

Pastor and People.

AFTER AWHILE

After awhile, life's rush shall cease;
This throbbing heart find sweet release.

After awhile, this wearied brain
Shall rest from sorrow, toil, and pain.

After awhile, these stumbling feet
Shall pass no more the stony street.

After awhile, this ill-worn band
Shall rest, there, in the better land.

After awhile, this tuneless voice
Shall with the angels' song rejoice.

After awhile, this dull, cold ear
The Master's loving voice shall hear.

After awhile, this burdened soul
Shall reach in heaven, the long-sought goal.

After awhile, these blinded eyes
Shall open with a glad surprise,

And see the Father's Holy Child,
Welcome me home, after awhile.

IT IS ALL RIGHT.

When St. Paul, the greatest of theologians, and Shakespeare, the greatest of poets, agree in hymning the advantages of affliction in human life, uninspired and prosaic folk may hum the same tune, even though it be in a pathetic, minor key. "No suffering for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down." Thus St. Paul.

Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

Thus the poet whom Milton calls "Sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child."

Yes, sorrow, though bitter, is wholesome. It is a corrective. It jogs us in the midst of our smelting and building and strife for precedence, and asks, What is all this worth? How much of the baggage of time can you take with you into eternity? What part of your possessions is permanent—real estate in very truth?

Trouble is a source of self-knowledge. When all goes well with us we are strong and confident. The world seems sufficient for us. We feel like a certain celebrity who said: "I had rather have my part in Paris than in Paradise!" But when some earthquake disaster rumbles through the soul and shakes down our loftiest, proudest creations in hideous ruin, we come to our senses, realize our weakness, and seek Him with whom we have to do, and who is "from everlasting to everlasting."

Adversity tends to make us sympathetic. It enlists selfishness on the side of generosity. The remembrance of our own losses and pains prompts us to feel for others when they suffer. The reflection that at any moment, so fickle a jade is fortune, we may be driven to draw on the bank of friendship, make us ready to honour any draft which our neighbours present and ask us to convert it into the cash of sympathy. Thus, to change the figure, we learn to carry a little fire at the hearthstone of the heart for a friend to warm his chilled fingers at.

Surely, then, God knows best. Infinite wisdom is His right hand and Infinite love is His left. In these arms He holds us all, and closest when we are neediest.

But look here; don't go around borrowing trouble. No need of that. There is usually enough of it in the house already!—*Rev. Carlos Martyn, in the Christian Intelligencer.*

LEST THAT WHICH IS LAME.

There is a tremendous force in our Saviour's words, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" How great in its effects, in the damage it may be doing! You cannot disassociate personality, its rectitude, its winning influence in one department from its responsibility in all others. Its possession rises to the force of a command that you make it tell for God, and tell for Him in its fullest capacity; it is not only our own salvation we are imperiling; it is the safety and peace of these immortal souls who are surrounding us, and who are walking in the paths we in our conduct, our belief and practices are indicating as best for them. We are all of us preachers, our pulpits the place of our daily occupation, our sermons our lives with their distinctions as to that which is important and unimportant.

I might plead by that which we owe to God, by our own endangered souls, but my plea is to-day by those whom we are effectively influencing. A break in the line of notable withstanders of Gospel grace is always followed by a large ingathering for the Church of Christ. It decides the hesitating. It moves the indifferent. It quickens the languishing. God is calling you to this high honour for Him. What we are in health, what we are in character, what we are in position, what we are in moral attractiveness, we owe all to God, and we owe it all to Him in becoming leaders to salvation for other souls. That is the only way in which we can pay our debt, to make straight paths for others, "lest that which is lame" through us be turned out of the way."

Oh! that we might make all that is within us our power for good, the beauty of our moral nature, the tenderness of our affection that draws others toward us, that renders our companionship pleasing to them, to be as the sunlight that draws in radiant lines the atmosphere of earth heavenward. But there is another and scarcely less important reference in these words, which makes the lameness to exist in ourselves.

It is that we shall guard well the especial point of our own infirmity, our own peculiar temptation, lest that which in us is already impaired may be made worse. Look at that man who by accident has been crippled. How he picks his steps, selecting the smooth places and moving carefully! How lenient we are to the door that hangs shakily on its hinges, to the pitcher that is cracked! How we ease the harness to the sore shoulder of the poor animal if we are compelled to drive him! Shall we have a care for everything else that is maimed, and not for the weak spots in our own moral nature? Moral evils grow upon their opportunities. If any of us has a feebleness of resolve in some one direction it should be a revelation to him of his peculiar peril.

Is it not often rather that our infirmities are the points in us which we especially foster? "Be careful," we say to another, "lest you touch upon this or that matter—upon all things else our friend is accessible, but he allows no trenching there." Now we shrink from certain tempers of those with whom we associate, walk softly by them, as we would by the kennel of a savage dog, lest we arouse the fierce or vindictive spirit. Worse than even this is it, if there be an evil passion in us, which we ever allow indulgence. We cannot afford to trifle with anything, however comparatively harmless it may seem, that has a reprobator in our conscience. We are making the way of the future still more rough and hard to be travelled. We are weakening the force of the Holy Spirit in us, grieving away the influence that, in such tendencies, we most need to befriend us.

Every moral and spiritual ruin has its inception in things which appeared at the time of little moment. Courage is not hardihood. Braver is it to know our temptation and manfully resist it. Then our very infirmities, as did those of Paul, may become the conservers of our strength. "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but rather let it be healed."—*Rev. E. P. Terhune, D.D., in Christian Intelligencer.*

THAT DEAD-LINE OF FIFTY.

Imprimis, I desire to say, being on the sunny or younger side of this line, I may be permitted to speak for those on the shady or older side; not that they are in need of my advocacy, but because I sympathize with them—or rather, they command my admiration.

I am nauseated. "He is effectually shelved—he's passed the dead-line of fifty, henceforth he'll be dignified and dull;" or, "O, we want a young man for pastor—you need recommend none over fifty." "Give us a young man, one who has yet to win his spurs"—and I add, quite likely will never win them at all.

Here and there, like spring oats in time of a drouth—one head shooting up in the space of a square rod, some young man achieves greatness and leaps at a bound to the front rank—and stays, whereupon his friends rush into print to tell us that Napoleon was Master of France at thirty-three; that Alexander had conquered the world and pressed the crown of universal dominion on his brow at thirty-three; that Byron was great at twenty-seven; that Cesar had completed his conquests of Gaul when he was under fifty, etc.

What does it prove? Let them tell us that Spurgeon was great at twenty-eight, that Washington was Commander-in-Chief of the army at forty-three. They seem to forget that it takes exceptions to prove rules, and these are the exceptions. "But what are they among so many?"—on the other side? Often we hear discussions as to the whys and wherefores of ministers being relegated to the rear after they have attained the age of fifty, while we are told that the practice does not prevail in the professions of the law, or medicine, or other arts and sciences. Then various reasons are assigned for justifying the exception as regards preachers—this, above other reasons, being perhaps urged most: "Preachers grow lazy, self-satisfied with their attainments, and so Dr. Sprightly or Dr. Freshness has allowed his sermon apparatus to grow rusty, and now he is dubbed Dr. Dry-as-dust."

The story is familiar of a French scientist submitting to the *savans* of Paris the following query: "Why may a fish weighing five pounds be introduced into a tub brimful of water and yet none of the water be displaced?" The philosophers one after another racked their polls over its abstrusities, and gave forth answers, assigning various scientific reasons, none of which were satisfactory. At length, the question being submitted to a certain one, he said, "I don't believe the proposition. Let us try it." So, getting a good-sized trout and a tub brimful of water, he gently immersed him, when lo, quite a quantity of the aqueous fluid leaped the confinement of the tub and ran out on the floor. He proved the folly of the proposition.

When it is sagely and sadly asked why the old, experienced and wise pastors are rudely put aside as they grow old, and their places filled by younger men, I answer, Such is not the case. The older and more experienced pastors, so far as they have been close students, faithful workers and diligent observers in acquiring knowledge of their work, are in their places, and these are the first places in the land. The remark applies also to editors and college professors.

I have not at my command a very exhaustive list of ministers who have grown old in the service of their denominations and yet retain their hold upon their churches, but I give a partial list: Spurgeon is fifty-five, Dr. Joseph Parker, fifty-nine; Newman Hall, seventy-two; Canon Farrar, fifty-eight; Dr. Storrs, sixty-eight; Dr. John Hall and Wm. M. Taylor, sixty; Dr. A. McLaren, sixty-three; Talmage, fifty-six; Phillips Brooks, fifty-four; Mr. Moody, fifty-two; and as these are not from among our Baptist ranks, I add Dr. Armitage, over seventy, our own beloved DeVotie, in his seventy-sixth year, Dr. J. L. Burrows, of Virginia, seventy-five. Dr. J. B. Jeter went up from the great activities of chief-editorship of the *Religious Herald*, his natural force and intellect not abated at about the age of seventy-eight. And our useful and efficient Secretaries of Home and Foreign Missions are respectively aged sixty-four and sixty-one. Permit the writer to say, the present able and efficient editor of the *Christian Index*, though able to say, "The days of my years are threescore and ten," yet he is doing as good and successful work now as when the writer first knew him in *ante bellum* days among the classic shades of Penfield. If here and there a preacher may be pointed out as "in the sere and yellow leaf" of his activity while comparatively young, so many more such among our lawyers, physicians and artists may be found.

These things being true, let us cease to talk about "that dead-line of fifty." There is a "dead-line," but to some it comes at thirty or forty, to some at seventy or eighty, to some—never! It comes when men fall out of sympathy with the progress of the age, when they drop out of the procession and thereby grow rusty.

Dr. Guthrie at fifty said, "Do not call me old because my locks are white. I never felt so young in my life. Be it so with us all. Let us, brother pastors, keep fresh and young by holding sympathy with our Sunday schools, by mixing with our young men and maidens, by keeping abreast the age in its progress in missions and education. Let us give ourselves to study and diligent research into God's Word, let us bring fresh fruits as the result of our toils to our congregations each Sunday; let us give them the oil of the sanctuary, well beaten. Then if we live to be as old as Dr. A. D. Sears, pastor of Clarksville (Tenn.) Baptist Church, who is eighty-seven, we will still hold our congregations, and like him have the largest congregations of young men and young women in the city or town where our lots are cast.—*Black Walnut, in Christian Index.*

UNSEEN PROTECTION.

"A lady was wakened up one morning by a strange noise of pecking at the window, and when she got up she saw a butterfly flying backward and forward inside the window in a great fright, because outside there was a sparrow pecking at the glass, wanting to reach the butterfly. The butterfly did not see the glass, but it saw the sparrow, and evidently expected every moment to be caught. Neither did the sparrow see the glass, though it saw the butterfly, and made sure of catching it. Yet all the while the butterfly, because of that thin, invisible sheet of glass, was actually as safe as if it had been miles away from the sparrow." It is when we forget our Protector that our hearts fail us. Elisha's servant was in great fear when he awoke in the morning and saw the city of Dothan encompassed with horses and chariots and a great host; but when his eyes were open at the prayer of the prophet his fears vanished, for he beheld the mountains full of horses and chariots of fire. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even forevermore."

Though now unseen by outward sense,
Faith sees him always near;
A guide, a glory, a defence;
Then, what have you to fear?

HAVE A PURPOSE.

Make the most of yourself. Find out what you are made for. See what you can do best. Have an unswerving purpose that you will work all your faculties to best advantage possible. Do not waste life. A wasted life is the most awful of tragedies. To fail of life's true object, is life wasted! Life's true object is "to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

Young man, have a purpose. Use your mind; compel it to think, to work, to serve you faithfully and truly. Arouse your moral faculties. Summon them to stand guard upon the walls. No man gets the most out of his nature who allows his moral self to be asleep. Keep the heart pure so that your sense of the unseen realities may be keen and certain. It broadens life's horizon infinitely to take in the spiritual, and to commune with God. No man makes the most of self whose nature does not stretch away to the unseen and divine.

A Chinese laundryman made complaint against a young man whose bill had not been paid. "What is your charge against this young man, John?" The aggrieved Celestial said: "He too muchee by and by." Plenty of young men "too muchee by and by." Have a purpose and fulfil it now. Most men never use a tithe of the power they possess. Thousands of our talents are wrapped up in napkins. Unwrap them quickly and put them out to use. The world has need of them. Men sin as much and as disastrously by choosing not to do, as by choosing to do. Manfully purpose to pull against the stream of evil; in thinking we are doing no harm, we are floating down towards the edge of ruin's cataract. If I could reach the ears of all the young, I would cry out to you, Have a purpose! Make the most of yourselves.—*Mid-Continent.*