

of rain, when "the child's quicksilver" falls rapidly, and when parents should not take too much notice either "for anxiety or for sermons." When he died, his eldest son, broken-hearted on hearing of his loss, wrote from his home in America a testimony which was most beautiful as to the wisdom, love, and friendliness of the fatherhood that had encircled the lives of all the children in the home at Eversley. Reverence for God, veneration for goodness, cordial regard for each other, had made that home well-nigh perfect a vestibule of heaven.

Very beautiful is that tribute which Carlyle inscribed on the tomb of his wife, who left him thirteen years ago: "In her bright existence she had more sorrows than are common; but also a soft invincibility or capacity of discernment, and a noble loyalty of heart, which are rare. For forty years she was the true and loving helpmate of her husband, and by act and word unweariedly forwarded him, as none else could, in all of worth that he did or attempted. She died at London, 21st April, 1866, suddenly snatched away from him, and the light of his life is as if gone out."

Ah! friends,

The world goes up and the world goes down,
And the sunshine follows the rain,
But yesterday's smile, and yesterday's frown,
Can never come back again.

Let us watch opportunities. Let us be careful to do right and to be right to-day. We are not sure of to-morrow. One and another who were with us when the last September's gold was tinting the woods and plains, have gone above. Not lost—oh no—but how we miss them! How the heart aches in the night, when we lie awake and want the sweet sister, the precious friend, and the brother who was part of our very being, with us no more now, but gone to be with Jesus. It were better, far, for many of us, if, instead of grieving so deeply for our lost, we set ourselves resolutely to making our remaining ones happier, by the constant exercise of forbearance and patience, and the daily benignity of love in the household.

There are fragmentary families, composed, one might say, of the remnants of other families, which are less easily kept in harmony than those which are made up in the natural way of father, mother, and the children. Perhaps the cousins, uncles, and aunts, the distant relation who has no other home, or the orphaned child who is sheltered by your meside, have their own peculiarities. No matter how difficult this problem or any other may be, there is one way to settle it—the way of unselfish love and faith in God.—*Christian at Work.*

DEBASING THE SPIRITUAL CURRENCY.

Some months ago, in a vivid story in the "Atlantic Monthly," entitled, "Irene the Missionary," the author, in describing his heroine as not being so much shocked as might have been expected at a "Scriptural joke," explained it by the fact that as these subjects had been so familiar to her from childhood, a liberty taken with them did not seem to her a very serious matter. Another writer in the same magazine refers to this as being a true touch of real life, and explains the supposed propensity of ministers to joke with such subjects on the same principle,—that our jests are generally taken from those things which lie nearest to us or with which we are most familiar.

Now, it seems to be saying a great deal too much to assert that ministers are more given to joking about sacred subjects than are other men; though, according to this writer, a minister is sometimes recognized as such, just through this very habit. In both the United States and Canada, judging by their current literature, it does not seem uncharitable to set down secular writers as far greater sinners than ministers in this respect. Still, the very fact that such things can be said in the pages of a first-class American monthly, would suggest that they are not, in the United States at least, so careful as they should be to avoid the evil of lowering, in the mind of any one, what ought to be a sacred idea. Are they, and are

Christians generally, quite as careful as they ought to be, even among ourselves?

Does our "Shorter Catechism" explain the third commandment too stringently by saying that it "re-ques the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works," and that it forbids "all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known"? If not, if this is a true statement of its meaning, then, are not what are usually known as "Scriptural jokes" among the category of forbidden things? Once associate a jest, or even a conundrum, with a passage of Scripture, and the light recollection will intrude itself many a time afterwards, when it is not wanted—dulling and eclipsing the true lesson of the passage, perhaps for ever after.

George Eliot, in her last collection of essays, has a very true and much needed one on the evil of "Debasing the Moral Currency." She shows powerfully how the lowering, by misapplication, of the words meant to express our highest thoughts must tend also to lower our very thoughts themselves. But great as is the danger of debasing the moral currency, is there not far greater danger in debasing the spiritual currency? We are so dependent on words that the associations we attach to them have no little reaction upon our feelings themselves. If, then, the most sweet and solemn words that our lips can frame on earth are debased by some light and trifling association, must not this have its effect in lowering also the feelings which the word, rightly used, should awaken? If we take a word which to the Christian is full of sweet and sacred meaning, and link it, even transiently, with a passing jest, or a ludicrous misapplication, do we not thereby help to debase our spiritual currency? Will the word, when we try to use it again in its true sense—come back to us with its original sacredness and purity? It may be so, with those who use it, but sometimes with those who hear it, it may never entirely lose the taint of the degrading association. Ministers who venture to treat carelessly on holy ground may never know how the souls which on one occasion they may have touched to finer issues by their solemn and earnest appeals—may, on another, be thrown back and hardened by hearing the same voice use the same words and forms of expressions in so different a tone and so different a connection. And when this happens, can they be held quite guiltless? We have no sympathy with the idea that earnest Christian people or Christian ministers need to wear long faces and eschew the innocent playfulness and legitimate humour of the "cheerful heart that doeth good like a medicine." But this may be enjoyed to the fullest extent, without trespassing on sacred ground, and some of the merriest-hearted of men have been the most truly reverent. But we do need, for our own sakes and that of the outside world, to beware how the American national sin of irreverence, and flippant trifling with sacred things, gains ground among ourselves.

There is no sin against which we have more solemn warnings in Old Testament history than the sin of touching any part of the Ark of God lightly. And there is nothing, probably, that more tends to encourage the growth of a defiant scepticism than the idea that Christians do not realize their own beliefs—a idea which is sure to be confirmed by the light use of words which they know we consider sacred. However lightly they may regard them themselves, they are very wide awake to anything like irreverence in professing Christians. Do we not then—ministers and people—need to beware lest in this way we may unthinkingly neutralize the very prayer we so often offer, "Hallowed be Thy Name"? Do we not need to be more on our guard, in the excitement of social meetings, and in the freedom of family life, against these "little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes?"

The Washington correspondent of the "Christian Union" writes "The ladies would generally vote for Mrs. Hayes for a second term. It is safe to say that no lady in the present generation has produced a more favourable impression by the grace and simpli-

city of her manners in presiding at the White House than has she. It is worth a journey to Washington to see a simple and unconventional lady at the very head of the best American society. Her portraits do her scant justice. Her face is wonderfully mobile, it constantly expresses her own genuine enjoyment in the enjoyment of her guests. Her laugh is contagious, and it would be as impossible for a photograph or even a portrait to picture the life that sparkles in her face as for a picture to portray the sunshine that dances on the dimpled surface of a lake which ever and anon breaks out into a quiet rippled laughter. Her social victory is complete, and has been won after a hard battle. The story has been told before, but it is worth re-telling. She came to Washington determined not to offer wine to her guests, this was the determination of a lifetime, and she would not and could not abandon it. To give a State dinner without wine was declared to be impossible, all Washington was opposed to her, I believe it even became a Cabinet question. For a year she was a target for the sort of arrows which it is so hard for any woman to bear unflinchingly. But she bore it all; by her patient persistence and her tact carried the day; and conquered Mrs. Grundy in her own field. She never has offered wine, Washington follows her lead, and I doubt whether any State capital, not excluding the capital of Maine, is a more thoroughly temperance city than Washington to-day. The exclusion of wines and liquors from the Capitol dates from the days of Senator Wilson, but I judge that public sentiment has grown stronger, and that the exclusion is more complete now than ever before. As you go to Capitol Hill along Pennsylvania Avenue you come to a liquor shop with a sign extending out over the sidewalk. On it are the words, 'The Last Chance.' On the reverse side, seen as you come back from the Capitol, are the words 'The First Chance.' Possibly a man who understands the appropriate signals can find a chance for a drink at the House or Senate restaurant; but nothing stronger than lager is drunk publicly."

WHAT TO AFFORD.

There is no end of hypocrisy and ignorance concealed in the common expression, "We can't afford it," and we always sympathized with that cheerful philosopher friend of ours who forbade its use in his home. By the allotments of life he was necessarily an economist; but he taught his family to say, "We prefer something else." "We do not choose to go," or "We can do without it." Used in a frank, manly or womanly fashion, and honestly, the expression is honourable; but it is so associated with a discontented, complaining spirit, with stinginess or a lack of true discrimination, that it has come to be the cant of economy, — and cant of all kinds is detestable.

Whether one can afford a thing or not depends upon something besides the income. The outgoes in other directions should enter into the calculation. Most of the serious minor mistakes of life come from not fully and correctly to understand what we cannot afford to do or not to do. To begin with, one cannot afford to live beyond his income; and the ignoring of this truth brings debt, with its endless train of worries and troubles. But all the wisdom and warning from Solomon's time to this have not sufficed to make men live within their incomes, and we do not purpose to waste words about it. There is a crime, however, to lead men and women to see that there is a decided choice as to what they shall get for the money they spend, be it more or less. The social philosopher or politico-economist who shall cause people to see vividly and understand clearly the widely differing possibilities that lie within ten, twenty—a hundred—five hundred dollars—will be a benefactor to his race. So many men see in a dollar only the pennies it will earn at interest. So many think only of what it will send down their throats, or put upon their backs, or add to their power to advertise its possession. The capacity to use money wisely is so much rarer than the ability to accumulate it.

And this suggests the reflection that there is too much drifting, and not enough planning, in the world. It seems sometimes as though the majority of men have plans for everything but life. Anything like an intelligent and serious estimate of the real value of the facts, experiences and possessions that we meet with here, is left to a few "ideologists." It is a pity that the appraisals of men who use the true standards of measurement, and know the real value of life, cannot be more generally accepted. But while every man is his own appraiser, what he shall get or make out of life will depend upon the views he holds and the habits he forms. We have always thought there was quite as much philosophy as was in the remark of Montey, "Give me the luxuries of life and I will dispense with the necessities." But both the sense and the wit lie in the interpretation of the terms. It is in knowing what to afford that the art of spreading money consists.—*Golden Rule.*