

of the country. Those newspapers which have formed the habit of talking about foreign countries as if they were all the enemies of the United States, and as if to be a true American involved hatred of everything French, English, German, Italian, or Spanish, have had the opportunity during the past few weeks of judging of the quality of their teaching by its fruits. It is to be hoped that they are satisfied. Never, surely, did a great nation through its representatives betray more weakness of temper and less power of impressive and weighty action.

These two causes have been further complicated by the fact that this is the Presidential year. In the general uncertainty about domestic questions, the confessed inability to deal with the currency question, the absolute failure so far of either party to define itself on that question, and the hopeless groping about for something definite to stand on, the members of Congress have rushed pell-mell through any door of escape into a foreign field. The result has been that both parties have outdone each other in an attempt to take the most extreme positions and use the most violent language, and Congress, without regard to party lines, has endeavored to outbid the President. It is to be hoped that this phase of contemporary political life is now ended. The Jingo powder has been burned. The speeches against effete Europe and tyrannical monarchies have now been made. The Senate has apparently gone back to its old-time attitude of a reasoning body, with the desire, not to bluster, but to ascertain facts according to rational custom. The ghost of Jingoism, which is the merest shadow of a real American feeling, will flit about the political field for the coming year, but it will be introduced for campaign purposes exclusively, and after the campaign is over it will go into the limbo of ghosts that have served their day and done their work.



## A Lenten Thought

### The Decline of Family Prayer

A veteran missionary was once asked, on his return from the Orient, what sign of change during his ten years' absence most impressed him. He replied, "The decline of family worship in the Christian homes where I am a guest." A contrast of this sort among Unitarians between the present and the preceding generation has recently been noted in the "Christian Register." It is not limited to them, and is an increasing contrast. Not only is the morning family worship omitted, but the blessing at the table also. Some theory of causes is likely to come first to mind, but a more important matter is the consideration of effects. It is a well-established psychological principle that expression has a stimulating reaction upon feeling, and that the life of feeling so depends on the stimulus of this reaction that if it be restrained the feeling declines. Moreover, while religion is essentially personal between each individual and God, religious feeling cannot be satisfied without social expression, since we are essentially social persons. Neither is the individual the social unit, but the family is the integer, and the individual but a fraction. The decadence of family worship is not only the impoverishment of social religious feeling, but it is the promotion of the excessive individualism from which in our times both the family and the community suffer.

Many can remember when evening as well as morning prayer was the rule in religious families. Social engagements and late hours have altogether driven out the evening prayer, and early trains to business now threaten to exclude the morning prayer. But to maintain the spirit of

religion apart from its form is a hope without warrant from experience. There are, no doubt, a few

"Whose faith has center everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form."

It is otherwise with most of us. It is otherwise in every family where there are children. A religious spirit cannot grow, neither can it sustain itself, except at a "poor dying rate," apart from embodiment in outward expression. So long as a faithful life in purity of heart depends on the habitual realization of the presence of God and our filial relation to him, so long is the daily acknowledgment of this at the family altar indispensable for those who would not only make their daily calling a divine service but teach their children to do so. What is the quarter-hour that one should grudge it for this? "Prayer and provender hinder no man." Time is given to fit the outer man for his daily going forth into the world, but the inner man is no less needy. Let not this Lenten season pass without the revival of household worship in many a family where it has ceased.



## Suggestions to Speakers

There is a notable tendency in this country to length of speech; a tendency upon which Major M. H. Bright comments forcibly in another column. It is said of one of the gentlemen mentioned by Mr. Bright that he never on any occasion speaks for a shorter time than one hour. It was said of a speech to which Mr. Bright also refers that it began exactly thirty-five minutes after the speaker commenced to talk. The disaster at the recent Presbyterian missionary rally in this city illustrates a kind of catastrophe which is continually befalling audiences in all parts of the country. A native Chinese missionary not long ago prefaced a brief address, which he had been invited to make, by the statement that the Chinese have no sense of time, and then proceeded to prove it by talking one hour and fifty-five minutes! The feeling is growing among the vast mass of listeners, who have uncomplainingly suffered these many years, that it is high time to take some protective measures. There is a feeling that speakers ought to be classified with reference to responsibility in the matter of time. Some men ought to be marked "dangerous," many more "extra-hazardous." An audience ought to be warned in advance when it is to be exposed to a recital of all past history as a preliminary to a ten minutes' talk on asphalt pavements. In the last century there was a certain member of the House of Lords who always recited the entire history of England when he rose to speak. The Minister who was on guard in the Upper House was in the habit of improving these occasions by making up for lost sleep, some gentleman being charged with the duty of awakening him when the subject was really reached. On one occasion the Minister was thus aroused from particularly needed rest, opened his eyes, listened a minute, and turned indignantly to the friend at his side with the exclamation, "You have awakened me a century too soon!" It would be a sensible arrangement if speakers who employ the "historical introduction" would come to a good understanding with their audiences by saying at the start, "I am about to begin, and shall reach my subject in thirty-eight minutes." The audience could then quietly drop off into slumber and give the speaker a fresh mind and willing heart when he reached his theme. Another and perhaps a better way would be to print the introduction and have it distributed at the door.

In the present anarchic condition of mind and habit on this subject distinct breaches of good manners sometimes occur. Gentlemen who have been asked to talk ten min-

utes are sometimes irreverently reminded of this fact at the end of an hour and a half. Dr. Edward Everett Hale says that he has a lecture on "Sleep," with illustrations by the audience! Audiences sometimes furnish this particular kind of illustration for subjects which have no relation to it. In the hope of reaching a better state of things, we venture to make a few practical suggestions to speakers:

I. Assume that your audience knows something, and do not endeavor to pour all knowledge into it on every occasion.

II. If you are invited to speak for fifteen minutes, leave out your introduction and confine yourself to the subject. If invited to talk ten minutes at the Chamber of Commerce dinner, do not recount the entire history of commerce since the days of Tyre and Sidon.

III. When others are to follow, try to remember that to appropriate their time is to be guilty of theft. "Thou shalt not steal" ought to be written over every platform and public dinner table.

IV. Never forget that your audience is mortal; it is perishable by its very nature, and time flies on winged feet! Respect its weakness in those moments when you feel most proudly your own ability to go on forever. A delicate forbearance is a beautiful quality in one given to public address.

And, finally, one word to chairmen and presiding officers: You are the custodians of the object for which a meeting is called, and you are bound to guard your meeting from failure, and protect your audience from the ravages of limitless speech. Therefore, when a speaker is guilty of the gross discourtesy of exceeding his time and begins to steal from his fellow, RING HIM DOWN. Such a speaker has put himself outside the pale of forbearance. Your duty is to your audience. Ring him down, and you will sound a bell that will go pealing across the continent and bring hope to a sorely tried people. Who will lead this great reform?



## Put Yourself in His Place

The minister who means to do anything for his fellow-men must put himself in their place. He must understand them if he would help them. He cannot save the drowning man by throwing a rope to him. He must jump in after him. He must either have had the same temptations or must have imagination enough to comprehend the temptations. He must not be so saintly as to be unsympathetic, nor so much a student as to be a recluse.

He who would help a man struggling with his appetite must either have had a similar struggle or be able to enter into it without having had it. If it seems to him contemptible to be mastered by the appetite, if self-indulgence is simply despicable, if he has no appreciation of the awful power of a well-nigh irresistible craving for drink, if the victim of the alcoholic habit is an enigmatical monstrosity to him, he lacks the first requisite for rescue work. He is unequipped. Let him not pride himself on his purity; let him rather lament his soul-narrowness. By personal acquaintance with men of animal nature, by open-mindedness, by cultivation of imagination through literature, let him supply his own defect.

If he has no intellectual difficulties with the dogmas of religion, he can do nothing to help those who have. The man who never doubts is powerless to help a doubting age, unless he has an imagination so sympathetic that he can share the doubts of others without himself doubting. This constitutes the fatal defect of the traditionalist. If he has

come to traditional theology as Newman did, by treading a pathway of doubts, he may minister to the skeptical. But if he has inherited the traditional faith without questioning, he can be of no help to questioners, unless he learns how to abandon for the moment, as it were, his inheritance, and put himself in the skeptic's place. The unbeliever's difficulties must be difficulties to him, or he can do nothing toward removing them. If he would lead others through the darkness, he must go out into the darkness. He cannot stay in his own well-lighted room and shout condemnation to the wayfarers outside, and expect to do any good by the process.

This is one reason why the Church does not reach the wage-earning class more effectively. It is not the only reason—but it is one reason. There is a great rift in the community, with employers on one side and "hands" on the other. And the ministers almost uniformly come from the first class, and know nothing sympathetically about the second. They do not know the real or fancied grievances, the convictions or the prejudices, the knowledge or the ignorances, the virtues or the vices, of the wage-earning class. And that they do not know is made very apparent when they venture timidly to deal with the labor question. If the minister wishes to reach the workingman, he must put himself in the workingman's place. He must either get acquainted with him by direct personal conference, or he must get his books and papers and read them—not critically, but sympathetically. Even if the workingmen were wholly wrong in their contentions—and they are not—this would still be true. We must diagnose a disease before we can cure it.

What makes Christ a Saviour is that he put himself in our place. For us and our salvation he came down to earth. He was tempted in all points like as we are. He knew the stress and strain of life—its burdens, its sorrows, its poverty, its limitations, its struggles. The minister must follow his Master. The critical spirit is fatal to the pastor. He must, above everything else, be receptive. He must see the good in evil, the truth in error, the better side in all men. He must not be so certain, and with such a kind of certitude, that he cannot entertain other men's difficulties; nor so good, and with such a kind of goodness, that he cannot sympathetically understand other men's temptations and falls. Congregations will not hear a minister who preaches to them across a chasm. He must stand at their side. He must say, not "you," but "we." The true prophet comes from the people, belongs to the people, is one of the people.



The "Congregationalist" commemorates its eightieth birthday by an exceedingly interesting résumé of the general progress which has been made during its own lifetime along some of the most important lines of human endeavor. It prints on its cover a facsimile of a copy of the Boston "Recorder" of 1816, thus affording its readers an opportunity of comparing the "Congregationalist" of to-day with the "Congregationalist" of eighty years ago. The comparison brings out very clearly the progress which religious journalism has made, and which is as well illustrated in the "Congregationalist" as in any other paper of its class in the country. The progress is discoverable in every department of the paper; in its mechanical make-up, its intellectual quality, its attitude toward other religious bodies, and its general interpretation of Christianity. Whatever causes for discouragement there may be in other directions, the growth of the religious spirit in breadth of vision and in practical application to the affairs of life and the relations of men is full of encouragement. Newspapers, like men, are constantly changing their relative positions, and there has been a notable readjustment of values in religious journalism in the last ten years. Among the small group of journals which have rightly interpreted the signs of the times, and have broadened their scope with the broadening of life, the "Congregationalist" holds a foremost place.