

"HE RESTORETH MY SOUL."

BY REV. P. D. MEYER.

Christ uses many restorative ministries. Sometimes it is the word of a friend or minister. Or it may be a hymn breathing the fragrance of a holy heart and speaking of a happier past. Or it may be a paragraph, a sentence, in some biography or religious treatise. Not unfrequently it happens on this wise: You are away in the country, walking solitarily and moodily, when there is a burst of sunbeams or of song notes from the brake; or, without any natural cause, you are suddenly aware of the gentle, thawing, all-pervasive influence of the grace of God, which touches the deepest springs of the heart and softens it and leads it to contrition and prayer. Is not this an experience something like that resulting from the look which Jesus cast at Peter, and which sent him out to weep bitterly, and was the first stage of his restoration?

Let those who want to understand the whole philosophy of restoration read the marvelous story of the way in which the Good Shepherd restored the soul of his erring apostle. We can only enumerate stages here. He prayed for him and warned him. From the midst of the rough crew that did their will on him, "He turned and looked upon Peter"—not angrily or harshly, but with the tenderest reproach. He gave a special message to the angels that they should bid the women to summon Peter amid the rest on the resurrection morning, showing how constantly he had been in the Saviour's heart all through His sorrows. He met him alone on the world's first Easter day, and permitted him to pour out the story of his sorrow unrestrained by the presence of any besides themselves. He gave him an opportunity of thrice attesting his love to wipe out the memory of the thrice denial. And this is not more than He will do for any one of us.

O, do not wait for days and weeks to elapse ere you apply to Him for His restoring grace; but just as you are dare to trust Him to do it now. While the throb of passion is still beating high, and the deed of shame is recent, look up to Him and claim forgiveness first, and in the same breath ask Him to put you back immediately in the very place which you occupied before you fell. And then, though as yet no answering joy fills your heart, you will be able to exclaim in the fullness of faith, "He restoreth my soul."

Yes, and for those who dare to claim it there is another promise still more reassuring, which tells us that "He will restore the years that the canker worm hath eaten," giving back to us opportunities and privileges which we may seem to have forfeited forever.

A CLERGYMAN'S TEMPTATIONS.

BY REV. EDWARD HERRICK CHANDLER.

It is characteristic of the younger clergyman of today to do away with all external signs of his profession. The clerical dress does not meet with general favor. Even the white tie—which only too often is not immaculate in its whiteness—is yielding, on other days than Sunday, to the ties which grace the necks of the unprofessional.

In other words, the young clergyman desires to be a man and to be taken for one. He shrinks from being classified with that third gender to which members of his profession have been said to belong. He wants to be judged by the same standards which are applied to other men, to show that he is one of them and to be admitted into their respect as a manly leader among them.

This being true, it certainly would be a mistake for him to deny that he is tempted like as other men, and has to struggle as hard as they to attain righteousness. For this is a very real fact, as every clergyman knows. Not only do the same temptations meet him which meet other men; they often present themselves in peculiarly virtuous forms. And the loftier his ideal and the holier his purposes, the more keenly does he feel their power for evil.

For instance, there is the temptation to strive after material possessions, against which pulpits are always uttering their word of warning. Are the clergy out of the reach of that temptation simply because they have turned their backs on a commercial life? By no means. The item of the salary somehow or other forces itself into the most conspicuous position in every call, and it takes a great effort to crowd it to the rear. It is easier to make up one's

mind to accept a call when there is an attractive parsonage than when there is a grave human need. Probably the clergy will have to acknowledge that they, as a whole, follow what they please to term "the divine leading" of an increased income as readily as most other professional men.

A subtler form in which this temptation presents itself to the clergyman is in special benefits. Rebates on railroads, free tickets to entertainments (including the circus), special rates on books and clothes, free medical service, all combine to tempt him to take for himself that for which he has given no proper equivalent. Gifts from parishioners, which on the surface seems to be such beautiful expressions of love, are frequently temptations to sacrifice the true spirit of manly independence. Many a pastor has refrained from proclaiming the *whole* truth of the gospel because of the "check" he has received from some worldly supporter of the sanctuary. Many a clergyman has lost the power of strong, independent, manly leadership because of the obligations under which he has allowed himself to be placed to the people among whom he is working.

Why should he be in the habit of receiving as a gift a trip to Europe, or a "purse," or a book-case, or a barrel of apples, or a rebate of any sort? Ought not he, even more than other men, to exemplify at all times the truth that it is more blessed to give than to receive? That it is entirely right for him to be paid a full and adequate salary in return for his service is beyond all question. But, having received that, would he not serve the kingdom of God better by showing that he is above "tips" of every kind and cannot be turned aside from his true prophetic mission by a dazzling array of gold pieces?

Another temptation which the clergyman meets as often as any one is the temptation to be dishonest. Here again the suggestion of evil is well disguised. It is a comparatively simple matter for one with his moral training to meet the ordinary standard of honesty; but the pressure comes in a way that is not at first apparent. It is extremely easy for a preacher to fall short of the highest standard of honesty in his pulpit utterances. A very slight twisting of facts will often prove his point. A very positive emphasis on a few familiar, commonplace truths will disguise his real views and put critical hearers off the scent. An ambiguous utterance on controverted questions will save him from annoying self-commitment. The worst of it is that it is so easy to make this lack of frankness appear to be in the interest of harmony and peace. Christ declared that He came not to send peace on the earth but a sword. His disciples, however, would often much prefer to compromise and harmonize in order that the sword may be kept out of sight. And the result of such dishonesty is injury to the kingdom of righteousness.

It is a common temptation to a clergyman to preach what will suit his hearers, and to countenance whatever habits the church to which he ministers may have fallen into. It is often called tact to refrain from interfering with crying evils in church management, or to avoid censuring un-Christian acts in the ranks of the church membership. A strict honesty would often require direct utterances that are now carefully and even prayerfully avoided.

In the pastoral relation it is by no means easy for the clergyman to hold firmly to the highest ideal of honesty. Pleasant attentions seem to require pleasant words, and such words stop the mouth from that plainness of speech which is much needed. It is far easier to let people take their own course than to stand face to face with them and speak the word of reproof. And it is easier yet to hold their good-will by seeming to approve what one knows should be condemned.

Is it only a slight matter that the clergy should so often swerve from the line of truth at the burial of the dead? It certainly is not fitting that the sins of the deceased, no matter how great or numerous, should be rehearsed for purposes of reproof. But that does not justify the indiscriminate eulogies of the dead which are so constantly uttered, either in the remarks, or the prayer, or, indirectly, in the selections of Scripture at the funeral service.

The third common temptation which the clergyman has to meet along with the rest of humanity is to shirk the main business of his profession. This is not inconsistent with the fact that the clergy are, as a rule, very busy men. But so often their busy ness is not their business. The special work to which the clergyman is set apart is to preach the gospel to every creature. But some creatures are so much more interesting and receptive than others that it is very