

ectly for that perfection? If all Christian men would always vote alike and in the interests of mortality and religion, how long would it be before saloons were banished from our cities and Sabbath-breaking restrained by the officers of the law?

All this is plausible, and doubtless many ministers have yielded to it. But it may be well to inquire whether the chief end of preaching may not be in danger of being overlooked. There certainly are matters of common interest to both the pulpit and the secular press, and both may harmonize at times in their public appeals. But each has its own distinctive field. The pulpit should be distinctly religious; that is, its chief end is to bring God and man together for a personal understanding. Man, the sinner, is brought before God by faithful preaching in the hope that he may repent, seek and accept pardon, and enter voluntarily into the service of God. His conversion will never be anything else than the result of his own personal dealing with God. And man, the volunteer in God's service, is also by faithful preaching brought face to face with God, that his purpose to serve him may be intensified and his work may appear more plainly. It is with this latter end in view that the preacher may take up social problems; he wishes to make the Christian see more plainly that he seems to do the work God would have him do. But even in such an endeavor is it not a mistake to assume, or to seem to assume, that what is most needed is a knowledge of what is right in commercial or political life? It certainly seems necessary to give some people instruction on these matters. But after all ignorance is not the sole or principal cause of wrong doing. Men go wrong in business because they hope thereby to gain advantage of some kind, and self-interest proves too powerful a rival for devotion to God and right. They find it easy to convince their own mind that what is legal or customary is right—at least, nearly enough right for them, in the present circumstances. We may infer that they need more light, and that a sermon on the subject may enlighten them to such a degree that they may decline to yield to the temptation, and this may be a correct inference. But it is certainly as sound an inference that what is needed is a more decided loyalty to God, a deeper purpose to do right, whatever may be the result to self; and this is a result that may always be effected by faithful preaching of divine truth, even when there is no reference to current questions. The men who wreck banks, ask people to buy stocks at double their real value, buy their way into offices, make divorce a coveted refuge for a maltreated wife, are not men who have a deep-seated purpose to do right in the sight of God; and such a purpose is their greatest need.

The chief end of preaching is the regeneration of the individual; and this is not effected by telling him about right and wrong ways of carrying on the affairs of society and the State, nor by severe denunciations of public wrong-doers, however well deserved they may be. He must have brought before his mind his personal relations to God in a way to make him feel his obligation to obey, and to awake in him the confidence and love that makes obedience a delight. But when the individuals enter into such a relationship with God they cannot be indifferent to their social and civil duties. The chief end is not the regeneration of society, but that follows the regeneration of its individual members. If the reconstruction of society be directly sought

by the Christian ministry they lose their greatest power for good over men and can do no more than other members of society; but the ministers who successfully seek the redemption of men from sin and their consecration to God's service render most effective aid toward the reconstruction of society, although their services may not be publicly recognized.

We are not intimating that the modern preacher should ignore what is going on in the world. Preaching that keeps constantly in view the chief end need not be narrow, need not be repeating constantly a few truths. The relations of God and man are multiform and called for variety of expressions. However varied the sermons in theme and style, there may yet in every one be some attempt to bring God and man face to face, and out of every such interview the man must depart more fully resolved to do his duty in every walk of life, and his moral vision will be clearer as to the real claims of his fellow-men.—The Presbyterian Banner.

### Opportunity and the President.

On the wall of the President's office in Washington hangs, framed, an autograph copy of J. Ingalls' sonnet, "Opportunity." In what administration it became a presidential property is not indicated, but Senator Ingalls died in the last year of President McKinley's first term, so, presumably the sonnet did not come into that office with Colonel Roosevelt. There was a controversy about this sonnet in the papers last June, arising from the claim of an Italian-American poet that he wrote the piece in Italian in the first place and brought it to Mr. Ingalls' notice, and that Mr. Ingalls' deliverance was no more than a translation, or paraphrase, of his work. That may be: Mr. Ingalls is dead and can't tell us. But true or not, it does not greatly signify, for it is Ingalls' English sonnet that has gained attention, and not the Italian version. So here is the sonnet printed on this page as Ingalls made it famous:

#### OPPORTUNITY.

BY THE LATE SENATOR JOHN J. INGALLS.  
Master of human destinies am I!  
Fame, love and fortune on my footsteps wait.  
Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate  
Deserts and fields remote, and, passing by  
Hovel and mart and palace, soon or late,  
I knock unbidden once at every gate.  
If sleeping, wake; if feasting, rise before  
I turn away. It is the hour of fate,  
And they who follow me reach every state  
Mortals desire, and conquer every foe  
Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate  
Condemned to failure, penury or woe,  
Seek me in vain and uselessly implore—  
I answer not, and I return no more.

It is a good sonnet—good poetry—but how far is it true? Is life such a touch-and-go affair as it makes out? Does opportunity knock "once" at every gate, unbidden or otherwise, and if it goes away does all high success go with it? Undoubtedly there are chances in life. Undoubtedly there are crises in the lives of most men where a choice must be made between courses, and where the future of the individual is enormously affected by the choice made. But I should be very sorry to accept the suggestion that success or failure in life turns on a man's ability to recognize one single great opportunity when it presents itself, and grapple it. The reputation of the chances commended by their purveyors as "opportunities of a-lifetime" is not very good. They are apt to be very speculative chances in which the only profit that is sure is the profit of the vendor. Life

is quite enough of a gamble as it really is. Every day the dice rattle in the box and the way they fall makes a difference, but it is by no means sound philosophy to represent everything at stake on a single great cast.

And that in a measure is what the Ingalls sonnet seems to do. We have one great chance, it says—one apiece: but if we miss that we might as well take down our sign.

It isn't so. Chance abounds, so do chances. Life is not a speculation, it is a problem. Opportunity is one of its most persistent incidents. It is the stuff in the man that makes the difference.—E. S. Martin in November "Metropolitan."

### Zola's Confession.

Mme. Edmond Adam in "My Literary Life," just published, tells this story of Emile Zola:

It was Hetzel who told me the story, three or four years later, of a young author who had once brought him a manuscript, the first two parts of which had given him infinite delight for the artistic merit, both of the subject matter and composition, but to his utter amazement and sorrow the third part was so obscene, nay, even nauseatingly purulent, that he turned away from it in positive disgust. On the appointed day, when the author came to learn some news of his book, Hetzel said to him:

"When your talent is such, sir, that you are capable of writing the first two parts of a book like yours, how can you find it in you to dishonor your pen by what you have deposited in the third part? What mental aberration can have induced you to become guilty of so foul a reproach as a criminal in letters?"

"Sir," replied the young author, "the first two parts were written to seduce literary people who make reputations; the last part was written for those who are to buy the book."

"How dare you make such a cynical confession?"

"My object is to teach the French reader to have a taste for the depicting of vices which surround him. Truth chastises hypocrites, but instructs those who pretend to virtue."

"A pretty object of ambition this is! Please Heaven, it may not be granted to you to corrupt our readers, and to destroy all the good we, and those who have gone before us, have tried to do. You are young and you are clever. I sincerely trust you will not persevere in your unhealthy wager. Believe me, clean and healthy books alone have continuous sales, and are the only ones acceptable to prosperity. You have a foreign name. May you, as you become more French, grow in wisdom."

The young author was Emile Zola.

Basket ball is a missionary agency. A teacher in the Friends' girls' school (English) at Tung Chwan in Yunnan, China, says that the Chinese girls are wild over it. Four of the girls have unbound their feet, two are unbinding, and others are trying to get permission from home to do likewise. The excitement of the game has done what no amount of exhortation could have accomplished in the way of setting free these young women bound by Satan these many years.

Sixteen of the world's leading nations have agreed by treaty to suppress in the greater part of the Congo Free State the traffics in slaves, firearms, and strong drink.