

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

"TAKING IT EASY."

The grammar of the colloquialism above written is questionable, but the idea it suggests is too often unquestionably bad. We are naturally indolent, self-indulgent and unwilling to take trouble. Stimulus of the right kind, and not sedative, is needed by most of us. Unless in peculiar circumstances, he is an unwise counsellor who bids us "take it easy."

There may be such circumstances in the physical or mental condition of the labourer, or in the kind of work being done. A man's health may render moderation in work desirable, or the work may be of a kind that to "rush things" would spoil it. To hold on to an undertaking with the brain in a chronic fever, or to march a regiment five miles an hour when two hours are available, is folly, and may be mischievous; but setting aside cases of this kind that have to be determined on their merits, we should resist the soft counsels of our own hearts, or of smooth-spoken friends, when they bid us "take it easy."

For—to begin with—we do that usually with the most satisfaction into which we put ourselves most thoroughly. Dreamy, drowsy, half-and-half working becomes uninteresting. It is when we are all alive that we have vivid enjoyment. "I like it," a healthy worker will be apt to say, "it so entirely occupies me." And he is a hundred times happier than the man who is condemned to the merest routine, and whose greatest afternoon excitement is the chewing of a toothpick as his eyes lazily follow the passing public. Few positions are less comfortable to a man who has anything in him than that in which he has little or nothing to do. If you want to enjoy your work, do not "take it easy."

For work is not always to be had in many lines of effort. The human race is annually growing in numbers and the world is not growing bigger. Human ingenuity is, moreover, making "hands" of the mechanical sort—hands that do not "strike," or go for shorter hours, which in many directions are superseding the old "hands." Competition is keen wherever there are prizes, and there is hardly any lot more pitiable than his who must live by work and cannot get it. But the chances—if there is any chance in it—are always in favour of the man who puts all his force into what he does, and against him who slumbers over it. It was cool and witty of Charles Lamb to set off against his being the last to come to the office, that he was the first to go away. But Charles was a peculiar man and could take liberties; and every man is not in an easy Government office. If Lamb had been an ordinary clerk in ordinary employment he would have lost his place for "taking it easy."

Excellence is never reached on the plan of taking it easy; what is valuable costs. Cheap things are commonly worthless. Poor pay is often the only thing that could be afforded, for it represents poor work. Here is Captain Carver astonishing London by the rapidity, accuracy, and one may say, the grace, with which he shatters the glass balls in the air. Two or three at a throw going into pieces under his quick and sure bullets, his eye and his fire moving together, even when he has to turn while his ball is in the air. But he did not come to do it by taking it easy. Macaulay did not become a great writer, Thomson a great poet, Bacon a great thinker, Luther a great reformer, Napoleon a great fighter, Whitfield a great preacher, nor Watt nor Stephenson great inventors, by taking it easy. In government, in art, in mechanics, in law, in medicine, the men of mark have been the toilers who put their entire strength into what they did. Young man, when you are resolving to "take it easy," you are making up your mind—however admirable your necktie, or artistic your moustache—to be commonplace. Even strong and vigorous minds have often fallen below the level which they early attained, by taking it easy. How many great names could be indicated in literature that are known mainly by their earliest efforts. Then they were on their mettle. They had to do their utmost, if they were to do anything. Time, pains, care, revision, were given to their writings before they were ventured before the world. Their best things were brought out in the best way. Later they had an assurance of success. Their names were made. But the works they then wrote are not bought as were those that

made their names. Who reads Sir Walter Scott's later poems as he reads "The Lay," or even "Paradise Regained" as he reads "Paradise Lost?" There is no evidence that Burke, or Dr. Johnson, with his great, rollicking, hearty, hard-worked nature, ever sat up all night to read any of Miss Burney's later work; but the former paid that sincere compliment to "Evelina." Great preachers have been described as men who can preach great sermons but rarely do it. If for some cause they fall into the way of "taking it easy," they will do it rarely indeed. And they are not all singular. All great results represent great exertion.

"But," it may be asked, "is there to be no rest, no quiet, no repose in one's life?" Ah! we are not talking about *life*, but about *work*. Take rest, by all means, at proper times, in proper places, in proper ways. But even in taking rest some method is needed, and one may "take it" so "easy" that it will be irksome instead of restful, and the memory of it unsatisfactory. Absolute idleness is poor rest, unless one is sleeping. See new objects, get new ideas, make new exertions, move on new lines, bring a new set of muscles—bodily or mental—into use, and do it heartily, and you rest, and so rest as to be in many ways a better furnished worker when you resume work. To let weeks pass in which—like the man's idea of comfort in church—one sits still and thinks about nothing, is to prepare one's self for that habitual absent-mindedness which has not always the plea of great genius behind it. One would like to see a strong, vigorous worker even resting in character. It is not given to every man as to Professor Wilson to climb mountains and to traverse moors, like a deer, or to be equally at home above or below the waters of the Westmoreland lakes which he so much loved, and where he could amuse himself by falling overboard, giving a ducking to the boatman who jumped after him, and after a gambol with him in the water, setting him back again in his boat—but the great, intense, hearty being that appears in such vehement rest is just the nature to laugh or cry in print with a laughing or weeping reader, or to lecture in the dusk with a fervour and force that stop the students' note-taking, as they sit still and gaze on the face that reflects so vividly the enthusiasm of the poet and scholar.—*Dr. John Hall.*

TRUST.

I cannot see, with my small human sight,
Why God should lead this way or that for me;
I only know he said, "Child, follow me."
But I can trust.

I know not why my path should be at times
So straitly hedged, so strangely barred before;
I only know that God could wide the door.
But I can trust.

I find no answer, often, when beset
With questions fierce and subtle on my way,
And often have but strength to faintly pray.
But I can trust.

I often wonder, as with trembling hand
I cast the seed along the furrowed ground,
If ripened fruit for God will there be found,
But I can trust.

I cannot know why suddenly the storm
Should rage so fiercely round me in its wrath;
But this I know, God watches all my path—
And I can trust.

I may not draw aside the mystic veil
That hides the unknown future from my sight;
Nor know if for me wait the dark or light;
But I can trust.

I have no power to look across the tide,
To see while here, the land beyond the river;
But this I know, I shall be God's forever;
So I can trust.

—*Illustrated Christian Weekly.*

PREACH JESUS.

Preach Jesus, the true sacrifice for sin, offered by Himself, not any miserable substitute offered by men. Distinguish well the visible from the spiritual Church, the outward from the inward man,—so shall you keep separate the shadow from the substance, the semblance from the truth. Preach Jesus, the true Priest for ever, the High Priest in heaven: not the bishops or clergy, weak worms of the earth. Preach Jesus, "the Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man." No breathing thoughts or burning words, no tongue of angel or of flaming seraph can tell the treasures of this matchless name. Jesus, the name above every

name, has been preached in city and in country, in cottage and in dungeon, in caverns of the earth, on wildest hillside and on solitary shore; and wherever preached in simplicity, faith, and prayer, grace has been given and power bestowed, sinners have wept and prayed and trusted, while angels sang in ecstasy, and heaven has rung with joy. The poor, the miserable, the lonely and forsaken, the heirs of sorrow and the sons of shame, have been gladdened by His Gospel and cheered by His word. No music to their ears like the music of His mercy; no cordial for their heart like the balm of His blood; no cover for their nakedness like the garment of His righteousness; and no procession for their wonder like the going forth of Jesus to conquer and to save. No structure raised by mortal hands, however stately and however costly, can satisfy their taste or come up to their desire. They look for the "habitation of God" that Jesus is erecting of living stones, hewn out and fashioned by the Almighty's hand, growing and glittering in the sunshine of His power, and resting secure on His everlasting strength. Already in anticipation and contemplation thereof, are they charmed with a beauty such as eye never saw, and regaled with music such as ear never heard.—*The late Bishop of Cork.*

HOPEFUL RELIGION.

If our old religious opinions were somewhat too narrow, there is at least a possibility that in the reaction our present opinions may become too broad. If we formerly erred in condemning all pagan religions as monstrosities of cruelty and superstition, there is a tendency to-day to overpraise them as the peers of Christianity itself. It certainly is true that the same aspirations and desires, which find expression in the religious literature of the Hebrews, find expression in the religious literature of other lands. It is certainly true that the ethical rules of the best pagan writers correspond with those of the New Testament. And if the religion of Jesus Christ were what many of the apostles of Comparative Religion regard it, simply a spiritual desire, or a code of morals, there would be some ground for finding in the best paganism a hint of Christianity.

But, at least in one respect, the religion of the Bible is easily distinguished from all others. It is the only hopeful religion; it is the one which over against every aspiration sees an anticipation of its fulfilment, and over against every law a divine influence potent to secure obedience to it. A broad charity would reasonably expect to find in the longings of the human heart everywhere a certain verisimilitude. A profound philosophy would expect to find in the pronouncements of the human conscience everywhere a certain verisimilitude. It is in what the divine offers to the human that the religion of the Bible transcends that of all other sacred writings.

The burden of sin is as heavy in India as it ever was in Palestine, as it is in Great Britain or the United States. But Christianity is the only religion that even so much as offers to lift that burden from the soul, and give in its place an unsathomable peace. The plaint of David is world-wide, "Oh! that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest." The promise of Christ is unique, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The longing of the warrior's soul for victory over sin, and the fruitfulness of righteousness is expressed in the religious hymnology of India with scarcely less pathos than in that of Christendom. But the song of triumph, that resounds alike in the great cathedral, from a marvellous combination of organ, orchestra, and choir, and from the untrained voices of a negro congregation in the Southern meeting-house has no prototype in pagan experience. "I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son," is a cry that came up from the far country. "Now are we sons of God; and it doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him," is an assurance never found, except under the shadows of the Father's house. The longing for God is a universal experience. Rest in God is a characteristically Christian experience. "As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God," is not the solitary cry of a single soul. "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him, is the solitary declaration of a single Messiah.

Take a concordance—see how the Bible abounds in