

THE PARSON'S BARREL.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUTLER.

"WELL, parson," said Deacon Goodgold to his pastor, "that last Sunday mornin's sermon was number one *prime*; may I ask you which end of the barrel that came out on? Your barrel is like the widder's in Scripture; it never seems to give out." "I am glad that my sermon suited you," replied the genial dominie, "for I got part of that at your house, part came from neighbor B—'s, and part from poor Mrs. C—'s, in whose sick room I spent an hour, and one hint in it came from your boy Frank, who rode by my house on 'old gray,' without any saddle or bridle. I picked up some of the best things in that discourse during an afternoon spent in pastoral visiting."

Parson Honeywell was a shrewd man and a faithful, godly pastor. He had not a great many books; and his family increased faster than his library. His Bible he had at his fingers' ends; it was his one great unexhausted storehouse of heavenly knowledge.

But he also had a book of human knowledge second only to God's Word. In the forenoon he studied his Bible, and in the afternoon he sallied out with horse and buggy and studied his people. He rode with his eyes open, finding illustrations—like his divine Master—from the birds of the air, the flowers of the field, and the sower or ploughman by the wayside. His mind was on his sermon all the week. If he saw a farmer letting his oxen "blow" under a roadside tree, he halted and had a chat with him. He observed the farmer's style of thought, gave him a few words of golden counsel, and drove on, leaving the farmer something to think of and something to love his pastor for also. If he saw a boy on his way from school he took the lad into his buggy and asked him some questions which set the youngster to study his Bible when he got home. Parson Honeywell caught his congregation when they were young.

Deacon Goodgold was curious to know more about the way in which his minister had gathered up that last Sunday's sermon. "Well," replied the parson, "I was studying on the subject of trusting God in times of trial. First I went to the fountain head, for my Bible never runs dry. I studied my text thoroughly, comparing Scripture with Scripture; I prayed over it, for a half hour of prayer is worth two hours of study in getting light on the things of God.

"After I had put my heads and doctrinal points on paper I sallied out to find my practical observations among our congregation. I rode down to your house, and your wife told me her difficulties about the doctrine of 'assurance of faith.'

"From there I went over to your neighbor B—'s house; he is terribly cut down since he failed in business. He told me that with the breaking down of his son's health, and his own break down in the store, he could hardly hold his head up, and he had begun to feel awfully rebellious towards his heavenly Father. I gave him a word or two of cheer, and noted down just what his difficulties were.

"From his store I went over to see poor Mrs. C—, who is dying slowly by consumption. She showed me a favorite flower that she had put in to her window-seat to catch the sunshine, and said that her flower had been a daily sermon to her about keeping herself in the sunshine of her Saviour's countenance. Her talk braced me up, and gave me a good hint.

"Then I called on the widow M—, who always needs a word of sympathy. Before I

came away she told me that her daughter Mary could not exactly understand what it was to trust Christ, and was finding no peace, although she had been under deep conviction of sin for several weeks. I had her daughter called in, and I drew from her all her points of difficulty; I read to her such texts of Scripture as applied to her case, prayed with her, and then started for home. Your boy rode by my house on the old horse, who went along without any bridle, and stopped when he got to the bars that lead in to the pasture.

"Before I went to bed I worked in all the material that I had gathered during the afternoon; and I studied out the solution to the difficulties of your wife and of your neighbor B—, and of the troubled daughter of Widow M—, and I wove the answers to such doubts and difficulties into my sermon.

The cheerful experiences of good Mrs. C— in her sick chamber helped me mightily, for faith in action is worth several pounds of it in theory. I went to my pulpit last Sunday pretty sure that my sermon would help three or four persons there, and if it would fit their cases, I judged that it would fit thirty or forty more cases. For human nature is pretty much alike, and sometimes when I preach a discourse that comes home close to my own heart's wants, I take it for granted that it will come to plenty of other hearts in the congregation."

"Yes, parson," said the deacon, "your sermons cut a pretty broad swath. I often feel '*Thou art the man*,' when you hit some of my besettin' sins. I have often been wantin' to ask you why your sermon barrel has never giv' out, as poor Parson Scanty's barrel did before you came here. He always giv' us about the same sermon, and as I set away back by the door, it got to be mighty thin by the time it got to my pew."

"Parson Honeywell turned pleasantly to the deacon and said: "I will tell you what the famous old Dr. Bellamy once said to a young minister who asked him how he should always have material for his sermons. The shrewd old doctor said: 'Young man, fill up the cask, *fill up the cask*, and then if you tap it anywhere you will get a full stream; but if you *put in* very little, it will dribble, dribble, dribble, and you may tap and tap and get precious little after all.' I always get my people to help me fill up my cask. Good afternoon, deacon."

PHYSICAL BANKRUPTCY

BY PIERRE S. STARR, M.D.

IN youth and manhood we daily perform a certain amount of physical and mental labor. Each day we use up a portion of our strength in discharging the duties that confront us, or in pursuing the pleasures we crave, and at its close we are more or less tired, and gratefully take the rest that nature gives. At the same time we feel that we are by no means exhausted, and if an emergency arises we find that we have a reserve of strength within us that enables us to accomplish far heavier labors and sustain more prolonged efforts, and then, after a little more rest, are as well and strong as ever.

This reserve of strength it is which gives the sense of confidence, of elasticity, and superiority to little ills which mark the man of robust health, and it is by drawing upon it by excess of living faster than it can be naturally restored that manhood is shortened and old age so often prematurely entered.

If a man would regard this reserve with as much concern and look upon it in the same light