

ing the Temple Library. His theory was not generally accepted by his colleagues at the time, but as the exploration progressed a large number of tablets were found under this mound, and it was styled "Temple Hill."

During subsequent expeditions the excavations were enlarged. Finally, from the large number of tablets brought to light, Professor Hilprecht's discovery came to be generally accepted. When the last university expedition went to Nippur, Prof. Hilprecht was put in charge as scientific director and was able to prove that his theory was the correct one.

He therefore set to work to unearth the great library, and recovered 20,000 tablets, all belonging to a period prior to that of Abraham, and nearly all historical. The fact was established that the library was thrown into ruins at about the time that Abraham started upon his wanderings from the land of the Chaldees, and that it had not been disturbed from that time until the present. Twenty-five feet of debris resting upon the ruins of the library represented four millenniums of accumulation through the erection of buildings and their decay.

The library was destroyed by the Elamites about 2,280 B. C. When the roof fell in the tablets were scattered in great confusion, in which condition they were found. The excavators opened up a series of rooms in which the records had been stored. In some of these rooms ledges had been cut into the walls, something in the order of bookshelves, in which the tablets had been laid.

A connection has been traced between this library and that of the great King Ashurbanapal of Nineveh, discovered twenty-five years ago by the British explorers, Laird and Smith. This library contained Assyrian copies of Babylonian originals concerning the history of the creation and the deluge. In the Nippur Temple Library, it has been ascertained, the originals from which these copies were made, are to be found. Professor Hilprecht expects to unearth them and thus to obtain a complete record of events, told of only in part by the Assyrian copies.

The tablets recovered from the great library belong to every period of Babylonian history up to the time of Abraham. Data have been gathered regarding the different kings who reigned in Nippur, or who left records of their activity in the destruction and restoration of buildings. Some of the tablets belong to the period of the King Sardan I., who reigned 3800 B. C.

Among other things, Professor Hilprecht identified the river Chebar, on the banks of which Ezekiel saw his vision and confronted his people in their exile. It was a large, navigable canal of the City of Nippur. The place has also been found where Nebuchadnezzar quartered the children of Israel in their exile. In digging for the city walls on the southern side of the city Professor Hilprecht discovered an enormous structure which belonged to the fifth millennium before the Christian era. It was 600 feet long and floors were paved with brick. A number of large terra cotta vases and other important antiquities were found in its ruins.—New York Times.

The State of Religion.

There is need of clear thinking upon the relation of the American nation to Christianity. Every one knows that the federal government and the state governments are constitutionally debarred from making laws for "the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." But the legislative, executive and judicial branches of both national and state governments are frequently called upon to deal with questions regarding religion. It would be impossible to enumerate all these questions off hand, but some of the most familiar are those concerning religious observances in schools, prisons, the army and navy, and public institutions; real and personal property owned or controlled by religious bodies, its title, transfer, taxation; the rights, in law and equity; of citizens in cases where an ecclesiastical body is involved, including the action of ecclesiastical courts and councils; the public function conferred on ministers by the authority to perform the marriage ceremony; and statutes of the several states or municipal regulations respecting blasphemy, profanity, interference with public worship, etc., though these offenses are prevalently regarded by the courts as mere breaches of the peace rather than as affronts to religious sentiment or belief.

Some would add, as evidence of a tie between the state and Christianity, the use of the oath taken upon a copy of the Bible in courts of justice and in the installation of public officials. But this, while historically a survival of the established church of the mother country and the practically established churches of our own colonial period, is now a form nearly destitute of religious significance. Its meaning, so far as any remains, is so bound up with a mechanical and sacerdotal notion of the scriptures that enlightened Christian citizenship should demand its discontinuance. If the supposed status of our nation as a "Christian nation" is so precarious as to require the retention of such a superstitious form as kissing the book, the sooner we get rid of these

relics of mediaevalism, the better; then a sounder relation can be established.

Many would add to the list of semi-religious features in our government the Sunday laws, and some even the laws restricting divorce, in states where those laws approximate the rule supposed to have been laid down in the gospels. But this appears to have been a confusion of thought which leads to many misapprehensions. Laws prohibiting labor on Sunday are based, and must be based, solely on the ground that one day's rest in seven is found to be a physical and economic good, of which employers are not to be allowed to deprive their employees except in cases deemed by the law making power to be necessary. Laws prohibiting Sunday amusements and Sunday liquor-selling come under the head of ordinances for peace and quiet during rest time, and may be compared with police regulations as to noises or disturbances during the night, and other public nuisances. Neither class of laws can be defended if construed as attempts to force the people, by a process of negative limitations, into observing Sunday as a day of religious worship. The law takes cognizance, without approval or prejudice, of the fact that many citizens do so employ that day, and protects them in a reasonable freedom from labor and from annoyance; but this phase is merely incidental to the more important civic view of Sunday as a rest day. Special legislation concerning Sunday closing at semi-public exhibitions is to be regarded in the same way.

Christian leaders do well to fight, and fight hard, against the tendency to increase Sunday labor and Sunday amusements. But every time that they confuse their arguments by reference to the religious sanctions of Sabbath observance, or even by the use of terms, such as "desecration," which involve religious principles, they harm the cause which they are trying to support. The case stands thus: Legalism and the Christian use of Sunday have nothing to do with each other, either in the civil or in the religious sphere. For in the civil sphere legal regulation can and should go no further than to insure a day free in the main from enforced physical labor and to secure a reasonable quiet which promotes rest and prevents interference with worship. And in the religious sphere the Christian use of Sunday is not a matter of law but of enlightened liberty—not the Sabbath of the Pharisees, or even the Sabbath of the written law with its prohibition of a fire and its capital punishment for wood-gathering; but the Lord's Day of the early Christian church, a voluntary and cheerful setting apart of a day for spiritual refreshment and worship, which can manifestly be governed by no statute more specific than the universal law of love to God and man, interpreted by the example of Jesus.—The Standard.

Unrest in the Ministry.

BY H. WALKER VINCENT.

The work of the Christian ministry is one that angels might well envy. The lowliest place in his kingdom where a real messenger of God labors is filled with an honor that no earthly splendor could ever give. The teaching and the preaching of his blessed word . . . what a privilege however great the suffering. And yet in the lives of men who have said to Jesus Christ, "I will follow whereso'er thou leadest me," in these very lives there is an unrest. I think it is not putting the case too strongly to say that seven out of every ten in the ministry to-day would be glad to change their field of labor if the way were open. This is a sad fact and surely it is not out of place to ask the cause of this dissatisfaction.

In the first place a sorry preacher is he whom God has not called. Dissatisfaction and unrest will trouble him wherever he goes and he will vex his soul with many changes till he leaves the work for those who are chosen to bear the King's messages. Sometimes a minister's service is worth about \$5,000 in his own mind, when the people only give him \$500, and it is not strange that he should desire a change. A clear loss every year of \$4,500. Are we wrong in supposing this to be a large factor in causing dissatisfaction in the ministry—men not getting what they think they are worth?

Then, again, there are peculiar difficulties on every field which do not always show themselves at the beginning of one's labors, but little by little as a man enters into the reality of the work, the skeleton faces and frightens him. A stubborn deacon, or a whole board of them for that matter, a fiery headed Sunday-school superintendent, some long tongued agent of the "old serpent," a lack of godliness on the part of many of the church members make other fields of more consecrated and appreciative people fill the dreams of the dissatisfied preacher.

It is possible that the ministry would be better satisfied as a body if they were not so dependent upon recommendations, photographs and newspaper clippings to make their calling and election sure. It would certainly save many a restless night if preachers of God's word would remember this old but blessed truth, "He that pusheth the Lord's doors will get his fingers pinched," and he ought to.

It may be that the chief cause of a changing ministry is due to this, that too few men enter deeply enough into the real work, suffering, and necessities of their fields to be bound. Whenever a man really gets under the load of the church he is serving, he is not likely to get away however much he may grow, but will manifest the true heroic spirit, the willingness to suffer for the gospel's sake and nothing but the unmitigated leading of God can persuade that man to give up his work. Bigger salaries, broader culture, fewer difficulties will not enter into it. For he will believe with all his soul that God led him to his place of service and there will he stay till an unwavering hand shall lead him forth. May the time speedily come among the ministers of his word when personal preference will be lost sight of in the earnest determination to do his will. Then will we be his messengers indeed, and each of our lives will furnish the sublime music to the victorious words, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, thenceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."—Commonwealth.

Love's Conspiracy.

The profoundest writer of any age, in dealing with the mysteries of human life, said: "To those who love God, all things work together for good." Study the text and your interest increases. Literally, everything unites in a conspiracy of love to help the Christian. Here is a combine, a trust, under the management of the Infinite, worthy your membership. Co operate with God in this promise, and happiness is as certain as gravitation.

In times of trial do not say: All these things are working against me. There is no order, no law of love working for me in life. In our cotton-mills, to the first-time visitor, the looms, spindles and shuttles appear to be in utter confusion. But the packing room reveals, in the finished cloth, a conspiracy of happy service. So would your Father weave, in his great factory, all the events of your life into a beautiful character-garment. As the fleeting, lawless, magnetic clouds of the aurora form above the quiet observer's head a crown of glory, even thus will the seemingly fortuitous affairs of your life, when you are rightly and trustfully related to them, issue in a coronation hour more joyful than that of kings.—J. W. Brigham.

Snowflakes.

I love to see the snowflakes fly,
So soft and silent through the air;
So purely white, so wondrous fair,
Like spirit birds from out the sky.

I love to see them lightly fall,
On e'en the meanest things of earth,
As though to them each had its worth,
And all were worthy to be blest.

I lift my eyes and see the clouds,
Not fierce and dark but only sad,—
For surely thy could not be glad
To see the snowflakes weaving shrouds!

O'er moor and lake, on plain and hill,
They spread their mantle soft and white,—
And oh! it is a wondrous sight
To watch them work with magic skill.

They cover e'en the smallest flower
That blushed beneath the summer sun,
And act as though 'twere only fun,
To exercise such magic power.

They do their work with grace and speed;
Their duty is a pleasant task,—
The reason why we need not ask,
So plain it is, that all may read,

They gifted are with future sight,
They see not death but only rest,
And so they work with joy and zest
To cover nature for the night.

They see ahead the glorious morn
When singing birds shall thrill the air
With merry music everywhere,
To greet all nature newly born.

Wolfville, N. S., MABEL VERNON JONES.

A Thanksgiving Prayer.

BY REV. W. F. DICKENS-LEWIS.

God of Mercy, God of Grace,
On all Thy bounties to the race,
On all Thy gifts to good and kind,
We cast a loving look behind,
And thank thee.

We come to Thee, O God of Love,
For all our blessings from above;
For all the mercies of the year,
To Thee we humbly would draw near
To thank thee.

We lowly bend before Thy throne,
For harvests which Thy hand hath grown,
For health and strength of mind and heart,
For prosperous commerce of the mart,
We thank thee.

For peace within our Nation's land,
For guidance by Thy gracious hand,
For gifts which to Thy love belong,
We worship Thee in tuneful song
And thank thee.

We bless Thee, Father, for our Church,
And darkened souls Thy love doth reach
In triumphs which the cross hath won;
And till the days of earth are done
We'll thank thee.

—New York Observer.