

prayer, and deeds of charity, "the Lord will add daily such as are saved." Our translation of Acts ii. 47 is a clumsy one. The Greek text signifies that the Lord brought into that apostolic ark "saved ones," who would otherwise have been lost.

In the family register of our churches there ought to be more frequent additions of names under the head of "Births." And when we return to the apostolic spirit of love, faith, and hard work, there will be a constant addition from the world of precious souls new-born into an everlasting life.—*Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D., in American Messenger.*

MINISTERIAL FITNESS.

In order that a preacher may be able to exercise a wise judgment in preparing for his people, he must know them personally and well, and so be guided in selection of Scripture and in course of thought. The sense on the part of the people of the preacher's sympathy will be a powerful agent of impression and conviction, and will be apt to prevent their occupation of the critic's unbecoming position.

This sound judgment, for which we are now contending, is the same as that which we call *tact* if we only ally it with a severe conscientiousness and high religious duty. Men of *tact* are not plenty. Whether it be laziness or a native and irremediable defect, a very large number of our fellow-men are clumsy in their attempted adaptations. They may be men of very acute and analytic thought, prodigies of learning and quick in the detection of error in any particular field of research, and yet when they have to deal with *men* and are called upon to use their gifts for some objective good they are stupid and bungling. Now, a preacher has conspicuously to deal with men. His daily work is with men, and with men of all sorts. He should understand human nature in all its Protean phases. It should be a second nature for him to adapt himself to every one in the fitting way. Now in this important qualification ministers are proverbially deficient. The defect may be and doubtless is exaggerated by malevolence, but that there is solid ground for criticism cannot be denied. The reason and perhaps the main reason for this ministerial veridancy (if I may use such a word) is the ordinary style of our seminary training. It is a cloister life. The student is secluded, cut off from the busy haunts of men, and often even from the smaller circles of social life, and, while he is storing his mind with knowledge that can be derived from books, he is gaining no knowledge whatever of the practical life of men, with which he will have to deal; but, on the contrary, he is forming habits that will render it the more difficult (sometimes even to impossibility) for him ever to become practically acquainted with actual life. The ordinary minister comes out of the seminary an imbecile. He may be a good scholar, an able reasoner, a devoted servant of God; but his place is still in the seminary, not in the seething caldron of the world. He is utterly dazed by the great realities around him. He has not had an atom of preparation for this. He shews such a weakness in meeting the dashing emergencies of life that the world loses respect for him. How many ministers will tell you that they spent the first ten years of their ministry in trying to overcome this awkwardness! There are some, however, who continue to live this green and ineffective life to the end, and the only pleasant feature in the matter is that they are happily unconscious of their own defect. It is a good sign for the future that some of our seminaries are seeing the importance of throwing the young men into active service while engaged in their studies, and of systematizing visitation, exhortation, and philanthropic supply as parts of the seminary course. This will do much toward removing the present reproach. I sometimes think that it would be well for a student not to enter the seminary till he is thirty years old, having during the preceding years become acquainted with the various styles and modes of men. He would then begin his seminary course with a clear and accurate idea of its aim, and when he should leave he would know how to use all his powers with skill and exactness.

It is because young men are so ill-adapted to the *true* work of the preacher that they are tempted to substitute a *false* work, a mere capture of itching ears, and so lay themselves out on eloquence, or poetry, or eccentricity as passports to popular favour. There is no surer way to make the ministry a trade than to send forth ministers destitute of sound judg-

ment or *tact*. They are led not to look to the wants of the people; but to the mere perfunctory performance of public duties, which they may strive to make attractive as possible on trade account. Even where the want of *tact* is counterbalanced by a sincere piety, and so checked from seeking secular ends, there can be little or no edification, for edification implies a skilled and judicious workman, laying his courses by square and plummet with all fitness and exactness. The hap-hazard tumbler-together of material may heap up, but scarcely edify.—*H. Crosby, D.D.*

MR. SPURGEON ON THE DRAMA.

Addressing a meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle upon the subject of "Timely Cautions," Mr. Spurgeon said: "I see it publicly stated by men who call themselves Christians that it would be advisable for Christians to frequent the theatre that the character of the drama might be raised. The suggestion is about as sensible as if we were bidden to pour a bottle of lavender water into a great sewer to improve its aroma. If the Church is to imitate the world to raise its tone, things have strangely altered since the day when our Lord said: 'Come ye out from among them and touch not the unclean thing.' Is heaven to descend to the infernal lake to raise its tone? Such has been the moral condition of the theatre for many a year that it has become too bad for mending, and even if it were mended it would corrupt again. Pass by it with averted gaze; the house of the strange woman is there. It has not been my lot ever to enter a theatre during the performance of a play, but I have seen enough when I have come home from distant journeys at nights whilst riding past the play-houses to make me pray that our sons and daughters may never go within the door. It must be a strange school for virtue which attracts the harlot and the debauchee. It is no place for a Christian, for it is best appreciated by the irreligious and worldly. If our church members fall into the habit of frequenting the theatre, we shall soon have them going much further in that direction of vice, and they will lose all relish for the ways of God. Theatre-going, if it become general among professing Christians, will soon prove the death of piety. One finds the taste for such things increasing on all hands, insomuch that we cannot enter places of entertainment once dedicated to science and art without finding ourselves before long in the presence of something like a theatrical performance. I do not doubt that things which may be in themselves harmless enough have tended to create and foster the taste which leads ultimately to the theatre and its surroundings. Who can suppose amusements surrounded by the seductions of vice to be fit recreations for a pure mind? Who could draw near to God after sitting to admire the performances of a wanton woman? and I am told that some who have dazzled London society are such. When manners are growing every day more lax and licentious, shall the Nonconformists of England cease from their godly protest and lower the standard of their lives? If they do so, their spiritual power is departed, and their reason for existence is gone. If there ever could be a time when Christians might relax their rigidity it surely is not now, when the very air is tainted with pollution and our streets ring with newsboys' cries, vending filthy papers and abominable prints. It is sad to hear our people talk about acts of sin nowadays; how young men and women, without blushing, talk of deeds which deprave and destroy as though they were trifles or themes for jest. It is a thousand pities that the ends of justice should require the publishing of unsavoury details. I suppose there are grave objections to certain cases being heard more privately, otherwise it would assuredly be better for public morals. As for those who not only commit lewdness but take pleasure in those who do it—oh, my soul, come not thou into their secret. My heart often cries, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove that I might fly away and be at rest.'"
—*The Freeman.*

NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH.

This truth, declared by the inspired penman, man seems slow to fully appreciate. There is a sort of feeling that God has been good, and exercised some love in providing salvation for sinners, and that therefore He must be willing that sinners should be saved. But now that the provision has been made, God simply observes the issues with little more than indiffer-

ence. He is pledged to give eternal life to whomsoever will believe, and He will do it. He has promised to turn none away who come to Him, and so He will not. Men may admit all this, and yet fail to realize that there is something in the heart of our Heavenly Father more than the unwavering adherence to His promises and declarations. This is indeed much; but besides this He is, we are clearly taught, interested in the matter of man's accepting the provision. He desires man's salvation—"not willing that any should perish." We would come probably more fully to realize and appreciate this fact, if we would dwell in thought more upon some of the acts of God which manifest it. These shew how very great His interest must be. The not leaving the sinner to perish in his sins, but making a provision for his escaping their consequences; the price that was paid for the redemption of man, the coming of our Saviour into this world, His life of humility and suffering, and His terrible death, all the details of which are so wonderful; the coming of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us; the giving to us the Word of Truth, in which the way to life is so clearly set before us, and in which so many appeals and arguments are found, urging the sinner to walk in it; the human ministers, and all the various means which He has ordained, and to which He gives such efficiency, to bring these truths to the knowledge of those for whom salvation is provided, and to impress them upon them—all these surely shew unmistakably that He who has done, and is doing this, must be deeply interested in those for whom it is done.

When we see a father lavishly spending his hard-earned money, carefully securing the very best instructors, and sparing no pains to place his son under the very happiest and best influences, no one would for one moment doubt that that father felt something more than simply a cold sense of duty to meet his obligations to his son, or to fulfil some previous promise which he might have made. There is evinced a deep interest in his son's welfare.

But if a man under these circumstances shews interest, how much greater is shewn by Him who has done almost infinitely more to secure an almost infinitely greater good for lost man. Surely, He is "not willing that any should perish."

Again, 'tis hard for a man to realize that our Heavenly Father is interested in him as in individual. He thinks only of a general interest.

He is ready to admit that God must be interested in the salvation of all men, but fails to realize that He is in him personally. Yet so it is. Many of the truths of God's word are addressed to the individual. It is, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," and "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." It is the individual. When the law was enacted giving liberty to the slaves of the Southern States it was for all, but was it any the less for each individual slave? Were not the makers of that law interested in each individual case? And any poor slave, however humble, might avail himself of it if he would, and the benefits which he received were just as secure to him, and just as great as if he had been the only one who could receive any benefit; as great as if the law had been provided especially for him.

So this salvation is for each individual just as much as if it were only for him; as if God had looked simply upon him and made all this provision for him alone.

The truth, then, evidently is that God is not willing that I, an individual, should perish. Think of that.—*Rev. G. L. Smith, in Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

EVENTS are not in our power, but it always is to make a good use of even the worst.—*Berkeley.*

WE cannot skip the seasons of our education. We cannot hasten the ripeness and the sweetness by a single day, nor dispense with one night's nipping frost, nor one week's blighting east wind.—*F. W. Robertson.*

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I AM persuaded that many persons say more about their sins being too great to be pardoned than they either believe or feel, from a supposition that it is a token of humility to talk thus. God cannot be glorified nor Christ honoured by doubting of His ability or willingness to save.—*James.*