

richness. And while nowhere as in the service of our Master must we use the motto Noblesse oblige ("Nobility demands noble behavior"), we shall do no service to anybody by parting with our best.

In such matters our duty is to restate our beliefs in terms of the present day, to find a fresh voice for the gospel in every age, to reduce offensive utterances to a minimum, to lop off unnecessary additions, to show that our beliefs are not provincial and temporary, but that they run parallel with the great courses of human need and experience; to discern clearly what are the weightier matters of the law, and to put the emphasis on them. Below this minimum we cannot healthily go. It is one thing to encourage weak faith; it is another to stimulate captiousness, and with this last we want nothing to do. Reducing things to "bare essentials" sounds alluring, but "essentials" are just the things which are never "bare." Essentials bloom out into all manner of forms, which we are unwilling to mutilate or cut off; and a faith of bare essentials would be according to the idea of some people, like a tree which never leaves out. If there is one thing more essential for faith than another, it is that to be rich. It is well for us to be jealous of anything which seems likely to put disabilities on far-minded people, but equally well for us not to impose upon ourselves the disability of poverty in the utterance of our faith. A faith which is simply a coolly calculated average of faiths, gives out a thin sound which but few will hear, and by which none will be comforted.

A preacher who is manifestly trimming down his every utterance so that the feeblest belief may not be offended, and so that the man in the audience who believes nothing may not be troubled, is thoroughly depressing to everybody. Let a man be sure of love in his own heart, sure that it is conviction, and not whim, which inspires him, and he might preach a full belief and fear not. In this attempt to make belief acceptable, the man who believes the most in the best spirit is the type to follow.

But it is in the Christian life that the danger of minimizing is more visible. Few people do a great deal of thinking, but everybody does a vast amount of living of one sort and another. In order to show that we are not pruders, and that the Christian life may be a pleasant life, we often abdicate positions which the world, spite of all its fault-finding with our gloom, yet expects us to maintain, and even hopes we will maintain. One can imagine no worse disaster than that the Prodigal Son, when he came home, should have found that his father had grown to be the same sort of a man that he was. Such a discovery would have killed every upspringing goodness in the soul of the son. His return would have been harder than the far country. Into vastly more confusion than he ever confesses to, is the unbeliever thrown when the Christian goes wrong. The unbeliever may rail at character, but it is the one thing which he respects, after all. His creed, in his better moments, is the character of some nobler man; and when that nobler man goes under, this man's belief is shaken.

Trying to carry our faith jauntily, catering to some worldly person by being flippant about some sacred thing, or jesting over some matter of faith, or dismissing decorum and reverence just to show the world how much we can be like it and yet be Christians, is one of the most sickening things in the world to the unbelieving onlooker. In his heart he despises us. If a man is a Christian, he had better be one right through, and in all companies. If he is a minister, he had better be a minister, and not try to be a man of the world (in the average sense) and a hail-fellow-well-met with everybody. If he is a man, this will all appear in good season from under any cloth, and in the long run the advantages of being a minister are greater than the advantages of being a little of everything else.

We may freely concede every disagreeable manner, we may freely meet the man of the world, the sinner, and be agreeable, courteous, kind, without any fear of conceding too much; but down in his heart he does not want us to concede any more, and a world of harm is done by other concessions. Phillips Brooks speaks of certain passages of Scripture which are forever robbed of some of their sweetness by flippant jokes or puns upon them which, having once heard, one can never forget. There is a world of this sort of thing which Christian people are forever mistakenly doing, without gaining any esteem, but steadily forfeiting it. The world is sorry when we cease to be Christians, when we forsake our professions, when we cater to what is low, when mountebank tricks are played in the pulpit, or slangy remarks are put into prayers. They will not ask us not to do it; they will even, perhaps, applaud when we do; but down underneath they wish we would not.

Concessions are to help, and not to hinder,—let us remember this; and there are enough concessions demanded of us nowadays without our running out of our way to make what there is no demand for. All the good things which are wrought by charity, fairness, and broadmindedness, may be attained with the sacrificing of a single self-respect or the lowering of a single ideal.—Sunday School Times.

The Famine in India.

Famine, there is a famine in the land, a famine that devours. The year of India is divided into three equal parts, viz., four months of hot and wet weather, from July to October, four of our months less hot and dry, from November to February, and four months of scorching heat, and dismal unbroken drought, from March to June. When the rain rains, it rains and does nothing else. The heavens open, and the dripping clouds settle down upon the earth, and the fountains of the great deep break up. The overflowing rivers, drenched fields, and sodden roads meet the bulging cloud bursts, the low lands become one vast bog, the high lanes one dense greenhouse of matted and tangled tropical growth. All nature is drunk with raskness. Then the rain stops.

During the eight months, the sun shines down, daily growing stronger, and sucks up into the glaring maw of the cloudless sky the moisture lent without stint in the other four months of the year. Day by day heaven's huge furnace blazes, and glows and draws, till the flowers droop and fade, the grasses scorch and wither, the green bleaches into white, the harvests are gathered, the tanks, rivers, and lakes disappear, the wells dry, and a shimmering lazy, tremulous haze shrouds the bare, brown, baked and seamy bosom of the earth. On in May the sun rises in a blaze of red, and sets in blood stained blue. His beams come creeping around the house corner, and shine with a long slant into the north verandah. The books curl up their lids, and turn over on the table, the mat trembles and creaks upon the floor. The wind howls through the venetians in the doors, and windows driving before it a murky brick rod dust that seems like the sweepings of a furnace. The crows quarrel in the shade, cawing hoarsely through their dry throats, from which the parched tongue tolls wearily, the indignant coolie, forced by his poverty to face the furnace like blasts of the noonday sun pauses at every shade, lifts one foot after the other, and rubs the burning heat of the bottoms, calloused though they are to the thickness of sole leather. The cattle seek the shade, the iniquitous dog is in doors. The water buffalo appropriates the last sluggish mud hole in the village, and exposes no more of its elephant like hide to the sun than the tip of his nose that looms out like a large-eyed black toad glowing out of the brackish slim. That is India in May.

In the May of '96 all looked for rain in a few weeks, to bring back the green with its touch as of a magicians wand. But no rain came. Down through that steel like shimmer the sun beats fiercely, month after month, till the earth opens in millions of seams, and lies ripped, and broken, and bare beneath the pitiless gaze of the relentless eye. The poor farmers crowd out gaunt and thirsty from the hamlets and strain blood-shot eyes upward into the sea of brilliant blue. They pray with parched lips for rain. But no rain comes. Then they settle down sullen, helpless, hopeless, and infidel to die a slow death by famine.

Of the 300,000,000 of India, full 40,000,000 live upon the ragged edge of want. They subsist on no more than one good meal a day, and lie down each night on a mud floor, and an empty stomach, seeking in dreams what they never know in reality, the satisfaction of appetite, and a sense of fullness. In famine times, with the first rise in the price of food grains, the condition of these people becomes at once extremely precarious. They soon fall an easy prey to the weakening effects of their reduced diet, and are swept off in hordes before the cholera and smallpox, the twin pestilences that follow hard and fast in the wake of every famine. Were in not for government interference the entire 40,000,000, or that part of them represented in the famine districts would die like rotten sheep. Slowly, with the last, lost hope of rain in December, all awakened to the sense of the fact that India was facing one of the most serious famines in twenty years. The vast resources of the Indian Government were called into requisition, but found themselves helpless to cope with the terrible extent of the need, owing to impoverishment through failure of the land taxes, which had been remitted to the impecunious people, but which in ordinary times constitutes full 28 per cent of the gross revenue of the state. They called for help. All Christendom responded. Russia, moved with sincere gratitude at the timely aid given her own starving serfs some few years ago had opened a fund before even the Mansion house fund. This latter fund now mounts up to \$360,000. Canada too has come forward nobly in the midst of hard financial stress at home.

At present there are 3,000,000 on the famine relief. The distress is felt most keenly in the Northwest Provinces, where 1,551,222 are in receipt of aid. In Madras only some 70,000 are under famine relief. But that does not mean that thousands more are not in sore distress. Although the collector, or chief officials for the Queen in this, the Godaveri District, will not declare the district under famine, yet he subscribed, unasked the sum of fifty rupees to our fund to relieve the distressed and starving Christians in our mission, who are amongst the very poorest. When the committee commenced they had the sum of 1000 rupees with which to relieve the most acute cases. The little English Baptist Church, with a resident membership of only twenty sent in Rs. 60 from their last Sunday night collection. The Telugu church, not to be behind has started a subscription list, headed by one of its members with the handsome subscription for him, of nine rupees. His monthly pay is only Rs. 15.

Fine rains have fallen yesterday and today, too late by months to help the crops, but not too late to save the people perishing with thirst. The plague still rages in Bombay, gnawing away at the poor skeleton of that once magnificent city, but now reduced to less than half of her former proud population of 800,000 or more. India suffers most keenly where she sinned most deeply, and may God have mercy on her. Pray for her, and lend her a hand of help. This is not the time for reproach.

Cocanada, India, March 24th, H. F. LAFFAMME.

Woman In Politics.

In the MESSENGER AND VISITOR of April 14th is an article on Woman in Politics by J. D. After carefully reading it, the answer of Gamaliel to the persecutors of Peter and John as found in God's Holy Word came forcibly to my mind, Acts 5th Chap. and 35th, verse, "Ye men of Israel take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men," also 38th and 39th verses, "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men and let them alone for if this counsel or this work be of, men it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

Change the word men to women and the truest and the best of womankind will say, amen.

If the thing is not of God we do not wish it to prosper, but if it is, BEWARE, for the "lest haply may be fraught with serious consequences to the hinderer.

That this message coming through God's Word may have the desired effect is the prayer of a member of the Middleton W. C. T. U.

Victoria Hospital.

APPEAL OF ENDOWMENT FUND PROMOTERS.

Fredericton's Fitting Jubilee Memorial—Completing of Victoria Hospital.

Everywhere throughout the Empire movements are on foot to commemorate the sixty years reign of our gracious Queen. The Victorian era has been the greatest in human history. In the field of discovery and invention, in the industrial arts generally, it has been an era of glorious triumphs. Our countrymen are everywhere proud of it. They are proud of what it has done in the name of humanity.

Our good Sovereign, recognizing the universal desire to celebrate the approaching Jubilee anniversary, has expressed a wish that any popular memorial in this behalf may be of a humane character. She has particularly commended public hospitals, in which, with adequate medical skill, the life and health of any, even the humblest citizen in the land may be a watchful care.

Victoria Hospital, Fredericton, founded ten years ago in honor of Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee, has been ministering to the sick to the number of 110 persons annually. It has been the means of salvation of many a life. More than one-half of its patients have received treatment gratuitously. More than one-half of its free patients have come from places outside of Fredericton.

The number of applications for relief in the Hospital has been increasing so that its enlargement has become an absolute necessity. The Board of Trustees have accordingly undertaken the construction of an addition to the building by which its capability will be more than doubled; and in order to defray the cost of the new building and provide a much needed endowment fund for the enlarged work of maintenance, a subscription list has been successfully opened.

This will afford to the friends of the afflicted, to the patriotic and public-spirited everywhere throughout the province, an opportunity to assist a worthy object, while doing honor to a worthy occasion.

The General Committee, appointed by the citizens of Fredericton to promote the Hospital Memorial Fund, has elected His Worship Mayor VanWart as permanent chairman, with Hon. A. F. Randolph (President of the Hospital Directors) as chairman of the General Subscription Committee, and W. T. Whitehead as treasurer. Either of these gentlemen will receive and gratefully acknowledge contributions to the fund. They will appreciate it, and it will expedite their labors, if all contributors will tender their aid without solicitation.

A. F. RANDOLPH, WESLEY VANWART,
Pres. Board of Directors, Chairman Gen. Com.

It Takes Time to get Acquainted With God.

It is impossible to rush into God's presence, catch up anything we fancy, and run off with it. To attempt this will end in mere delusion and disappointment. Nature will not unveil her rarest beauty to the chance tourist. Pictures which are the result of a life of work do not disclose their secret loveliness to the saunterer down a gallery. No character can be read at a glance. And God's best cannot be ours apart from patient waiting in His holy presence. The superficial may be put off with a parable, a pretty story, but it is not given to such to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.—F. B. Meyer.

To this life of yours and mine there can be no postscript. We must do our work now or never.—Spurgeon.