

This is the habit of prayer, and when it is formed we can at any moment feel that we are doing what God has called us to do. The most paralyzing thing in all Christian work is the uncertainty whether we are working on God's lines that must haunt those who have not taken Him into their confidence at every step.

BE ENCOURAGING.—Of course some men are conceited, and undue praise will make them more so. But just praise will scarcely ever do harm. It is undeserved praise—flattery, blarney, puffing, that does harm. It surely ought not to injure a man's character to tell him if he has done what he has tried to do. Many a clergyman never hears, from month to month, what people think of the teaching he is giving them. The poor fellow is like a marksman aiming at a target, and never knowing whether he has hit it. That is scarcely the way to improve his aim. Of course, no good man is working merely for success. But every good man is aiming at something, and likes to know whither some of his bullets go. It humbles a true man to know that he has succeeded. He reads his own heart, and he sees upon what a slender thread success hangs, and when blessing comes the thought of God's goodness is more likely to fill his mind than that of his own powers. The shaft was carried by God rather than by himself. But he will be all the better man for knowing that God has so honored him. Speak words of encouragement. It will help to lighten the parson's burden.

LIBERTY.—Spiritual freedom does not lie in the abolition of laws, any more than agricultural prosperity lies in the removal of fences. It lies rather in the due adjustment of men's hearts and characters to the best and holiest rules of living. Who ever heard of an honest man complaining that his liberty was abridged by the laws against stealing; or of one who respected the rights of others, regarding himself to be in bondage because he could not do as he liked at all times and in all circumstances? What sort of liberty should we have if every one asserted his right to do that which was lawful in his own eyes? We should have the worst kind of tyranny; the ascendancy of selfishness and lust. And so in spiritual affairs. True liberty does not lie, as some Balaams would teach us, in the abolition of God's moral law, but in having the law graven in our hearts and infused into our lives by

God the Holy Ghost, and where the Spirit of the Lord dwells and rules there is liberty.

LITERATURE FOR THE BOYS AND GIRLS.

A LADY was asked recently to what benevolence she would devote \$50,000, if it was at her disposal. Her reply was: "I would use it in an effort to develop a taste for the better class of literature among our boys and girls."

We believe her answer struck at one of the main roots of the immorality of the day. The minds of boys and girls are being poisoned beyond belief. They become so familiar, through reading, with every form of folly and vice, and so feed their imaginations upon what is low and vile, that their moral sensibilities become blunted, and they are no longer shocked when they come in contact with the reality.

Pope wrote of vice:

"Familiar with her face,

We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

But the "endurance" and the "pity" are now too often experienced through the medium of the dime novel and sensational stories, within the very precincts of the home, and the young reader is ready to "embrace" at first meeting.

Parents must awaken to the fact that it is no less a duty to supply their children with pure and happy literature than to furnish shoes for their feet and bread for their mouths. They must learn that unless their boy finds plenty of attractive reading on the parlor table, he will be likely to exchange his dime for a thrilling story of the Jesse James type, which he reads on the sly, and then slyly exchanges with a neighbor boy for an equally pernicious tale.

The indifference of the masses in regard to this evil is truly alarming. A great cry is raised over drinking and gambling, while comparatively little is said of the influence exerted by vile literature, which, it may be no exaggeration to say, bears somewhat the same relation to the saloons and gambling dens that the preparatory school does to the college. Well-meaning parents in Christian homes, while careful to ask where their children go and what they do, quite forget to ask what they read; and we hear twenty ministers denounce from the pulpit the liquor traffic, while one raises his voice against this more subtle and, therefore, more dangerous evil.

To work a change in the homes of the higher and middle classes, through any benevolent scheme, is perhaps impossible,

but might not something be done for the lower classes in our cities? Here we find many children without the proper restraints of home life, and who eagerly snatch at anything which promises a moment's diversion. Is it not practicable to establish, in some favorable locality, a reading room which shall be designed expressly for boys and girls? A movement of this sort has already been made by the Christian workers in a few of our large cities, but it is far from general. There is need for a like effort in every large centre throughout the land.

Let such rooms be supplied with the *Youth's Companion*, and similar papers. Let there be books, too; not the "goody-goody" Sunday-school books, whose only merit so often is of a merely negative nature, but popular histories, biographies, and the better class of fiction, of which there is now such an abundance adapted to children's needs. What boy does not become interested in Dickens' "Child's History of England"? Biographies of great and good men have an unending charm for youth, and from admiration to imitation is often but a step. Easy works in science, too, hold the young mind, and open up lines of thought which are far from leading to the saloon and gambling table. Let such rooms be in charge of persons who are profoundly interested in the project, and with that ready tact which would enable them to place the right book or paper in the hand of each child, thus in a measure directing his reading. We believe that such a place might be made an attractive spot to the ragged street urchins, who would thus not only be kept from low resorts, but would unconsciously cultivate a taste for things high and pure—*Christian at Work*.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

ON MAKING A CHOICE.

WHEN Charles I. was threatening the freedom of England, two men of good birth, of means, and of ability, stood side by side in defending the ancient liberties of the nation. They worked together against the evils of the time; their aims were alike, and they were fast friends. But the time came when one of them was to change. Wentworth was an ambitious man. He felt that he had great powers, and when King Charles offered him a high place in the State the brilliant prize dazzled him. His tone changed. His friend Pym saw that Wentworth was sorely tempted. One day they met at Green-