

Pastor and People.

The Education of Clergymen's Sons.

There is one question which has been forcing itself upon our attention for some time. It has enlisted not only our attention, but our sympathy; and we are not alone in it. There is a large class who will give us both heart and hand in the matter.

Everybody knows how largely clergymen, as a class, have helped to promote our educational progress, for both in our collegiate and common school systems, they have been among their most intelligent and strenuous advocates. It would not be saying too much to affirm, that more than any other class, they have been for both, the substantial founders. The history of New England, at least, goes far to bear us out in this. And we are proud to add, that New England will always gladly acknowledge her indebtedness to them. She does it now in more ways than one.

Now, all over our land clergymen are bringing up sons. They are giving them the strongest bias toward a liberal education. They are starting them in the track of the most earnest thought, and the purest philanthropy, and patriotism. They are leading them onward most vigorously in the path of self-sustaining efforts and culture. Whatever may be the exceptions, it is simply fair to say, that no class of youth are more commonly and more effectively surrounded by an atmosphere of intelligent learning and aspiration. Can any one show a class of the same relative means and magnitude, from whom so much is to be hoped for our religion, our learning, and our freedom?

But, under the existing enormous increase of expense for a higher education, what are our clergymen to do? Their salaries have not advanced proportionally. In the rural sections, they are more often than people are aware, poised upon the "razged edge" of a bare subsistence. Of the desperate nature of the undertaking of these to secure for their son a collegiate education, only those who know who are involved in it. And in saying thus much, we have not touched upon the various incidental ways in which a clergyman's income is cut short; and of the narrowing of a student's means for self-help, by the competition existing among teachers. If it were possible—as narrated in the old novel "Asmodeus"—to lift the roots of parsonages and rectories, so that one could look in upon the secret struggle of parental love and cultured aspiration, who can tell what a scene of toil, self-deprivation, of painful calculation, and still more painful anxiety and discouragement, would be revealed!

Now, it seems to us, that this is a matter which should at once engage the earnest attention and the resolute efforts of educators and Christians; and not merely from professional sympathy, but from profound regard for both the interest of education and religion. The spectacle of a cultivated man, forced to see his son growing up to drop into the half-educated mass, away from his own level and society, is certainly one to excite sympathy.

The spectacle of a Christian minister, compelled to see his son—from native associations more naturally shaped to the pursuit of his own holy calling—turned away from it into the common walks of labor or of trade, is hardly less calculated to create a profound concern. The too common outcry of our ministerial body, with regard to the relative diminution of candidates for the holy ministry—caused, as it doubtless is, by this compulsory diversion of the best mind and heart to lower channels of effort—is fitted only to provoke anxious solicitude. Hardly less occasion does it give, for concern at the subtraction of so large an amount of ability and native interest, from the field of the most direct effort in behalf of higher education, and of popular education as well.

Does it not then approve itself to every one, as a special and pressing demand of the times, that side by side with the munificence which erects magnificent edifices and founds universities, there should be found the beneficence which provides such foundations, as in the academy and the college, as well as in the theological seminary, will put a liberal education as fully within reach of the sons of our clergymen, as it once was? The difficulty is now in the early part of the course, rather than in the later. Secure full opportunity for success in the first struggles, and the latter part of the student's career may be left to take care of itself. Assure impregnability to your first lines of investment, and the pressing forward of the final sap and storm is only a question of time and persistence. Give our impoverished clergy an effective "locus standi," and they and their sons will secure the Archimedean result.—New England Journal of Education.

The Demon of Debt.

In the old English Litany there are divers evils and calamities from which there is the oft-repeated petition "Good Lord, deliver us!" In the ugly catalogue are enumerated lightning and tempest, plague, pestilence, and famine, murder and sudden death. But though it is a public prayer for the whole congregation, we do not find in it any mention of church-debts. There is a prayer for deliverance from the "deceits of the devil," and church debts may fairly be included under that head. For when the arch-deceiver personates God's people that it is all right to build or to buy what they have not the money to pay for, he is practising one of his smoothest devices. There is also a prayer for deliverance from "contempt of God's word and commandments;" and if we read our Bible rightly, we are commanded to owe no man anything but love." Whether it is often named in his public prayers or not, there is one grievous burden that lies pretty heavily upon many a minister's heart, and that is the burden of debt. Whether it is his own obligation to the butcher, the baker, and the tailor, or his church's obligation to a builder or a bank, it is felt to be an intolerable nuisance.

Occasionally a church or a benevolent society may be placed in dilemma, where a moderate loan may be a justifiable step. But even then the borrowing of money by

a church, could only be justified by an assured certainty that the money could be speedily returned without serious injury to the church. We know now of a church which was caught by the outbreak of our civil war, and had to decide between stopping the erection of a needed edifice, or raising a moderate amount of money by loan from a savings bank. Yet even that unavoidable debt is now felt to be such a nuisance that the congregation are engaged in a systematic effort to remove it by weekly and monthly offerings. No man, no church, no religious society, has the right to call themselves independent while they owe one dollar beyond their reasonable income.

A large portion of debts arise from the extravagant determination to buy or to build more expensively than the individual or the church can afford. The architect presents an attractive plan. An ambitious building-committee approve it, and "go ahead." The bills are left to be footed by posterity, and the edifice thus constructed is ostentatiously consecrated to the Lord, while there is a very possible risk that it may go into the hands of the sheriff. Such dedications are a pious fraud. Such financing is disgraceful to a Christian organization, and demoralizing in its influence upon the world. When God's people pander to extravagance, and exhibit a lax sense of pecuniary obligation, we need not wonder that "the Gentiles" should "do the same," and even worse.

An exposure of the simple facts would reveal a "skeleton in the closet" (or the trustee's room) of more churches than the public dream of. There are superb edifices on whose roofs are piled debts that are to be reckoned not by tons but by hundreds of thousands. We could name active churches with popular pastors, and crowded congregations, which present an appearance of external prosperity. But the pastor never looks up at the beautiful ceiling on the Sabbath without seeing the hideous word debt staring out from groined arch or fresco. He passes many a sleepless hour in worry over the unendurable burden. He knows perfectly well that what the public calls his church, and his people call "God's house," really is at the mercy of the mortgage-holder. He dare not expect his flock to give liberally for outside objects of benevolence because they are hampered and ham-strung by an accursed debt upon their own shoulders. "We must be just before we are generous," is the ready answer that a flung back in response to his appeals for benevolence. Very true; but the sense of justice should have operated further back. It should have forbidden their erection of an expensive edifice without providing in advance the means to pay for it.

This, we are persuaded, is the only sound principle on which a Christian organization should conduct their finances. No church-edifice should be contracted for until the funds to pay for it are already secured. If unforeseen public calamities overtake the congregation while the work is under way, then the life of a loan may be justified—provided that wise precautions are taken for the certain payment of the loan when "the calamities are overpast." But the general rule holds good that no Christian man should build or buy what he cannot pay for. A church is only an embodied Christian. Folly or sin do not cease to be folly or sin because they are enacted at a meeting of pious people which is "opened with prayer."

It is time that a reform was begun; and the place to begin, is in the house of God. It is time that God's church began to testify more earnestly for old-fashioned Bible honesty. It is time that churches and religious societies began to consider debt only another name for the devil. Those that are now grievously vexed with this devil, should straightway cast him out, at whatever cost of self-denial. As for those congregations who recklessly build what they cannot pay for, they richly deserve to have their mortgaged temples sold out to the Pope, and turned into a mass-house. A fitting litany for the day might read somewhat like this—"From the pride that goeth before destruction, and the debt that bringeth disgrace, good Lord deliver us!"—Rev. Theodore L. Gayler.

Clerical Reputation.

We should hardly expect to find such wholesome advice to our candidates for the ministry, in a daily paper as The Tribune gave the other day. Referring to the severe criticisms made in certain quarters upon the ministry, suggested by the unhappy events now occurring in the vicinity of New York, it goes on to say, "if we might venture to point out the moral of clerical misfortunes, which have become too common, we should say that they are full of warning to those who undertake the duties of the pulpit recklessly, in a spirit merely mercenary and economical. A bachelor of arts who becomes a clergyman principally because he does not wish to become a lawyer, or a physician, or a school teacher, may get through his life by the sheer force of prudence, without breaking down; but he runs a heavy risk of the most frightful failure which can overtake a mortal. We are not astonished that there are so many clerical mishaps of a kind which we need not particularly describe, it would astonish us if they were fewer. At the same time, considering the weakness of human nature, and the peculiar perils of the priestly office, we desire to record our deliberate opinion that the general moral character of the clergy, as a class, is not only higher than that of any other class, but it affords an example of exemplary living which society could not spare at all."

God's people are ardently loved by Him, they are His jewels; He protects, blesses them, and considers the favors bestowed on them by others as conferred on Himself. Even so small a gift as a cup of cold water to the humblest of them, He notes and rewards. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." Heb. vi. 10. Let us bear this in mind every season, but especially the winter season, when so many of God's people may be suffering for the necessities of life.

Sensational Literature.

In reviewing a sermon by Dr. Hatfield upon the prevalent faults of the newspapers of the day, Zion's Herald has occasioned sensible remarks on the cause of the existence and success of corrupting sensational journals. Dr. Hatfield had charged newspapers with impudently intermeddling with private affairs, with bitter and scurrilous personalities among themselves, with unfair and untruthful statements in reference to political opponents and their opinions, with pandering to the lowest tastes by extended and highly-colored accounts of criminal acts, and by offering their columns to immoral advertisements, and to aid in gratifying intemperate appetites and sensual lusts.

The Herald says: "These admitted faults cannot be cured, however, by pulpit criticism, or by the rebuke of an honest press. The evil is a radical one. The cause lies far back of the press. It is because a very large portion of the public demand this very style of literature that it is provided for it. The papers that chiefly pander to the lowest appetites are sold in the largest numbers. The most reckless, personal, bitter, and unprincipled sheets are sure to have the widest circulation. Even among the higher class of newspapers, intellectually, those that are the freshest in outspoken judgments upon the motives as well as acts of men, the most ready to crush a reputation upon the slightest occasion, to give the worst possible construction to the word or deed of a conspicuous man, are apt to secure the widest reading, and thus pay the largest returns upon the invested stock.

"This is one of the significant signs of the worldliness and hardness of the times. The literature of the day is the symbol of its taste and moral character. It is not the paper-covered novel that creates the taste—it simply feeds it. The scientific materialism of our modern books is the supply for an existing demand. It is an easy relief to the afflicted moral sense to abuse the publisher of the religious juvenile books of the hour because they all run, in these days, into fiction. But these are the only books these bookmorsers can sell to any profit. If these moral romances were not provided, a lower and depraving form of the literature of the imagination would be sought after, and certainly obtained from less scrupulous publishers. The only radical cure for all this is, not simply a revival, but a reformation—a great sweep of a heavenly tide, purifying the taste, the intellectual appetite, and the moral life of the hour.

"The suggestion of the eloquent Philadelphia preacher, of which we have only the barest intimations in the report of the sermon in the New York Tribune, are all pertinent, and worthy of consideration; but they do not reach the root of the evil. It is certainly an amazing and grievous fact that our best citizens patronize those very sheets with their advertisements, and by receiving them into their counting-rooms, and into their families. It is an unpleasant truth that, on account of the immense circulation of some of these sheets, obtained not always in the most honorable way, they are enabled to present also an unequalled display of world-wide news. They are, therefore, considered a necessity. A daily paper makes a good point upon Mr. Talmage, who has been delivering one of his raking broadsides upon the city press, calling his attention to the fact that he declares, in his onslaught, that three of these objectionable prints comes daily into his own home! No thoughtful man, upon reflection, can fail to see the inevitable moral evil that must result from the perusal, by the younger members of the home circle, of the contents of many of the daily newspapers. The constant familiarity with crime, the freedom with which the highest names in society are at times associated with questionable, or even immoral acts, the daily vision of the most depraved and vicious side of human life, must affect the delicacy of the moral sensibilities, and take away from any instinctive horror of crime."

The Ladder on the Cliff.

We can never be placed in such straits and difficulties that the Lord cannot help us. Years before the emergency happens. He may have set on foot a train of circumstances that will lead to our relief at just the moment we need it. We should learn to acknowledge thankfully the source from whence the blessing comes, just as we would if he had sent an angel down from heaven to give us help.

One dark and stormy night a vessel was wrecked on a rocky island off the coast of Scotland. The crew had watched with terror the white waves as they dashed on the stately cliffs, and felt that to be driven upon those rocks was to seal their doom. The cabin was filled with water, and the captain's wife was drowned. The sailors climbed into the rigging, and prayed as they never had before, that God would have mercy upon them. That He could save them from temporal death seemed almost incredible. But the cruel waves drove the vessel on and on, till the very foot of the awful cliff was reached. O, if they could only reach its top! There would be safety, and, no doubt, friendly hands to help them. Just as they struck the rock, they espied on the face of the cliff a ladder. Here was their despair changed to joy. They sprang from the rigging, and climbed the ropes as rapidly as their benumbed fingers would permit; but they were all rescued, and in a few moments more the vessel went to pieces.

That ladder seemed to them almost a miracle. Yet its presence there was easily explained. It was used by the quarrymen as they climbed up and down to their work every day. Though usually drawn up when they left, the suddenness of the storm that night had caused the workmen to hurry to the shelter of their humble homes, without taking time to remove the ladder. It was God who had ordered this seemingly trifling matter for the preservation of all their lives.

Some writer has well said, "However long the chain of second causes may be, the first link is always in God's hand." Learn to observe this loving Father's hand in all the events of your life, and it will save you from many dark hours.—Presbyterians.

The Prayer-Meeting.

A prayer-meeting, like a poet, should be born, not made. It should be nascent in the hearts of Christians. We are a little afraid of the phrase "good prayer-meeting." It savors a wrong idea as to what a prayer-meeting should be. It should be good before it is a meeting at all, in order that it may be good as a whole. The prayer-meeting can be good to you only as you bring it with you. Its value to you is largely determined before the first hymn is sung. He who has a good prayer-meeting in his heart will be sure to have one in the lecture-room. It must grow up out of your desires and longings. To jostle a hundred worldly-minded Christians together in a prayer-room, each one straight and feverish from his farm, his microbain and his signing, and expect a really helpful meeting, is sheer absurdity. God's Spirit makes a good meeting. He comes in answer to the prayer that has been smouldering a day, or a week, or a year, in the depths of spiritual desire, and that breaks out in tongues of flame, when the "one mind" comes to expression in the prayer-meeting.

Making a good meeting is sometimes a dangerous experiment. An interesting meeting can usually be constructed out of the elements on the surface. But it is machinery. It has the creaking of wheels and springs, and the smell of worldly oil. Get a few good speakers, break up every tendency to the real level of discouraging dullness by a startling anecdote or illustration, fill every pause with a stirring song, and you will make an interesting meeting. But will it be a good one? People will say it is. They will nod to each other as they go out, and rub their hands with a fine satisfaction. The meeting has been a success—arranged as sometimes pulpit services are, with a view to "effect." But each one goes on in his dead and selfish way, just the same. Next week there will be another good meeting, more self-congratulation and less and less groaning of the spirit. Let us beware of a pious Wednesday evening entertainment.

What about the dull prayer-meetings? Better the dullness, that they may awaken to a sense of the real deadness, than worldly spices, to perfume the ceremonies and conceal the decay. Yes, even "devil's pauses," so much dreaded by those who want to see things "moving on," have their value. They are better sometimes than noisy froth. At least they are honest, and sincerity is a great thing in a prayer-meeting.

Talkers' meetings should be held separately. Sometimes a church gets into a chatter, gets into a special evening for it. But go to the prayer-meeting to pray. Carry your burdens of soul there, not your criticisms. Do not be anxious about the success of the meeting, only about your own soul, and the souls of others. The meeting will take care of itself. It may not be a success; it may be very stupid, because very honest; but if you and yours go out with bowed heads, saying humbly, "How long, O Lord! how long?" the prayer-meeting will be a sancta porta—a gateway to the throne.—Interior.

The True Life.

The life that is not life is the portion of the many. The life that is life is the heritage of the few. True life, with its strange, rich secrets, both of joy and sadness, is but little known—nay, hardly so much as conceived of in this region of the dead.

Men do not think of living, but only of enjoying existence. To have life unfolded from within them by a heavenly agency, as the leaf and blossom are drawn in beauty out of the tree by the sun and air, is beyond their very widest ideas of life. Yet what is a man's true life but the developing of his powers and affections—the bringing forth of his whole being into fullest exercise by the energy of the Holy Ghost? It is not the external circumstances in which he moves, nor the points in which he comes into contact with men and things around him, that make up life, so that in surmounting up his days of business, or his nights of pleasure, he might say: "I have lived," or "I live." It is the springing, budding blossom of the MAN—the very man himself as God made him—that alone can be counted LIFE.

How few men live, or even think of living! Life to most is an unexplored continent. They do not know, or do they care to know, what its features or its treasures are. They only cruise along its rocky seaboard, and think that narrow strip of sand and shells which their eye takes in to be all of life that can be known. To penetrate the vast interior, with its streams, and lakes, and woods, and groves, and vales, and fields, and happy dwellings, where the sun does not smite by day, nor the moon by night, is what they have never yet proposed to themselves, and have only shrunk from when proposed to them by others.

But though life is an undiscovered region to most, it is not so to all. Some, though few, have found and known it. They have found that without the conscious friendship of the God that made them there is no life. "In His favour is life." The possession of this favour is the one thing that distinguishes existence from life. The former they always had; the latter they "only began to have when they became acquainted with God."

This life came down to them freely, like the manna which Israel partook of in the desert. They did not buy nor earn it. It cost them only what the manna cost Israel—the gathering it up as it lay around. It cost them only what the food cost the ravens, or what their clothing cost the lilies. They were labouring hard for what they thought to be life, digging into the earth and trying to wring out from it something that might at least be called life—when, looking upward, they saw the true life, like fresh rain, coming down plentifully on every side. They saw the vanity of their toil, and were content from that moment to be receivers of the life-giving shower. They opened their parched lips to the abundant rain, and they were filled. Happy men! In toiling hard for life, they failed to get it. In ceasing to toil, and consenting to let God fill them with it, they got

it at once! The unbought love of God came pouring in upon them, and they found that "in His favour is life," and that "with Him was the fountain of life." A "well of water springing up into everlasting life" was now opened within them; and they drank of the fountain of the water of life freely.

This life is, while here, but partial and feeble. Like all other kinds of life in the dying world, it has to maintain a ceaseless struggle with death; for neither climate nor soil are congenial, and no length of time nor care of culture can acclimatize a plant so entirely heavenly in its nature. Yet, though imperfect in some respects, it is above all price—"far above rubies."—H. Bonar, D.D.

Random Readings.

THE Lord gives his blessings as he pleases; the fruits of the earth,—not to those that wish, but to those that labor.

If we cannot go to God with a broken heart, let us go to Him for one. The spirit breaks and binds up.

THIS happiness Jesus Christ vouchsafes to all His; that, as a Saviour, He comes suffering for them; and that, as a Friend, He always suffers with them.—South.

FINE feelings, without vigor of reason, are in the situation of the extreme feathers of the peacock's tail—dragging in the mud.

CHRIST crucified, the preacher's Alpha and Omega. Away with finery and feathers! Let the Spirit of God speak to thee. He knows how to hit the heart.—Hedinger.

THE spiritual life should always be kept uppermost; not the body only, but the whole carnal nature should be kept under, in order that the soul may have its proper rule. He is a poor travesty of what man is meant to be, who lets his higher nature grovel in subserviency to his baser propensities.

"HARRY," said my uncle, "one can be moral without being religious; but I don't believe in any man's religion divorced from morality. You may shed the penitential tear, you may pray like Paul, you may work like Nehemiah, you may have the courage of Moses or the faith of Abraham, but if you don't pay your debts, Henry, you dishonour religion in the sight of the world. Pay what debts you incur, and don't incur debts you cannot pay."

Most people need all the strength which a high-toned public opinion can give them, to keep them true to their conscience and their God; and that opinion is partly formed by what we do and what we are. Strive earnestly, then, to order your life with a wise simplicity. Be frugal in the shows, and generous in the substances of life. Set the example, so greatly needed, of wholesome moderation. Show that you care for character above all else.

It is a mistake to suppose that Sabbath-keeping is a thing merely of religious observance, or especially a tenet of some particular sect; on the contrary, the setting apart by the whole community of one day in seven, wherein the thoughts of men and the physical activities shall be turned into another than their accustomed channels, is a thing pertaining as much to the law of nature as is the intervening of the night between days.

WHILE night remain" in us contrary to a perfect resignation of our wills, it is like a seal to the book wherein is written "that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" concerning us. But when our minds entirely yield to Christ, that silence is known which followeth the opening of the last seals. In this silence we learn to abide in the Divine will, and there feel that we have no cause to promote except that alone in which the light of life directs us.—John Woolman.

We cannot often do great things, but we can do some little good thing every day. A word spoken fitly, a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, a crumb afforded to some starving sufferer—all these are small to those who do them, but they may be very great to those to whom they are done, and it is the aggregate of such deeds that makes up a benevolent life. A rain drop is small, but it is equal to any and all of its kind, the multitude of which water the fields and swell the floods.

Christ left His throne of light! The secret hid from ages past to tell; The revelation of the Infinite, The image of the Great Invisible, A Father's love disclosing unto all; The poor, the lost, the burdened, the oppressed, Not one excluded from the gracious call—"Come unto Me, ye weary, and have rest!" Peace for the guilty, stung with conscious sin; Peace for the nervous ones waiting for their death; Peace amid waves without and storms within. The troubled soothed, the mourner comforted.—J. R. Macdill.

PRAYER is the rustling of the wings of the angels that are on their way bringing us the boons of heaven. Have you heard prayer in your heart? You shall see the angel in your house. When the cherubim that bring us blessings rumble, their wheels sound with prayer. We hear the prayer in our own spirits; and that prayer becomes the token of the coming blessing. Even as the cloud forshadeth rain, so prayer forshadeth blessing; even as the green blade is the beginning of the harvest, so is the prayer the prophecy of the blessing that is about to come.—Spurgeon.

"I THINK the time has gone by for defending the Bible against anybody, who ever he may be. The Bible really has been so often defended, and the defenses are so admirable, that I must look upon it now as the other day I did upon a little village Church which I came across in the middle of a wood; a church subjected to a great many changes of the weather, and built and there are about twice as many bricks in the buttresses as there are in the church. There seems to me to have been twice as much done in some ages in defending the Bible as in expounding it; but if we go to the whole of our strength shall henceforth go to the expounding of it and spreading it, we may leave it pretty well to defend itself. The way to meet infidelity is to spread the Bible. The answer to every objection to the Bible is the Bible."—Spurgeon.