

the memory. Sluggish natures can rarely grasp and retain a great truth or a weighty thought. It is only the rapid stream that can carry along the larger pebbles and gravel. The lazy current can carry only mud.

Childhood's impressions often seem almost ineradicable, and in this fact lies one of the strongest arguments for early instruction in the ways of righteousness. Dr. Eliphalet Nott, for sixty years the President of Union College, in one of the latter days of his long life (he died at the age of 93), when undertaking to lead in family worship, began unconsciously to repeat the little quatrain learned at his mother's knee:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I awake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

A similar instance of the retention of instruction received in early life has been manifested for a number of years in the case of an aged lady in Central Ohio, who recently died at the age of 94. In her girlhood she had resided near a French settlement in Canada, and had then learned to speak the French language. Removing in her sixteenth year, she had never again had occasion to use the language, and, as she

supposed, had forgotten it entirely. But a few years ago, to her own surprise, she found herself, every once in a while, beginning an order to those around her in French.

The witness of the Spirit was most beautifully illustrated by a speaker—Mr. J. Q. Maynard—at a recent Sunday-school anniversary in Brooklyn. A soldier was badly wounded in one of the battles of the late war. His mother, residing in the North, was notified, and took the first train that would carry her where her son lay at death's door. She reached the hospital, made herself known, and asked to be taken to her boy. She was informed that he was sleeping, and it would not be best to disturb him. She was allowed, however, to go to his couch and take the place of the nurse who sat by his side, with her hand upon his feverish brow. But hardly had the mother's hand touched his forehead when the patient's eyes opened, and he started up in great excitement. It was dark, and he could not see his attendant. "Whose hand was that?" he called. "That felt like my mother's hand. Bring a light and let me see my mother's face." When the finger of God touches us, shall we, even in all the darkness of our sin and ignorance, not know it?

QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Q. "I cannot extemporize. Would you advise me to read or memorize my manuscript?" A.: Neither; but learn to use your *manuscript as a brief*. Write in a large, bold hand. Read it over once or twice for the sake of imprinting on the mind the connection of its thoughts in detail, but with as little attention as possible to the exact language. Just before preaching go over it again with a colored pencil and underscore heavily the prominent words upon which the progressive thoughts rest. These will probably be all that you will care to see while preaching. Memory will supply much of the language as written, and, if not, so much the better for the sermon; for any change you will make after having given the matter so much thought will be an improvement. By this plan you will be beyond the possibility of breaking down, without the burden of invention while speaking, and with the whole force of soul and body for the delivery.

Q. "It takes all my study-time during the week to prepare for the pulpit. Ought I not to take time for general reading even at the expense of sermon

elaboration? If so, what course would you advise?" A.: 1. Some of our most prominent preachers give but half of their study-hours to the sermon, or to reading immediately connected with the sermon. They find, by experience, that three mornings devoted to other subjects gives them such an amount of side-light upon Bible themes, such a store of information with which to illustrate, that the sermon-making is vastly facilitated. But this side-reading should never be carried on without special alertness for moral and spiritual analogies which you may find in any department of truth. The fault of many sermons is that they are too narrowly original, and have no background in the general culture of the preacher. They lack that "reserve" which enables a man to speak the simplest thoughts with the weight of his own fullness. 2. *As to subjects of side-study*, avoid what is called "general reading," i.e. promiscuous, except for a few moments' diversion at a time. Choose some subject requiring research, leading you through more than one book. The mind never works to its best advantage until it has the glow of pursuit, to-