

**Our Unsuspected Perils.**

BY REV. J. R. MILLER, D. D.

Many of life's worst dangers are unsuspected. Disease lurks oftentimes in a soft, still, dreamy atmosphere, which we think delicious, with its sweet odors, while the chill, rough, wintry blast, from which we shrink as too severe, comes laden with life and health. Most of us think of a life of ease, leisure and luxury as the most highly favored lot, one to be envied. Yet there is no doubt that a life of rugged toil, hardship and self-denial, which we look upon as almost a misfortune, is far safer than one of ease.

There was laid one morning on the minister's pulpit a little folded paper which, when opened, contained the words, "The prayers of the congregation are requested for a man who is growing rich." It certainly seemed a strange request for prayer, if it had been for a man who, through misfortune, had become suddenly poor, or for a man who was suffering in some great adversity, or for one who had met with sore bereavement, every heart would at once have felt deep sympathy. Such experiences as these are thought to be trying and perilous only in which men need special grace. But to ask prayer for a man who was growing rich, no doubt to many people in the congregation seemed incongruous. Should it not rather have been a request for thanksgiving for this man's success?

Yet when we open the Bible we find that the experience of growing rich is indeed set down as one full of spiritual peril. It was Jesus who said, "How hardly shall they who have riches enter the kingdom of God!" And St. Paul said, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in desolation and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil." There is no doubt that when a Christian is growing rich he needs the prayers of God's people whether they are requested for him or not. Compassion men have hoped their manhood in the fabrics of earthly prosperity which their hands have reared. Many a man's envied fortune is in God's sight but the splendid missoleum of his soul. We do indeed need the prayers of God's people in the time of prosperity that our hearts may be kept warm and soft, and thus may be sheltered by the love of God from all the insidious dangers and hurtful influences that belong to the experience of worldly favor.

Another condition that, according to the Scriptures, hides an unsuspected peril is one of unbroken prosperity. "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." Those who are thus described are free from trouble from adversity, from misfortune, from disappointments. It is not usual that such an experience is regarded as one of danger. Indeed we naturally consider such persons as peculiarly favored. For example here is a house which has gone on for a long time without suffering changes. Business has prospered, and the circumstances of the household have become more and more easy. There have been no long serious illness, gluing pain and anxiety, no deaths breaking the happy circle of loved ones.

No one naturally looks on the household as in any peculiar danger. The neighbors do not have special prayers for it in church. Yet there is no doubt that insidious moral dangers do lurk in such experience. Oftentimes God has less and less welcome in such a home. Christ is lost out of the household life, and beneath the bright earthly prosperity the angels see spiritual death.

The same is true of individual life. Unbroken prosperity is the bane of spiritual good. There are truths that can be learned better in darkness than in light. We should never see the stars if there were no night to blot out the glare of day. And there are truths in the Bible which are perhaps never learned in the brightness of human joy. There are divine promises which by their very nature are invisible in the noon-day of gladness, fading away like stars in the light, and revealing themselves only when it grows dark around us. The deeper meaning of many a word of scripture is learned amid life's painful changes.

There are also developments in spiritual growth which cannot come in time of unbroken prosperity. The artist was trying to improve a dead mother's picture. But the son said, "No, don't take out the lines. Just leave them, every one. It wouldn't be my mother if all the lines were gone." It was well enough to say, for young people who had never known a care to have lines free from wrinkles; but when these have seventy years of love, service and self-forgetfulness, it would be like lying to cover up their tracks. The very beauty of that old face was in the wrinkles and lines, which told of what brave heart and strong hands had done for love's sake. There is a blessing in such a life. But in the life of ease which many a woman lives there hide sore perils.

Another of the unsuspected perils of no changes is the lessening of dependence upon God. While there are no breaks in the flow of favors, we are apt to forget that all our good gifts come from our Father's hand. It is sad hour in my life when the consciousness of the need of God fades out of it. It seems pleasant to go on making plans of our own, and carrying them out without check or defect. We like to say that we are masters of circumstances, that we make all things serve us, that we turn obstacles into stepping stones, climbing continuously upon them. But a little thought will show peril that hides in thus having always our own way. It is not the doing of our will but God's that leads to perfect character and blessedness. Un-

less, therefore, we are filling out of God's plan for our life, the unbrokenness of the prosperity is not an unmixed good. Most of us need to be baffled oftentimes in our schemes, to be defeated in our projects, to have our own plans fail, to be compelled to yield to a stronger will. In no other way can the sense of dependence be kept warm in the heart. If we always get our own way, we are apt, being human, to grow proud, wilful and rebellious. It is a sore misfortune to any one of us if, in having our own way, we forget God and cease to love and follow Christ. Says Archdeacon Farrar: "God's judgments—it may be the very sternest and most irremediable of them—come, many a time, in the guise, not of affliction, but of immense earthly prosper and ease."

**The Anabaptists.**

BY HENRY M. KING, D. D.

A new volume has just been issued by the MacMillan Co. on the Anabaptists. The author is E. Belfort Bax, who, though he has published other volumes, is not widely known in this country. He has evidently given careful study to the various sects which arose at the time of the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland and to the differences in view and practice which distinguished them. He had produced a book that is informing, readable, sympathetic and charitable in judgment even towards those who were extravagant in their doctrinal beliefs and guilty of notions and insurrectionary conduct. In times of evident reaction there is always danger that the new liberty will lead in some instances to open fanaticism. Such was the case in Europe in the sixteenth century.

Mr. Bax candidly admits that some who were called Anabaptists were in no true sense Anabaptists. They did not practice rebaptism or believers' baptism. This admission is made by all modern church historians of acknowledged authority. The name formerly was a term of reproach and was applied wholesale to all dissenting sects at the time of the Reformation, however extreme their opinions and lawless and immoral their conduct. The history of the Anabaptists was for many years written by their enemies, and they fared hard in such hostile hands. But in the light of recent investigation the great body of the Anabaptists, who were very numerous, are found to have been godly, peaceable, law-abiding citizens. They not only repudiated the name by which they had been stigmatized—for they said where there is no faith, as in infancy, there can be no baptism—but they condemned, as they had opportunity, the violent acts of those who were called Anabaptists, and for whose evil conduct they were made to suffer.

Mr. Bax expressly says that the riotous and scandalous Munsterites cannot be justly called Anabaptists, for it is known that their leaders never submitted to the rite of adult baptism. And yet strange to say, a very large portion of his volume is occupied with the detailed account of their cruelties and organized and persistent resistance of constituted authority. The question suggests itself whether the title of the book is not a misnomer. The book bears the name "The Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists." The fact is the genuine Anabaptists receive scant treatment in its pages.

The author is certainly mistaken in his account of the restriction of the rite of scriptural baptism, and he fails utterly to give to the Anabaptists the supreme credit which they deserve as the first promulgators of the great doctrine of religious liberty, making no allusion whatever to the famous Confessions of Faith which they issued at Schleitheim in 1527, which is the first known Confession in the history of Christendom which claimed for all men the right of private judgment and the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of their own consciences, a Confession which antedated the confessions of the English Baptists and the illustrious achievement of Roger Williams in this country by a hundred years and more.

And yet Mr. Bax has given to the public a book of great value as setting forth the social conditions in Europe in the sixteenth century, and the vagaries and excesses into which fanaticism, reacting from ecclesiastical despotism and blind submission to spiritual authority, can plunge its victims.—Zion's Advocate.

**Work for All.**

It is a time, not so much for the discussion of methods or for complaints over the past, as for every one going to work for the salvation of the lost. Less criticism of the church and of its members, and more charity and good will among all who should, and can, labor for Christ and souls, will best meet the situation. Getting away from the hindering processes, and into living and stirring connection with encouraging and assuring agencies, is necessary to the production of the largest and surest saving results. The cry, "Be up and doing," is ringing in the ears of the church with an earnestness and force she cannot afford to ignore.

Foremost in soul-saving work should be the pastor. He need not await the coming of the evangelist, but should awake to a sense of his own responsibility in rousing his own church to evangelistic zeal, prayer and activity. He should show that he can preach convicting and converting sermons as well as edifying ones. Thirty or forty years ago it was thought that a minister did not know his place and sphere if he could not preach to sinners as well as to saints.

Now the line is being quite distinctly drawn between the preaching of a pastor and of an evangelist. We never could and cannot now, see the reason for this attempted, or assumed, distinction. The gospel is to be presented in all its relations and bearings on saint and sinner by him whom the people have called to be their minister. God has sent him to seek and to save the lost under his care, as well as to shepherd the flock. He is to bring in the lambs as well as to feed the sheep. He is to go after those who have strayed, as well as to nurture those safely in the fold. We have a feeling of pity for those who talk as though they had no soul-saving power, and must rely upon outside help for reaching the unconverted. The trouble is that in most cases, they have not cultivated their latent capacities in this direction. They have thereby lost, not only a telling power for salvation, but a joy, peculiar and special, as soul-movers Christward. We would advise our young pastors to give more earnest heed to this kind of preaching, and not to imagine that their forte lies along other lines of Christian service. It is their duty and privilege to win men to Christ, as well as to build them up in the faith. It is too much to expect every occupant of the pulpit at a time, when so many are in expectation, that we are on the eve of great revival experiences, to preach awakening and revival sermons, to touch the conscience and the heart, to present the terrors of the law, as well as the wooings of love, to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the necessity of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners, to press for an immediate surrender to the gospel terms of salvation, and to stir up the people in behalf of the perishing around them?

Great and consecrated as may be the revival activities of pastors, they will not avail as they should, if the people generally do not rally to their help. God calls for the co-operation of the entire membership. An Achan can hinder and defeat, in a marked degree, the fulness of a pentecostal blessing. The holding back of prominent and influential church members can prevent a wide-spread religious awakening. Dissention in a congregation, or variance and strife among those who should be open and decided, as well as friendly, workers in Christ's kingdom, means the putting of stumbling-blocks in the way of the onward movement of his cause, especially when many are seeking his reviving and saving manifestations. There is therefore an urgent call for healing the breaches of Zion, for bringing those outside the church into saving relationship to Christ, and into personal acknowledgement of him before men, and for pushing on the cause of King Jesus with renewed energy, at home and abroad.—Presbyterian.

**The Discipline of Love.**

REV. R. J. CAMPBELL.

No one doubts Peter's love for Christ; Christ never did. He loved his Master, and the very fact that he could love changed him. We are like him. You are very poor if no great love has ever come into your life. You are better if you have ever given yourself in love to anyone. One has sometimes heard people mourn that they ever had committed themselves to a great love, because some of those to whom you give the most give to you in return the least. And you wish that it were not so; you wish to exercise the experience, not only that of ingratitude, but that of the bond of affection which united you with the loved one. Never wish that again. What you are to-day you are in great measure because you have learned to love. Do you regret that you ever committed yourself so far as to rob yourself of luxury and ease and pleasure because of that child who has turned out all that you could wish? Believe me the chapter has not closed yet by any means, but something of its meaning you can read already. What difference has it made to you? You are wise, kinder, noble, sweeter. It is a great thing to have loved. "Say never ye loved once." The experience is built into your soul. God supplied you with a key to the meaning of life when he made you capable of loving somebody. Never wish the experience undone; it has helped to make you. Think of anyone who is incapable of such an affection. How much of life such natures miss! They remain in the lower stories; there is a vast landscape hidden from them. They are able to mount higher just in proportion as they are able to give themselves to an ideal. A great love transformed Peter; the power of love may transform you.—Ex.

**Revivals Not Obsolete.**

The prominence of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, as successor to the late Dr. Joseph Parker, in the pastorate of the City Temple, London, has given added interest to the article recently contributed by him to the columns of "The British Weekly." Mr. Campbell does not for a moment believe that the day of religious enthusiasm is past and gone forever. He believes, on the other hand, that the facts justify the hope of a revival of religious fervor, zeal and hope. Mr. Campbell is evidently sustaining himself with the comfort of a reasonable and religious hope when he so speaks, and so pronounced a prediction as he makes is heartily to be welcomed. He takes safe ground when he claims that "a quickened spiritual life in the churches, a recovered enthusiasm and a new sense of the presence of Christ as Deliverer and Lord, would set free grand social enthusiasms