

## Current Opinions.

## GOOL READING IN THE PULPIT.

The *Congregationalist* very properly remarks: In these days of complaint of the non-attendance of multitudes upon church, would it not be well for clergymen to pay more attention to their manner of reading the Scriptures and hymns? It is believed to be justifiable to offer the attraction of good singing as a means of drawing persons to hear, if not to take part in worship, and if singing, sermons and prayers, as means of grace, depend much upon the spirit with which these exercises make up the elements of worship, why should good reading be disregarded, as is too commonly the case? Even a poor sermon might be tolerated, with a proper reading of the language of Scripture?—*From N. Y. Evangelist.*

## "THE BATTLE OF BERLIN."

"The Battle of Dorking" has had an almost unprecedented popularity, as one of the publications of the day. Hundreds of thousands of this imaginary picture of the future invasion and conquest of England have been scattered abroad, and have been regarded with varied emotions of gratification or resentment. Those who disliked it wanted to know the vaticinations of a sagacious popular writer, and those who were in sympathy with it exulted in the likelihood that as a political prophecy it might yet be verified in actual experience.

But now to the "Battle of Dorking," succeeds the "Battle of Berlin," and Germany takes the place of England in the dust of humiliation. The proud conqueror of France, confident in her strength and arrogant in her tone, ventures to provoke a quarrel with one of inferior powers of Europe, and on the death of Bismarck (which is dated 1875) a combination of hostile nations, among which France is foremost, fired with revenge, assaults her at a disadvantage, and reduce her to a position that strangely contrasts with her present greatness.

All this, it is true, is simply imaginary. But the plausibility with which the story of these battles is invested, shows on how slender a basis the peace of Europe rests, and that no nation, however strong, is secure in its proud eminence. A battle of Dorking or of Berlin is antecedently no more improbable than that of Sadowa or Sedan, and yet in a single day the map of Europe may be changed, and a nation of the second rank may become one of "the Great Powers," or having been advanced sunk back into a secondary position.

## MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

Rev. Dr. Jacobus, of Alleghany, in a speech delivered recently in Philadelphia on "Ministerial Sustentation," said that he had been chairman of a committee of the General Assembly which had addressed letters to twenty-seven hundred churches and ministers, collecting statistics—such as salaries of ministers, method of raising the salaries, number of communicants, etc.,—and the result was the discovery that one half or two thirds of the ministers of the Church received salaries of less than one thousand dollars, and one-third less than six hundred dollars. In the letters he received many of them related sad facts in relation to the difficulty encountered by the ministers in supporting their families, many of them having to add to their income by some kind of manual labor.

## SPREAD OF PRESBYTERIANISM

Rev. Dr. Blaikie, of the Edinburgh New College, proposes a grand meeting of the English speaking Presbyterian Churches throughout the world. Presbyterianism has now spread wherever the English tongue is spoken. The six ministers of 1500, in Scotland alone, have as their successors three thousand ministers. In Ireland there are about six hundred ministers and congregations. In England there are, at least, 250. In the Dominion there are upwards of 500 ministers and churches. In Australia, New Zealand, Africa, West Indies, &c., there are about 500 more. All the Presbyterian Churches in the United States put together number about 7,200. The Presbyterian churches that look back to the Assembly at Edinburgh in 1560 as their mother Assembly, number in all about 12,000 ministers and churches—living in the British Isles, in the United States, in British America, and in the Isles of the Southern Seas. Dr. Blaikie proposes Edinburgh as the place where the first meeting of the Ecumenical Presbyterian Council should be held, as it is the dear Jerusalem of the Presbyterian Churches. "It would be a grand and stirring thing," he says, "if in the very chapel where Knox first met with his handful of comrades, and from the very desk where he rose to ask the blessing of God, the voice of thanksgiving should rise in the name of 12,000 congregations for the conspicuous answer to that prayer, and for the marvellous expansion vouchsafed to the little band, whose soul was moved with the desire to spread abroad the pure and blessed evangel of Jesus Christ."

## ARCHBISHOP LYNCH, ON THE RECENT COUNCIL OF THE VATICAN AND THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

This Council, at the Vatican, was needed in consequence of the numerous errors which had arisen during the 800 years which had elapsed since the last General Council of Trent—materialism, communism, pantheism: the state of the Polish Catholics in Russia, the banishment of the Church from Norway and Sweden, and its condition in Spain, Italy, Germany, France, and other places. He referred to the large number of bishops at the Council representing the English speaking people, and the large number of those who were Irish. He traced the history of the Church in England, and expressed his opinion that England was being reconverted.

How the Council of Trent corrected the alleged error then prevailing, may be gathered from the history of that period. In truth it may be likened to a vast petrifying well, in which the weeds of error have been carefully collected and steeped. Now they may be found laid up in the Church of Rome in orderly arrangement, wearing the same form, but hardened into stone—still weeds—noisome, worthless weeds, but fixed and stamed with the enduring character of unchangeable petrifications. The creed of Pius IV is in fact the echo of the council.

THE CREED OF POPE PIUS THE FOURTH, DEC. 9th, 1564.

I most firmly admit and embrace apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other constitutions and observances of the same church.

I also admit the sacred Scriptures according to the sense which the holy mother church has held, and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; nor will I ever take or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers.

I profess also that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and for the salvation of mankind, though all are not necessary for every one; namely, baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders and matrimony, and that they confer grace; and of these, baptism, confirmation, and orders, cannot be reiterated without sacrilege.

I also receive and admit the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, received and approved in the solemn administration of all the above said sacraments.

I receive and embrace all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the holy council of Trent concerning original sin and justification.

I profess likewise that in the mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which conversion the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation.

I confess also that under either kind alone, whole and entire, Christ and a true sacrament are received.

I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the sufferings of the faithful.

Likewise, that the saints reigning together with Christ are to be honored and invoked, that they offer prayers to God for us; and that their relics are to be venerated.

I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, and of the mother of God, ever virgin, and also of the other saints, are to be had and retained, and that due honour and veneration are to be given to them.

I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

I acknowledge the holy catholic and apostolical Roman church, the mother and mistress of all churches; and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman bishop, the successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, and vicar of Jesus Christ.

I also profess and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons, and general councils, and particularly by the holy council of Trent; and likewise I also condemn, reject, and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all heresies whatever, condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the church.

This true catholic faith, out of which none can be saved, which I now truly profess, and truly hold in—promise, vow, and swear most constantly to hold and profess the same entire and whole, with God's assistance, to the end of my life; and to procure as far as in my power that the same shall be held, taught, and preached by all who are under me, or are

entrusted to my care by virtue of my office. So help me God, and these holy Gospels of God.

This creed may be considered as the great accredited forgery of the Romish church. The Pope and his councillors were, to all intents and purposes, will forgers. They have given the seal of their most solemn authority to the imposture, and with awful unwarrantable audacity, they call upon the Christian world to receive as the will of God, the poor and beggarly inventions of man.

## A ROMISH CATECHISM CORRECTED.

Keenan's controversial catechism, which was widely circulated in Ireland, under high ecclesiastical sanction two or three years ago, had in its original form the following question and answer: "Q. Must not the Catholics believe the Pope in himself to be infallible? A. This is a Protestant invention; it is no article of the Catholic faith; no decision of the Pope can oblige under pain of heresy, unless it be received and enforced by the teaching body—that is, by the Bishops of the Church." Since the promulgation of the dogma, this catechism has been carefully altered, the questions on the same page being spread out so as to conceal the fact that one question and answer have been expunged. Only a few copies are in existence with the above quotation in them, the rest having been bought up and destroyed.

## OLD PATHS.

There is a theology of Christian experience—a great body of precious doctrines which have endured the test of ages, and have been the abiding comfort of all who believed them. The faithfulness of God, the love of Christ, the ministry of the Spirit,—how these have wrought themselves by evidences compared with which even mathematical demonstration is weak. When the blind man was restored to sight, he might be excused if he gave little heed to an argument that proved miracles impossible; when Lazarus was brought from the tomb, the Sadducee could not hope to convince him that there is no resurrection; when the penitent sinner has heard in his heart the pardoning voice of Christ, he cannot easily be persuaded that the Gospel is a fiction; and when these experiences of spiritual renewal and healing have been repeated in millions of biographies and through whole periods of history, the accumulated testimony, with all its incidental confirmations, justifies our complete confidence. We may be told that the world has outgrown these dogmas of Christianity, but the cloud of witnesses for their truth is too large and too dense to be so easily blown aside. The pangs of guilt, the deep earnest of conscience, the fear of punishment, are as certain as any facts which the senses can recognize or the reason apprehend; and it is no less certain that guilt and unrest and fear have been removed, in almost countless instances, by penitence and faith in Christ. And so long as man's nature and needs remain, so long will the old paths be the only ones which lead to peace and to God. We cannot yield the Scriptures and the doctrines of salvation by the cross, until some surer and happier way of spiritual life has been discovered. If skepticism or philosophy or science, or anything else, will surpass the moral virtue of the Gospel, and work greater miracles in lifting up the sinful, and purifying society, then it will be easy to supplant the Bible and supersede Christ. We hold to the old, not because it is old, but because it shows itself the power of God unto salvation. Virtue goes out of Christ, to whomsoever may touch him: thus we know that he has still power on earth to forgive sins, that he is still the old and only path to God,—the way, the truth, and the life.—*National Baptist.*

HUMILITY.—The flower of Christian graces grow only in the shade of the Cross, and the root of them all is humility.

Tom Ingoldsby was at a dinner where they were telling about an invention for extracting the ink from parchment and reducing the parchment to pure gelatine. "Good!" said he; "now a man may eat not only his words but his deeds."

A full-bearded young grandfather recently shaved, showing a clean face for the first time in a number of years. At the dinner-table, his little grand daughter noticed it, "gazed with wondering eye," and finally ejaculated, "Grandfather, whose head you got on?"

At an examination by a Scotch minister of his flock, previous to the administration of the communion, a man was asked: "What kind of a man was Adam?" "Oh, just like other folk!" The minister insisted on having a more special description of the first man, and pressed for more explanation. "Well," said the respondent, "he was just like Joe Simpson, the horse-cooper." "How so?" asked the minister. "Well, nobody got any one thing by him, and money lost."

## UNION IN SCOTLAND.

The following remarks, as the signature shows, are from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Mitchell, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of St. Andrews. His words carry with them much weight:—

There are no divisions in any part of the Christian Church, the continuance of which seems to all but ourselves more uncalled for, or incapable of being defended on the ground of vital principle than those which still subsist among the Presbyterians of Scotland. I envy not the heart or head of that man among them who does not find in his secret soul some response to the noble words of Dr. McDuff:—"I am sure many of us would be willing, and more than willing, to surrender, or at least to modify any favourite ecclesiastical theory,—to abandon even historic traditions,—if we could get the grandest of all historic traditions realized in a united Church, and see Scotland the Scotland of Knox again. No one dare ignore this fact, that our divisions are the sin and the disgrace of our land—to be so near to one another in all vital essentials, and yet to be so far apart. For these divisions of Ruben, there may well be great searchings of heart." The difficulties in the way of any general union or confederation of the Presbyterian Churches are still confessedly great, but sure I am that few who can be persuaded calmly and impartially to examine them, will pronounce them insurmountable, or say that, considering the blessed consequences which would result to themselves and to their native land, there might not well be frank and honorable conference to ascertain whether they could not be all removed or diminished. That ideal which filled the mind of our great Reformer, and kindled and kept brightly glowing within his breast, the flame of Christian patriotism—that ideal which, when partially rejected by the men of his generation, was solemnly commended by him to the generations to come, and has been fondly cherished in the minds of his heart-hearted countrymen ever since—that ideal, the partial realisation of which has made our beloved Scotland what it is, and the more complete realisation of which alone will enable us to make Scotland what it ought to be, is once more, by a singular concurrence of circumstances specially presented to our view and pressed on our notice. Shall we finally thrust it away from us, and in another sense than the crafty Maudslott intended, pronounce our Reformer's noble plans a "devout imagination," never more to be striven for, never now to be realised, or only to be so in some far distant millennium which we shall never see? Shall we continue to waste our energies and resources against each other, instead of uniting heart and hand to turn them to the best advantage, and use them for the common good, to diffuse among the outcast and erring the light and life of Christianity, and to preserve for the religious training of the young and the adult, the fragments of ecclesiastical property which the cupidity of our nobles has left us? Rather surely, adopting the dying words of one who longed and labored for this blessed consummation, and expressed his readiness to make a great sacrifice of personal feeling and sentiment to secure it, we should say: "There is needed but the spirit of the great Reformer—mellowed but not enervated—to unite all hearts and to make all hands co-operate in reviving, with the aid of His grace, the work of God in the midst of us, and enlightening and ennobling the benighted and cheerless families of the land with the light and life of the everlasting Gospel." If we are true to our common principles and professions, the bright vision of a confederated or re-united Presbyterian Church may yet be realised. But if we prove faithless or faint-hearted, the happy day may be long deferred, the work of our common Master may be greatly hindered, and the influence of our separate Churches be sadly weakened.

A. F. MITCHELL.

## ARE THE TIMES CHANGED?

Three thousand souls were converted on the day of Pentecost. In the great awakening in New England in the last century, twenty thousand members were added to the churches, who, by their consistent walk in after-life, proved that they were truly born again. Were these harvest seasons exceptional times in the history of our world, and never to be seen again? Or may an expectant church labour and pray for the coming again of such times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord? Never did the Church universal need such a baptism of the Holy Ghost as now, and never did our own Church need such a sealing testimony from God, and such an awakening as shall send a new and quicker life into all her ministries, and make every branch of her service vital with the presence and power of the Divine Spirit.—*Presbyterian.*

THE KEY.—In order rightly to understand the voice of God in nature, we ought to enter her temple with the Bible in our hands.

## MY CREED.

I believe that a religion that will not make a man happy in this world, will not make him happy in any other world.

I believe that there is no piety at all in a long face, any more than in a long nose.

I believe that Christ and His people have a better right to the good things of this world, than the devil and his people.

I believe a minister of the Gospel has as good a right to drive a fast horse, and wear a fashionable coat, and eat a good dinner, as any other man.

I believe there is more religiousness in the Church, than there is true religion.

I believe that a man who won't trust his business to God, won't trust Him with his soul.

I believe there is no overplus of honesty and fair dealing among professors of religion.

I believe that a great deal of what is called evangelical religion in this day is no better than the Phariseism of our Saviour's time.

I believe that a man who does not know that he is a Christian is in a very bad way.

I believe there is more devotion shown, in many a country church, to fashion and manners, than to the Lord.

I believe that the outfit of one girl, for a common occasion, often costs more than all the money given by the whole congregation into the Lord's treasury.

I believe that the salary paid to many a faithful pastor is less than what is given by the same people for whiskey and patent medicines.

I believe that generally a minister had better be in his study preparing food for his people on next Sabbath, than going about condoling with every old woman who has cracked her sugar-bowl; or some old foggy who believes that these are the very worst of times that ever were.

I believe that the poor widow, who cast her two mites into the treasury of the Lord, had more real happiness than all the millionaires in New York city ever experienced.

I believe it is foolish to expect in children the gravity that is proper in great-grandfathers.

I believe that to encourage young people in amusements that are innocent, is the best preservative from those that are vicious.

I believe that Christian people have to do with secularities as well as sanctities.

I believe, at the proper time and place, there is no sin in a good joke, or a sparkle of wit, or a bubble of humour.

I believe there is sometimes more virtue in a hearty laugh, than in a box of pills.

I believe that debt is a sin and a shame, and a source of a thousand miseries in Christian people.

I believe that debt, and care, and poverty, and intolerable perplexities, come from giving too little to the Lord.

I believe that nothing is so sure to end in disaster, as an attempt to rob God.

I believe that he can not be a healthy Christian who gives less than the Jews gave a thousand years before Christ came.

I believe that God never has never will bless a people that are faithless to their obligations to support their pastor.

I believe there is a great deal of ignorance among those who preach the Gospel as to what the Gospel really is.

I believe that no man can make his own heart better by all the patching and tinkering he can bestow upon it; and that his only safety is in getting a new heart.

I believe that sinners are saved, not by using the means of grace, or by reforming their lives, but by believing the Gospel.

I believe that a minister can no more preach instructively without laborious study, than my lamp will continue to burn without being replenished with oil.

I believe that the language in which the Gospel should be preached, is the language which people use every day around their firesides and in their business, and not the—unknown tongue of the schools and books.

I believe that one of the best rules for making sermons in the utter disregard of all rules.

I believe that red tape and a want of common sense have wrought a world of mischief in the Church.

I believe that this is a pretty good sort of a world after all; and that it is a blessed thing to live and work and suffer here if these are done for Christ.

I believe that the man who is not hated and slandered by some is not of much account.

I believe that he who is always whining about the hard times and personal troubles is a disgrace to Christianity.

I believe that the first step towards repairing a broken fortune is to make a generous offering to the Lord.

I believe that the wisdom of this world is as much at fault in managing money matters, as in devising a scheme of salvation.

I believe that decided convictions and their fearless expression will command respect even from its bitterest opponents.—*Presbyterian Index.*