

ATTENDING CHURCH ON RAINY SABBATHS

Frances Ridley Havergal's admirers, whose name is legion, will read with interest the following lines from her pen, which a correspondent in Manitoba has forwarded for insertion in "The Record."

I attended church on rainy Sabbaths, because—

1. God has blessed the Lord's day and hallowed it, making no exceptions for rainy Sabbaths.

2. I expect my minister to be there. I should be surprised if he were to stay at home for the weather.

3. If this hand fail through weakness, I shall have great reason to blame myself, unless I sustain him by prayer and presence.

4. By staying away I may lose the prayers, which may bring God's blessing and the sermon that would have done me great good.

5. My presence is more needful on Sabbaths when there are few, than on those days when the Church is crowded.

6. Whatever station I hold in the church, my example must influence others. If I stay away, why may not they?

7. On any important business, rainy weather does not keep me at home, and church attendance is, in God's sight, very important.

8. Among the crowds of pleasure-seekers I see that no weather keeps the delicate female from the ball, the party or concert.

9. Among other blessings, such weather will show me on what foundation my faith is built. It will prove how much I love Christ. True love rarely fails to meet an appointment.

10. Those who stay from church because it is too warm, or too cold, or too rainy, frequently absent themselves on fair Sabbaths.

11. Though my excuses satisfy myself, they still must undergo God's scrutiny, and they must be well grounded to bear that. (Luke xiv. 18.)

12. There is a special promise that where two or three meet together in God's name He will be in the midst of them.

13. An avoidable absence from the church is an infallible evidence of spiritual decay. Disciples first follow Christ at a distance, and then, like Peter, do not know Him.

14. Such yielding to surmountable difficulties prepares for yielding to those merely imaginary, until thousands never enter a Church, and yet they think they have good reason for such neglect.

15. I know not how many more Sabbaths God may give me, and it would be a poor preparation for my first Sabbath in heaven to have slighted my last Sabbath on earth.

BAPTIST MINISTERS—WHY THE SCARCITY?

Of late we hear much about the needs of our Baptist cause in the Maritime Provinces, and especially as to the scarcity of preachers. Why this scarcity of ministers in our Baptist denomination? Has God forgotten to be gracious? What sins, if any, have we Baptists committed, and which stand unforgiven, that our denomination should have so few preachers for our many churches?

We hear it said our young men go to schools in the United States, and are lost to our home churches. Are they lost to the home churches? Is it entirely the fault of our young men that they do not return to us? I would like in this article to refer to a few reasons why we have such a scarcity of ministers for our Baptist churches in these provinces by the sea.

1st. The young parents of our home churches are not praying for ministers to be born in their families. In the good old days our fathers, and mothers consecrated themselves, and their sons to the ministry of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Today it is not so, and in many cases the laws of God are disobeyed, and no children are born in the home.

2nd. Again, the fathers and mothers of our home churches are not encouraging their sons to enter the Christian ministry. The stress of counsel is placed on money, money, money—when it should be on the kingdom of God. How the dear old fathers and mothers used to pray for Almighty God to call one son, or all, into the ministry of Jesus. The men we have today throughout our Baptist churches as pastors and evangelists are from such parents.

3rd. Our home churches are not praying to have one or more of the young men from their membership to be called to preach the gospel. Go to the churches of today, and how many ministers pray from the pulpit for laborers to be sent into Christ's vineyard. Our fathers in each prayer had a request to God for ministers, and in their pastoral visitation before leaving a home, a prayer was offered asking of God to call some one, or more of the little boys to preach Jesus. To pray from the platform on the Lord's Day for young men to go into the ministry is being fast abandoned, not purposely, but from neglect, and as for a prayer at a pastoral call, this is thought as being a bold encroachment on the people's rights.

4th. Again, the gospel ministry I fear, is devolving into a mercenary calling. The young man of today who intends to be a minister of Christ, and we who are in the work must abide close to the cross.

5th. Our churches are not keeping in close touch with our young men. When they leave the provinces for study, very few inquiries are made as to where that young country licentiate is, and should he try to keep in touch with the home churches, they seldom if ever reply to his letters.

6th. The churches are not dealing justly with the property of the church of God, ministers of Christ. They are turning down the grey heads. They are rejecting the slow of speech, and awkward of bearing. They are refusing to hear the man who has not been hatched from the university theological incubator. Our churches need the grey heads, they need the slow of speech, and the self-educated man with heart and purpose, is a blessing from God.

7th. The church members of our Baptist churches are not loyal enough to their pastor. There are too many "itching ears." A change is desired. So many will not uphold his character, and reputation. They do not encourage as they should. They do not support as a whole in spiritual and money graces.

Think over these, reader. Are you one of these? God is willing to send any church a shepherd. Don't go to Theological Schools for your man—go to God and your man will be sent. He may come from our educational centres; he may come from the farm, but when he arrives receive him, love him, help him, honor him, and labor with him, and your church will be a power for Jesus. Try this course. Begin today. Call your church members together and confess wrongs, and pray God to send you a minister, and to send ministers to all our churches. Do this, and the province will be supplied, and a revival of grace to bless our churches.—Maritime Baptist.

AN UNEXPECTED QUESTION.

One morning about twenty years ago a lawyer on the way to his office stopped outside a barber's shop door to get a "shine."

The little bootblack who plied his trade there was no stranger to him, although he knew him only by his street name. This morning the boy was unusually silent. The lawyer missed his bright remarks and began to rally him a little, when suddenly the boy looked up in his face and said:

"Mr. Bartlett, do you love God?"

The lawyer was an upright, self-respecting man, but neither a church attendant nor one given to religious thought, and he took the question at first as an attempt at a joke on the part of the boy; but he soon found that it was meant in all seriousness. No one had ever asked him the question before in quite the same way and it staggered him.

"Why do you ask me that, Bart?" he said, after a rather awkward pause. "What difference does it make to you?"

"Well, I'll tell you, sir. Me mother an' me's got to get out; for the place we live in'll be tore down pretty soon, an' a feller like me can't pay much rent. Mother does all she can, but you see there's three of us, and me grandmother's lame I dunno what to do. Yesterday I heard two men talkin', an' one of 'em said God would help anybody that loved him if they'd tell him they were in the hole. I thought about it 'most all night, an' this mornin' I made up my mind I'd lay for somebody that knew him well enough to ask him."

The lawyer was embarrassed. All he

could say to the threadbare little bootblack was that he had better ask someone else. He had better keep inquiring, he told him; for in a city of so many churches he would surely find the sort of person he wanted. He thrust a dollar into the boy's hand and hurried away.

But all that day he found his thoughts reverting to the bootblack and his strange question. "A fine position for an educated man in a Christian country!" he said to himself. "Struck dumb by an ignorant street Arab! I could not answer his question. Why not?"

The lawyer was an honest man, and his self-examination ended in a resolution to find out the reason why. That evening he went, for the first time in many years, to prayer meeting, and frankly told the whole story, without sparing himself. From that day life had a new meaning for him, and a higher purpose.

A few days later, at a conference of ministers of different denominations in the same city, the lawyer's strange experience was mentioned by the pastor who had given him his first Christian welcome. Immediately another minister told of a young man in his congregation who had been awakened to a religious life by the same question put to him by the same little bootblack. The interest culminated when the third declared he had a call from the bootblack himself, who had been brought to his study by a man who had appreciated his unexpected question and knew how to befriend him.

Such an incident could not be allowed to end there. The boy was helped to good lodgings, and to patronage that enabled him to provide better for his "family." At last he had found somebody who loved God; and in time he had learned to love himself, and "knew him well enough to ask him." Opportunities for a decent education were opened to him, and he showed so much promise that his lawyer friend took him in first as an office boy and finally as a student.

Many would recognize the bootblack today if his name was given, not only as a member of the bar in successful practice, but as a church member and a worker in Sabbath school. He loves boys, and the few who knew that he was once a bootblack understand his interest in little fellows who need a friend. Helping them is for him loving God in the most effectual way.—Youth's Companion.

THE WORD—A LAMP.

An old Indian who had been converted, kept always his Bible near by him. On being asked why he did so, he made the following reply:

"In telling you why I keep this so near me, I want you to understand that the greater part of my life has been spent in the night, away over in the middle of the night, that part of the night where it is the darkest, where no light comes and one gets lost. It was then when I was dark and lost that this book came, and was like the rising of the sun in the morning; it shone on the place I wanted to walk upon. I put my feet there and I got into the light. I learned to read the words of the book. They came into my heart and have made it dance. Keep the book near me. I must do it for between the two sides of it everything I have is there. I can do without my ponies, without my dogs, without my friends, without them all; but I can not do without the book. I am an old man and I need to open the book often and hear what it says."—Missionary Tidings.

When you are doubtful as to your course, submit your judgment absolutely to the Spirit of God, and ask Him to shut against you every door but the right one. In the meantime continue along the path which you have been already treading. It lies in front of you; pursue it. Abide in the calling in which you were called. Keep on as you are, unless you are clearly told to do something else. Expect to have as clear a door out as you had in; and if there is no indication to the contrary, consider the absence of indication to be the indication of God's will that you are on His track.—F. B. Meyer.

Victor used to say: "The winter of age is upon my head, but eternal spring time is in my heart. I feel in my soul the symptoms of the age to come. My work is only beginning. I feel in myself a future life. Heaven lights me with the sunshine of unseen worlds. I am rising I know, toward the skies."

SPECIAL PRAYER.

At the Keswick Convention at present session in England, the following letter or request was received and read at a prayer meeting, and as we read it we could not help but feel that this same request might well be made to the readers of the "Banner." The letter reads as follows:

"I feel strongly led, I trust of God, to ask if there could not be special and earnest prayer for the children of God's people at the Keswick Convention. I know of so many mothers weeping in sorrow over their sons, brought up in the fear of God, but now held in the power of Satan. He seems to make a dead set at the children of godly parents in these days. Can we not ask the Lord to fight for us, and deliver the prey out of the hands of the terrible one? Isaiah 49:55. I am in deep sorrow myself over my son and his wife; but it is not for myself alone I would ask, but for all the children who have gone astray."

For some time we have been especially burdened with the thought expressed in the foregoing letter. We see so many of the children of godly parents—children who are the subject of many prayers and tears, rushing madly into the world, as it were, trying to get away from the pleadings and groans of their parents, and to drown, if possible, the conviction which gets hold of them at times. Young men and women who, when in their boyhood and girlhood days were tender and expressed a living hope in Christ, and were an encouragement and a joy to their parents, now seem to delight in tramping mercilessly under foot all the early convictions and teachings, and seem to have a hatred towards the good, plain old way that leads through self-denial and separation to glory. They find fault with everything spiritual, and blindly seek after the gratification of their own desire for pleasure and fun. All they think of, apparently, is to have a good time in the world. There seems to be little reverence and respect for the feelings of their parents. They consider not how many years of anxious care and prayer they trample under foot, and how they fill the cup of their parents with sorrow instead of joy. One would hope and expect better things from such children.—Gospel Banner.

A holy life is a silent witness for Jesus—an incense cloud from the heart-altar, breathing odors and sweet spices, of which the world cannot fail to take knowledge. . . . It must and will manifest its living and influential power. The heart, broken at the cross, like Mary's broken box, begins from that hour to give forth the hallowed perfume of faith, and love, and obedience, and every kindred grace.—John R. Macduff.

"Dr. Duff when leaving for India in 1829 said: 'There was a time when I had no care or concern for the heathen; that was when I had none for my own soul. When by the grace of God I was led to care for my own soul, I began to care for them. In my closet I said, O Lord, silver and gold have I none, What I have I give: I offer Thee myself! Wilt Thou accept the gift?'"

Let us wipe our tears, lift our heads and give ourselves to brave and cheerful toil. In due time the release will come; rest so sweet after the toil is over; glory so bright after the darkness is passed; victory so grand that we would not wish the conflicts to have been the less fierce, or the perils of the day less numerous or painful.—Sel.

Five minutes spent in the companionship of Christ every morning—age, two minutes, if it is face to face and heart to heart—will change the whole day; will make every thought and feeling different, will enable you to do things for His sake that you would not have done for your own sake or for any one's sake.—Drummond.

A little girl asked prayers for the salvation of her sister, and then before they had time to pray she hurried away. The leader asked her why she did not wait to join in the prayer for her sister. "Oh," said she, "I am hurrying home to see how Lucy's face will shine when she gets converted." "If our faith were but more simple, we would take Him at His word."—Sel.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMN.

WHISTLE OR WHINE.

Two little boys were on their way to school. The smaller one tumbled and began to whine.

The older boy took his hand in a fatherly way and said: "Oh, never mind, Jimmy, don't whine; it is a great deal better to whistle." And he began a cheerful whistle.

Jimmie tried to join. "I can't whistle as nice as you, Charlie," said he; "my lips will not pucker up good."

"That's because you haven't got all the whine out yet," said Charlie; "but you try a minute, and the whistle will drive the whine away."

So he did, and the last I saw or heard of the little fellows they were whistling away as earnestly as though that were the chief end of life.—The Junior Christian Endeavour World.

NOW I LAY ME

There is a touching story told of a little girl who was to undergo an operation. The physician said to her as he was about to place her upon the operating table, "Before we can make you well we must put you to sleep." The little girl looked up, and smiling said, "Oh, if you are going to put me to sleep, I must say my prayers first." Then she knelt down beside the table and said:

"Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take."

The surgeon said afterwards that he prayed that night for the first time for thirty years. This little girl was only about her Father's business as Christ was when he was listening and asking questions.—Sel.

KEEP THE SOUL ON TOP.

A little boy, on returning from Sunday School, was asked what he had learned in his class.

"Well, mamma," said the little fellow, "I have learned that it is always best to keep the soul on top. Teacher said so, and taught us a verse that means that."

"What was the verse, darling?" said the wondering mother.

"I can't remember it, mamma; but that is what it means anyway."

The mother thought long, and finally by dint of much questioning, found it was Paul's declaration, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection," and tears came into her eyes as she thought the little son had gotten the larger meaning of the text in his homely interpretation, "Keep the soul on top."

THE LITTLE BLIND GIRL

This pathetic little story of a blind girl is told by Ian Maclaren in an American magazine:

"If I dinna see"—and she spoke as if this were a matter of doubt and she were making a concession for argument's sake—"there's nobody in the Glen can hear like me. There's no footstep of a Drumtochy man comes to the door but I ken his name and there's no voice on the road that I canna tell. The birds sing sweeter to me than to onybody else and I can hear them cheeping to one another in the bushes before they go to sleep. And the flowers smell sweeter to me—the roses and the carnations and the bonny moss-rose—and I judge that the oat cake and the milk taste the richer because I dinna see them. Na, na, ye're no to think that I've been ill treated by my God, for if He didna give me aye thing, He gave me mony things instead. And mind ye, it's no as I'd seen once and lost my sight; that might ha' been a trial and my faith might ha' failed. I've lost nothing; my life has been all gettinging."—Anon.

The Presbyterian gives us these sententious words of prayer: "God respects not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how long they are; nor the music of our prayers, how melodious they are; nor the logic of our prayers, how methodical they are; but the divinity of our prayers, how heart-sprung they are. Not gifts, but graces prevail in prayer."