

Pastor and People.

BUILD WELL.

High on the granite wall the builders,
tolling,
Heaved up the massive blocks and
slabs to place,
With swart and streaming brows and
straining sinews,
Under the summer's blaze.

And higher yet, amid the chills of au-
tumn,
Tier upon tier and arch on arch arose;
And still crept upward, coldly, wearily,
'Mid winter's sifting snows.

From stage to stage upsprings the mas-
ter builder,
Instructing, cheering, chiding here and
there,
Scanning, with scrutiny severe and rigid,
Each lusty labourer's share.

Anon his voice to the most distant shout-
ing
Through the hoarse trumpet, makes
his orders swell,
Or utters words like these to rouse and
hearten:—

"Build well, my men, build well!"

"The ropes are strong, and new and
sound the pulleys;
The derrick's beams are equal to the
strain;
Unerring are the level, line and plum-
met;
Let naught be done in vain!"

"Build that these walls to coming gen-
erations
Your skill, your strength, your faith-
fulness shall tell;
That all may say, as forms and centuries
test them,
The men of old built well."

And ever thus speaks the Great Master
Builder
To us, where'er our "journey work"
may be;
"Whate'er the toil, the season or the
structure,
Build well, build worthily!"

—Christian at Work.

DR. OSWALD DYKES ON A GOSPEL FOR THE AGE.

No one can fail to notice that the modern world attaches a different conception to the word "salvation" from that which has been traditional in the Church. What the Church has always placed in the forefront of her message has been the salvation of the individual from sin and from the consequences of his own sinning. It has exhorted men to seek to have their souls saved from guilt and condemnation and divine wrath, by the forgiveness of their sins. It has sought to produce saints or holy individuals by gathering them out of the world and training them into fitness for another and better world to come. And certain types of earnest Christianity, as, for example, the evangelism that awoke in the end of last century and flourished in the first half of this, have carried this so far as to sacrifice everything else to personal salvation, or the securing of heaven for individual believers when they die. Now, with the revival of a keener, social instinct, it has become the fashion to deride this as pure selfishness in the guise of religion. By way of violent recoil from a form of piety so isolated and individualistic as this has been, the cry of the new democracy is all for the sacrifice of the individual to the community. It will have the individual find salvation, if at all, through his own efforts to promote the common weal. Its ideal, therefore, is not saved souls, but a wholesome public life. To cure the ills of society by applying the principles of Christian ethics to the relation of man to man, of class to class, of capital to labour, to readjust these social relationships on lines which will distribute more equally the fruits of industry, and remedy those economic and sanitary conditions which cause preventible misery to the masses of the people; this is the aim of moderate and sensible thinkers of the new school, however confused, anarchic, or foolish may be the methods by which some would work out similar ends. It

is demanded, accordingly, that we modify or widen our conception of salvation. We must understand by it salvation from physical ills, and not from spiritual only; salvation for the State, and not for the individual only; salvation that ends in a kingdom of God on earth, and not in heaven only.

Here, then, are two theories of what Christianity and the Christian Church are intended to accomplish. I am bold enough to hope that there may yet be found room in Christianity for both. It is probably going to be one of the achievements of the wider and better-balanced theology, which one trusts is to come out of the present confusion in the twentieth or some other century, that it will frame some larger conceptions of Christ's salvation, big enough to embrace and harmonize these two rival theories of it—the personal religious salvation of the soul from sin, and the ethical and social salvation of the community from wrong and suffering.

UNHISTORICAL CRITICAL THE- ORIES.

"All things come to them who wait," and even the Bible may be found to have some originality by those who are willing to await results of persistent investigation in its favour. Dr. Murray Mitchell writes to the Scotsman drawing attention to an important work recently issued by Professor Darmisteter, the French Orientalist. It has hitherto been a favorite exercise for the critics to trace the influence of the Persian faith upon the later books of the Old Testament. "Every Orientalist," says Dr. Murray Mitchell, admits that much uncertainty rests on the origin and history of the ancient Persian faith. But it has been always assumed—at least by critics in our day—that the portion of the Avesta called the Gathas, the moral tone of which is generally high and pure, must be the most ancient, and that it was composed before the Persians came in contact with the Jews. Consequently, when the Persian and Jewish doctrines agree, the Bible must have drawn from the Avesta. So—rather swiftly—ran the logic. But Professor Darmisteter has set himself with all earnestness to show that the Avesta, as we have it, is traceable in any of its parts only to the first century after Christ. He holds it to be uncertain whether any sacred books existed in the ancient Persian empire; but that, if they did, they were (as, indeed, the modern Parsees affirm) lost in the convulsions occasioned by Alexander's conquest of Persia. We know from history that a king, called by the Romans Vol-gases, who reigned from A.D. 54 to 78, began the restoration of the ancient books. The Professor holds that the Gathas were composed in a language already dead, and probably under this king. Two centuries later, King Artaxerxes (Ardashir) employed a priest to reconstruct the sacred writings. Further additions were made under his successors, until the orthodox doctrines the fourth century.—New York Observer.

THE MEANNESS OF SOME PROFES- SING CHRISTIANS.

The work is more than the worker. Yet many are of a contrary opinion, and are willing to turn their backs on the Master at the bidding of their wounded self-love. The world is keen to notice this, for the worldly man knows that nothing more surely shows a small mind and one capable of great purposes than this same weakness. We can learn much from men who make no pretensions to religion. They are in many things much wiser than the children of light, and as Jesus Himself was not above drawing a lesson from them, we need not think it beneath our dignity to do so. We cannot conceal from ourselves that it is chiefly the smallness, even more than the wickedness or the inconsistency of the

Christians which degrades the name of Christ among the men and women of the world. Do we not all know professing Christians of the largest pretensions, with whom we would wish to have nothing to do in any business transaction, who are capable of such small and creeping meanness as would not be possible to any man of the world? How the finger is pointed, how the tongue is sharpened, "There, there is your Christian!" Have we not known a person who, when plotting some peculiarly sneaking meanness, some piece of ignoble underhandness, has tried blasphemously to throw the responsibility of the contemplated act on the Master Himself? "I know it must be right, for I took it to the dear Lord in prayer." Sir, be assured if you did, it lost its way and never got there. For the honour of Jesus and of His teaching is higher than the highest honour of the world's code. If the name of a Christian is in disrepute in a certain very practical sphere, it is not entirely to be put down to the unregenerate nature of the inhabitants. We have all need to live more and to profess less. Only thus can we give a reason for the faith that is in us that will stand.

GIVING.

The wit and wisdom of nineteen centuries at least have been at work on plans for raising money for religious uses. Yes, away back in the days when the first building for God was to be built, a plan was given to Moses from heaven for raising a sum which Bush, the commentator, estimates at \$1,250,000. God told Moses to call on all the people to make an offering to Him. That call is a nutshell condensation of the whole matter, principle and particulars. Any act that by any proper use of language can be called benevolent is an act between the soul and God—an act of worship. Who would have thought that the Israelites, just out of Egyptian bondage, could have raised any such sum as \$1,250,000, or made an approach to it? How did they do it? They made it a matter intensely personal, as between each individual soul and God. It was therefore easily done. Turn now from this history, away back in Exodus, forward three-fourths the way through the New Testament, to 1 Cor. xvi. 2: "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper;" or, as the old version has it, "as God hath prospered him;" the same principle repeated. The father of the wisest man that ever lived says, (1 Chron. xxix. 12) "Both riches and honour come of Thee." God gave us our powers of acquisition, and so all we have acquired. Out of this God tells us by His divinely inspired servant Paul, lay by in store on the first day of the week, as God has prospered us. Let the smallest, poorest parish in Christendom conscientiously, faithfully and persistently do this, year in and year out, on the first day of every week, and the "struggles" in four-fifths of the struggling and dependent churches would be at a perpetual end; parish expenses would be easily met; gifts to benevolence would be doubled at once and go on increasing.

When Forepaugh went to Chicago with his circus, Mr. Moody asked the manager if he could hire the tent for morning services, and it was rented to him. Moody held service on Sunday morning and thousands attended. The circus was opened Sunday night, but "didn't go"—no crowd to look on. The end of it all was that the manager was delighted with Moody and told him he would never again open the show on Sunday, and if he would get a good evangelist for him he would pay all expenses, and have him preach to the showmen every Sunday morning.

If all our wishes were gratified most of our pleasures would be destroyed.—Whateley.

ONE TALENT PEOPLE.

There are quite a number of us gathered together. We, poor souls, are, all of us, more or less conscious of our poverty, and yet are sincerely anxious not to keep our one talent laid up in a napkin, nor to hide it in the earth; so we have met to consult ways and means to make the most of what we have, so that when the Lord of these servants comes to demand His own, we can return that He has given doubled and quadrupled. The meeting is called to order, and the first to speak is a poor girl: "There is only one thing in the world that I can do well," she says, "and that is to sew. One night in the week after I come from the store, I sew for a poor, blind woman who lives up-stairs, and who has nobody but a little grandchild; as soon as the days grow longer I shall teach the child to use her needle. That is the only talent I have and it may not bring in much interest, but I shall do my best with it." "I can write," said another, "not, of course, like people who are famous, but I can put sentences together, and I hope my poor little talent will improve by use. I am going to try to make it help somebody every time I take up my pen to write, even if it is only a letter. How nice it is to think that such a little thing as my pen may be consecrated!" "When I learned to read," said a third, "I never thought it was a talent; but I can read fairly well and without getting tired, so I go to Old People's Homes and read to some of them. Sometimes I get tired of going so steadily, and I am so ashamed when I remember that if our Lord was there and needed me, I would go quickly enough, and yet these are His people, and you know He said it was just the same.

THE OLIVE TREE.

The most striking feature of the olive tree is its fixed and permanent habit of yielding fruit. Season after season—on the low alluvials or up on the rocky cliff—the same bountiful crop comes in, prompt as a sunrise, and always "on time." A follower of Jesus Christ, who is habitually labourious in every good enterprise, who is always abounding in love deeds, and sweet, gentle words of sympathy, and in ministrations of mercy at sick beds and in poverty's cellars or attics, who distils true piety like holy oil into every day of his life, who drops his benign influence on the driest and bleakest spots that misery ever cursed, who loves to do good and cannot help it, and would chafe himself to death if he were not allowed to do good—such a man answers to the Bible description that "his beauty is as the olive tree." He has a habit of loving Christ and loving his fellow-men; not on special occasions, but all the while. It is his way. We can count on him; and we go to him for a contribution of money, or of a timely prayer or speech in a prayer-meeting, or a good service of any kind, just as confidently as we go to a Bartlett pear tree in its September abundance of golden fruit. This blessed fruitfulness is the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwelleth in Him; he is always alive, because Jesus Christ liveth in his innermost soul, and supplies the vital sap.—Theodore Cuyler, D.D.

USEFUL CHURCH MEMBERS.

Let us be thankful for the men and women, busy with the affairs of daily life, who find time to prosecute some form of Church work. We asked a man the other day, whom we knew to be overburdened with professional and family cares, if he were still teaching his Sunday-school class. At once his face lit up, and he said, "I can't give that up anyway; it is my meat and drink." Another gentleman of our acquaintance has time for only one thing, but he does that well. He stands at the church door and greets with a cheery smile and a grasp of the hand those who come in. In our work for the Master it is a mistake to scatter one's energies over too large a field. Find out what you can do, and then do it, however trivial be the service, as faithfully as though the Kingdom of God depended on your fidelity. Perhaps it does.