

BEGIN EARLY.

A DISTINGUISHED educator advises young ministers always to have several sermons "simmering." This is the idea for us; cooks talk of a "simmer," of a "slow boil," and of a "hard boil." That which merely gets a little heat, but which is warmed, and soaked, and softened, may not thereby be made ready for use at the table, but when placed directly over the heat its final preparation will be more rapid and thorough. It is exactly so with a sermon, a lecture, or a lesson. Let it simmer along until the time for use is but one week off, then let it boil.

The true idea of an early beginning, then, is this: Let the lesson "simmer" for at least one week; let it "boil slowly" for another; let it "boil rapidly" for one more, and then serve hot. This process, repeated week after week, will keep three lessons in hand all the time; one under a mild course of preparation; the next under a medium course; and the other pressed intensely for early use. In all these stages make free use of pencil and paper, that your ideas, illustrations, questions, Scripture references, and gleanings of all sorts, be preserved. For each lesson use separate sheets, with the name and number of the lesson at the head of each.

But, having made such a start, how shall we proceed? During the first week with a lesson, read it carefully and often, think about it, read its connections in the Bible, and note its relation to lessons which have gone before it. The second week's work with a given lesson is simply to become still better acquainted with its parts and relations. Look it over each day, and think about it frequently. The third week's work is that of final and thorough preparation.—George A. Peltz.

"GRACE TO THE LOWLY."

THE highest mountains are throgs of icy barrenness. They gleam with rogal beauty, but are never clothed with verdure, or with fruit. And for human sustenance and human habitation, one sweet little valley is worth more than all the snow-crowned peaks that lift their imperial splendours beneath the starry skies.

"God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." The icy storms discharge themselves upon the snow-capped heights; but the gentle rains flow sweetly down the hillside, and fall refreshingly upon the valley. Still waters glide there, and there are the green pastures, and there the Good Shepherd feeds his flock in peace. No rivers flow upon the mountain tops; no waters murmur in sweetness and quietness there; but in the lowly valley we find the crystal stream, and the greatest rivers roll through the deepest vales. God gives when we are made ready to receive. God pours from his eternal fulness the tide of blessing into hungry and broken hearts. And if we who have sought for human honour, and coveted worldly power, will learn the lesson of lowliness and meekness and humility, we shall find that God, whose tender mercies are over the least and feeblest of his children, will care for us, if we but trust beneath the shadow of his wings.

"He giveth grace to the lowly."—Prov. iii. 34. Are we lowly? Let us see to it that we stand in the position of those on whom God bestows his favour, proving by blest experience that "though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly." And in all our lives, let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves, "Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

THE ROMAN SENTINEL—When Pompeii was destroyed there were very many buried in the ruins of it who were afterwards found in very different situations. There were some found in deep vaults as if they had gone there for security. There were some found in lofty chambers. But where did they find the Roman sentinel? They found him standing at the city gate with his hand still grasping the war weapon, where he had been placed by his captain. And there, while the heavens threatened him, there while the earth shook beneath him, there where the lava stream rolled, he had stood at his post; and there after a thousand years, he was found. So let Christians stand to their duty, in the post at which their Captain has placed them.

THE PREACHER'S SUNDAY.

BY THE REV. JOHN TESSEMAN.

SOME time ago I read an article in an American publication to the effect that, as it was incumbent upon all Christians to observe the Christian Sabbath, those ministers who did not observe a day of rest some time during the week were guilty of the sin of Sabbath breaking. Without going so far as this, we, nevertheless, recognise the desirability of taking some day during the week, and making it a kind of holiday and a season of relaxation, when the active brain may rest, and all the other powers, physical as well as moral, may find repose. I find it a very beneficial thing myself. It is to me a positive gain. I throw off all restraint. It is not so much the spirit of devotion which I seek on this day, for I have already had that, in common with all other worshippers, when we met on the previous Sabbath, as well as at other times of religious exercise and prayer. What I want now is relaxation, rest, a free and easy way of enjoying myself, by which I may get over my mental exhaustion, and regain my intellectual vigour and strength. And I go about it right earnestly betimes.

Sometimes I walk out into the open country and find recreation there. To an attentive eye and a thoughtful mind nature is instructive, amusing, recreative. I do not try to think, but allow myself to wander almost at random from one scene to another, whilst the constant variety and freshness of the scenes presented to the eye keep me from dwelling too long upon any one subject, and so nature seems like a moving panorama, and I am pleased without being at all fatigued. If I am in want of mental rest more than physical, I take my spade and dig for an hour two in my garden, or else take a good sharp walk, or a good sharp trot on horseback. If I am more in want of physical rest I fling myself on the sofa and try to sleep, then rise up and seek the most pleasant company I can find, and have a game of croquet, or anything else that comes to hand. But sometimes I am waylaid by two young sharpers, who insist that we three shall have a "game of horses," when I am duly harnessed, and one mounts the pony, and the other drives him on whip in hand. It is one of the best, and healthiest, and most recreative exercises I know of, to be made to go on "all fours," or carry two youngsters "shoulder height," from one end of the room to the other, whilst they cry out "gee-up," and other etceteras, with which all drivers of horses are familiar. All recreation to be beneficial must be obtained outside the study. Shut the door, turn the key, and go away.

I select a day, generally in the middle of the week, after which I am fresh and strong to begin my work for the coming Sabbath. I would ask my brethren, especially my hard-working brethren, to try the plan. In my humble opinion they would require fewer long holidays if they did so, and would have far greater pleasure in their work. They would have increased mental vigour as well. They would do more work, and do it better too: I do not prescribe the form such exercise (or rest, call it by what name you like) shall take; I only plead for the thing itself. It is an injury done to self, not to do it; it is, in fact, tempting Divine Providence, and many men fail for lack of a judicious care exercised over their physical health. We have no more right to abuse our bodies than we have to abuse our souls. Our bodies are the "temples of the Holy Ghost," let us take care of them all we can, and make them do God's work as long as it shall be possible for us to do so.

Hope and Faith are closely allied in brotherhood. But their sister, Charity, crowns them with light, and brings an ever-blooming joy into their dwelling.

Make the first day of the week a bright, cheerful, sweet day at home, and it will shed its radiance on the other six days of work and play. Do not make it a Jewish day, fenced in by outward severities and traditions. Do not limit its sacred freedom by domestic "Blue Laws," which would make it to the little ones anything but a "day of all the week the best." But with music and prayer, with the Bible and other good reading, with cheerful conversation and gentle graces, with the glow of the altar and the spirit of the sanctuary, with thankfulness and love to God and man, any Christian household can make it a perpetual blessing to themselves and to the community in which its Sabbath lights are kept burning.—Intelligencer.