

ful to the eye. I entered the wood. What a difference I found. There was shade here, but no gloom; for between the trees of irregular size and shape there were intervals of space through which the bright blue sky could be seen, and down through which came the glorious sunshine. Close beside the knarled old giant oak was the slender sappling stretching up its tiny little limbs and leaves to catch the bright light of heaven, that it might grow up to take the place of the giant when its days were numbered. Here the daisies and the violets and innumerable other spring beauties bloomed to give joy to those who came within these shady bowers. As I looked about me I saw that there were trees there that gave promise of large crops of nuts and other fruits which would be of service to man and beast, some for the summer, others for the cold dark days of winter. Here was a rugged old tree that did not give much promise of fruit itself, but I noticed that it supported a vine, which could not stand alone, but which with the support of the old tree could and would bear luscious fruit.

From bow to bow fitted the host of little songsters that had made this place their home and were now filling the air with the melody of their gladsome songs. In the midst of their songs and spurred it would seem by them, they were industriously at work procuring food for their nests full of little ones.

Like Peter of old, on the mountain top, I felt that it was good to be there. As I sat leaning against a great oak with the daisies springing up all about me in a bed of moss, looking like tiny white stars in a sky of emerald green, my mind turned from nature to nature's God, and then to his representatives upon earth.

I thought how like these two forests are the ideas that different children of God have of what the Church ought to be. One man would have all churches united and made one in form and outward appearance, and have every member to be just alike in belief and practice. This, I thought, is the pine forest.

Another believes that as there are many men, so there are many minds, and he does not see the advantage of trying to make all conform to the same modes of thought or methods of life, so long as they are all glorifying God by their lives. This thought I is the oak forest, and this is better.

A NEWER TYPE.

The ministry was never so hard to fill as now. It will become harder. It is a position of higher usefulness, if not of greater influence than ever before.

The number of churches is not likely to increase greatly as the years go by. In our cities—and urban population is rapidly increasing—the number of churches is decreasing. The tendency is toward larger congregations and fewer of them. Consolidation is the order of the Church day.

This is due to several reasons. It is easier for the people to get together from greater distances. The street car, the automobile, the good roads, have made communication easier. Where possible people love to come together in large crowds.

It is cheaper, and hence more efficient. The overhead expense of small and separate churches is lessened, when the several small churches unite in one large one. The salary of the one minister is not equal to the several salaries of the several ministers. The ordinary upkeep of the plant is lessened.

The one Church has a better opportunity of securing more efficient men to serve it. And churches, like businesses, like to have the best for their money.

Thus the tendency is found operating in the Church, as well as in the factory. Small concerns going into larger ones for higher efficiency. Then where there is no consolidation, there is often growth in churches to large membership.

The time was in the Southern Presbyterian Church, when a congregation of five hundred was very rare. Now there may be fifty, or it may be one hundred. There are a dozen of over, or near, one thousand members. One, we believe, claims over two thousand members.

Moreover, the activities of the modern Church are manifold. Not only in the purely religious sphere, but the Church is reaching out into sociological and philanthropic work of almost infinite variety.

It used to be that the Church was open on Sunday once or twice, and on Wednesday night. Now it is open every day and every night for some kind of work.

This tendency is not confined to the city congregation. It is more and more finding a place in the country church. It has become the centre of neighborhood activities.

The modern Sunday-school is a great and good machine of many parts.

It needs continual oversight.

The Presbytery and the Assembly are touching wider spheres of useful service to mankind.

It is very evident from these statements that the kind of minister to take pastoral charge of such churches,—and this is the type of the coming church—must himself be a new type of a minister.

Of course he must be a man with a divine message. He must know how to deliver it. Then he must be a preacher. There is this advantage to the man who preaches. It is easier to preach to a thousand people than to two hundred. He will be burdened with the importance of his message as he thinks of, or faces the great congregation. It will help him to preach.

He cannot well be the pastor he might be, if ministering to a hundred or more. He cannot go into the homes of all, and touch with quiet and holy word the hearts of the few. He must have helpers along this as well as other lines.

Then the new type of minister must be a man who knows how to choose his assistants. He must be a great Executive Head. Most of his working force are volunteers—and cannot be bound by any contracts to the performance of their duties. It is his personality that largely keeps the force up to the point of efficient service. He must have that elusive gift we call "personal magnetism." He must have an inexhaustible fund of common sense saturated by the Spirit. He will need it in the numberless cases that will be handed up to him for final decision. Or if he fails in this executive ability, he will have to have an executive who will work well under him. He must be a man of much versatility. As a housekeeper must know how to do everything about a house, even if she does not do it regularly herself—so the minister must know how to do everything about a church from duties of the janitor up, even if he does not have it to do. He will have to be an expert along many lines—and know how to fit in at many points.

This magnifies the ministry. This will put him in the fore-front of the life of the people. He should train for it, in more ways than one. Above all the Church should recognize that it needs more men who live of the Gospel, who can do the larger work that is now required of the Church.

How fortunate it is that our Church has teachers in our seminaries who are awake to the needs of the times and are trying to train our ministry for this varied service.

How blessed it is that we have a number of men in our Southland who are fitted for such a ministry and are striking examples of the new type the times require. A. A. L.

Contributed

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD.

By Rev. D. W. Brannen, D. D.

The scene is a playground. Flocks of children are scurrying hither and thither. A shrill voice pipes a question: "What shall we play?" "Let's play funeral," comes the answer. There is instant assent and the procession quickly forms. But, a little knot of malcontents gather over in a corner, with scowling faces. "We don't want to play funeral," grumbles their spokesman. "Why not play something else?" The play goes on. After the funeral, a voice inquires again, "What shall we play now?" Comes the answer, "Let's play wedding," and the procession forms for the wedding. Again a voice grumbles from the knot in the corner, "We don't want to play wedding. Why not play something else?"

The world is a playground. A man came into it exemplifying a certain type of goodness, and there were many to say, "We want to be good, but we don't want to be good like you." Then, there came another man, exemplifying an entirely different type of goodness—gentle, sympathetic, democratic; and there were many to say, "We want to be good, but we don't want to be good like you."

Christianity can never please the world. It must always be a subject of criticism. The church is either cold, or its zeal is fanaticism. If it emphasizes the spiritual, it is censured for neglecting man's life in the world. If it champions the oppressed and stands for social righteousness, "it is dabbling in politics." If it preaches the love of God, the world says it should preach the terrors of the law. If a Christian is active, he has some ulterior motive, and is a hypocrite. If he is inactive, he is a fraud, and is not faithful to his profession.

However, such criticism should not be resented by the Christian. Far from it. It is entirely natural. For the world is a stranger to the genius of Christianity. It does not and cannot understand any more than a man born deaf can understand the hymn a congregation is singing in his presence. Doubtless their facial expression, while singing, seems to the deaf man extremely ludicrous.

Then, too, the principles of the Christian and the principles of the worldling are innately hostile. There is no fellowship between light and darkness. Truth is a constant challenge to falsehood. To the world, prayer is but a cowardly whine.

More than this, God has endowed our faith with certain repellent features. The plant, it is said, has the three qualities of attraction, assimilation and repulsion. It draws to it that which it may absorb, and on which it may thrive. It expels that which is not assimilable and noxious. Likewise is it with Christianity. Goodness attracts some and repels others, even as the light of the sun evokes the song of the bird, but causes the owl and the bat to hide themselves from its penetrating rays. It is told that a noted French atheist and libertine rushed from the presence of Fenelon, into whose society he had been accidentally thrown, crying,