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THE

BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

THE CALL OF THE PRISON TO MINISTERS.

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THE general opinion among pastors has probably been that the acceptance of a chaplaincy in a penal institution is not a forward step in a ministerial career. There are few paths out of the pastorate that a minister can follow to-day without some loss of caste among his associates. A chaplaincy in the army or the navy of the United States, or even a prison chaplaincy, probably is not one of the few. A pastor may accept a college presidency, or even a first-class professorship, or possibly even in some instances an editorial chair, and be cheered on his way with very hearty and even admiring congratulations. But the church pastor who becomes a prison chaplain is often considered to have taken a step backward. Although his friends may speak very kindly to him about the change he has made, and even fortify their praises with generalizations, pious or profound, there is, nevertheless, a lack of fire in the phrases which often change speedily into the style of a condolence such as smoothes the path of decline.

The purpose of this article is not to lessen any man's estimate of the privilege or the honor of a pastor's position. Let us yield everything that can be asked upon that point. Let it be admitted that no life on earth is more sweet, more dignified, more full of splendid compensations, more consonant with the true health of the body, the mind, and the soul, than that of the pastor. Nevertheless we cannot all of us have an unqualified liberty of choice in this matter. Not every man, not every minister, not every good and successful minister, can have for his field of labor even an approximation to the ideal parish and the ideal church. The Lord of the vineyard has a great variety of places to be filled. Although the prison chaplaincy in the estimation of a man of good taste and well-balanced judgment and correct ambition may be less desirable than some other work, it may yet be very much underestimated by the world and by the ministry. It is undoubtedly true that few men ever taste the vital, ever-new joys of a pastor's life, and then go into a different work however exalted in the opinion of the world, without ofttimes looking back with longing to the occupations of the days gone by, and without many hopes, cherished even beyond reason, cherished in the secret places of the heart long after they have ceased to be openly mentioned, that some time the exile will return. Still there is no service under the Master's call but somewhere conceals, even though it be under an external appearance most unpromising, a charm peculiar to itself, a charm too wonderful for an angel to tell.

The rewards of the Lord's work among prisoners are underestimated. Why should they not be? Why should we expect that religious work in penal institutions would be rightly regarded, when so little has been said to call attention to the claims of the prisoner class upon the endeavors of Christian people? There are in Massachusetts, for instance, at the present time, probably fifty thousand persons who have been under arrest within a year for some offence which they have committed. Associated with them is another

large army of people who are sure to suffer with the offender. They are the dependent families and the immediate friends of prisoners, who in some sense of the word are arrested with the prisoner and go to prison with him. The shame and the taint of imprisonment partly fall upon them. All these are not easily estimated as to their numbers, but must be kept in view in any thorough study of the prison question.

Now how much has been said in time past to call the attention of Christian workers to this large and needy class of people? Striking and notable utterances have been made, no doubt, at times, utterances that ought to have had more effect upon those that heard them. But as regards systematic effort to impress the duty and the privilege of Christian care for these people, efforts to arouse men not only to the performance of their duty but to hope and joy and enthusiasm in the work, far too little has been said or done.

In our theological seminaries, for instance, many of the young men have their thoughts occupied with the prospects of a busy life in our prosperous churches here at home. Others of them have the trials and the rewards of a home missionary life held up before them. Others are being stimulated to offer themselves for the sacrifices of a mission in heathen and far-off lands. But how often has the fact been presented before the students in our seminaries that a large and increasing class of their fellow-men are lifting up their hands in the prison and asking for the gospel, and that the man of Macedonia to-day is standing inside the prison walls? Some of our seminaries have sent promising young men abroad to study correlated problems under peculiar advantages, and have perhaps made some special lectures on such subjects a part of their provision for their students. Perhaps some have done even more. But still we may ask with regret, How often have good men pressed it home upon these undergraduates, that if they were faithful enough in their seminary preparation they might hope to fit themselves for usefulness in our jails and reformatories? Seminary students take very sweet counsel together in their

meetings, or in their rooms, or as they walk by the way together, concerning the time when they shall lift up their voice for Christ in India or Japan, or concerning the experiences they will share when they shall have been settled in thriving parishes. But who ever heard of seminary students holding special meetings to compare views of the measures they would use, and the peculiar and high joys they would find, when they should really get at their work in the prison or the penitentiary?

And yet what authority has any man to say that Christ does not give to the disciple who ministers to him in the prison as generous a reward as to those who do his will in other ways? There is a romance in going to foreign lands, there is an enchantment which distance lends to the view. But Christ in a far-off country and Christ in prison here are the same Saviour, and his smile and his welcome are the same, and he knows how to make his reward abundant everywhere. Certainly, then, enthusiasm in his service is as reasonable and as becoming in ministering to those in prison as in carrying the message to his poor, his ignorant, or his helpless ones anywhere else.

This evil of a too slight appreciation of the privilege as well as the duty of this work which has been perpetuated thus far is liable to perpetuate itself still further. For while it is hardly to be expected that theological students and young ministers will easily disregard the judgment of honored and older men as to what work is more promising or less, it is also true that the charm, unknown before, of almost any department of Christian work, is rarely discovered and brought out until that work is entered by young men. The new era of foreign missions, as far as our country is concerned, commenced with the consecration of young men to that work. The dignity, the sublimity of home missionary work in our new states and territories, was first illustrated by Iowa bands, and Kansas bands, and other workers before them, full of young blood and of all the enthusiasm of young life.

But in these days the prison chaplain is not commonly a young man. The prison surgeon is sometimes young, but the chaplain is generally older, and the office he holds is not his first love. Experience is often argued to be indispensable to such prison service, but why is it so any more than the enthusiasm of early consecration to the work? If the chaplain had to contend with the indifference or the opposition of an unsympathetic and unspiritual administration, this plea might be more weighty. But that necessity ought not to exist, nor will it in the prison of the future. Some prisons are already so administered (there may be many such) that an inexperienced but discreet minister would be fully as safe there from serious mistakes as in the average parish. Nevertheless the freshness of youth is rarely found in a prison pulpit.

Many years ago a chaplain was wanted for a vacancy in the navy. It was said that there were a thousand applications, new or on file, for that one place. If it were said also that among the whole thousand there were but few young ministers of the highest standing and of really bright promise, in any leading denomination, what reader would be very much surprised? The man who was appointed to the place desired it for the necessities of his health, although he did excellent service for many years. But disappointed men, or men who seek now first of all to live, or to have their reproach taken away, are not the men to reflect the honor and true dignity of any work whatsoever. When our theological students, instead of thinking of a chaplaincy as a last refuge in case they should find themselves broken down or stranded, or as a benevolent provision of a kind providence in behalf of needy ministers, shall begin to explore this field as they would any accredited spiritual placer; when they shall begin to count up its great privileges; when they shall really invite Christ to walk along the echoing corridors and through the wards of the prison with them,—the prison parish will be better appreciated than now. Then seminary students will begin to look forward to prison work as a reward of

preparation worthy of Christ to give, and of men of large talent to receive.

If it has thus far escaped the notice of bright young men, it will not do so much longer, that a new and wide interest has been awakened in the broad science of penology. Prisons and prisoners, prison discipline, and the true aim of a prison, might already be described as a subject that is "in the air." The Elmira application of the Crofton system, and improvement upon it, has challenged thought very widely. Massachusetts has at once sent out her discoverers to see what can be learned in the interest of her prisoners. So has Ohio; other states are doing the same. The demand has already been made, and is now well under consideration, that the United States shall build a prison, and care for her prisoners in her own institution, instead of boarding them in local prisons as now. When this demand is met, and a model reformatory is to be put before all the states by the Nation, an additional impulse is almost certain to be given to public discussion of the whole problem of the prisoner class.

Prison experts are already a well-organized profession. They hold their conventions and congresses on a large scale. In many of the states there are isolated organizations of the philanthropic and Christian sentiment on this theme. But there is also, wider than these, the national meeting of the Conference of Charities and Corrections annually. There is also the American Prison Association, which holds a congress every year. There is also a large association of chaplains organized by themselves. There is also an international congress, whose last meeting, held in Rome, was attended by representative American delegates. The American citizen who has illustrated very happily indeed how a president may retire to private life with a dignity worthy of the august position he has occupied, Ex-President Hayes, is the president of the American Prison Association, evidently without fear of the one term, or the two terms principle. The discussions of these bodies are carefully published and widely circulated, and already form an ex-

tensive and valuable literature on this topic. And all this is one of the signs of the near twentieth century. The noblest young men have joined reforms no more sacred than this, in periods when they were weaker, and have never regretted it.

Some persons find it quite hard to reckon the advantages of prison work fairly, because their minds are unduly occupied with certain of its difficulties. For instance, prison life is unnatural and must be. We were not intended by the Creator to live in prisons. Prison populations are usually all men or all women. We were made to live where the sexes mingle, and where men, women, and children meet one another. In prison, families are separated. It was intended that families should come together to the house of God. All such peculiarities of prison life are not according to the great original scheme, and they tend, as do some other things, to load the chaplain's work with unnatural conditions. But outside of the prison, town life, city life, or village life even, is not wholly fashioned according to the plan shown us in the Mount. How many caste customs, how many artificial conditions, there are everywhere, that hinder a pastor's best work! He must not expect anywhere to escape them all.

But notwithstanding everything adverse that can be said, the prison pastor does have some advantages peculiar to his place and work. For instance: in a well-conducted prison, the audience are in a mood to hear the gospel. Not every audience will listen to real preaching as prisoners will. In point of intelligence they will compare with outside congregations much more favorably than is often supposed. And they are not surfeited with prosperity, nor with sympathy. They are heart-hungry. Some of their circumstances are peculiarly favorable to the preacher. They went to bed at a reasonable hour on Saturday evening. They have had good plain food this Sunday morning. The Sunday newspaper has not preoccupied their minds. The pew question, they have forgotten all about. There is no foolish

aristocracy, either of dress or of sittings, among them. There are no tardy worshippers. The room may be supposed to be well filled. The service may be called compulsory, but as a fact few of the men leave their rooms for this service against their will, or would prefer to remain locked up rather than come to church. Indeed, it may well be doubted whether, from the preacher's point of view, the compulsory feature is either needful or desirable, although it may be expedient as an administrative measure. The odium of it therefore, if there should be any, does not need to rest upon the pulpit. The preacher rises to speak. The witness of those whose observation or experience qualifies them to judge would undoubtedly be, that they have not generally found audiences elsewhere more glad to hear the gospel.

Of course all this is said on the supposition that the prison preacher declares the gospel, as being himself a sinner saved by grace divine. Prisoners need not be told from the pulpit, nor do they like to be, that they are convicts. They have been sufficiently assured of that by the court. Nor have they much patience with patronizing discourse of any kind. They know, and often feel deeply and with utter humiliation of spirit, that they are sinners. But although the world may regard them as sinners above all others, they are not sure that the All-seeing One so regards them. Indeed, they do not suppose themselves arrested because they have broken God's law; but because they have broken man's law. It seems to them that many break God's law, not only with entire immunity from arrest, but often without loss of respectability even in church society, provided they know how to do it without breaking human law. Man's law seems righteous enough to them as far as it goes, but clumsy; often putting the less sinner in a cell and leaving the greater unharmed. A sorrowful man in prison for drunkenness thought bitterly of his little girl a dozen years old. Death had taken all the rest. She alone was left him. He was now sober. His mind was as clear as it ever was.

Perhaps he was not especially bright, but he was of the honest sort, even if a little dull and slow. And he was sensitive enough to feel it very keenly when he thought himself wronged. And at last, under a bitter sense of injury, he ventured to stop the chaplain in the yard one afternoon, and having spoken of his daughter, added with much contrition and humility, as if the trouble might be after all with his halting faculties, that he could not see how it was right for the State to sell men, for money, the power to set traps everywhere for poor men "the likes of him," and then, when he fell into one of these traps, "to shove him into prison for it."

But while the prisoners may not always believe themselves to be altogether and utterly different from other men, they are not behind other men in being ready to admit themselves such as the gospel comes to save. And any man who feels it to be a real privilege to preach the gospel, and who is called of God to do so, surely ought to be a happy man when the Sabbath morning finds him in a prison pulpit.

In pastoral work, too, a chaplain has some peculiar advantages. He has as many parishioners, it is safe to say, as most other pastors, who really want to see him, not upon any frivolous errand, but upon some errand that is sacred to them. It ought to be easy for most chaplains to see their parishioners. There are many hours of the day when prisoners are quite sure to be at home. And when they are at home they are generally very willing to talk. It may be the chaplain sees them in his own room, or in some other used for the purpose. But a very easy way in many prisons is to go, as he ought to be free to do, to the room door. Conversation there in a natural tone is only intelligible to themselves and is reasonably private. The pastor can make the call as brief or as long as he chooses. And no time is lost in going to the next house. The amount of profitable pastoral work which a chaplain can do in a prison is literally without limit.

Many church pastors have some anxiety about keeping

their congregation together; and not infrequently they feel compelled to enter upon some lines of effort for this end which involve important sacrifices. The prison pastor, however, escapes all such evils and temptations.

Some of our readers, it may be, have often wished they could work among the Roman Catholic population. I do not refer now to such as may cherish a propagandist spirit, but to those—and I am sure there are such—who have been specially drawn to the Catholic people, just as perhaps some Catholic workers have cherished a feeling of special affection for Protestants, and wanted to communicate to them some good thing. There are persons who have for some reason felt so drawn towards the Catholic people that, without any sectarian or bigoted feeling moving them in this matter, they would almost be willing to become Catholics for better reaching the hearts of Catholics.

Any one who has this desire may find one of the best opportunities to gratify it in our prisons. A large part of those held as prisoners are nominally Catholics. The proportion sometimes ranges between one-half and two-thirds. And while a chaplain might fare hard, and he would deserve to do so, who took advantage of his office to win any of these wards of the State away from their chosen church connection, the wise chaplain will find this class of men entirely open, as a rule, to receive any Christian kindness he may bestow. The Catholics take far better care, in some respects, of the children of their church than other Christians do. But the greater prominence which their priests give to the church and the priesthood enables a chaplain who is thinking less of the church, and almost altogether of the individual soul, to do a great many helpful things which the prisoner appreciates highly, without coming into any rivalry with the prisoner's chosen and preferred pastor.

A very great privilege of a chaplain's position is the naturalness and the intimacy of the intercourse which it favors with Christians of every name. Denominational organization undoubtedly has many great advantages, and probably

the clergy of most sects greatly enjoy their special associations together. But, nevertheless, is it owing to the limitations of our humanity that each denomination lives to such an extent within itself. But when one becomes a chaplain, he has not only an excuse, but a cause, for a more promiscuous acquaintance than he had before, with Christians in different communions. Barriers between different parts of the Lord's great household, which, perhaps, he had always wished might be pierced here and there with commodious gateways, so far as he is concerned, in some places are almost thrown down. He need not leave his own denomination. It is to be hoped that former ties will always remain as dear as before. But he at once finds himself in new relations to the great Christian hosts of other names. New realms of Christian experience are opened to him, and new wealth of Christian feeling is brought near to him. The whole effect upon him might naturally be expected to be broadening and liberalizing, like that of travel in foreign lands, or like a transfer from one's present field into new and distant regions of Christian activity.

Peculiar facilities for interpreting the Scripture are, in these days, considered worthy of purchase even at a dear price. But probably not a few parts of the Scripture yield a meaning to a man familiar with the prison which they yield to no one else so freely. A great deal in both Testaments has to do with the prison. Our Lord was taken from prison, and his humiliation consisted in part in his being under arrest in circumstances quite destitute of any respectability in human eyes. One must be in prison to know how the song of Paul and Silas sounded in such a place. As for the story of Joseph, one may study it everywhere else, in history, in art, in tableaux and panoramas; but he will never know it until he has lived in a prison. The way character sometimes stands out in a prison is marvellous. The man who is only technically guilty, or unjustly sentenced, of sterling character, of noble mien, of incorruptible integrity, of heroic mould,—how surely such a man comes to the front in a prison popu-

lation! How he looms up in his superiority, and commands respect! Many an officer, even, may have no such position as he! And where it is said that Joseph found favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison, how peculiarly graphic is this touch of the description to one who knows a prison! How vividly he reads between the lines a score of liberties substantially implied by these few words! In a flash they annihilate thirty-six hundred years. One smiles as he reaches out his hand while he reads, so to speak, to shake hands with Joseph as he first availed himself of his growing privileges. Far be it from us to depreciate Oriental travel, but a man might live a long time under the pyramids and not see that in the story of Joseph which is revealed even to a prison chaplain here at home.

It would be impossible to make here any complete catalogue of the advantages of a chaplain's position, provided he be possessed of judgment to appreciate them, and the ability to magnify his office. What has already been said, however, surely constitutes no mean array of attractions to any earnest young minister who will look at them. And yet we must stop to add at least one more, namely, the peculiar privilege of helping a fellow-man at the moment when he is crushed, and perhaps of saving him when he is at the door of despair. Probably one must know this privilege by using it, in order to know it at all. But there was a somewhat conspicuous illustration of it in a large American city within a few years. A man always reputed wealthy, and moving in the very highest social walks of the metropolis, was suddenly exposed in a grievous wrong. The whole city was shocked; we might rather say, the whole region. This wrong was a state-prison offence of many years. Very tender and sacred associations—associations public and private, domestic and churchly—dignified the life of this man, and combined to heighten the dramatic effect of his downfall. One of the notable circumstances of his trial was the presence of his pastor in the court-room. This pastor, a man of national reputation, had loved this parishioner and his family very

devotedly ; at least so the report was. A minister can easily see how, notwithstanding his own unutterable sorrow, it may have been one of the great privileges of this pastor's entire life to stand by that fallen friend in this hour of agony.

But so far as human distress is concerned, these are just the circumstances in which a prison chaplain is constantly meeting his new parishioners. Not all prisoners are truly penitent or worthy when they bid good-bye to the world ; but not a few are, and even if their history lack the striking features and the peculiarly touching sorrow of the instance just referred to, yet the heart is the same, and human nature is the same, in all conditions of life. Hence a chaplain in a large prison is all the time seeing great sorrow which has a noble side to it. Perhaps the prisoner is strongly supported from without. A family perhaps combine to send "papa" a letter every day, one taking one day, another, another. And these letters are full of the details of home life. Another worthy prisoner perhaps is supplied every week in the year with the choicest fruit or flowers the markets afford. And whatever it be, into this circle of sympathy, it is the chaplain's privilege to enter. Or if, as it may be, the poor prisoner is alone in the world, then the prison officers have the privilege of being all to him. The ordinary pastor is not necessarily a stranger to such experiences, but few can know the joy of them as a prison chaplain does.

It is not to be expected that a difficult and somewhat unpopular work can be commended to seminary students and young ministers without encountering serious objections. A minister lately remarked, "I should not like to be a chaplain, I should feel all the time as if I were a hired man." Doubtless there is somewhat less of personal liberty in prison work than in a parish. A pastor comes and goes, absents himself for days together, attends conventions here and there, and makes engagements far in advance, more or less subject to funeral duties and similar demands it is true, but otherwise with scarcely any consultation with others whose authority is recognized. He could hardly do so if he were

a chaplain. One eminent chaplain of a state-prison has never once been away from the prison for what would be called a vacation, and rarely has been away for twenty-four consecutive hours. But he has his reward; and the man who is not willing to bear some loss for the sake of doing prisoners good is not worthy of the privilege.

But is this limitation to be wholly charged against the prison work? May it not be that pastors sometimes use more liberty in this matter than they ought? Is it right for a man who has covenanted to be the pastor of a parish, and who is in part rewarded therefor by a salary laboriously collected, to use any considerable portion of his time in outside business or in seeking his own pleasure? Can a pastor be very luxurious in this respect without losing the regard of thoughtful people? The objection is that the objector does not wish to feel like a hired man. But is not every pastor a hired man?

Every minister, however, ought to know that the man who is truly called to religious and spiritual work in any congregation, prison or other, has a commission so high that it cannot be dominated by any other. And this commission absolutely requires for him all needful confidence and liberty and privilege. To interfere with these in any way as regards the chaplain would be to threaten or abolish the office itself. Let a chaplain keep in mind that his aim is not place, or a dignity, or deference, or precedence, or any such thing, but to help prisoners as best he can as a pastor, and he is reasonably certain either to enjoy all proper liberty himself, or else to hasten the time when all chaplains will have whatever was withheld from him. A good man who is providentially allowed to suffer hindrance or calamity always gains for others, or for himself subsequently, enough to compensate richly for all that he has endured.

Another objection sometimes urged is that a chaplain's duties are merely formal, that his work is a make-believe, that his position is a kind of a sinecure, and that he has very little genuine work to do. This objection is wholly a mis-

conception. Any man who will call at any well-conducted state-prison may find abundant evidence that the chaplain there is one of the hard-worked men in the place. In a dreadful prison rebellion in 1882, the chaplain was the man who alone commanded the unlimited confidence and affection of all the prisoners, and whose word they would undoubtedly have obeyed gladly and immediately had he been allowed to compose the trouble. The religious officer in another similar institution, for instance, should be ready to superintend a large organization for Bible study on Sunday morning at 9.30; conduct a public preaching service for a congregation of eight hundred men, besides a small miscellaneous congregation, at 10.30; attend and bear some responsibility for a large non-religious meeting at 2.45 P. M., although he does not make the address there; and visit and take part in two large popular, social, and devotional meetings of over three hundred prisoners, continuing over two hours in the evening. On Tuesday and Thursday evenings, between six and seven o'clock, the hour before the schools, he conducts a service less studied than a preaching service, but more elaborate than college prayers—voluntary but largely attended. Wednesdays and Saturdays there are social prayer-meetings. Friday evenings there is a Prison Bible-class-Teachers' meeting; and during the week there are a half-dozen literary meetings of prisoners that kindly look for frequent visits, suggestions, and cheer from various officers, including the chaplain. Beside this, every week a large amount of pastoral work is to be done promptly, or else it drags until it is overtaken; and no small amount of correspondence and general labor is to be carried on with ex-prisoners, and with friends, and organizations here and there, who are taking hold of prison work. In still other prisons more may be attempted, but certainly any man who is trying to do even this amount of work is in no danger of being regarded as a supernumerary by well-informed persons, or despised as a man who has slipped into a soft place. Probably all pastors have times when they especially feel their insufficiency for their work.

But probably pastors are rarely more completely prostrated with this feeling than the chaplain sometimes is, as he looks upon a prison congregation.

Another objection with some is the danger of being hindered by the judgments of unsympathetic men in official station. The argument is this. Here is a congregation of prisoners. Over them are, we will say, fifty officers. These officers, some of them, may be profane men. Perhaps only a few of them are church men. They have no such regard for preaching that they would ever hear much of it if they were left to their own choice. If they were free in a city, every Sunday in the year they might be found in a variety of places of secular diversion or occupation, but rarely in any church. Yet they are the officers who are put in absolute control of a congregation that would be difficult to reach at best! How can a preacher expect to do anything with his audience against the coldness, and the heartless criticisms, and perhaps in secret the contemptuous sneers, of such men in positions of power? What could any pastor do anywhere if the deacons and leading men were careless of all preaching and secretly hostile to real pastoral work? We state the objection strongly in order to do it justice. And we reply, that, wherever our poor prisoners, in addition to all their other calamities, are consigned to the care of such men, there is an added motive, with a good man, to go to them and expose such godless treatment of them, and lift up the standard, and trust the Lord to sustain him. But a second answer is, that, whatever may have been the case in some prisons formerly, the day is close at hand when such officers will not be allowed in any respectable prison to hinder religious work. The standard for police service in the prison cannot be raised in a moment. But it is already evident, that, because a man abounds in physical courage, and could break all a prisoner's ribs quickly, it does not follow that he would make a good prison officer. In the prison of the future, profanity, coarseness, and scornfulness of moral

measures or of spiritual work and workers, will not be tolerated in any officer.

We are not skilful in answering objections, but we will refer to one more. It is that a chaplain is, of necessity, out of that atmosphere of sympathy and of spiritual tenderness in which much of a pastor's best work must be done. However true this may have been sometimes, it will not be true of the prison of the future. Any one may be convinced of this, I think, by visiting the best prisons to-day. In the Massachusetts Reformatory, for instance, services of revival tenderness might be reasonably expected at any time. A large meeting, often of great power, is conducted by the prisoners themselves on Sunday evenings. At the signal the doors are unlocked, and more than two hundred men come forth as freely as from their own homes, and go, each in his own way, to the large lecture-room where the meeting is held. This meeting is quite long. The singing is excellent. There is first a praise service of half an hour. A prisoner with the spirit and power of a lay preacher speaks twenty or twenty-five minutes, and conducts the entire meeting from the beginning. Prayers and testimonies follow. The superintendent comes in a few minutes and speaks briefly at the close. There is sometimes an after-meeting. There are signs of the Holy Spirit's presence. Men rise for prayers. Men appear to begin a new way of living, and they hold out. At an after-meeting I have repeatedly seen perhaps twenty prisoners on their knees praying unitedly for some special object, as for the wife of one of their number reported to be fatally sick. The communion has been observed in the prison impressively. Baptism has also been administered.

The less general meetings are often peculiarly tender. Last evening was the prayer-meeting which is only open to elected members, to the church, so to speak. It was conducted by an officer. This was a very rare thing, but it had been specially desired that this beloved officer would come

in and conduct it at this time. The Scripture read was the eighth chapter of Proverbs. The hymns beginning, "Come, sing the gospel's joyful sound," and "Ho! my comrades, see the signal," from Moody and Sankey, were then sung. Prayer was offered by a prisoner. He prayed that we might see the many things for which we should be thankful, and that we might go on with rejoicing hearts, being unwilling to live without doing good, and constantly entering into light. He prayed that God would sanctify our acquaintance to each one; also very tenderly for the officer who presided, and for his family, and then for all our families; and then finally that we might reap the good things along our path and go through our imprisonment and our life not sorrowful, but rejoicing all the way. Then we sang two verses of the hymn beginning, "Take the name of Jesus with you." A young man of eighteen, of unusual brightness and talent and of good education, next arose, and showed by his words how earnestly he felt that no other reform but the Christian reform would meet his need. A married man of twenty-five spoke of the wet and cloudy days we had had, and the bad news he had received from home, and how dreary his room had been after the bolt was drawn on him, until he read several chapters of the New Testament, when light broke in. He was followed by an old man (for a prisoner), a man of fifty, of small education, but the president of the prayer-meeting organization. The spirit of the Master is certainly in him, and all respect him. He is the opposite of voluble, but he said he had been greatly oppressed by the severe sickness in his home for two weeks past. Nevertheless, it did his soul good to meet with us. He knew it took "lots" to get our hearts right, and God does all things well. The next speaker, President of the Young Men's Christian Association, took up this thought of getting our hearts right, and referred to the translation of the Bible lesson for the coming Sunday (Ex. xvi.), into prison language, which would put "kicked" for murmured. When men "kick" against God's way, the wrong is in their own hearts. It

was in the case of the Israelites as it was here in prison, the "kickers" are very often the ones who have the most done for them. No man can make his life right until his heart is right. The leader then prayed that we might all have our hearts right. Afterwards a young man of twenty-two, who had a very fiery temper and was once almost at the door of the third grade, told of his "change" at this point. The next brother was a man of forty-three, very diffident, and he was hardly heard. The next was a married man, twenty-five that day, who had been having a "blue" time. He was expecting to be taken to court for trial on another charge soon, and wanted us to pray for him. The first and last verses of "Come thou Fount of every blessing" were sung. The next speaker was a man of twenty-six. Something had just been said about a mother's love, but he said he did not know what that was, for he had lived an orphan. He wanted us to pray for him. One verse of "Yield not to temptation" was sung. A young man convicted of a very dreadful deed, but a good man, briefly told us what a good time he had had, and a happy week. A brother of twenty-two was glad to say he was trusting, and finding it easy to do right. Next a Swede, an interesting man, testified that there was more pleasure in one of our meetings than in all the theatres and concerts he ever went to. He that believeth *hath*—not, shall have a thousand years hence, but now and here. His own heart told him that every word of the Scripture was true. Then, "I heard the voice of Jesus say" was sung. A man of forty-nine, with a family, who had held lucrative trusts, but had been almost ruined by liquor, and who was soon to go out, spoke very fluently and beautifully of the preciousness of the love of Christ both in life and death, and of Christ's power and wish to forgive *now*. "I hear Thy welcome voice" was started. It was pitched too low, and we sang only one verse. The leader, who had formerly been an officer on shipboard, here told a story of the sea illustrating the value of vital religion. Three verses of "What a friend we have in Jesus" were sung. Another

prisoner here prayed for those who had spoken of their troubles; for the superintendent and for all our loved ones at home. The Vice-President of the Young Men's Christian Association spoke. A simple-hearted boy of nineteen told of his life built on the solid Rock, after which we sang "My hope is built on nothing else."

The meeting closed in three-quarters of an hour, being shorter than usual for special reasons. In all the prayers it is fair to say the chaplain was remembered. Prayer is also constant in these meetings for the administration, and for our brothers who have gone out and are battling with the world again, often against odds. The meeting was closed, as these meetings invariably close, by our standing in a circle around the room, all joining hands, when a brief prayer is offered and the verse "Blessed be the tie" is sung, after which, with a shake, all hands are unclasped.

This meeting was not at all better than the average. There was not time for all to speak or lead in prayer. But any one can see that where such meetings are constantly held, appreciated to the full by the administration, and respected by the officers, and honored by all the prisoners, a chaplain does not need to feel that he is living in a spiritually frigid zone.

Recently six prisoners sat down at my table. We had been busy all the beautiful afternoon in a practical way about the house and garden. All together, the table was quite full. How many a jocund word and merry laugh seasoned our hearty meal! It was growing dusk when we finished, and rather than light a lamp we repeated familiar Scripture verses around the table. After a song we knelt, and one of the prisoners led in a tender, intercessory prayer. Then we began singing again, which we continued for a long time. We sang from memory entirely, and a grand singing time it was. We had not sung all the hymns that were called for, when we concluded to go to the parlor and with the piano try a few secular songs, but there we soon came back to Moody and Sankey. But the longest summer evening will

have an end, and too soon the clock reminded us that as we had about a mile to walk, we must start on our return. We reached the prison gate just before it was locked for the night. On a former occasion a smaller charge of mine found the gate locked, and, rather than call down the officer, with some skill and mirth climbed back toward the guard-room through a window, while I waited without long enough to hear the guard-room officer formally announce "all right," and then returned home. It may be inferred that this company were Protestant prisoners. The reason was that that afternoon was a special season with the Catholics, five priests being busy hearing confessions, and it seemed discourteous to invite any of their men away. The next company that went out with me restored the balance, however, and we too had a cordial and pleasant visit.

This is told to illustrate the sympathy and family feeling that is possible in a cold and gloomy prison. But now some one says, "Your prison must be peculiar; you are an exception." I can hardly expect my testimony to weigh with expert prison wardens, but I believe the same principles which the superintendent applies in the Massachusetts Reformatory, if applied with equal skill, would produce similar results anywhere on earth. Who were these six prisoners at the table? One stood close upon five feet eleven inches, and fearless. One was in prison convicted of a crime not to be mentioned here; another was in prison for assault with a deadly weapon. The others were there for common prison crimes. The man convicted of the nameless crime, it may safely be said, was not guilty. But I believe, I can not doubt, that had the Lord been on earth as of old, and passing by heard our voices through the open windows, he would gladly have come in and sat with those men.

In this paper we have been appealing to theological students and young ministers to consider what they might do for prisons as chaplains. But we need not limit our appeal. They will be more likely to work as chaplains than in any other way, but they are not shut up to that way. As

society advances, men will more and more pursue professional study for other than limited professional ends. Already hundreds of young men are studying law, not for the purpose of opening law-offices, but for the value of such studies to merchants and manufacturers and business men, or in politics, or in diplomacy, or for other purposes. So men by and by will find that, for many other ends than regular pulpit work, a training in the highest studies is very valuable, and especially trained skill in the applications of motives. The idea that any determined man who can knock a rough down quickly, will do for a prison-keeper is effete. The prison-keeper of the future is to be a man of natural aptitude, and trained skill, and enthusiastic faith in the use of moral and spiritual motives. Strange and even absurd as the idea may now seem to some, the time is coming when ministers may be called to be prison-keepers, when the State will lay hands on some Dr. Wayland or Dr. Hopkins, perhaps in a Park-street pulpit, or wherever they find him, and say, "We want you to be the warden of our prison." And it may be that the United States will yet say to Dr. McCosh, or some other such man, "You have been faithful over many things, and we want you as the superintendent of our National reformatory to lay the foundation of peculiarly divine work in coming time." And the remarkable man will resign his presidency of a great university—to go up higher.