

about it, and glorified him for saving grace. Both became earnest, consistent followers of Jesus, and lived so, and were a great power for good in home, factory, town and church. About three years after his conversion he met with a fatal accident, but lived for months after it, full of patience, love and faith, and then went home to his "Father's house," a monument of what redeeming grace can do.—Journal and Messenger.

How To Be A Pastor.

BY REV THEODORE L. CUVLER.

What is the chief object of the Christian minister? It goes without saying that it is to win souls to Jesus Christ. The chief element of power with every true minister should be heart-power. The majority of all congregations—rich or poor—are reached not so much through the intellect as through the affections. This is an encouraging fact; for only one man in ten may have the talent to be a very great preacher; but all the other nine, if they love Christ and love human souls, can become great pastors. Nothing gives a pastor such heart-power as personal attentions to his people, for everybody loves to be noticed. Especially is personal sympathy welcome in seasons of trial. Let a pastor make himself at home in everybody's home; let him come often and visit their sick rooms, and kneel beside their empty cribs and their broken hearts and pray with them; let him go and see the business man when they have suffered reverses, and give them a word of cheer; let him recognize and speak kindly to the children, and he will weave a cord around the hearts of his people that will stand a prodigious pressure. His inferior sermons (for about every minister preaches such sometimes) will be kindly condoned, and he can launch the most sharp and pungent truths at them from the pulpit, and they will not take offense. He will have won their hearts to himself, and that is a mighty step toward drawing them to the course of God and winning their souls to the Saviour. "A house going minister," said Chalmers, "makes a church-going people."

The chief end of a minister's work must never be lost sight of. It is to awaken the careless, to warn the endangered, to comfort the sorrowing, to help the weak, and to edify believers; in short, it is to make bad people good, and good people better. Preaching strong gospel sermons is one of the most effective means to this end. But it is not the only one. Outside of the pulpit every messenger of Christ can come to close quarters with the individual soul and preach eye to eye; no one can dodge such preaching or go to sleep under it. If the shepherd can only save the sheep by going after the sheep, then woe be unto him if he neglect his duty! As many souls are won to Christ outside the pulpit as in the pulpit. Every discourse, too, can be lodged more securely in the hearts of the people by constant and affectionate intercourse with them during the week. I am firmly persuaded that if many a minister would take part of the time he now spends in polishing his discourses, and devote it to pastoral visitation, he would have larger congregations and a far larger number of conversions to Christ. He would be a healthier man for the physical exercise; he would be a more fluent speaker from the practice he would gain in personal conversation; he would be a much more tender, eloquent, and heart-moving ambassador of Christ.

"How shall I become such a pastor?" To this question I would reply, Determine to become one, cost what it may. If you are shy and bashful, conquer your diffidence; a man has no business to be a shepherd if he is afraid of the sheep. If you are naturally reserved and reticent, unlock your lips. Go and talk with your people about anything or everything, until you get in touch with them; and then if you have any grace or "gumption" you can certainly manage to say something to them about the "one thing needful." It is not best that a minister should talk exclusively about things spiritual. Talk to them about their business, and show your interest in what they are doing. Encourage them to talk with you about your discourses; you will discover what shots strike and what are only blank cartridges. Watch your chance to put in a timely and loving word for your master. You are Christ's man on Christ's business. If you can only gain your point by going often to the house, then go often. One soul won wins others. You can reach the parents sometimes by reaching the son or daughter. These personal conversations with individual souls will train you to be a closer, more suggestive and practical preacher. They will make you colloquial and simple and direct in the pulpit. Half of all the preaching is fired into the air. By knowing your auditors thoroughly, you can learn how to take aim. You will gather also most precious material for your sermons by going about among your people and finding out what they are doing, what they are thinking, what they are suffering, and what they need.

Resolve to devote a portion of every day to pastoral service. To visit a large congregation consumes a vast amount of time; but can you spend it more profitably elsewhere? Be on the lookout for sermon hits wherever you

go; one hour with a live man may teach you more than two hours with a dead book. Do your book work and your Bible study in the forenoon, when your mind is fresh; devote your afternoons to making or receiving visits. Your evenings can be used for religious services and for some social recreations, and for occasional pastoral visits and for general reading. But be wise enough not to burn out your brains in writing sermons by lamplight. Morning is the time which God gives you for study.—N. Y. Advocate.

Repeated Chastisements.

In reading the Bible, one, if given to careful reflection, is impressed with the accounts of God's repeated judgments, or diversified chastisements. Pharaoh refused to let his people go at his command, and plague succeeded plague. When God had an abhorred race on his hands in the wilderness, sore dispensation multiplied according to occasion and requirement. All through Israel's history it became necessary to add stroke to stroke. In the New Testament record a succession of adverse and trying conditions appears.

Marvel at and criticize this method of divine procedure as one may, God has in and through it a beneficent design. Man is very forgetful, and naturally heedless. He needs the power of repetition to add dull memory and to deepen the sense of responsibility. Pharaoh ignored God and obligation upon the lifting of the first admonition. He hardened his heart against a teaching and judging God, and had to learn his lesson in the school of bitter experience. Plagues followed in telling succession until he was brought to know his own littleness and God's greatness and until he recognized that duty had claims upon him and that he could have no rest or peace unless he released an oppressed people and allowed them to work out their ordained mission under other and different conditions.

It is useless to quarrel with God as he makes his onslaughts upon our slippery memories and our very selfish lives. It is far more to the point to note his purpose in it, to fall into line with it and to gather out of it a storehouse of experience that will abide with us for guidance, inspiration and direction all our days. Dark and trying providences are in vain. They may come oftener than we may wish or relish, and may cause many a surprise, but they are careful to keep alive a tender and responsive spirit and to bring a growing dependence upon an overruling and directive power. The more we hold back and fail to respond to the first, second or third admonition, the louder and more urgent the subsequent dispensations until we let go all that stands in the way of a hearty, full and implicit compliance with the requirements of the hour. God may then lift the pain, but he leaves the mark of the chastisement for our good in after times. The experienced in life bear many an impress of repeated adversity, but the sanctified influence is among their most prized memories.

It sometimes happens that persons under multiplied afflictions think they have reached the limit of divine infliction or of a possible endurance. But lower depths of misery exist and larger measures of sorrow could be meted out. God has not exhausted his power to chastise. His resources are infinite. The worst has never been experienced. There are still bitterer cups to drink or heavier strokes to bear. God can destroy both body and soul. He knows how much punishment to send, and when it is enough. We are in his hands. He is merciful and good, as well as just and righteous. It is not ours to find fault but to recognize the beneficence of his dealings, and see in them an evidence of the worth of the soul which he thus seeks to save. He warns as well as entreats. He afflicts as well as blesses. He thinks so much of the soul's restoration to his own image that he neglects no agency that provides happy results in this direction. He seeks to purify the dross from the gold of character and to leave the bright, precious and enduring substance. He implants fear as well as develops love in human nature by his disciplinary processes, and thereby, shows the high estimate which he places upon it. There is love in his sharp and adverse siftings as well as in his generous and prosperous dealings, and if we are rightly disposed toward him, we will bless and honor him for his repeated chastisements as well as for his multiplied mercies. He is in all things, and overrules everything to the permanent welfare of all who put their trust and hope in him as the providential and gracious disposer of all events.—Presbyterian.

Christmas Around the World

The Christmas festivities vary in different countries. In our own land there are the giving of presents, the church going, the dinners, and the festive joy that prevail both among the high and the low. But there is one part of our country where the Christmas customs are signally diverse from those of any other portion of America, and that is in that great northern territory called Alaska. The people of Alaska are nearly all Russians and Indians, and they belong, nominally at least, to the

Greek church. They also count time by the Julian calendar, or "Old Style," as it is sometimes called, instead of the Gregorian calendar by which we and most of the European nations reckon. This method of computing time brings all the fixed holidays twelve days later than our customary dates. Thus the Russian Christmas occurs on the sixth of our January.

One of the most interesting ceremonies outside of the church service practiced in Alaska is what they call "Going around with the stars." A large star with six or more points is made on a light wood frame, somewhat gaudily painted and decorated with bright-colored tissue paper, and this is borne round from house to house by a party of boys and girls. Wherever they stop they are invited in, for everybody keeps "open house" at this season, where they sing some of the musical Russian Christmas carols, after which they are regaled with what dainties are upon the table.

This going around with the star is practiced three nights, and is supposed to typify the quest of the wise men who followed the Star in search of the Infant Christ. The third night the "Starbearers" are more or less disturbed by bands of maskers, who go around and try to catch the "Star parties," and destroy the star. These maskers are believed to represent the soldiers sent by King Herod to destroy the young children in hope that the Infant Jesus would perish in the slaughter.

The Christmas festival in Mexico is one long, hilarious holiday. Long before the Holy Night, the Mexicans, young and old, men and women, are preparing for the Christmas season. First come the rehearsals for the "Pastores," sometimes called the Mexican Passion Play. The Pastores follows night after night, passing even into the climax of the solemn midnight mass of the cathedral. The "pasadas" next claim the attention of the people. This is a home observance, something similar to the Christmas tree of the German people. Every family has one of these trees, and the children hang their gifts upon it, and a figure in a mask to resemble Santa Claus gives all the presents away, adapting his gift and his speech to the wishes and necessities of each one. After the distribution of presents, there follows the week of worldly enjoyment, the contests over the gaming tables, the revival of balls and fetes, and the brutal sports day and night in the bloody house a table is kept furnished all day with wine, cake and sweetmeats for visitors, who talk first, compliment, and sip wine and nibble cake with remarkable perseverance. Even the birds are not forgotten, and every Norwegian hangs out a sheaf of corn or wheat for their Christmas dinner. The scolding of these birds about the gables and roofs of the peasant cottages makes a Norwegian Christmas cheery. The burning of the Yule log is common to every Christian country, but in the Back Mountain there is a "great log o' Christmas," and there are smaller logs for each member of the family. The wood must be cut before sunrise Christmas morning. The head of the house, followed by his family, goes into the forest and cuts down a standing stump. He then takes off his cap to the log, turns toward the east, crosses himself, and off he goes up this prayer: "Give to me and to Christmas abundantly, O God." If by chance the log falls the wrong way, they cut another, unless indeed they choose to be unlucky for a year. The logs are drawn to the house and leaned against the wall, with the cut end uppermost. If one by mistake is reversed, the whole thing must be done over again, or else misfortune will be sure to come to the family. When the fire is lighted, there is great joy in the household, but no one on any account must speak of witcher after the great log is placed on the hearth, for they are supposed to be flying around on Christmas night as "pitiful as sparks."—Fred Myron Colby, in New York Observer.

Old Age.

Professor Jewett, the great master of Balliol College, had wise words to speak on the crucial topic of growing old. He wrote to a friend:

"The latter years of life appear to me, from a certain point of view, to be the best. They are less disturbed by care and the world; we begin to understand that things really never did matter so much as we supposed, and we are able to see them more in their true proportion, instead of being overwhelmed by them. We are more resigned to the will of God—neither afraid to depart nor overanxious to stay. We cannot see into another life, but we believe, with an inextinguishable hope, that there is something still reserved for us."

It is worth while to remember his hints for old age, full, as they are, of a practical wisdom.

Beware of the coming on of age, for it will not be defied.

A man cannot become young by over-exerting himself.

A man of sixty should lead a quiet, open-air life.

He should collect the young about him,

He should set other men to work.

He ought, at sixty, to have acquired authority, reticence, and freedom from personality.

He may truly think of the last years of life as being the best, and every year as better than the last, if he knows how to use it.