

like unto those in which we were nurtured, we have supplied to a great degree the bone and sinew of other denominations. The American Board, the Home Missionary Society, and other kindred agencies have thereby lost in this way those who are now peculiarly the largest and ablest givers in the west. For when any one from a Congregational church in the east fails to connect himself with one of like order in the newer States of our country, he not only drops out of the denomination, but those great missionary organizations which depend for support on the Congregationalists of the land lose thereby his advocacy and gifts. Happily the tide is turning now, and emigration does not so uniformly involve numerical loss to the churches of our name. It is a good time, however, to impress upon Congregationalists seeking new homes in the States of the Mississippi Valley the duty of placing themselves promptly and cordially in their own churches. The following suggestions would tend, where heeded, to secure this result:

1. In coming west bring with you your letter of recommendation to the Congregational church in the place where you expect to settle. If not a church member, bring a letter of introduction to its pastor or officers, and become at once a member of the congregation. If there is no Congregational church in the town, wait and see if one is not needed, and whether your co-operation may not be a matter of duty.

2. If a young man, full of business ambitions, do not settle down, ignoring your church obligations. Not a few of your age wrongly determine to achieve success first in material pursuits, and afterwards attend to religion. The reverse order is the only safe one, "Seek first the kingdom of God," etc.

3. Be manly about your church connections. Do not put yourself in the market as a prize for the church that will shew you the most attention, and do the most to secure your adherence. If you have been a Congregationalist say so and stay so, and go to your own church at once, making yourself known to the brethren, and shew by your conduct that you have no other purpose than to enter the household of faith with which you have been connected in the east.

4. Be careful to keep up your subscription to the religious paper you used to read in your early home. You can better afford to go without a good many things, rather than dispense with the religious weekly which represents your denomination, and which will serve to keep up your interest in its work and in the Church and Christian associations of your former days.

5. In coming west resolve that you will live a pronounced Christian life from the start. Whether in city or frontier hamlet, take your stand for Christ, engage in some form of religious work, and avoid every appearance of "trimming," either church-wise, or as a professing Christian.

#### SATAN AND SCRIPTURE.

It is fashionable to make fun of the very idea of Satan. And even many who admit the presence and malign force of evil in the world, as hostile to, and in perpetual conflict with, good, are excessively reluctant to admit also that there is any devil—a personal, powerful agent, at work trying to tempt men and to thwart God.

It seems to be a sufficient answer to all such doubts—we mean sufficient to the minds of those who accept the New Testament as of unquestionable inspiration—that it is clear that our Lord understood Satan to be a personal agent of evil, and treated him as such. No amount of explanation can make reasonable any other rendering of the narrative of the Gospels, or reduce to mere meaningless figures of rhetoric its sharp and circumstantial averments.

Accepting the narrative of the temptation of our Lord by this great tempter, as the chronicle of events which actually happened in form and manner as recounted, one is struck at once with the knowledge which Satan has of the Scriptures, and the adroitness with which he lays hold of texts which are plausible to his purpose. It is an inference which is both natural and simple, that if Satan quoted Scripture thus skilfully to the Master, he may be in the habit also of quoting it with quite as much skill (and usually

with more success) to His children. It is easy to suspect his hand in multitudes of those perversions of the Word by which the Romish Church seeks to gloss over such of its dogmas as are unevangelical and dangerous; and may we not fear his interpreting in multitudes of those sharp textual reasonings which sever the saints into sects, when they ought to be one in the oneness of a common Saviour and the unity of a common salvation? The Bible itself tells us that Satan preached the first Universalist sermon that ever was, and there are indications not infrequent that he has neither changed his theology nor his course of conduct since that effort.

Let good people then specially be on their guard against the perversion—the manipulating and wire-drawing—of Scripture. The Bible was written for common people, and the great rule of its interpretation is that *it means what it says*.

Furthermore, let good people also learn by Christ's example to fight fire with fire, and subvert Satan's Scripture by antagonist Scripture applied in the genuine spirit of its intent.—*Congregationalist*.

#### THE DUTY OF FORGETTING.

Paul, in one of his epistles, speaks of forgetting those things which are behind. And he speaks of this forgetting not as a remissness or neglect, for which he would blame himself, but as something commendable, the discharge of a duty.

There is then a duty of forgetfulness as well as of remembrance. Of the latter we have frequent reminders, in sermons and otherwise, but not so of the former. Forgetting is commonly taken to be a fault or at least a misfortune or defect. But it is sometimes a duty, nothing short of it, to forget, and this it is well to bear in mind. It is well to have it in mind at this opening of a new year, for there is a tendency as we pass from one year to another to dwell in our remembrances. With some this is very strong. They stand with their backs to the new year rather than their faces, especially if the past year has brought them disappointments and trials, if the course of things has not gone according to their expectations or wishes. They recall their troubles and make them fresh and suffer over again their pains. The new year has nothing bright for them; they hardly see it. And this dwelling in the past, as any one can see, is a great impediment to the right use of the new year. It takes away from its enjoyment and it takes away from its usefulness.

If one believes in the overruling providence of God, he must believe that the experiences of the past have come in accordance with His will and not as haphazard events. They have come too with designs of the most perfect goodness and love. They are, therefore, not to be made the subject of repining or perhaps of rebellious regret, but we are cheerfully to acquiesce in them and instead of moodily dwelling upon them as evils, to dismiss them, leave them behind as things belonging to the past and to turn our faces forward and our feet forward and go on, the stronger for what of training these experiences, though bitter for the time, have given us.

It is not good even to be too conscious of our sins at such a time as this, and to have the head bowed down as a bulrush in consequence. Of course we should not be unmindful of our sins, and if, on the opening of a new year, as we instinctively turn and look back, some grave delinquencies confront us, it is proper that we should allow them to give us their rebuke and so help us to a better life for the year to come. But to go into mourning, so to speak, for our sins is not the best way. Better turn the back upon them with a repentance that does not require a long time for its development, and putting new faith in that Redeemer whom the new year brings so vividly and so graciously before us, feel that He has assumed the burden of our sins and so go forward with a quickened step and a lightened heart, to the new duties and experiences of the new year.

God says of the sins of his repentant children that He will remember them no more. If He is willing, for Christ's sake, to blot them from His memory, why may we not dismiss them from ours. Do we not by

so doing magnify and honour the grace of God rather than by overmuch dwelling upon our sins? Do we not thus live in Him, while by the other course we live in ourselves?—*Religious Herald*.

#### DOING SOMETHING ELSE.

This is an open secret of real rest to many busy workers. Mere idling is not always restful, though it has its times and places. We quite sympathized with the feeling of a recent English essayist, who, weary of entertainments that did not entertain and recreations that failed to re-create, celebrated the pleasures of pure idleness as a vacation pastime, and found it sweet not to be compelled to listen to anything,—not even to the voice of a friend, or the strains of Beethoven or Mozart. This will do very well for summer weather, with nature for a companion and solace; but in the winter, idleness is often more tedious than work,—more wearing than worry; for it must be taken indoors. Yet as the summer vacation does not enable us to rest for the entire year, it should not monopolize our efforts at rational and recreative living. If we cannot enjoy the freedom of the fields, the silence of the woods, the grandeur of the mountains, or the soothing time-beats of the tides, we still have need of diversion and rest. Why not borrow a hint from the summer recreations? Many a weary mind-worker has found his best relaxation in the garden,—just as the tired house-mother's nerves are all re-strung by an hour's labour of love among her flowers. So the kind of hard work that we agree to call sport,—such as fishing, hunting, or mountain climbing,—is truly named recreation, although it is really another form of labour—doing something else. Boys are not the only persons to whom it makes a deal of difference whether a given amount of exertion is called fun or work. Splitting wood is a weariness to the flesh, while football is a refreshment. Puzzles are stimulating, but "sums" are a bore. And the fortunate man in whom "the boy" has never wholly died, will find that all work and no play does not agree with him any better than with the proverbial Jack.

Just what the "something else" is in which one shall find relaxation, depends of course upon individual tastes and preferences. To the brain worker, reading is hardly a diversion unless he is wise enough to shut the doors of his particular "shop," and browse in fresh fields. A mechanic scarcely needs to punch ivory balls on a green table for exercise. A clerk confined all day in a crowded store ought to be able to find a more healthful change than that afforded in a crowded play-house. He had much better practice bicycling or pedestrianism out of doors. Every person needs an avocation as well as a vocation,—something which calls him aside from his business, if only for an hour or two a day. And whether it be in art, science, literature, mechanics, gymnastics, or simple amusements, does not so much matter as that he shall find relief in change. "He who doeth one thing," said the Greeks, "is terrible." But he is often a terrible bore to other people and a burden to himself. Let him season his life with the spice of variety.—*Golden Rule*.

SOME men finding neither life, nor power, nor success in duties of religion, grow weary of them; for nothing is more grievous than the outward form of spiritual duties where there is no experience of inward power and sweetness.

O, BELIEVER, what matters it if God denies thee a kid to make merry, when He says, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine!" Hath a son any cause to complain that His father denies him a flower in the garden when he makes him heir to his whole estate.—*Carlyle*.

THE healthy Christian life finds its inspiration, not in contemplating its own spiritual state, but in beholding Christ. In the memoirs of the most successful missionaries we find little record of subjective experiences. They were absorbed in viewing the needs of men and the love of Christ. They spent not much time in gauging their faith. They were looking unto Jesus the beginner and completer of it.—*A. E. Dunning*.