

Pastor and People.

ON TAKING THE COLLECTION.

I was taking my collection for the Foreign Mission work; And believing it the practice on the part of some to shirk From the clearest Christian duty—leaving others to sustain The sublimest work of ages—in my preaching I was plain, Rather personal in places, and, as people sometimes say, Struck out squarely from the shoulder, in the good old-fashioned way. There were restlessness and motion, quite unusual, in the pews; Women rearranged their bonnets, men had trouble with their shoes. In the gallery around me there was one continual stir, And a large amount of coughing for that season of the year. This but acted as a challenge on a nature such as mine, So I rose to the occasion, hewing closer to the line. Uncle Ben, as was his custom, gave the sermon earnest heed, But his face wore some expressions that were difficult to read. I discoursed upon the subject, argued, scolded for an hour, And pronounced a peroration of considerable power. The collection was my first one, and I naturally believed It would reach a handsome figure; I was thoroughly deceived. When the ushers gave the total, they both said, with solemn face, It was far the smallest offering ever taken in that place. Full of weariness, reflecting on the selfishness of men, I went early Monday morning to talk with Uncle Ben. He was milking, and I asked him what the bottom reason was That the people gave so little to the Foreign Mission cause. "Try your hand at milking, parson," Uncle Ben said, with a smile. "Take this Jersey;" and I sat down, pleased enough to make a trial, Going at the business roughly, like a novice, pull, tug, pound, And that heifer in a moment laid me flat out on the ground. "Whoa, there, Bessie! Jump up, parson; ain't hurt much? I'll brush your coat Here's your hat," he said. I swallowed something rising in my throat. Then he sat down beside that Jersey, humming some old-fashioned air, Milking, humming, and the creature stood and never stirred a hair. "Well," I said, regaining slowly calmness and a sweeter mood, "Who would dream, to see that heifer, she would ever act so rude!" Uncle Ben looked up and whispered: "It's a curious kind of trick, How to get the milk out from her, and not have the creature kick. Learn the lesson, parson, clearly; learn it here and learn it now— You must touch a congregation gently, as I touch this cow. Lay your hand upon the people with a stroke as soft as silk, And you'll fill the plates with money, as I fill this pail with milk."

—Rev. Alfred J. Hough, in *Zion's Herald*.

SAVE THE BOYS.

Where are the boys, the young men? we instinctively and sorrowfully ask, as we look over our congregations and communion tables. Some of them, in many congregations a goodly number of them, are present, interested and devout worshippers. Here and there are pews where every boy belonging to the family is seen. And sometimes the pleasant spectacle is presented of the whole family at the communion table. Instances of this should be common instead of infrequent. God's promises to Christian parents authorize them, if they are faithful in parental duty, to expect to see their children walking "in the footsteps of the flock, and feeding beside the shepherds' tents."

While the Church is doing much to save the youth by means of the Sabbath school and young people's societies, it is no doubt true that much more could and should be done to save them before they pass the period of girlhood and boyhood.

We seem to regard the conversion of a man as far more important than the conversion of a boy. Hence our efforts are chiefly put forth on their behalf. Christian ministers and people spend far more of their time and strength in trying to get men to break off from sinful habits than they do to prevent the young from forming such habits, forgetting the old maxim, that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

The farmer who would allow the weeds to grow tall and strong before trying to eradicate them, would not get credit for much wisdom. Every husbandman knows that he can only be successful in keeping his field free from weeds by destroying them as soon as they appear, and before they have rooted and become strong. With a single stroke of his hoe he can destroy dozens of the tender plants, but it requires all his strength and many strokes to remove one that has struck its roots deep into the earth and towers above his head. It is far easier to keep a boy from forming the habit of using tobacco than to get him to give up the habit after it is formed. And effort expended in instilling into the minds of boys the principle of total abstinence is far more effective in promoting temperance than that put forth to reform the confirmed drunkard.

We can hardly overestimate the influence of the Christian home in the training of youth. "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it." The Sabbath school has sometimes been called the nursery of the Church; but the Christian home rather deserves the name. From the altars and firesides of Christian families has come the larger number of the members of our Churches. A very large proportion of the Gospel ministry were brought up by Christian parents, who daily led them to the family altar, and trained them by pious counsel and example.

Every congregation affords abundant illustration of the influence of Christian parents in training their children. Almost without exception the children of parents who are earnest, pious and faithful, follow in the footsteps of their parents. Professing Christian parents of a low degree of piety, who are irregular in their attendance upon the public ordinances of religion, who neglect the family altar and the prayer-meeting, who do but little according to their ability to support the Gospel among themselves, or to send it to the

spiritually destitute and needy, usually have children just as careless, lifeless and worldly as themselves.

Perhaps not less than the nine-tenths, possibly a much larger proportion, of the active membership of the Church to-day were brought into its full communion in early life. It is only now and again that one is plucked as a brand out of the fire in the latter period of life. How impressively does this fact suggest the importance of saving the boys and girls? If they are not saved in youth, the greater number of them will be lost. Either the world or the Church will have the most of them before they are thirty years of age.

If the children of this generation are saved, the coming generation will see such spiritual peace and prosperity as the world has never yet known. Then let Christian parents and the whole Church give all possible diligence to make sure the calling and election of the youth of the Church and of all young people before they become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."—*United Presbyterian*.

HERE I AM.

A lawyer had a cage hanging on the wall in his office, in which was a starling. He had taught the little fellow to answer when he called it. A boy named Charley came in one morning. The lawyer left the boy there while he went out for a few minutes. When he returned the bird was gone. He asked: "Where is my bird?" Charley replied that he did not know anything about it. "But," said he, "Charlie, that bird was in the cage when I went out. Now tell me all about it; where is it?" Charlie declared that he knew nothing about it; that the cage door was open, and he guessed that the bird had flown out. The lawyer called out: "Starling, where are you?" The bird spoke right out of the boy's pocket, and said just as plain as it could, "Here I am!" Ah, what a fix that boy was in? He had stolen the bird and had hid it, as he supposed, in a safe place, and had told two lies to conceal his guilt, and now came a voice from his own pocket which told the story of his guilt. It was a testimony that all the world would believe. The boy had nothing to say. The bird was a living witness that the boy was a thief and a liar.

We have not all of us a starling, but we have a conscience—not in our pocket, but in a more secure place—in our soul; and that tells the story of our guilt or our innocence. As the bird answered when the lawyer called it, so when God speaks our conscience will reply; and give such testimony that we cannot deny nor explain away.

A PASTORAL INCIDENT.

It was my first year in the ministry. A good elder had come in to spend an evening hour with his pastor, and to talk over the affairs of the Church generally. In the course of conversation I said: "I heard this afternoon that old Mr. — is very sick, and I'm going to see him in the morning."

The old man lived three miles away, never came to church, and had never seen me, nor I him. I knew, and the elder knew, that three years before, when on her dying bed, the old man's wife had sent for my predecessor, that the old man had ordered the faithful pastor to leave the house. When, therefore, I proposed going to see him, the elder shook his head ominously, and said: "I think you better not. He'll probably order you out of the house if you do."

To this I replied: "No matter if he does; I'll do as I please about going; I'm not afraid of an old man, especially if he's sick."

"Well," said the elder, "if that's the way you feel about it you had better go."

In the morning I went, and mark how the way was opened for me. No one noticed my arrival, and, as I knocked at the door a daughter-in-law of the sick man and a member of the Church of which I was pastor, opened the door and welcomed me.

My first thought was: "God has opened the way for me here." My next thought, as I saw the old man and heard his groans, was: "Old man, you're past ordering me out of the house." Then, presently, before speaking with him his daughter-in-law said: "Father told us this morning that if he died he wanted you to preach his funeral sermon." Was ever the way more clearly opened for a man to speak the Gospel to a dying fellow-mortals?

When I came to speak the Gospel message to him—for I had to speak to rather than with him, on account of his sufferings—I felt great freedom, helped on, no doubt, by all that had preceded. Before leaving him, his son, who had lived in the house and had imbibed his father's principles, and a neighbour who likewise sympathized with his peculiar principles, being present, I said: "Mr. —, I must leave you now, but before I go I must tell you plainly that to all human appearance you are very near your end; and now, without any reference to the past—what you may have thought or what you may have said—what is your idea of the future? What is your hope, if you have any?" And he answered in a distinct voice, so that all in the room could distinctly hear and understand him: "For a whole year past, by night and by day, I have called on God my Saviour."

This whole occurrence was a valuable lesson to me in the beginning of my ministry. It taught me that when duty is clear I should go steadily forth to its performance, and I have never seen cause to act otherwise.—*Intelligencer*.

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE.

Let only one soul in any community become deeply awakened on account of guilt, and with an absorbed gaze look away from self to Christ to find peace and pardon in His name. What an influence will be exerted upon others. No form of opposition can effectually resist it. No secret scepticism abroad can withstand such an example of conquering grace. Other souls will be led to sober reflection and genuine repentance. Many widespread revivals have originated in the regeneration of a single individual—possibly an obscure person, without worldly position and brought to Christ through the agency of some individual equally unknown.

This is just as true of a soul earnestly seeking a clean heart. The Spirit dwelling in such persons is quickly contagious. The silent prayer will be lifted all around: "Create in me a clean heart," the meetings for prayer will be forthwith enlivened, the awakened attention of believers to their high privilege in the Gospel will soon become general—all the result of the new life of faith wrought by the Holy Spirit in a single soul. Who has not seen all this again and again illustrated in his own community? And if this be God's method of bringing in the fulness of His kingdom upon earth, every Christian should enquire: Am I all that God would have me to be in inward purity and outward life?

GIVE THEM THE CUT DIRECT.

There are a few things which I would have you remember, and then I have done. Remember that the Holy Spirit has His ways and methods, and there are some things which He will not do. Bethink you that He makes no promise to bless compromises. If we make a treaty with error or sin, we do it at our own risk. If we do anything that we are not clear about, if we tamper with truth or holiness, if we are friends of the world, if we make provision for the flesh, if we preach half-heartedly and are in league with errorists, we have no promise that the Holy Spirit will go with us. The great promise runs in quite another strain: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty." In the New Testament only in that one place, with the exception of the Book of Revelation, is God called by the name of "the Lord God Almighty." If you want to know what great things the Lord can do, as the Lord God Almighty, be separate from the world, and from those who apostatise from the truth. The title, "Lord God Almighty," is evidently quoted from the Old Testament. "El-Shaddai"—God all-sufficient, the many-breasted God. We shall never know the utmost power of God for supplying all our needs till we have cut connection once for all with everything which is not according to His mind. That was grand of Abraham when he said to the King of Sodom: "I will not take of thee"—a Babylonish garment, or a wedge of gold? No, No. He said: "I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet." That was "the cut direct." The man of God will have nothing to do with Sodom, or with false doctrine. If you see anything that is evil, give it the cut direct. Have done with those who have done with truth. Then you will be prepared to receive the promise, and not till then.—*Spurgeon*.

BEAUTIFUL SIDE OF LIFE.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that two-thirds of all that makes it "beautiful to be alive" consists in cup-offerings of water. Not an hour of life's journey but is rendered easier by their freshening or harder by their absence. Why? Because most of us are burden-bearers of one sort or another; because to most of us a large part of the journey is a dull and trivial trudge; because there is much dust upon the road, and not so many bad places as probably we think, yet many common places; and it is load and dust and stretches of the common place that make one thirsty. If the feeling on our shoulders were of wings instead of load; if on Mondays, "in some good cause not our own," we were marching singing to a battle, and on Saturdays were coming back victorious, then the greetings on the way would make less difference to us. But, as it is, we crave the roadside recognitions which give praise for the good deed attempted, pity for the hard luck and the fall, a hand-lift now and then to ease the burden's chafe, and now and then a word of sympathy in the step, step-stepping that takes us through the dust. And this is all that most of us wait to give, for we, too, are here on business. You cannot step my journey for me, cannot carry me on your back, cannot do me great service; but it makes a world of difference to me whether I do my part in the world with or without these little helps which fellow-travellers exchange. "I am busy, when the little fellow hurt his finger. 'Yes, you could—you might have said 'Oh!'' sobbed Johnnie. There's a Johnnie in tears inside all of us upon occasions. The old Quaker was right: "I expect to pass through this life but once. If there is any kindness or any good thing I can do to my fellow-beings, let me do it now. I shall pass this way but once."

POPULARLY called the king of medicines—Hood's Sarsaparilla. It conquers scrofula, salt rheum and all other blood diseases.