

moral principal before it is capable of the highest power." Emphasis must be laid upon ethical culture thereby saving the youth of our land from moral degradation if we would add life and vigor to the republic. If the public school fails to do its work in this respect the story of free government will soon be written.

Youth—that period of mad passions and generous impulses, mighty purposes and defective reasonings—that period so full of hope and danger, when the forces of evil and of good are fighting for the mastery over the soul! How much, oh teacher, depends upon the character of your work! Think of the sacred charge given into your keeping! Lose neither time nor opportunity for the future citizenship of the country lies plastic in your hands to mould it as you will? Believe in yourself—believe in the dignity of your work, and be loyal to both. Rest assured there is no nobler and no more important calling than yours. Be assured also that your work is appreciated more and more by the people as they understand what you are really doing in the service of God and man; and if you are doing it well and leading those in your keeping to larger and purer purposes in life many will rise up in after years and call your name blessed. After all there can be no greater reward than gratitude, for it is the tribute of the soul. Go forth then to your work with courage and hopeful enthusiasm; make the most of yourself and do the best for your pupils. Let your motive be love for the work; let your arm be power and culture and righteousness for those you lead and inspire to the better life. Thus you will emulate the ideal teacher who,

"Day by day for her darlings
To her much she added more.
In her hundred gated Thebes
Every chamber was a door;
A door to something grander,
Lottier wall and wider floor."

Popular sovereignty is the genius of modern free government only so long as it is properly educated, and in order to make it complete and effective we must educate the whole man, and how much that means for better conditions of life! When we are able to do this we will have a virtuous citizenship and a sound and righteous government.

An idea is the conception of a possibility. What were once ideas are now realities. Liberty has a new meaning, the mind a new freedom, conscience a new power, history a new era. Yet we must remember that if we are to perpetuate our free institutions amidst the rapidly increasing complexities of modern life, the laws of righteousness cannot be violated. When righteousness exalts our nation, then our people will be happy, for their lives will be directed by "the piety not merely of the heart, but the piety of the intellect that beholds truth, the piety of the will that does good deeds wisely, the piety of the senses that sees the beautiful and realizes it in works of art." Our country with its mighty mission among the governments of men in the future stands or falls on the fundamental proposition of universal suffrage and universal education. The first would be a destructive force without the latter; the latter is dangerous unless it educates the whole man. This is the mission of the free school and the only reason for its existence, as I understand it, viz., to produce the very best type of citizenship, which in turn contributes to the highest human welfare. Let us guard it with jealous care and a willingness and readiness not only to live by it but to die for it, if necessary, and meanwhile to remember with Emerson that "Cause and effect, means and end, seed and fruit, cannot be severed, for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end pre-exists in the means, the fruit in the seed."—Eugene A. Mead.

Christ's Prisoners.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CULYER, D. D.

These two words, when read together, sound like a single pair of bedfellows. For to be behind the bars of a jail in our day commonly indicates an accomplice of Satan. But in apostolic days imprisonment often was a badge of honor. The chiefest of the Apostles, when he wrote a letter to his Colossian friend, Philemon, signed himself, "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ." The old hero is Christ's ambassador in Nero's fetters—a prisoner not for evil doing, but for well-doing, his manacles are badges of honor; and while his scarred body is bound; his soul is rejoicing as Christ's freedman from the yoke of sin, and there is not a happier man in Rome.

The essence of imprisonment is to be confined in one place, without the permission or possibility of going where one chooses. In this sense there are a great many good people who are Christ's servants, and yet are prisoners. They are shut-ins without their own consent. Some of them are unable to get into God's house on Sabbath, though the Lord of the house comes to them. Some have been confined within the walls of one room for long, weary years. During my pastorate I used to visit, year after year, a lovely and cultured young lady who knew nothing of the outdoor world, except the glimpses she got from her bedroom window. What sermons that brave girl used to preach to me on the beauties of Christian patience! I learned from her what a sweet rest there is in the everlasting Arms." She never uttered to me one syllable of dis-

content during the whole fourteen or fifteen years of her imprisonment in that sick chamber! When I read to her some cheering passage from God's Book, or gave her a sip of honey from that inexhaustible honey comb, a joyous smile passed over her face (which was sadly distorted by long disease), as if she were saying, "Oh, how good that tastes!" If there was one room in Brooklyn that the Master "ofttimes restored to," it was that in which this bright sunny-souled girl spent all her youthful years as a "prisoner of Jesus Christ."

Just why it is that the all-wise and loving Master permits some of his choicest servants to be laid aside from all active service and to be tortured often by sharp bodily pains I cannot understand. When every voice is so needed to teach and to preach His gospel, why are so many doomed to silence? When every hand is needed in his service, why are so many of his soldiers destined to lie helpless in the hospitals? It is not my business to explain all these mysteries. But there are some explanations that give me partial relief.

One is, that Christian life is a school for the promotion of that vitally important thing—Christ-like character. And some of the most beautiful traits can only be got through suffering. Hot furnaces often make the brightest Christian. It is not those whom he hates but those whom he loves, that he thus chasteneth. The Master sits as a refiner beside the furnace of affliction. He heats it until the metal melts, and the dross of selfishness and impatience and unbelief runs off. He often keeps his silver in the furnace till he can see his own face reflected in the clear metal of the heart as in a mirror. Then the affliction is doing its appointed work, and Jesus has made the vessel unto his own honor. During my pastoral experience I have discovered what some of the most attractive and well ripened Christian characters belonged to those who had been schooled by intense bodily sufferings. Perhaps when such reach heaven, they may be more than content that in this world they were among the Lord's shut-ins.

The prisoners of Jesus Christ may be among the most useful of his servants I mean useful to others. A gaoler locked himself up at Philippi; but in a few hours he had that very gaoler at his feet crying out "What must I do to be saved?" At Rome he preached the Gospel to those around him until there were many converts in Caesar's household. He wrote seven of his inspired epistles while he was Nero's captive—one of them was the letter to Philippi, which is the special epistle of gratitude for divine mercies, and of exultant joy under sharp afflictions.

I need not remind my readers of the case of John Bunyan who would probably never have written the immortal "Pilgrim's Progress" if he had not been an inmate of Bedford Goal.

Miss Charlotte Elliott composed that wonderful hymn, "Just as I am, without one plea," and some of her exquisite songs of the soul, while she was imprisoned in a sick chamber. An invalid lady, who could no longer be a tract distributor in her district, spent her time in folding and directing leaflets of awakening to the impenitent, or consolation to the troubled—and these she sent through the post or by special messenger. You may imprison a body, but you cannot imprison a soul that is luminous with the light of Jesus, and vocal with the inspirations of his spirit.—Baptist Commonwealth.

Aim of the Church.

It is important and even essential that every Christian should have a definite and correct view of the true aim of the church. Men engaged in worldly pursuits know exactly what they are trying to do. Ask a farmer or any one of the men working on a farm what they hope to accomplish by all their toil, and without a moment's hesitation he will answer correctly: "In this field we are raising corn; in that field wheat; in another field clover." Ask the proprietor of a great factory or any employee in the establishment what all the labor and machinery are for and he will give an immediate and correct answer: "We are making carpets, or watches, or sewing machines, or reapers." There is no uncertainty no doubt. Go into a school where hundreds of young people meet together five days in the week, and ask any teacher or scholar what it is all for, and he will tell you that they are teaching the young to think. If it should be a school with a special purpose, a teacher or student will say, "We are making physicians, ministers, or soldiers here." In every case the answer is definite and correct.

How many members of a great church can tell just what all the machinery and effort of the church are for? Yet this is one thing which everyone who belongs to a church should know perfectly. The aim of the church is not to furnish entertainment. Many persons go to church to be entertained, and if the entertainment is satisfactory they will go again, but if it is otherwise they are not attracted by what they have heard and seen. The church should not be dull and stupid. The minister should not be indifferent to the desire for entertainment. He should do what he can to interest and attract even the worldly to the sanctuary by presenting the truth in the most forcible way. But entertainment must not be the aim of the sermon, the song or the prayer. This is a secondary and incidental consideration.

It is not the aim of the church to gratify the social longings of the people. Those who manage the affairs of the church must not forget that men and women have social feelings. Many are driven from the church by the coldness and indifference of its members. But the church is not a social club, and all efforts to attract and hold the people by appealing to their social nature must be subservient to a higher end. It is not the aim of the church to cultivate and improve the intellectual life of men. Some are so intellectual that they cannot enjoy a religious service unless it is of high intellectual order. The church does appeal to the intellect, quicken and stimulate the intellectual faculties and improve the intellectual life of the community. But this also is incidental. The aim of the church is higher.

The church cannot afford to direct its energies toward the support of a political party. No doubt every true church does influence the political movements of the country. It is a great blessing to the state. But the church which lends or sells itself to a political party or leader, or a political machine, is not a church of God. Nor is it the aim of the church to build up a strong and influential society founded on wealth, fashion and culture. We have witnessed a deal of rivalry in this direction. Many laymen appear to think that the church will be strengthened by adding to its membership as many rich men as possible, and it is necessarily a weak church if its members are all poor. Their ideal of a church is a wealthy society. We do not disparage wealth. Those who condemn men simply because they are wealthy are narrow and partisan in spirit. Some rich men are humble, unselfish pure, and honest as any that live. Some poor men are as worldly-minded, as proud and cruel as it is possible for men to be. The church should not ask whether a man is rich or poor, but remember that he is a man. In the church the rich and poor should meet together, for the Lord is the maker of them all.

The true aim of the church is to make good men, women, and children. To bring men to God and lead them in the paths of righteousness, to train them in virtue and holiness, is the work of the church. All else must bend to this. Men need nothing so much as a good pure heart. They need education, culture, refinement, money, bread, and a thousand things. But they can do without all these. They cannot do without a pure heart and a right spirit. The world needs nothing so much as good men. It needs great men, educated men, rich men, men of genius, statesmen. But most of all it needs men with right hearts, men whose goodness is not merely outward but inward also. True men are needed everywhere and at all times. This is a great work. The farmer is doing a great work, but his work is to produce bodily food. Important as it is, it can not be compared with the bread of life which nourishes the soul. The manufacturer is doing much for the world, but he is dealing with material things. The teacher is a great blessing and the school is indispensable. But the school deals with the intellect and with conscience. The church deals with the heart, the conscience, the affections, and the relation of the spirit of man to the Spirit of God.

If all ministers and all Christians would make everything in the church bend to this one great purpose their labors would be lighter and the results would be grander. Set the heart right and all will be right. There will be little trouble about entertainment and social enjoyment and all the rest when the heart is right. Everything in its order. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."—Christian Advocate.

The Minister's Duty.

The minister is to be simply colonel of the regiment. The real fighting is to be done by the men in the ranks who carry the guns. No idea could be more non-Christian or more irrational than that the religious colonel is engaged to do the fighting for his men, while they sit at ease. And yet, perhaps, there is one idea current which is more absurd still. That is that there is to be no fighting at all, but that the colonel is paid to spend his time solacing his regiment, or giving it gentle, educative instruction, not destined ever to result in any downright manly effort on the part of the whole regiment to do anything against the enemy. Laymen are bound to propagate their religion by speaking about it, by preaching it, in fact. When one meets another in a railway train and speaks of Christ to him, it is as legitimate a type of preaching as the delivery of a set discourse by another man from a pulpit in the church. Telling men the gospel, explaining what Christ can be to a man, is preaching, as scriptural as any preaching can be made. Ministers ought to make this plain, and lay the duty of such preaching upon all their laymen, and teach them how to do it. It makes no difference if it is done haltingly. A broken testimony from a laborer to his friend is likely to be more effective than a smooth and consecutive Sunday morning sermon. It would be a good thing if all ministers should read aloud to their people chapter after chapter on Sunday mornings, as preludes to their sermons most of the chapters of Dr. Trumbull's little book on "Individual Work for Individuals," and thus set before the layman in their churches the true ideal of Christian evangelism, which is the propagation of Christianity, not by public preachers so much as by private conversation and the testimony of common men.—Robert E. Speer.