

and all go to the dentists for artificial masticators and ornaments.

Far too often is it that nourishing strength is sacrificed to delicate refinements and exquisite presentations of truth, while the soul is robbed of the life-sustaining, vigor-imparting elements in the word of God. Not infrequently one has gone from some vigorous work, with a sturdy appetite to take a "meal"—good old Saxon word reminding one of the hand-ground corn of our forefathers—as a guest in some friendly home, only to find spotless linen and exquisite china; shining silver and fragrant flowers; beautiful cakes and custards and confections, on a table surrounded by delicate, pale-faced, feebly-nourished children, and, not a thing for one with a manly appetite. From such a "dainty table one turns, as soon as good manners will permit, and hies himself to his own plain board, to his own good wife, who spreads before him the good roast beef and the good graham loaf, and he eats and is satisfied. A hungry soul cannot be fed on flowers of rhetoric, or dainty figures of speech, nor on lawn sleeves or spotless collars and cuffs, and faultless elocution. This may satisfy the worldly throng, with no spiritual appetite, and no thought above "society" functions; the less spiritual the food which is offered to them, the better they like the sermon. But to a "hungry" soul, the first thing is food, the second thing is food, the third thing is food, and plenty of it, hot from the fire, and savory withal. After he has eaten and is satisfied, he may turn and examine the linen and the dishes, and even to criticize the servant who has crossed him. Albeit someone will swallow poison if well served and will refuse who'some food if served in a homely way. A beautiful table, and a courteous servant, by all means; but first and always and by all means, "food."

How any man, with a heart in him, can look into the eager, upturned faces of the people who gather to hear him, and into their earnest, longing eyes, and not cry out as he contemplates his five small loaves and his few small fishes, "Lord, what are these among so many?" or will offer them ought but the Bread of Life, is past comprehension. And as he thinks of what the opportunity means, both for time and eternity, to him and to them, he may well and most earnestly pray:

O lead me, Lord, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering feet,
O feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.
O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things Thou dost impart;
And wing my words that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

And so praying, there will be fewer who will say, "I am so hungry!"—Baptist Commonwealth.

In His Name.

Once, while travelling in a sister State, I had occasion to wait a half an hour at a railway station. While looking out of the car window, I saw a family, consisting of father, mother, and five children, the oldest not more than twelve years of age, and the youngest an infant. They had apparently just arrived in this country, and were entirely unacquainted with our language, customs and mode of dress. They were evidently waiting for a train that would take them farther on their journey. It was a hot day, and it was particularly hot inside the station waiting room; so they were trying to make themselves as comfortable as possible at the end of the depot, outside, where there was a bit of shade. They were travel-stained, and looked lonely, tired and homesick. The children tried to play; but could not succeed. The mother held the youngest child in her lap, and seemed ready to drop from exhaustion. The father smoked his pipe in gloomy silence. No one around them could understand their language and they could not understand one word that was spoken about them. They were indeed, strangers in a strange land. They were alone, and yet were surrounded by a large number of people. A more complete picture of loneliness could not well be imagined.

I was so engaged looking at them that I scarcely noticed a party of ladies who had just entered the car, and had taken seats near me, until I heard them talking of the same people that I was looking at. Then my attention was arrested at once as I listened to the conversation with interest. One beautiful young lady, who was dressed in the height of fashion, and whose appearance and conversation showed her to be both refined and cultured, held in her hand a bouquet of rare and beautiful flowers. I heard her say, "I wish I could talk to them and cheer them up; they look so tired and lonely." After a moment she said "I wonder if they would like these flowers? I think I will offer them to the children," and suiting the action to the word, she left the car, crossed three lines of car tracks, and went up the platform where the strangers were. They seemed much surprised to see such a fine lady coming toward them, and the children crept close to their parents for protection. But when she divided the large bouquet into five smaller ones, and gave one to each child, it did one's heart good to see the expression of happiness and content that came over the faces of the entire family. They could not understand the words that were spoken, but they could understand the language of kindness and sympathy that prompted the action. The tired look vanished from the face of the

mother, the father removed his pipe from his mouth, and smiled his thanks, and the children were almost wild with delight. The lady then recrossed the tracks, came into the car again just as the train started, took her seat, and, taking a book from her hand bag, began to read as quietly as though nothing had happened. I had never seen her before, have never seen her since, never knew her name, and would not recognize her should I meet her; but I became very much interested in knowing what kind of a book she chose to read on the train. I was so anxious to know that, at the risk of appearing rude, I managed to pass by her seat and glance over her shoulders, and saw that she was reading the New Testament. I then thought no wonder she does such kind acts. She was reading of the blessed Master, who went about doing good, and who has said to each one of us, his followers, Go and do like wise."—Rev. E. J. Reed, in Religious Telescope.

An Optimist.

The question was, What was to be done with the old parsonage? The roof leaked. The sills were rotten. The floors sagged. The ceilings threatened to fall. The cellar needed a cement floor. Finally, the house, originally built for an excellent spinster who had willed it to the church, was far too small for Mr. Bent and his wife and four babies.

Mrs. Baker believed that the parsonage could be enlarged and repaired for six hundred dollars, and, moreover, that the money could be raised in a parish that had hardly been out of debt in twenty years. She bore with calmness the reproach of Mrs. Porter.

"An optimist? Of course I am! So are you every time you stir the yeast into a batch of bread. Don't you expect it will rise?"

With that the discussion ended for that day.

But "Aunt Mary" Baker did not content herself with talking. The next parish meeting voted to proceed with repairs, if satisfactory estimates could be had for six hundred dollars, and if four hundred were in hand. Those contingencies seemed so remote that the vote was unanimous. Mrs. Baker was made chairman of a committee to raise funds.

Now, it is noticeable that the optimists of the world often have a shrewd contrivance as to ways and means. The first thing Mrs. Baker did was to arrange for the sale of an old building which stood at the back of the parsonage lot: John Stevens wanted it for a barber's shop. He gave eighty-seven dollars for it, and that was a noble "nest-egg."

Then came the subscription paper. That was carefully used so as to encourage the reluctant. If Thomas Cates gave twenty dollars, James Potter would be ashamed to give less. Two generous cheques came in response to Aunt Mary's letters to two of "our boys" who had prospered out west. Squire Foster, skeptical in regard to the whole business, was made the partner of a curious enterprise. Would he give ten dollars, if by it could be secured, forty dollars more? So improbable did that seem that he gave assent. Then did Aunt Mary expend ten dollars on Sugar and nuts and chocolate and pop-corn, and making big boxes of her delicious candy, she found a ready market for them at the summer hotel on the hill. She actually counted forty-two dollars as her lawful gains from that enterprise, before the summer was over.

Then the frolics that took place in the name of the parsonage! A chicken-pie supper, a husking, an 'old folks' concert, a spelling school—in fact, pretty much all the good times in the village for one year were traceable to the renewed parsonage.

Of course the plans and the money were forthcoming, and the house—with its veranda, its enlarged rooms, all opening together, as the rooms in a minister's house should, its convenient kitchen, and its water-tight cellar—stands as a testimony to Aunt Mary Baker's optimism. After all, perhaps, that is only another name for that Christianity which "hopeth all things."—Exchange.

Hearing a Sermon.

In order to get the most out of a sermon we should come to the service with a receptive mind and tender heart. To bring a thoughtless mind and cold heart to the hearing of a sermon is like casting good seed upon hard and dry ground, in which it cannot hide itself. Thus when our hearts are hungry and seeking some truth to help us in life, then the most common hymn or prayer or sermon will be full of pearls for us.

The hearer should come prepared for the sermon, as well as the preacher come prepared with the sermon. The trouble too frequently is that persons come to the service expecting the preacher to prepare both them and the sermon. They come with thoughtless minds, expecting to be made to think, and with cold hearts expecting to be warmed, or to use an old adage, "The preacher must find both the sermon and ears."

Come to the service looking for some special help. The seeking soul has a quickened perception. When one is looking with open eyes for flowers in the field, he sees a hundred where the unseeking walker discovers one. Most persons can testify that very able sermons have been dull and without profit to them when they have heard them

seeking no help, but the most ordinary preaching and the most commonplace sermon has been full of strength and comfort when they have heard it with a seeking heart. The purpose of the soul, when it listens to a sermon, decides how much we get out of it.

Think about it. To think about a sermon makes it more to us. Many sermons are only heard. We listen to them, as to the rattle of wheels as they pass upon the street, and when the sound is gone the sermon is gone. Let the truth which the sermon has cast into the mind be silently thought over, held in the closet of the soul awhile in meditation, and it will become a part of the mind.

Talk it over. Talk over a sermon recalls it and reproduces it and it becomes a kind of second sermon, a kind of review, and reviews are necessary to the greatest benefit in any study. Do not criticize the sermon, for that will destroy the good it was intended to do; but tell, one to the other, which part most interested or most helped you. Sometimes a good social meeting is one in which the last Sunday's sermon was talked and prayed over. Ask the children to tell how much they remember, and have the parents do the same. A social discussion of the leading thoughts of a sermon leads to new thoughts. A good sermon is one which causes the hearer to think, and to talk over a sermon has the same effect.

Every Christian audience is a kind of class in religious instruction, and every preacher or lecturer and every student knows that the notebook is one of the most important helps in the lecture room. We recently saw a note-book of sermons preached years ago and taken by a then young girl. It made sermon hearing a new thing to her. It fixed her mind upon the truth, and it became a source of delight in after years.

It has been said that "a sermon is never done until it is lived by those who heard it," as the life of a seed is not finished till it is reproduced by the soil which has received it. We know not how like a grain of mustard seed one thought is, till we let it into our souls and feel its influence on our lives. Remember, we never know when a truth will find its way into our hearts unless we listen, and as we listen all unexpected some common truth will lodge in our minds. Therefore always look at the preacher, for a respectful hearer helps the preacher and helps himself. With a receptive, seeking, thinking, confessing, recording and practicing soul the commonest sermon becomes very uncommon in its results. Christian Endeavor World.

A Serious View of Life.

It is the fashion of the day to talk of the Puritanical spirit of our fathers, and to charge them with taking too serious a view of life. We are cautioned against wearing their long faces and saturating our minds with their theology. The children of a Heavenly King are pointed to a beautiful world and urged to make much of its beauty, pleasures and bounties. The young are taught to cultivate the merry heart and the optimistic vision. The materialism of the times opens up its resources and says, Live to enjoy. Literature, art and science tend to cast discredit upon the past and to inject into the present a more gay and flippant tone and air. On all sides, and among all classes, there is coming to the surface a growing disposition to make light of serious things. The old-world cry is again resounding, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." The sportive mood finds expression at every turn. Religion is made a subject of jest and ridicule. Sacred things are treated with laxity. The sense of personal accountability is diminishing, the multitudes fall in with passing currents and drifts. Solemn preaching is tabooed, and the entertaining is demanded. A religion of sacrifice, duty and responsibility is not to the taste or desire, and is too severe for twentieth century approval and exemplification. The Sabbath is looked upon more as a holiday than as a holy day. The present rather than the future absorbs thought and interest.

But over and above this easy-going and trifling view of life rise the claims of God, Christ, truth and humanity. Men are here to think, feel and act as responsible creatures. They are now in a state of probation. They are facing a coming judgment. One and all have to answer for the deeds done in the body. It is not all of life to live. Beyond, is an eternity big with weal or woe. Conscience is given as a guide and monitor. Providences are of a nature to be studied and heeded. Obligations press upon the mind and heart and must be met, or disaster follows. Christ as Saviour and Lord issues his calls, and they can be ignored or evaded only at one's peril. Home makes its thoughtful exactions. God is in the universe working out results which deeply and intimately concern the individual and the nation. Sin starts and presses its momentous problems. Grace is a potential factor in character and activity, and must be reckoned with. Everything with which man comes in contact bears upon his destiny.

Thus situated, flippancy of spirit, speech and action is out of place. It is a menace to many a precious interest, temporal, spiritual and eternal. The meaning of time, circumstance, tendency and result calls for earnest consideration. Life is a trust, and should be esteemed and used as a solemn and holy thing.—Presbyterian.