

still populated, and the courts of law sitting day and night to overtake the criminal calendar. Before the ink of the morning paper is dry, successive editions of the evening papers come to tell us of the human heart's discontent; domestic misery, hatred, anarchy and murder. Only the other day I was reading of certain towns in Massachusetts crying for help on account of ungovernable hoodlums. What is the trouble? Men have thought to keep down crime by jails and fines. They have been trying to cleanse public morals with soap-suds, and purify the conscience with political economy and college settlements. Many of our city fathers pay for expensive lectures on art and science. They want to broaden human life. But why try to broaden life until it has been deepened? What are the advantages of culture without personal character? Is there any advantage in travelling sixty miles an hour by lightning express if you are just the same selfish man at the end of your journey as at the beginning? What is gained by being able to talk through a telephone if you are not able to put new hope or love or courage or faith into the man at the other end of the wire? Of what advantage the brilliance of electric lights if they merely illumine homes filled with vanity and godlessness? We had an object lesson in our Western country a few years ago of a community that tried to get along without religion. It determined to show the world that the preacher was a superfluity. In about six months that community became noted for its wickedness and injustice where all nameless crimes were practiced. It was not safe to live there, not safe to travel through it. But a Presbyterian Home Missionary ventured there. A revival started and spread from house to house, and to day the people dwell in sobriety; they are better clothed, better housed, better fed; virtue is honored, iniquity punished and God's day and Word revered, all because of a faithful voice proclaiming the truth of God. Has the printing press displaced the pulpit? When books on the training of children make mothers unnecessary, then will the press displace the pulpit.

In conclusion let me say, there was never a time when the courageous and uncompromising doctrine of Presbyterianism was more needed than now as a moulder of character. For two reasons:

First, because of its supreme exaltation of God. No other system presents the Fatherhood of God in such clear outlines. Not bare sovereignty, nor arbitrary will, nor naked power, but a personal Being, revealed in the character of the perfect man Jesus Christ. It leaves the individual man alone in the presence of God; it thus intensifies a man's individuality; it reveals to him his responsibility to God, his relation to Eternity. It confronts every man with the question. Not, is a thing pleasant, or popular, or profitable, but is it right in the sight of God?

Second. Our system reveals not only Isaiah's vision of the exalted character of God, but the awful nature of sin. It shows sin to be rebellion against the authority of the greatest and best of Fathers. It tells the sinner that he is not only guilty but lost! This is a timely doctrine in a day when many writers and readers are saying that sin isn't so bad as it has been painted; that it is only a trifle, an imperfection in training or environment, a pardonable ignorance, a straw which some happy wind will some day, somehow, blow out of sight. Thank God for a system of doctrine which echoes the Bible in calling a thing by its right name; which takes that word sin and

grasps it with the rough hand of a man in earnest, declares the fearful reality and malignity of it, the awful danger of it, and stirs in the heart a contrite desire to get rid of it because it is self-estrangement from the source of truth and life. Then, like a merciful angel, our system reveals a salvation all of grace, the free gift of God's love and mercy in Christ.

That, dear friend, is the relation of Presbyterianism to personal character. Its function is manbuilding. To lift a man from the basilar conditions where he stands, and where all the tendencies of human nature try to hold him, to lift him to those coronal heights where he catches the vision splendid, and gives him the power to rise "on his dead self to nobler things."

Thus it puts its work, not into iron that rusts, nor wood that rots, nor marble that crumbles, nor colors that fade, but into that which is immortal, character, the only thing we carry with us to the great white throne.

#### Sparks From Other Anvils.

Herald and Presbyterian. It is nothing to die, but it is terrible to die when one has not become either to die or live. If one is saved, it is all the same whether he lives or dies.

Michigan Presbyterian. Preachers cannot afford to lower their standard of preaching in the summer time, simply because some of the congregation are absent on a vacation. Those who remain deserve the best that can be given to them.

The United Presbyterian. The character of the day's work will show the manner of the day's thinking. All finished product is but crystallized thought, whether it be the ditch in the meadow, the painting on the easel, or the steamship on the sea. Achievement is transmuted intelligence.

The Herald and Presbyterian rightly says "We know of no church in the world that is not doing a grand work in its way and place, and with which it would not be an honor to be affiliated. If they were all united, they might do more than they are doing."

Michigan Presbyterian. When the church compromises with worldliness it is a compromise in which the church makes all the sacrifices and the world gains all the advantage. There is never any thing fair in such a bargain. The world gains what it asks for, the endorsement of the church. The church makes itself ridiculous, and has surrendered all its influence for good.

Congregationalist: Whatever break the summer may necessitate in church services and the other outward expressions of institutional religion, the obligation to conduct ourselves as disciples of the Lord Christ holds, whatever the season or the temperature. Persons who go on vacations are frequently admonished to take their religion with them, but it is no less desirable to exhort those who stay at home not to grow lax or careless.

Prayer is the converse of the soul with God. In its broadest view, prayer is the soul holding communion with God, and that soul in turn listening to the voice of God in response. It is not necessary that it should be vocal, for it may be little more than silent meditation, or unspoken aspiration. Petition and supplication may be parts of prayer; but the deepest aspect of prayer is that of communion, wherein the soul holds converse with God in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Gospel.

A contemporary has an article on "What I know about vacations," which begins with the statement that the writer has "never taken a vacation and never expects to." Yet it takes him two columns to tell what he knows. The Herald and Presbyterian says that part of his article is not nearly so foolish as the rest of it.

A hobby is not always as bad a thing as people make out says the Southern Presbyterian. It is only when it is disagreeable or obtrusive that we are justified in condemning it. If it possesses its rider thoroughly that may be all the better in many cases. A "hobby" oftentimes means a man's favorite pursuit or special thought. It is that which gives distinctiveness and character to him. It is often the key to his life. "This one thing I do," was Paul's way of putting it.

Herald and Presbyterian. An elder who has been away for his vacation writes to his pastor that he will be home next week, and adds: "I hope the fall may open up with brighter prospects for our church work than ever before." Many a minister and member will come back home, after the vacation rest, with this spirit and prayer. The church of which one is a part is never out of the heart of the true Christian worker, and in absence it becomes even still dearer and more earnestly prayed for.

Christian Observer. This is the season of vacations. People, whether they need it or no, are now seeking rest and recreation. The philosophy of rest is not easily mastered, and perhaps there is no philosophy of it which suits all its seekers. Few will be satisfied with absolute inactivity as the best way to secure rest. Some may think that having a good time in some form of dissipation is the way to take a vacation rest. Such a time usually calls for a rest after it is over. Change of air and scene refreshes the body; change of occupation and company invigorates the mind. Rest should not be an end in itself, but always have recreation and refreshment in view.

The liturgy question is likely to prove a lively one among our Northern Presbyterian brethren says: the New Orleans Presbyterian. The approval of the report in part of the committee, by the Buffalo Assembly, has brought it up, somewhat obscured, of course, by the more prominent question of closer relations with other bodies. The advocates of the liturgy vigorously maintain the reasonableness of the movement looking to the church's use of certain forms, deny any tendency in it towards ritualism, claim that there is no suggestion of rigidity in its services, and cite the stock argument that there was a liturgy used by Calvin, Knox, Bucer, and other reformers, and that even the Episcopal order of service was Presbyterian in its origin.

United Presbyterian. The false diamond like the true, is dependent for its brightness upon the rays of the sun, or upon artificial light. They derive their beauty from the same source. The hypocrite owes his success to the few graces of the true light which he is enabled to reflect. The difference between him and the genuine Christian is not, however, merely one of light but one of character. The medium through which the light shines has almost everything to do with the brilliance of the gem. The false and the true deal with the same light; but they cannot deal equally with it. Light cannot use glass as it does the diamond. No matter what the hypocrite's social or intellectual qualities may be, the fact that he is a false medium prevents the Divine Light from using him. The humblest saint will reflect the graces of the Spirit better than he.