

will satisfy, so that we shall not go away from the feast you have prepared more hungry than we came. . . . If you will but give us of that which feeds your own souls in their varying conditions and experiences, you surely will not go amiss."

These are words which the ministerial readers of this REVIEW will do well to heed. It is a protest against that class of sermons which may be designated "stones" and not "bread." It may be that pastors do not sufficiently keep in mind the fact of the hunger of their flocks for spiritual food; that they are too intent upon dealing with "problems" and too forgetful that they are entrusted with the care of souls, overlooking the universal need of "the truth" in their concern about truths. Let this cry from a hungry hearer be answered "by a consecrated obedience to the Master's injunction, "Feed the hungry."

"Why Do People Go to Sleep in Church?"

THIS question, according to Mr. James Payn, the English novelist, is being gravely discussed in a serious periodical, and the conclusion arrived at is that the somnolence of church sleepers is largely due to the fact that they are hypnotized. "The subdued light, the hush of silence, the concentration of attention on a single figure, present conditions similar to those enforced at spiritualistic *séances*." This may all be true. We are not familiar with the conditions of "spiritualistic *séances*." Our experience—for we confess that, if we have not been among the out-and-out sleepers, we have at least been among the noddors—leads us to suggest that there are two factors overlooked in this explanation, scientific as it pretends to be: the one the unskillfulness of the preacher in opening up the Scripture, and the other the unfaithfulness of the sexton in opening up the Church. An absence of freshness in the presentation of truth and an absence of freshness in the condition of

the atmosphere, either or both, will inevitably prove soporific in their effect upon a congregation. A rousing sermon may counteract the effect of a drowsy atmosphere, but we have yet to find a counteragent for a dull sermon. This is the main hypnotic influence, we are inclined to think ordinarily the only one, in our Church services. There is a mesmeric power which preachers would do well to covet and to cultivate, one that stands at a long remove from hypnotism: it is that which Elihu Burritt emphasizes in his ten-minute talks: "Many a speaker, by the very mesmerism of his own heart-power, has raised dead words from the ground and made them electrify great audiences with their startling life." Let this "mesmerism of heart-power" get into the pulpit, and somnolence will leave the pews.

"Grand."

WE recently heard a preacher deliver a sermon in which he attempted to show that various characteristics of the Divine Son of Man had appeared conspicuously in the illustrious heroes of Old Testament history. In introducing these, one after another, he repeatedly used the expression, "Grand old." It was "grand old" Noah, and "grand old" Abraham, and "grand old" Samuel, etc. We were reminded of the words of "The Country Parson" in his essay on "Immaturity," with which we advise our readers to familiarize themselves, if they have not already done so. "The word *grand*," he writes, "has of late come to excite a strong suspicion of Veal." Nothing tends to weaken a discourse more than a too copious supply of superlatives or adjectives that suggest the superlative. A piece of music rendered *fortissimo* throughout would soon weary an audience. Skill in shading is one of the main requisites in the art of expression. A building all towers of equal height would be an architectural monstrosity. Occasional level stretches between mountain ranges give