

old-fashioned menace that used to be held over our heads in the shape of everlasting torments, has been greatly exaggerated, and there is every reason to believe (we are told) that the whole American people (with very few exceptions) will all come out right, even if they do let their religion set a little more lightly on them than their Puritan forefathers."

This picture is startling, but the colours are not too strong, and it will not be out of place for pastors, church officers and parents to study it. Conformity to the world by the Church has never failed to weaken and finally eat out vital piety, and then a general deterioration of morals has followed. Let us not be deceived; activity in benevolent work and even a high degree of liberality, cannot be substituted for religion in the heart and holiness of life. It is not enough to be satisfied with routine services and an outward morality, necessary and becoming as they are; a deeper and more thorough work and a higher life are demanded. The distinctive character of churches and neighbourhoods is in danger of being entirely changed by the flood of worldliness which is sweeping over them. Bitter will be the fruits of indifference, neglect and yielding on the part of Christians, while the world will jeer and mock at those who have been deluded by it.

The only effective remedy is the earnest and faithful preaching of the gospel, watching for souls on the part of pastors and all Christians, prayer, diligent keeping of the heart by all who love our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the use of all Scriptural means to arrest the attention and win the hearts of the unconverted. Just now the use of these means is specially demanded. Those in the Church who are passing along without any concern, courting rather than impelling the advances of the spirit and customs of worldliness, are exposing themselves to many evils and are giving encouragement to their children and others to go away from the Church and also from the King and Head of the Church.—*Presbyterian Banner*.

A QUIET MIND.

Most of us have found out how much easier it is to bear up bravely under a great misfortune than to act with patience, good temper, and courage when little things go wrong. How many times a day are we tried and harassed in the family! One person is apt to be irritated at trifles, and to speak petulantly and hastily when provoked. Nothing spreads more quickly than such an infirmity. It is as subtle as malaria, and as hard to overcome. If father or mother have the habit of speaking in a harsh, rasping voice, or of magnifying little faults into great crimes, the children will soon learn the trick of scowling brows and cross words. We never hear a little girl scolding her doll, in uplifted tones, nor see her striking and shaking it, without a suspicion that in that way she sees the home government administered. And when we observe gentleness, sweetness, and unselfishness predominating in the conduct of children, the inference is natural that they live in a sunny atmosphere, and have beautiful examples set before them daily.

How often we mothers have gone from our rooms, where we have had a tender season of communion with God, have read precious promises in His Book, and been strengthened against need, and then, secure, as we thought, against temptation, have had all the peace banished by some untoward occurrence! To enter the parlour and find that Jennie is playing tea with the china which is your pride, or that Tommie has made a horse of your frail Japanese chair; to have a favourite book, which you lent in the goodness of your heart, come home stained and torn: to go to the kitchen and be confronted by the stupidity or obstinacy of an ignorant servant,—these are common experiences, and how often our self-control flies before them! It is as humiliating as it is common to find that when we are on the level of our highest moods, we are apt to be swept down to our lowest.

How can we exercise ourselves so as to have a quiet mind? In two or three ways.

We cannot invariably control our thoughts and impulses, but our words and our tones are in our own power. We may resolve to preserve silence, when we are exasperated, till we feel calm, and never to elevate our tones when annoyed. A low, clear voice is a great charm in a woman; and when it is a mother's, it has an almost magical influence in the maintaining of harmony in the household.

If we would have a quiet mind, we must give fair play to the house in which our mind dwells. Often the temper is uncertain and fortitude breaks down because the body is worn out by illness or sleeplessness. Let us resolve to secure some needed repose, and some small space of solitude every day. There should be one room to which, morning or afternoon, we may retire, and be safe from intrusion, while we read, meditate, rest, or pray.

Let us make daily and practical use of our Bibles. They are full of help, of instruction, and of comfort. We can open them nowhere without finding some thought of God, outshining like a star, and dispensing its brilliant light for our cheer and guidance. The way of perfect trust is the only peaceful way in this world, and they have most of its joy who dwell nearest the heavenly Father.—*Christian at Work*.

RESTRAINTS OF GOD'S LAW.

No doubt the law restrains us, but all chains are not fetters, nor all walls the gloomy precincts of a gaol. It is a blessed chain by which the ship, now buried in the trough and now rising on the top of the sea, rides at anchor and outlives the storm. The condemned would give worlds to break his chain, but the sailor trembles lest his should snap, and when the gray morning breaks upon the wild lee shore, all strewn with wrecks and corpses, he blesses God for the good iron that stood the strain. The pale captive eyes his high prison wall, to curse the man that built it, and envy the little bird that, perched upon its summit, sings merrily, and flies away on wings of wisdom. But were you travelling some Alpine pass, where the narrow road hung over a frightful gorge, it is with other eyes you would look on the wall that restrains your restive steed from backing into the gulf below. Such are the restraints God's law imposes—no other. It is a fence from evil—nothing else. It challenges the world to put its finger on any one of these ten commandments which is not meant and calculated to keep us from harming ourselves or hurting others.—*Dr. Guthrie*.

SCOLDING IN THE PULPIT.

"He that winneth souls is wise."—Prov. xi. 30.

There is a difference between *winning* and *driving*; and one of the commonest mistakes of the pulpit is the confounding of the two, and indulging in a fault-finding, censorious spirit, instead of the opposite. Ministers may find many things going wrong in their churches, their members becoming lukewarm and worldly-minded, indulging in practices inconsistent with their profession, and that hinder the cause of Christ; and they rail out against them from Sabbath to Sabbath, and wonder that their tirades do not check these evils—that they continue just as bad, or become even worse than they were before. They feel that ministerial faithfulness requires that they should bear testimony against the sins of their flocks, and endeavour to induce them to forsake them; and so it does, but they mistake the best method of doing it. Churches, in this matter, are very much like families. They may be governed and moulded by kindness and affection, but not by scolding and fault-finding. When affection is at the helm of a family, and beams out in every look and action of its head; when sorrow, rather than anger, is depicted in the countenance when any of its members do wrong, the family can be very easily corrected, in all ordinary cases. But when petulance and railing follow each other in quick succession, and the members come to feel that they will be scolded and harshly found fault with for every little error they may fall into, all family government soon comes to an end. The head of the family loses all power to mould it. Just so it is with churches. They may be persuaded, encouraged, and reasoned into almost anything that is proper, but they can be scolded and driven into nothing. Said the sweet-tempered Christian poet, Cowper, in a letter to the Rev. John Newton: "No man was ever scolded out of his sins. The heart, corrupt as it is, and because it is so, grows angry if it be not treated with some management and good manners, and scolds again. A surly mastiff may bear perhaps to be poked, though he will growl even under that operation, but if you touch him roughly he will bite. There is no grace that the spirit of self can counterfeit with more success than religious zeal. A man thinks that he is skilfully searching the hearts of others, when he is only gratifying the malignity of his own; and chari-

tably supposes his hearers destitute of all grace, that he may shine the more in his own eyes by comparison. When he has performed this rotatable task, he wonders that they are not converted. He has given it to them soundly, and if they do not tremble and confess that God is in them in truth, he gives them up as reprobate, incorrigible, and lost for ever. But a man that loves me, if he sees me in error, will pity me, and endeavour calmly to convince me of it, and persuade me to forsake it. If he has great and good news to tell me, he will not do it angrily and in much heat and discomposure of spirit. It is not, therefore, easy to conceive on what ground a minister can justify a conduct which only proves that he does not understand his errand. The absurdity of it would certainly strike him, if he were not himself deluded."

Sharp rebuke is sometimes necessary and useful, but all other means should be tried before it is resorted to. And when we who preach the gospel fall in our attempts to reform our hearers, we ought not, at once, to settle down in a state of self-satisfaction with our own efforts, and lay all the blame on the depravity of others, and not our own. It is possible that we may not have approached them in a right spirit, and plied them with proper motives, and if so, we may be as much to blame as they are.

Two clergymen were settled in their youth in contiguous parishes. The congregation of the one had become very much broken and scattered, while that of the other remained large and strong. At a ministerial gathering, Dr. A. said to Dr. B., "Brother, how has it happened, that while I have laboured as diligently as you have, and preached better sermons, and more of them, my parish has been scattered to the winds, and yours remains strong and unbroken?" Dr. B. facetiously replied, "Oh, I'll tell you, brother. When you go fishing, you first get a great rough pole for a handle, to which you attach a large cod line, and a great hook, and twice as much bait as the fish can swallow. With these accoutrements, you dash up to the brook, and throw in your hook, with, 'There, bite, you dogs!' Thus, you scare away all the fish. When I go fishing, I get a little switching pole, a small line, and just such a hook and bait as the fish can swallow. Then I creep up to the brook, and gently slip them in, and I twitch 'em out, and twitch 'em out, till my basket is full."

DR. DUFF'S CLOSING DAYS.

The following from the Rev. Dr. Duff's memoir, gives a very pleasing view of the closing days of the great missionary:

"The deepened solitude of his life after 1865, into which even the most loving and sympathetic could not penetrate, shewed itself in a renewed study of the Word of God and of those masterpieces of theological literature, practical and scientific, in which truly devout and cultured souls take refuge from the ecclesiastical as well as literary sensationalism of the day. He had always cultivated the highest of all the graces—the grace of meditation, which feeds the others. He increasingly loved to muse, shutting himself up for hours in his study, or retiring for weeks to a friendly retreat, now in the Scottish, now in the English lakes. He was catholic in his tastes, literary and theological. He had found a strong impulse in the works of Thomas Carlyle as they appeared, declaring on one occasion to the writer that no living author had so stimulated him. He enjoyed the majestic roll and exquisite English of De Quincey's sentences, finding in him, moreover, a definiteness of faith and even dogmatic conviction as to the divine source of all duty and action which, like many admirers of Carlyle, he hungered for in the original of "Sartor Resartus." Milton and Cowper were never long out of his hands. He was a rapid reader, and a shrewd and genial critic of current literature. But he transmuted all, as the wisely earnest man will always do, into the gold of his own profession. The essayist and the poet, the historian and the politician, the philosopher and the theologian, while giving the purest pleasure and the best of all kinds of recreation at the time, became new material, literary, ethical, and spiritual, for the one end of his life, the bringing of India and Africa into the kingdom of Christ."

HATE makes us vehement partisans, but love still more so.

SYMPATHY is the key to truth; we must love in order to appreciate.—*Lord Lindsay*.