

[From the Puritan Recorder.]

OLD AGE.

People of all ages have their joys and sorrows, their advantages and disadvantages.—The young are passing on, like the sun, to high meridian, where they wish to remain, and not, like the sun, to decline. They cannot fully sympathise with the aged. Experience only can give them a full understanding of their condition. Were it not so, would there not be more sympathy and tender feeling, as well as respect, for those who are in the decline of life? Yet reason alone teaches them, that *they too may be old.*

It is the lot of old age to be forsaken.—Hence David said, in an address to the Lord, "When I am old and grey-headed, forsake me not." Aware that he should be forsaken by men, he prayed the Lord not to forsake him. It is a trying condition for any man; but more especially for ministers of the gospel, who have faithfully served a people all the best of their days, and are then turned away—long and strong attachments and associations broken up—by no fault of ministers, who cannot stop the tide of time.

How much more calamitous is the condition of those, who, having received a mere support, in old age are left without funds, and unsupported by the people whom they have served the best of their days. What shall they do? Having been long in a profession, they would be glad to pursue it while they have competent powers of action. Activity is a constituent of life, and they would pine away without it. If past labour, and destitute, the slaves of the South (whose masters are bound by law to maintain them through life,) may "glory over them." And what adds poignancy to grief is, having laboured long in word and doctrine with only a bare support, and been the means, it may be, of the conversion, sanctification and salvation of many, now to be forsaken, and especially by their spiritual children.

If any labourers are worthy of their meat, are not these? Says Paul, 1 Tim. v. 17, "Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in word and doctrine." Either they should be able to provide a competency for old age, or have the privilege of slaves, entitled to a competent support through life. In almost any other occupation, they might have been independent, as other men. Who can be found, with only a common education, willing to labour all their days for a mere support? The keepers of the poor have a salary, over and above their houserent and the support of their families. So people often say that they are willing their ministers should "lay up as much as the people in general." But is it so?—

"What meaneth then the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen?"—The truth is, men do that in associated bodies, which they would shrink from doing in their individual capacity. Divided among so many, the quotient is a fraction. They acknowledge the wrong; but the body did it, while no one feels his individual responsibility.

It is probably best that ministers should not be rich, (which need not be feared;) but is it best that they should be "brought to a piece of bread?" The cry is, "More ministers are wanted; a thousand are now needed in the great West." And the inquiry is urged, "Why do not more young men go into the ministry?" Young men know, and so do the people, that "he who provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." They know too, as well as the people, that, with their education, and a common blessing, they could provide liberally for themselves and families during a long life, as other men of like education and genius. And until their services are better appreciated, and made somewhere near equal to common labourers, it is not to be expected that young men of ordinary talents only, will enter the ministry to the extent they are needed. And can they be blamed for this? They are not specially called to the work as the apostles were; and the "woe if they preach not the gospel," may not apply to them, more than to others.

The case of ministers reminds one of the following lines:

"If unlamented I must die,
That thought, no doubt, would cost a sigh;
But after death no more is known
Of reckless joy, or friendly moan.
If undesired I must live,
The change which circumstances give,
Must render life a living grief.
And death alone can give relief,
Live undesired, and with a sigh,
Sink down, and unlamented die." Pastor.

The Sabbath Slighted, the Nation's Ruin.

But even could we for a season prosper without the Sabbath, is it possible to shake off our allegiance with God, or to evade the retributions of his righteous providence? Who wields the orb of day? Who guides the seasons? Who sends adversity, and measures out prosperity? Have we so soon forgotten the weakness of our infancy, and our cries to God when men rose up against us? Have we reached an eminence from which God cannot thrust us down? Can we dispense with his protection, and set at naught his institutions, and run successfully the race of an irreligious prosperity? Be not deceived. What fleets and armies could not do, the hand of suicide may accomplish, emanated from Divine restraint. Proud and fearless of heaven as we may be, in one hour destruction may come. The decree is universal. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee, shall perish." And God has not departed from the helm of universal government, or put beyond his power the instruments of punishment. In our country's bosom lie the materials of ruin, which wait only the Divine permission to burst in terrific eruption, scattering far and wide the fragments of our greatness.

Give up the Sabbath; blot out the orb of day; suspend its blessed attraction; and the reign of chaos and old night would return.—The waves of our unquiet sea, high as our mountains would roll and dash, from North to South, and from South to North, shipwrecking the hopes of patriots and the world.

Who, then, is the patriot that would thrust our ship from the peaceful moorings, in a starless night, upon such an ocean of storms, without rudder, or anchor, or compass, or chart? The elements round us may remain, and our great rivers and mountains. Our miserable descendants also may multiply, and vegetate and rot in moral darkness and putrefaction.—But the American character, and our glorious institutions will go down into the same tomb that entombs the Sabbath, and our epitaph will stand forth a warning to the world.—Thus endeth the nation that despised the Lord, and gloried in wisdom, wealth, and power.—Dr. Beecher.

Preach Christ Crucified.

The following extract is the close of a sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Hamilton, a Congregational minister of Leeds, England, before the students of the Chesnut College. Its cautions are of value here as well as in England:—

Preach Christ crucified! Turn not aside from this, under the temptation of meeting some question of the day, or some bearing of the public mind. There is much mystic verbiage which some esteem to be of transcendental depth. There is much pantheism, which some regard as original and sublime. Your versatility will often be urged to follow after these conceits. You will be told of their amazing influence. They really are nothing. They are the bubbles of the hour. They cannot boast even a novelty. I conjure you, care little for them. Yours is not a discretionary theme. It is unchanging. Keep to it. Abide by it. It is one, but it is an infinite one! It is the word of Christ, divinely true! Its rigidity can never hamper your thought. Its reiteration can never weary your inquiry. At no point can it restrict you. It is a large place. It is a boundless range. It is a mine of wealth. It is a firmament of power. Whither would you go from it? It is the unwinding of all the great principles! It is the expansion of all glorious thoughts. It is the capacity of all blessed emotions. O Calvary, we turn to thee! Our nature, a wreck, a chaos, only canst thou adjust! We have an aching void which thou canst only fill! We have pantings and longings, which only thou canst satisfy! Be thou the strength and the charm of our inward life! Be thou the earnestness of our deepest interest! Be thou inspiration, impulsion, divinity, and all! Our tears never relieved us until thou taughtest us to weep! Our smiles only mocked us, until thou badest us rejoice! We knew no way of peace, until we found our way to thee! Hope was banished from us, until its dove flew downwards from thee upon our heart? All was dormant, until thou didst stir; all was dull, until thou didst excite us! Our eyes are still lifted up to thee, as to the hill from which cometh all our help! Our feet shall stand upon thee, O high mountain, and thou shalt make them beautiful, while we publish the glad tidings of "Christ crucified."

"Why Stand Ye all the Day Idle."

We were created to work; activity is our native element. But having sinned, our moral powers are palsied, and "we are like them that dream." We have not, however, escaped from the divine government; Christ's searching eye still surveys us; and as he beholds the children of men, for whom he died in anguish, with the offers of pardon in their hands, and the solemn realities of death and eternity but a step before them, sleeping away their probationary existence, he comes with the startling inquiry, "Why stand ye all the day idle?" This is the voice of our Saviour, addressed to each one of us, arousing to activity,—not in worldly business, for in this we are sufficiently active, often too much absorbed,—but in the work of God the soul's salvation. And while so busy in securing that which must perish with the using, why are we so sluggish in a work whose fruits are immortal? Can we not be made to see our inconsistency, and awake?

Are not our obligations strong enough to incite us to effort? God has given us all our powers and capacities. He has, therefore, an absolute right to them, and to all the services we are thereby capable of putting forth; and shall we refuse to employ them as our beneficent Creator designed? Is not the loveliness of Christ's character attractive enough to draw forth all the activities of the soul? Were not his sufferings in our behalf stupendous enough to awaken our gratitude, and thus win us to obedience? What could he have done more? He laid down his life for us. Are not the rewards of salvation from sin and woe everlasting, an elevation to a crown that fadeth not away, great enough to move our moral susceptibilities? He has offered us himself as our undying portion, and what could he have offered more? Can we continue to slumber under all this 'pressure of motives'?—N. Y. Puritan.

The Man Lives.

I remember to have heard, some years ago, of an interesting fact, showing the value of human life as it was appreciated by a remarkable and distinguished man. It is recorded of Alexander the late emperor of all the Russias—that upon one occasion he was with a number of his courtiers engaged in a party of pleasure, I believe in the chase. He had left his companions and suddenly came to the margin of a lake, where he found that a man had just been dragged out of the water, apparently drowned. The Emperor had recently read the instructions published by the Humane Society for the recovery of people in such circumstances; and right noble as he was, he threw aside all his trappings, and laboured with the zeal and energy of a professional man to recover the life of this humble peasant.—For a long time the labour seemed to be altogether unavailing, but at length the man gave signs of returning life; his pulse began to beat, his chest to heave, and his lungs to play; he gave a sigh, and opened his eyes. The emperor, with the perspiration rolling from his forehead, fell back, and in a state of ecstasy, exclaimed, "Good God, the man lives!" It was an act worthy of an emperor, unworthy of a man, to attach such importance to human life—the life of a peasant that must presently be laid down. What then should be our joy at hearing to-night that through the instrumentality of your Society, thousands have been brought to the position of spiritual life, have attained a life which is indestructible and shall never die. Let us give thanks to God, then, that we have been permitted to take any part in this enterprise. I feel thankful for one, that I live in the nineteenth century. To have lived 200 years ago, would have been to have one's soul imprisoned, as compared with the present moment.—Mr. Wells, before the British Bible Society.

"I Cannot Leave My Class."

So said a young lady, when urged to spend the Sabbath with some friends she was visiting, a few miles from home. "I should be happy to stay with you, but I cannot leave my Sabbath school class."

"Will not the superintendent find them a teacher just for one Sabbath, when he sees that you are not there?" asked her friends, as they continued to press her to prolong her visit. "It is so long since you have been here, we cannot consent to your leaving us to-night." "O, yes, a teacher might be found readily, but I said nothing to them last Sabbath of a possibility of my being absent, and they will feel disappointed if I am not there."

"There seems now a prospect of a rainy day to-morrow. If so, your class will not be there. I think you had better stay, if that is all that requires your return," remarked an elderly lady present.

"A rain will make no difference," replied Miss R.; "my little girls are always there unless sick. Besides, I promised to explain to them to-morrow some allusion to ancient Eastern usages, which they did not understand, by reading some descriptions from the Bible Dictionary. I thank you; I should love to be with you, but I must go to-night."

The friends ceased to urge her; but while they admired her devotedness to the Sabbath-school, they could not forbear still asking, "Do you never allow yourself to be absent from home on the Sabbath?"

"Never, on ordinary occasions," she answered; "if a long journey, or anything (sickness excepted) demanded my absence, I endeavor to make arrangements previously, so that no interruption or disappointment need occur in my class. They are so punctual themselves, I certainly should be so too."

Happy little girls! to be blessed with the instructions of such a teacher; and happy teacher too! who may place such confidence in the punctual attendance and unabated interest of her pupils.—Well Spring.

The Chamber of Death.

A FRAGMENT.

How glorious is the dying chamber of the Christian! It is the very union of time and eternity, a meeting of the living earth with the angels of heaven. The place is holy; for it is filled with those ministering spirits, waiting for the soul departing from this perishing world, for the everlasting habitations of the redeemed. But glorious as this is, it shrinks before the greater glory of Him who is present: Jesus himself is present, and the Holy Spirit is there to finish the work of salvation! Ah! how different, could we see the throng in the chamber of the unsaved departing soul! If words cannot express, or imagination conceive, the glory of the former, neither can the horror of the latter be supposed, where the bed is surrounded by fiends eagerly waiting for their prey. But it is not in this solemn hour only, that these unseen spirits are beside us. They are constantly present for good or for evil, in the bustle of the world or the solitude of the lonely. By day and by night we are surrounded by this unseen host, waiting during all its pilgrimage, on the soul of man. Go into the sick chamber. Mark all the routine of the sick bed, the fruitless visit of the physician, the profound sympathy of friends, the prayer of the minister, too often desired only to close the last scene. Ask, then, if there be not, to one and all, a fast-coming eternity, a message from the Lord in the house. "This night shall thy soul be required of thee;" and this very night shall that soul see a holy and just God, and hear the question whether Christ has been indeed precious, and his redemption been indeed the chief desire in life, and the only hope in death.—Wes. Meth. Mag.

The Sea, and Sea Water.

To a person of mere observation without reflection, or a knowledge of Natural Philosophy, it will naturally enough occur, that the proportion of water is too great to the proportion of land; and if instead of that mighty and pathless extent of salt water, composing the ocean, and which man can turn to little account, he had been supplied with some thousands of square miles more of fertile land, the redundant population of other portions of the globe might there have found a comfortable and happy home, and the earth itself made capable of sustaining a greater number of human beings. But the man of science comes to a very different conclusion. By a well known law the heat of the sun is constantly raising water into the atmosphere in imperceptible particles. These light misty vapours, form themselves into clouds, and float above the surface of the earth, until coming in contact with a stratum of cold air, they are immediately condensed, and becoming too heavy for the atmosphere, fall to the earth in the form of rain or snow. If the sun had a more limited expanse of water to act upon, less rain would consequently be accumulated, and springs and rivers would in a short time dry up. The earth in a short time would lose all its moisture, and speedily become a dreary wilderness. Indeed it has been found by calculation, that the quantity of land and water is proportioned to each other. If there was more