskings. But what were they without pretty girls, and what were a red ear without a pair of ruby lips to match it?

Good cheer, courage, faith, and love spring up in the footsteps of the unremembered women. Rare is the life sublime, uninspired by a good woman. We celebrate the famous prayer-meeting at the haystack, but who taught those college boys to pray? Rich and varied is the story of the unremembered.

XII

OPTIMISM, THE MINISTER'S BUSINESS

Varied and unremitting is the task of the minister. He is teacher and promoter in religion, which is at the heart of everything in the world, and lays hold of things in heaven and earth not dreamed of in our philosophy. Emerging from the seminary he is expected to be conservative with the conservatives, liberal with the liberals, wise with the wise and a sympathetic friend of the foolish. He must hold firmly the truths of a decadent theology and keep an eye on the eastern sky for the dawning of a new day. He must discover the good in Calvin, Servetus and Mother Eddy. He should be scientific, artistic, poetic, practical. He must be able to make the nimble dollar go as far as the dollar of the fathers, yet he cannot afford to seem close. He must be able to speak well on any subject, on any occasion, at a moment's notice, whether he be struck with grip, toothache, blues or poverty. He must keep up his classics, be familiar with the latest book, and infallible in his knowledge of the pedigree of Cain's wife. With tastes educated to the tune of two thousand dollars a year, he must be a model of sweet and angelic contentment on one-half that sum.

His skill in selecting a companion in his home

must outrival the wise man in Moore's Utopia, for she must out-housekeep the housekeepers, out-pray the other saintly women of the church, out-sew the sewing society, out-train the teachers, and out-club the clubbists.

The parson must know the latest science, be intelligent upon the President's latest scheme for muzzling the trusts, and see the wisdom concealed in the latest fad. He must lead the wandering sheep back to the fold, pilot distressed mariners on a sea of trouble to the desired haven, get the calf fatted for the prodigal, reduce the cantankerousness of the elder brother, and set everybody at work. He must keep up the Sunday School, fill the prayer meeting with devout and earnest worshipers, and when Sunday comes he must stand in the pulpit, lift the congregation heavenward on the wings of prayer, feed, cheer and inspire. He must be able to rejoice with those who enjoy poor health, weep with those who linger in the furnace of affliction, socialize with socialists, and grange with the granger. He must be on speaking terms with political economy, political science, hypnotism, basket-ball, religious pedagogy, philosophy, biology, higher criticism, athletics, advertising, management of moving pic- and therapeutics! I never see a company of theological students graduating without thinking that they out-Napoleon Napoleon in courage, out-Peary Peary in daring. They must be accomplished in every virtue, bold yet cautious, en-

thusiastic yet considerate, venturesome yet level-headed. They must be wise and devout sons to the mothers in Israel, chums with joyous youths, responsive, yet self-controlled and discreet, when gentle eyes flash their friendly messages, and furnish cool, hard-headed business men with solid chunks of practical righteousness. They must have a common sense which would have delighted Franklin, a practical insight which would have been as pleasing as another wife to Solomon, an aloofness from the world which St. Francis would have applauded, and a spirituality which would have charmed Paul. They must be able to say with Robert Burdette when offered strawberries in February at a banquet, "No, I thank you; it will be all the harder to go back to prunes," and do it with unfeigned gladness.

They must tell the truth though it call forth resentment, listen to sharp criticism as to entrancing music, and never say a foolish thing. Like his Master, the minister must be dignified and independent in the house of Simon the Pharisee, warm-hearted at the festive table of the publican, tender with the outcast, and patient with the wayward. The college boy must think of him as one of the fellows he is glad to meet, and the dying must rejoice to take his hand as he moves toward the Great Divide.

The country parson must know how to harness a horse, milk a cow, plant a garden, paint a room, tinker the clock, and make hens lay. He should

be far more accomplished than his unfortunate brother in the city. The task of the latter is simplicity itself. If a parishioner in the city does not like his pastor, he can slip out into another church, but in the country he remains to find fault, cut down his subscription and keep the blanket wet. The minister must meet him with self-respect, courage, kindness and a desire to win him to the Kingdom.

Varied is the task of the country minister. His prime business is to make God real within the whole sphere of his influence, real in the pulpit as he interprets the great truths of Redemption, real in daily life as he walks with Jesus in high companionship. There is no good cause to which he can afford to turn a deaf ear, no form of well-being in which he should not be interested, no department of his church in which his influence should not be felt. His sympathy and prayers go out to the toilers in the mines, sufferers in Armenia, workers in sweat-shops, the pensioners and the pensionless, the wise and prudent, the thriftless and the improvident. But his business is to make God real to every one he can reach, to eradicate sin, to bring Christ and his salvation in contact with the misery and depravity of the world.

The most powerfully spiritual, the most expert in dealing with the sophisms of the human soul are inadequate enough for this colossal task, but the true minister, whatever his training or experience, seeks to discover to men their souls. Busi-

ness, home cares, pleasures, throw their concrete over many a life. It is the minister's business to break up that concrete, to disclose the hidden springs of joy, hope and love. A pupil of Dugald Stewart spoke in terms of deepest affection of his great teacher thus, "He was the first to make me realize that I had a soul."

It is easy to forget that the superb task of the minister is not to preside over a philanthropic institution, in which gymnasium, cooking-classes, health-cure, money-raising, and athletics absorb his time and exhaust his strength, but rather to transform men into the divine likeness. And this can be achieved only as he is able to persuade them that Christ has a great career for them which is practical, inviting, indispensable.

The word which may suggest this task of the minister's is Optimism. When Voltaire started the word "optimism" on its distinguished career, little did his benevolent soul imagine its wide use and utility. We find it decorating the interior of our trolley cars, a staple with skilful and successful founders of new religious sects and new ways of getting well without drugs,—save perhaps a drug for the imagination.

There are different kinds of optimism and the value, the abiding value, of the disposition depends on the kind; the old, tried way was to face and fight our troubles, and depend largely on our own energy and courage for the rosy hue in the future: the modern way is to shut our eyes to our

trials, play that they do not exist. We older people are rather prejudiced in favor of the former method, but we must all admit that there is a good deal of value in the latter, especially for persons of a certain quality of mind and degree of culture. There must be a wide receptivity for the doctrine of suggestion, the imagination that there is nothing the matter with us, though nerves quiver with pain and the solar plexus is overworked in its effort to slumber. No one sees more clearly than the minister that the determination to be an optimist is a valuable asset, but he also sees that it must have a solid basis in righteousness and common sense, or it becomes at length a delusion and a source of weakness.

Augustus and Angelina, billing and cooing in those seraphic days before marriage, dream of bliss unutterable; Augustus is sure Paradise will always charm while Angelina smiles, and Angelina is sure that Augustus will always be chivalric and kind, but the time may come when love will be sharply tested. A gulf may yawn; the wife may be tempted by another, the husband, blinded and delirious, plunge toward the dark. The cheerful optimism of those halycon days had no foundation.

Venice was never more optimistic than when she was passing through her golden era. Dreaming that all was well, the people lived on in gay, light-hearted security, but with no home life, the decay of which invited disaster.

The optimism which is the minister's business is not the glittering hue of hopefulness which leads one Micawber-like to expect to pluck ripe clusters of grapes where there is not even a vine. George Macdonald's bright eyed little woman, whose eyes were like a morning in June, was always saying, "Something good is waiting for you yonder, if you will only have patience to go on until you reach it." But even she would perhaps lose a little of her radiant sunshine if she knew she was living beyond her income. Cheerfulness is like a gold-mine beneath a threadbare carpet, a silver tongue speaking from a meager library, but there must be gold and intelligence somewhere near.

Happy is the man whom Isaac Barrow eulogized as "smiling always with a never-failing serenity of countenance, and flourishing in an immortal youth." Gloom, fretfulness, worry, discontent, sleety nagging, chill the tender plants of happiness and peace, and at last when evening shadows gather, we lament that we did not know how well off we were. It is the minister's fine task to help a little in the cultivation of an atmosphere which shall ward off such disaster. To do this is an achievement. Says a wise thinker, "If I can put one touch of rosy sunset into the life of any man or woman, I shall feel that I have worked with God."

True optimism is a triumph over difficulties, and not a closing of the eyes to facts. It is the hid-

den path up the Heights of Abraham, and the sex which is sometimes spoken of as weaker more often wears the laurel in this struggle for the goal of peace. The fling is sometimes cast at the minister that he preaches mostly to women. He might do worse, for if he can cultivate in women's hearts a true and well-balanced optimism, he is feeding the springs of high endeavor. The only one of the Round Table who kept his soul clean and so won the sight of the Holy Grail was Sir Galahad whose strength was invincible because a pure woman

"Sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Through him, and made him hers, and laid her
Mind on him, and he believed in her belief."

Milton makes Paradise Lost turn on the failure of a woman to keep her eyes on the goal of a high optimism. Shakespeare's heroes are all heroines. How glorious the company,—Cordelia, Desdemona, Virgilia, Catharine. How strong and brilliant they are. The redemption of a play usually turns on the wisdom of a woman. Above the artists, philosophers, poets, statesmen of Athens, above the roof of the Parthenon on the rocky Acropolis, in honor of the guardian of the city, stood the virgin goddess Athenæ, with gold-crested helmet and gold-tipped spear. Rome was the mightiest of the nations while Minerva, the virgin daughter of Jupiter, was revered, and pure wives and mothers lived in honor.

It seems a far cry from the high inspiration of

a woman to paying one's bills, but the optimism which holds its steady movement through stern equinoctials must be thrifty. Perhaps one reason why the teacher of religion needs the exercise of chasing the wolf from his door is that he may understand the experiences of most of his people. Emerson says, "The pulpit and the press have many commonplaces denouncing the thirst for wealth; but if men should take these moralists at their word and leave off aiming to be rich, the moralists would rush to rekindle at all hazards this love of power in the people, lest civilization should be undone."

With a clear appreciation of the value of money (an appreciation, alas, too keenly felt because his pocket is so empty), eager to head every subscription-paper with a goodly sum, yet warned by experience to be economical, until he hates the very word economy, the minister must manage to keep himself high-minded, great-hearted, brave in his grasp of spiritual truth as the only reality worth consideration. Like Mark Tapley, he must almost welcome troubles as occasions for "coming out strong" in the spiritual. His optimism is that of Browning. He delights in Rabbi Ben Ezra with his

> "Then welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough.
> . . . . . .
> Be our joy three parts pain."

He may say to his child when hurt, "Never

mind," but he adds, "Be a man." Though his heart be torn, his life filled with cares and sorrows, his treasury almost empty, his future cloudy, it is his business as a minister of Christ to wear an indelible smile, to let his life and his preaching ring true to the celestial music. The man whose optimism is worth anything never thinks of sin as merely a mistake, to be mended by suggestion or education. He regards the "Don't worry" societies as helpful to the superficial, and Pres. Eliot's exhortation, "Be sure and live on the sunny side" as good so far as it goes. He hopes the time will come before many moons when the trying paraphernalia of burials, which are so pagan and so depressing will pass away with the other remnants of the Dark Ages. He is quite aware of the fact that he is living in the reaction from days when a favorite hymn in church was this,—

> " There is a dreadful hell,
> And ever lasting pains,
> Where sinners must with devils dwell,
> In darkness, fire, and chains."

and therefore he must guard against a syrupy gospel.

He never forgets that optimism works according to great and exacting laws, enthrones the sacrificial Christ in the souls of men, and inspires them to lives of integrity and practical holiness. With this as the spring of his life, and with daily

fellowship with the kingly Master, he will present to his fellows an optimism which in their hearts they will desire, and in his high endeavor he will win the day at last.