

Pastor and People.

The After or Inquiry Meeting.

The Evangelization Society has issued an admirable tract on this subject, which will do much in removing mis-conceptions, and in explaining the object and the manner in which inquiry meetings should be conducted. We give a few extracts:—

I.—What is the object of after meetings?—The object of after meetings is (1) to bring the evangelist into closer contact with the anxious, (2) to supplement the address, and (3) to meet any difficulties in the minds of the hearers which the address has failed to reach. There are in most gospel meetings a certain number of persons who have not understood the Gospel message. The evangelist has lacked clearness and simplicity; or it may be that the extreme ignorance of the hearers prevents them from understanding the message even when plainly delivered—or there may be some individual difficulties which require help. Supposing the evangelist to have fully realized his responsibility during the address, and still to think it wise to invite to an after meeting the anxious and those who wish to enquire further, he must never lose sight of the object of this second meeting. It is for the anxious and inquiring ones that they may have an opportunity of hearing explained still more clearly and fully God's way of peace. The great need of the anxious is "to see Jesus." They want to "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." They want to be led to see the life-boat which is now alongside the sinking ship. If the evangelist begins by telling them to pray, he runs the risk of turning them from the point. It is a time for decision, for action, for praise, rather than for prayer.

II.—By whom is an inquirer's meeting to be conducted?—It must be an understood thing that the inquirer's meeting is left entirely in the hands of the evangelist. The importance of adhering to this direction will be seen by all who reflect that very unwise, though perhaps very earnest men, are often the first to assume a prominent position on such occasions. By leaving the meetings in any degree open to such men, much injury is often done to the cause of evangelization, and if they are allowed to take any part in an inquirer's meeting, there is very great danger that, in their inexperienced zeal, they may misdirect the anxious, and only put greater stumbling-blocks and difficulties in their way. Of course the evangelist is free to invite the help and co-operation of any experienced Christians in whom he may feel confidence, if he thinks it desirable to do so, but none should be allowed to take part in an inquirer's meeting without such special invitation. It is well if it can be arranged for Christians to meet for prayer in another room while the evangelist is speaking to the anxious. If this cannot be done, the evangelist should invite any Christians who choose to remain during the inquirer's meeting to retire to a distant part of the room, and to engage in silent prayer that the Holy Spirit will open the hearts of the hearers and reveal Jesus to them.

III.—How must the evangelist deal with anxious souls at the inquirer's meeting?—He has to make more clear to them the same message which he has sought to deliver in his address. It is essential to convince the inquirer that he is a sinner, and to show him that Jesus died in the sinner's place. The evangelist cannot be too earnest in showing that God has provided the Saviour, and that Jesus is waiting to receive all who come to him by faith; that the sinner is not to wait until he is better, or till he is happy, but is just to take God at His word, and trust Him to do all that He has promised. He must carefully point out the prevalent erroneous idea that Christ's salvation is not a finished and complete one, and that something yet remains to be done to conciliate God and to obtain the blessing which he offers now freely without money and without price. He may, if he wishes, pray with the inquirer that the Holy Spirit will enable him to trust in Jesus and accept the salvation which he has brought near to him; but even here great care is needed—it were almost better to let it be a silent prayer in the heart, lest he should even by this means turn the sinner's eyes from Christ to wait for the Holy Spirit, instead of leading him to realize that he is called to obey the Gospel by accepting the blessing procured for him at such an infinite cost, and that he is responsible to God for accepting or rejecting the gracious offer of Him, whose arms are still outstretched, and who is "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." The evangelist should never attempt to persuade the anxious to say that they believe, nor should he seek to work upon their feelings. He should as much as possible answer their objections by Scripture, remembering that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Real Presence.

"There is a real presence of Christ in partaking of the Lord's Supper. But there is also a real presence in reading or in hearing the Word of God, in meditation and prayer, and in every act of communion with God and our risen Saviour through the Spirit. Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). The presence at the sacrament is not local in the elements, but in the hearts of the communicants. If there were no communicants there would be no presence, even if the Pope himself consecrated the bread and wine. The presence is spiritual, not material, and therefore not different in kind from the presence in the ministry of the Word, when there is preaching of "Christ, and Him crucified." In the one case the symbols of bread and wine, in the other case the preached words bring to remembrance the same truths. The sacrament brings them to mind through the senses of touch and taste, as well as sight; the preached word brings them to mind through the ear; but in both cases the receiving of truth is by faith only."

Let the ideals of us, in the hearts that love us, be prophetic of what we shall become.

The Book of Job.

The Book of Job is a didactic drama, with an epic introduction and close. The prologue and the epilogue are written in plain prose, the body of the poem in poetry. It has been called the Hebrew tragedy, but differing from other tragedies by its happy termination. We better call it a dramatic tragedy. It wrestles with the perplexing problem of ages, viz., the true meaning and object of evil and suffering in the world, under the government of a holy, wise, and merciful God. The dramatic form shows itself in the symmetrical arrangement, the introduction of several speakers, the action or rather the suffering of the hero, the growing passion and conflict, the secret crime supposed to underlie his misfortune, and the awful mystery in back ground. But there is little external action in it, and this is almost confined to the prologue and epilogue. Instead of it we have here an intellectual battle of the deepest moral import, mind grappling with mind on the most serious problems which can challenge our attention. The outward drapery only is dramatic, with all the Hebrew ideas of divine Providence, which differ from the Greek notion of blind Fate, as the light of day differs from midnight. It is intended for the study, not for the stage.

The book opens, like a Greek drama, with a prologue, which introduces the reader into the situation, and makes him acquainted with the character, the prosperous condition, the terrible misfortunes, and the exemplary patience of the hero. Even God and his great antagonist, Satan, who appears, however, in heaven as a servant of God, are drawn into the scenery, and a previous arrangement in the divine counsel precedes and determines the subsequent transaction. History on earth is thus viewed as an execution of the decrees of heaven, and as controlled throughout by supernatural forces. But we have here the unsearchable wisdom of the Almighty Maker and Ruler of men, not the dark impersonal Fate of the heaven tragedy. This grand feature of Job has been admirably imitated by Goethe in the prologue of his Faust. The action itself commences after seven days and seven nights of most eloquent silence. The grief over the misfortunes which, like a succession of whirlwinds, and suddenly hurled the patriarchal prince from the summit of prosperity to the lowest depths of misery, culminating in the most loathsome disease, and intensified by the heartless sneers of his wife at last bursts forth in a passionate monologue of Job, causing the day of his birth. Then follows the metaphysical conflict with his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, who now turn to enemies and "miserable comforters." "forgers of lies, and bachelors of vanities." The debate has three acts, with an increasing entanglement, and every act consists of three assaults of the false friends, and as many defences of Job (with the exception that in the third battle, Zophar retires, and Job alone speaks). After a closing monologue of Job, expressing fully his feelings and thoughts in view of the past controversy, the youthful Elihu, who had silently listened, comes forward, and in three speeches administers deserved rebuke to both parties, with as little mercy to Job as for his friends, but with a better philosophy of suffering, whose object he represents to be correction and reformation, the reproof of arrogance, and the exercise of humility and faith. He begins the disentanglement of the problem, and makes the transition to the final decision. At last God himself, to whom Job had appealed, appears as the judge of the controversy, and Job humbly submits to His infinite power and wisdom, and penitently confesses his sin and folly. This is the solution of the mighty problem, if solution it can be called.

A brief epilogue relates the historical issue, the restoration and increased prosperity of Job after this severest trial of his faith, and patient submission. To the eternal order corresponds the internal dialectic development in the wave-like motion of conflicting sentiments and growing passions. The first act of the debate shows yet a tolerable amount of friendly feeling on both sides. In the second, the passion is much increased and the charges of the opponents against Job made.

In the last debate, Eliphaz, the leader of the rest, proceeds to the open accusation of heavy crimes against the sufferer, with an admonition to repent. Job, after repeated declarations of his innocence, and vain attempts at convincing his opponents, appeals at last to God as his Judge. God appears, convicts him, by several questions on the mysteries of nature, of his ignorance, and brings him to complete submission under the infinite power and wisdom of the Almighty.

The Book of Job, like the Iliad of Homer, the Divina Comedia of Dante, and the dramas of Shakespeare, stands out a marvel in literature, without a predecessor, without a rival. It is of the order of Melchisedek, "without father, without mother, without descent," but with "the power of endless life."—Philip Schaff, D.D., in International Review.

SUPREME LOVE.—If this love to God should prevail, there would be—1. No idolatry. 2. No superstition. 3. No profanation. 4. No opposition to truth. 5. No corruption to truth. 6. No perjury. 7. No despising the good. 8. No ingratitude. 9. No pride. 10. No discontent. 11. No suicide. 12. No violent deaths. 13. No duels. 14. No wars. 15. No rivalry. 16. No breach of contracts. 17. No envy. 18. No wrongs. 19. No slander. 20. No intrigues. 21. No deceit. 22. No fraud. 23. No false statements. 24. No oppression. 25. No injury to person, property, or character. 26. No cruelty. 27. No selfishness. 28. No disobedience. 29. No unkindness. 30. No resentments. 31. No haunts of wickedness. 32. No social evils. 33. No complainings in our streets.—Vendoren.

As the eye which has gazed at the sun cannot immediately discern any other object; as the man who has been accustomed to behold the ocean turns with contempt from a stagnant pool; so the mind which has contemplated eternity overlooks and despises the things of time.—Payson.

Business Religion.

In the early days of Christianity, Paul bore his testimony that the man who would live "godly in Christ Jesus, should suffer persecution." The particular truth here expressed would not now, perhaps, be re-asserted with the same emphasis. But the general truth underlying the specific statement would get as positive an utterance now as then. The man who attempts a life of pure and strict godliness finds that the world remains unfriendly to that type of living; resents it as an impertinence and a rebuke; does not foster and help it on, but crowds it aside if it can, and makes it difficult for the attempt to succeed.

Let a man attempt to carry into business fellowship the principle of exact and unwavering honesty; to go by that against all bribes of gain and advantage; to buy and sell by it; to manufacture by it; to offer and accept and fulfil contracts by it; to make every advertisement tell the exact truth, and every label a true rescript of the goods it covers—how far would he go without finding that he was out of place, and, by anticipation, out of date? Who would be his partner? Who would hire him as a travelling agent? Who would bid for him as a chief salesman on the floor of the warehouse? Undoubtedly there are men who would prize him for his incorruptible integrity, especially if it were enlisted on their behalf. Without a question, honesty wins the respect of men who sometimes soften and water its decisions. But as things go, would such a man find it easy to keep this lofty and spiritual kind of uprightness unspotted in a business career?

Let the same man attempt to act in all these relations under the more sovereign principle of "charity," not going by legal claims merely—paying the stipulated sum, keeping the letter of his bond—but rendering in each appropriate instance love's free will offering—would his movement provoke no sarcastic comment? would not such a principle of procedure in the common engagements of life be considered a strange intruder?

Or, suppose a man, hesitating to give his assent to some questionable measure, were to express his scruple by a Scripture quotation, strengthening his moral stand by an appeal to the Bible—would not the sound of these same words in the midst of a bargain call forth some looks of surprise, if not of scorn, upon the faces of the negotiators?

I do not care to add to these illustrations; the impression which I wish to produce is this: that one must not expect help from the world in living a godly life, but rather hindrance and discouragement. If he meet with no disturbance in reducing his ideal to practice, he has some reason to fear that somewhere he is unfaithful. He may be going too much with the current. Of course it is smooth floating down the stream; but to stem it, and make headway against it, will excite commotion. It requires, then, courage and boldness to be a living witness for Christ. We must be baptized with something of the old martyr's spirit. We must be ready to stand by our faith under pains and penalties.—Rev. A. L. Stone.

Cure for Covetousness.

Some people are sorely troubled with worldliness and covetousness, and know not how to break the chains which mammon has forged around them. And yet the task is simple. They have been trying for years to get, till their hearts have become hard, and their affections perverted. Let them now reverse the process, and give, and they will soon "begin to amend." Getting and giving balance each other. They are the two streams—the inlet and the outlet to the pond; they should correspond to each other. If the inlet is large, then keep the outlet open, and the gate up. If water runs into a valley and does not run out again, we have swamp, mud, bog, and stagnation. Cut a drain and let the waters flow off, and we have fertile, solid ground, and a crystal stream running through its midst, spreading life, and health, and verdure far and wide.

Try giving. Give a dollar, two dollars, or five dollars. There, don't you feel better? Not much? Then try ten dollars, fifty dollars, a hundred. How are you now? Not cured yet? Try two hundred, five hundred, a thousand. Give, and keep giving. Find out where to give. Hunt out those who need. Do not sound a trumpet over it, and so call a troop of beggars to dog your steps and hound you for money to pay their own salaries, but take time. Know what you are about, and put your money where it is needed, and will honour God. And keep at it, remembering that desperate diseases require active treatment. Follow up the giving as long as you have the getting. Work quick before death gets you, and the lawyers divide your estate to please quarrelling heirs and rascally executors. Lay up treasure in heaven till the upper life is larger than the lower one, and then you will find that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." This will help you; and if you feel any symptoms of the malady returning, keep giving and double the dose.

The Portland Transcript gives an example, in the case of "Old Church," who was one day riding on horseback, when he was met by an old woman who had not so much of this world's goods as he had. Taking out his wallet, he handed her a quarter of a dollar, and rode on.

He had ridden only a short distance, when he began to soliloquize thus:

"Now, wouldn't I have done better to have kept that money, and bought myself something?"

Wheeling his horse round, he rode back to where the old lady was standing, and said—

"Give me that money!"

She handed it to him, wondering what he meant. Placing it in his wallet, and at the same time handing her a five-dollar bill, he exclaimed—

"There, self, now I guess you'll wish you had kept still!"

A few courses of this kind of treatment will work wonders in most cases, and, with God's blessing, many a poor worldling may get out of the kingdom of heaven, for with God all things are possible.

DESIRE not here in time what is only to be had yonder in eternity.—Starks.

Something about Pulpits.

The reign of spider-tables and capstans of vessels, called pulpits, seems to be nearly over. Men are drifting back to the old pulpits of other days. The idea of bringing the minister down to the people by putting him on a platform without shelter, where every movement could be observed, and the man be looked at from his boots to his hair, has failed to satisfy. A man who reads his sermon from a manuscript is bound to observe the rules of grammar, rhetoric, and composition. Talking on a platform without cover is an imitation of the stage, and demands peculiar culture. The most effective ministry has been in close pulpits. The pulpit from which Knox thundered in the presence of Queen Mary is preserved in the library-room of St. Giles. Whitefield's pulpit is still used in London, and is of a wine-glass shape, into which the preacher entered as into a closet, and closed the door behind him. It was one of the impressive scenes in the service to see Whitefield close the door of his pulpit behind him and kneel in prayer. When Whitefield preached in America he had a pulpit made for him, which he carried from place to place. That pulpit can be seen in the American Tract Society Rooms on Nassau Street. Nothing is more curious in Spurgeon's Tabernacle than his pulpit. First is the platform, the ordinary height of an American pulpit platform. Eight above this, on the level of the first gallery, stands a pulpit resting on several columns. It is like Ezra's, "a pulpit of wood," holding thirteen persons. When Spurgeon held his six services in Agricultural Hall, and preached to 25,000 people, he had a rough pulpit made in the same style as the one in his own auditorium. Wesley's pulpit at City Road Chapel is nearly an exact copy of Whitefield's, and it remains as when the great preacher occupied it. The pulpits of England stand usually a third of the way from the wall. An area is cleared around them, and here the preacher and singers sit who lead the congregation in its songs of praise. The new Presbyterian Church at Cincinnati, Ohio, has introduced a wine-glass pulpit into the new edifice. Other societies are bringing back the old style.

Mr Moody's Humor.

He applied the case of the man out of whom the devils were cast to young converts, and wisely exhorted them to "confess Christ." He said he could fancy the man going home to Decapolis and telling his friends and his neighbors until a crowd gathered. Then he could "fancy" the man getting upon a barrel or something, and telling them all about it. The consequence was, a great revival broke out through the preaching of this converted layman, "so that all men did marvel." He also pictured very graphically the woman who had spent all her money on physicians, and "became no better," etc. She had tried all the doctors, he said, but in vain. They had her money, but she rather grew worse. She was told that Jesus of Nazareth would cure her for nothing. So she went to Him and pushed her way through, until she "touched his garments," and was healed. Many were like the woman now, he said. They went to any and every physician, instead of Jesus. Many were like the disciples that were in the multitude; they did not know the difference between the "touch of the crowd, and the touch of faith;" but Christ knew. And the woman found that there was more healing power in the garments of the Saviour than in all the apothecaries' shops in Palestine.—Mr Moody in London.

The Study of Metaphysics.

Metaphysics is not, like logic, a purely formal science; it is, on the contrary, the science of fundamental and essential reality, of that which underlies all appearances, as the soul of a man underlies his features and his fleshy framework, and survives all changes as their permanent type. It is that which we come to when we get behind the special phenomena presented by individual sciences; it is neither botany, nor physiology, nor geology, nor astronomy, nor chemistry, nor anthropology, but those general, all-pervading, and all-controlling powers, forces, and experiences, of which each special branch of knowledge is only a single aspect or manifestation; it is the common element of all existence; and as all existence is more a grand evolution of self-determining reason (for, were it not for the indwelling reason the world would be a chaos, and not a cosmos), it follows that metaphysics is the knowledge of the absolute or cosmic reason so far as it is known by our limited individualized reason, and is therefore, as Aristotle long ago remarked, identical with theology. Indeed, the idea of God, as the absolute, self-existent, self-organizing, self-determining reason, is the only idea which can make the world intelligible, and has justly been held fast by all the great thinkers of the world, from Pythagoras down to Hegel, as the alone keystone of all sane thinking. By all means, therefore, let metaphysics be studied, especially in this age and place, where the novelty of a succession of brilliant discoveries in physical science, coupled with a one-sided habit of mind, swerving with a strong bias toward what is outward and material, has led some men to imagine that in mere physics is wisdom to be found, and that the true magician's wand for striking out the most important results is induction. This is the very madness of externalism. An essentially reasonable theology, and an essentially reverent speculation, are the metaphysics which a young man may fitly commence to seek after in the schools, but which he can find only by the experience of a truthful and manly life; and he will then know that he has found it when, like King David and the noble army of Hebrew psalmists, he can repose upon the quiet faith of it, like a child upon the bosom of its mother.—Blackie's Self-Culture.

Love finds love. The deaf and dumb child yet sees love in the mother's eye; when she becomes a mother she knows what the look of that eye meant. We are to find Him through love. Paul somewhat found this in Hym, and so the Epistles are an apocalypse.—Storrs.

Origin of Foreign Missions.

Though foreign missionary organizations have been in existence for over two centuries and a half, and though missionary operations have been actively carried on ever since the days when the little church at Antioch, in Syria, sent Paul and Barnabas on the first mission to the heathen, Protestant missions, in their present form, have only existed from about the beginning of the present century. The Moravians were the forerunner, and pioneers in this work. In 1727 two of their number went to Greenland, in 1771 a mission was established in Labrador, which is sustained to the present day, and even prior to that time, in 1701, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was founded in the Church of England, under the fostering care of the English bishops. But its energies were mainly, if not exclusively, confined to labors among English colonies. And it was not until 1793 that missions, on any extended scale, to the heathen were undertaken. Then it was, despite much open opposition and more lukewarmness, indifference and moral inertia, that William Carey succeeded in awakening an interest in foreign missions, which resulted in the organization of the Baptist Missionary Society. Two years later (1795), the London Missionary Society was organized by Rowland Hill and others, and in the following year sent a company of twenty-nine missionaries to the South Sea Islands. Five years later (1800), the Church Missionary Society (Church of England) and the Wesleyan Society (Methodist) were organized. For this, as for so many other humane, philanthropic and religious enterprises, this country is indebted to the mother-land. Not until 1810 was the first missionary organization in the United States founded—the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Thus we are justified in saying that modern Protestant missions are all the growth of the past seventy-five or eighty years.—Lyman Abbott, in Harper's Magazine for February.

Random Readings.

"It is a maxim of military art," said Napoleon, "that the army that remains in its entrenchment is beaten." That is eminently true in the church. If it stands still it forfeits its right to be called a church. The church is not a mutual admiration society, nor merely a refuge into which the exposed may run for protection and safety; it is an army sent forth to subdue the world.—Independent.

The Epistle to the Romans was written to a Church who had believed, and who really knew the truth. Yet how the Apostle goes over the whole ground from the beginning, thus showing that those who have believed must be continually occupied with all the truths of the Gospel—doctrinal, dispensational, and practical. We want no new doctrines, but we want a deeper insight into, and a richer experience of, those things which are so clearly revealed.

BETTER a thousandfold sacrifice elegance than fervour; better crucify refined taste than quench holy passion; better have the outward forms of devotion imperfect and marred than lose the spirit which alone gives them value; better that music should be discordant than soulless, the prayers broken and rugged than cold and undevout, the altar bare and unattractive than the fire that ought to burn on it extinguished, the temple rude and unshapely than the God absent.

In mental prayer we confess God's omniscience; in vocal we call angels to witness. In the first, our spirits rejoice in God; in the second, the angels rejoice in us. Mental prayer is the best remedy against lightness and indifference of affections, but vocal prayer is the aptest instrument of communion. That is more angelical, but yet is fittest for the state of separation and glory; this is but human, but it is apter for our present constitution.—Jeremy Taylor.

THERE is room in the Church, and need, for all manner of workers. The poorest and less recognized are as much needed as any. Open your watch; your eye falls on jewels there. But the sparkling jewels cannot say to the modest coil of steel beside them, "We have no need of thee," for that is the mainspring. And the mainspring cannot say to the tiniest cog-wheel, "We have no need of thee," for without it the works stand still. It is just so in the Church of Christ. One little worker can mar the whole by failing to fulfil his office. There is a place for each.

When the sun rises there is light. Why I do not know. There might have been light without the sun, and there might have been a sun that gave no light, but God has been pleased to put these two things together—sunrise and light. So, whenever there is prayer there is a blessing. I do not know why. There might have been prayer without a blessing, for there is the world of wrath; and there might have been a blessing without prayer, for it is often sent to some who sought it not. But God has been pleased to make this a rule for the government of the moral and spiritual universe, and there shall be prayer first, and then there shall be an answer to prayer.—Spurgeon.

I do not know a more beautiful sight on earth than a man who has served his Lord for many years, and who, having grown gray in service, feels that in the order of nature he must soon be called home. He is rejoicing in the first fruits of the Spirit which he has obtained, but he is panting after the full harvest of the Spirit which is guaranteed to him. I think I see him sitting on a jutting crag by the edge of Jordan, listening to the harpors on the other side, and waiting till the plover shall be broken at the fountain, and the wheel at the cistern, and the Spirit shall depart to God who gave it. A wife waiting for her husband's footsteps, a child waiting for the darkness of the night till its mother comes to give it the evening kiss, are portraits of our waiting. It is pleasant and a precious thing so to wait and so to hope.—Spurgeon.