

a man's neighbours know, oftentimes, his circumstances better than the minister does. One minister cannot know all the people in a community as one man knows his immediate neighbours, and a consistent Christian ought to have an influence with those who live in his immediate vicinity.

When a congregation invites a minister to preach in any certain community, it ought to be with the feeling and purpose that, if the minister will try to prepare good, acceptable food, and convincing truth for the people, they will try to gather the people together to hear him.

The congregation consists of thirty, fifty, a hundred or two hundred members. These members are scattered throughout the community; they often meet with their neighbours; they are well acquainted with them, know their circumstances, and may be supposed to have influence with them. The minister cannot see them all very often in their homes. He has preparation to make for the pulpit, for prayer-meeting, and perhaps several other meetings during the week. He cannot be constantly acting as a visiting committee, and when he does visit he may have a delicacy in asking people to come and hear him preach. But here is a field of work for the membership. They can help fill up the church; and when the church is full the minister is apt to preach better sermons, and preach his sermons better. His heart is encouraged, new life is imparted to him, and this will enable him to do better work.

Do not wait for your minister to fill up your church. Look after all the families in your immediate vicinity; and that you may have influence with them, do not simply throw an invitation to them once in a while to come to church, but so weave your life into theirs, make and show yourself their friend, so visit them, so talk with them about the church and things of religion, that they will believe there is a reality and power in them. Be so interested and so enthusiastic as to kindle interest in them. There is such a thing as earnestness and by sympathy so fasten yourself to your neighbours that you can draw them after you to the house of God. Be patient and persistent, and do not give them up until you have won them as friends to yourself and as constant members of the congregation.

Thus labouring, with God's blessing, you may hope to see your church filled with listeners to the word. But do not expect your minister to bring all your neighbours to the church, while day by day you pass their doors and do not use your influence to bring them to the house of God.

EVOLUTION AND THE FUTURE.

In a recent number of "Nature," Professor Huxley closed a very beautiful and eloquent tribute to the memory of Darwin with these words:—"Once more the image of Socrates rises unbidden, and the noble peroration of the 'Apology' rings in our ears as if it were Charles Darwin's farewell. 'The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways, I to die and you to live. Which is the better, God only knows.'"

This was the high-water mark to which ancient philosophy, "in the person of the wisest of men," attained; a calmness and serenity of spirit, a "wise indifference," facing the inevitable without hope but also without fear; prepared to submit to and acquiesce in whatever might befall; but having no certainty as to what that "something after death" might be; whether better or worse than the state enjoyed or suffered here. "Which is better, God only knows."

About four hundred years after the death of Socrates, a poor Jewish prisoner in Rome, daily expecting death at the hands of a cruel and capricious tyrant, wrote thus to some friends in a distant city:—"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." And again, to a youthful friend and disciple he wrote:—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

Do not these words indicate something higher and better than the calm uncomplaining submission, noble though that was, expressed by Socrates; even an assured hope and confidence, fitted not only to sustain but to cheer and comfort man's spirit in the prospect of death? Why should the Evolutionist stop short at

the Pagan level, if he may ascend to the Christian? Does not his own theory lead him to anticipate that the future shall be better than the past? We are not aware that there is any reason for implying that the great naturalist who has lately been taken from us bade farewell to life in the spirit of Socrates rather than in that of St. Paul. But if so, was there not a distinct retrogression here? In any case there is surely something in this department—of man's faith and hope in the Unseen—which, as revealed in history, transcends Evolution, and must be due to a higher law. For, as long ago as six hundred years before Socrates, we find an old Hebrew writer singing in this strain:—"My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. Therefore my heart is glad; my flesh also shall rest in hope. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy: at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD.

"The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." It often has an influence which the words of men do not have; and it would be well if ministers and other Christians, in their reasoning with unconverted persons, were to depend on it more than they do; and would use it as "the sword of the spirit," and expect decided results. The following incident is one illustration out of many which might be given of the "power of the word of God."

Some years ago, at the close of a large meeting, a number of persons remained for inquiry. A minister noticed in one of the aisles several young men talking together. He went up to them, and instead of speaking to them all as they were together, he asked one of them to go with him apart. On his doing so, the minister opened his Bible at John iii. 16, and placing his finger near it, asked the young man to read it. The minister then read aloud, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The eyes of the young man filled with tears, and he bowed his head. After a short silence, he said to the minister, "You do not know what you have done, sir." He replied, "I have read with you a passage from the word of God." The young man answered, "Well, sir, it has broken my heart." He then added, "When you led me aside, I was telling those young men that this revival work was all nonsense, that it was just getting up an excitement which would soon pass away, and that it was very foolish; and you brought me here, and read that verse to me, and that word of God has gone to my heart, and has made me altogether different to what I was."

The minister says that had he known the circumstances with reference to what the young man was doing, he would probably have taken a different course with him; but he is glad that he did not know them, and that he was led to depend simply on the word of God. It was to the young man the commencement of a new life, and the minister knew him for years afterwards as a living Christian.

A DEAD CHURCH.

A dead Church does not become cold and negligent, or formal or loose in doctrine or practice, by any sudden change. It is seldom that the transition can be noticed. On the contrary, the change is quite unnoticed, save by those who may recollect the past, and noting the change, they make a comparison with the present. They used to enjoy the old time prayer-meeting, and they remember how it was first neglected, and then the Sunday night preaching service, family worship went next, the fires went out on the home altars, and the Sabbath school ran down and became dull and uninteresting. The young people gave up their prayer meeting and began to drift away; then infidel ideas crept in; a great clamour was heard for "more liberties," until finally pulpit, pew and family altar became a mockery and a farce. Pastors, church officers and Christian people need to watch most earnestly for the beginnings of evil. No Church will go astray in a day. —*Baltimore Presbyterian.*

THE first Welsh Church in Ohio was founded in 1803. At present there are in the State forty churches with 3,000 members.

MISSION NOTES.

A LONDON letter in the Manchester "Guardian" contains the following:—"I can vouch for the truth of the pleasant little story which follows of the late Mr. Charles Darwin. It has been stated in most of the obituary notices published to-day that the foundations of his life-long work as a naturalist were laid in the observations which he made while on board the 'Beagle,' of whose voyage he afterwards wrote such an interesting account. Among other phenomena which struck his attention particularly while cruising off South America was the degraded condition of man in Patagonia, and the subject was warmly discussed between the philosopher and a pious young officer on the 'Beagle,' who has since risen to a high position in Her Majesty's navy. Darwin maintained that the Patagonian was specifically different from the Englishman, and incapable of improvement. The lieutenant was equally confident that the savage had but to be brought under Christian teaching to be elevated to the same rank in the social scale as a European. Some thirty years passed away, and by some means Darwin came to know of the marvellous work in the way of civilizing the Patagonians which has been accomplished by the missionaries of the Church of England in that inhospitable country. It was characteristic of the candour and generosity of the man that he frankly avowed his mistake, and as a proof of his sincerity, gave his name as a subscriber to the funds of the South American Missionary Society, on whose books I believe it still remains."

THE London Missionary Society received \$580,060, and reports a balance in the treasury. The abstract of the annual report stated that the force in the field had been increased from 152 to 156. In South Africa one of the Kaffrarian churches has become self-supporting. There were revivals in Bechuanaland, and the converts at Shoshong sent forty evangelists to labour among the Batauana at Lake Ngami. The Central African Mission, on which \$110,000 has been expended, will be reinforced by five ordained missionaries, two artisans, and one sailor, who will take with them a steel boat for navigating Lake Tanganyika. Dr. Southon has had a good year's work in Urambo. The chief, Mirambo, who bears a reputation for savagery, has been uniformly kind, and listens to the Gospel now proclaimed to him in the tongue of his people—Kinyamwezi. In Madagascar education is bringing about a great change. In India the society has no less than 20,000 scholars in its various schools, and at Cuddaph two hundred converts have received baptism. With respect to China, where the Society has 23 missionaries, the report gives little that is encouraging. In North China it declares that the results have been disappointing. A large number of nominal converts, who had lapsed into heathenism, were excluded in Peking. On the other hand, there were numerous additions to the Church in Wuchang and Hangkau. The native Church in Amoy has become self-supporting. The missionaries are to be sent this year into the interior of Fu-Kien Province, which has not been reached hitherto. It has also been decided to send a medical missionary to Chung-Kiang, on the Yang-tse-Kiang, where the China Inland and the Methodist Episcopal Missions are to have their headquarters. The most encouraging returns seem to be from the Polynesian Missions, of which the report says: "The Polynesian Missions continue to afford the brightest and most remarkable evidences of the power of the Gospel to subdue the nature and to transform the life." The native Christians of the Samoan Group subscribed no less than \$1,660 for the Society. In the small islands north of the Samoan Group, which are only visited once a year by the missionary, a revolution has been brought about, and traders bear wonderful testimony to the uprightness of the people and their delight in God's Word. Tamana, says the report, is a remarkable instance of what Christianity can do for a people in only a commercial or temporal manner. A few years ago people were dying in large numbers for want of food. Then they had only cocoanuts, bananas, and fish. Now the settlement is like a little garden, with bread-fruit trees, bananas, pumpkins, pineapples, etc., growing in great profusion, and, except in case of very severe drought, are well provided against future famine. Attendance at school is compulsory. Dishonesty and immorality are quite unknown. The mission in New Guinea, where the native missionaries were massacred last year, has been reinforced by a brave band from the South Sea Islands.