

Draw the People to Church.

The great reason why more people do not attend church is because they are not attracted. "Ring the bell loud enough," said a certain famous pulpiteer, "and people will come to church." What he meant was that the church should be made conspicuous in all their avenues of thought and sense. If you want people to believe you, you must get them to hear you. If you want them to hear you, you must say something that will interest them. It is to be feared that too few preachers grapple with everyday thought. Others make the mistake of clothing sacred truth in scientific garb. If there is anything despicable in the shape of verbiage it is the vernacular of modern science. What we want is interesting truth in interesting dress. The simpler the words the better. An old lady once walked a long distance to hear Dr. Adam Clarke, the distinguished commentator, preach. She heard him with great interest. She was asked how she liked the sermon "Why," she said, "I could understand every word." She did not expect to understand the great Biblical scholar, and was surprised when she heard him use such simple language that she, a poor, illiterate woman, could understand every word. No sermon should be above the comprehension of the unlearned. Technical terms and scientific phrases would better be avoided. Indeed, unless the preacher does avoid them the common people will avoid him. Spurgeon says some preachers seem to understand the Saviour's commission, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs," to be "Feed my giraffes." And Talmage, who is noted for his directness and simplicity of speech, says: "We want fewer rhetorical elaborations and fewer acquiescent words, and when we talk about shadows we do not want to say adumbrations, and when we mean querness we do not want to talk about idiosyncrasies, or if a stitoh in the back we do not want to say lumbago; but in the plain vernacular to preach that gospel which proposes to make all men happy, honest, victorious and free. In other words, we want more cinnamon and less gristle. Let this be so in all the different departments of work to which the Lord calls us. Let us be plain. Let us be earnest. Let us be common sential."

All this agrees with the precept and example of John Wesley, who drew more people to church than almost any other man since the days of Paul. His happy art is outlined in the following: "I design plain truth for plain people; therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice, philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasoning; and as far as possible from even a show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures. I labor to avoid all words that are not easily understood, all which are not used in common life; and in particular those kind of technical terms that so frequently occur in bodies of divinity, those modes of speaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which to common people are an unknown tongue."—Michigan Advocate.

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Self-Denial and Hardness.

In the New Testament self-denial and hardness are joined as cause and effect. They are cardinal characteristics of the New Testament ministry. The men who impress this or any other ago for Christ must be thoroughly saturated with the power to endure. It belongs to their vocation. It is one of the elements of a successful ministry. The man who is looking for an easy place has fallen from grace; has separated himself from his Lord who was the very impersonation of self-denial; who emptied Himself as the initial step in his ministry.

To endure hardness as a good soldier is the first element of a Christly ministry. He who seeks an easy place, a better place, who regards salary or ease, may project himself and preach pleasant or self-lauding sermons, but he is wholly without ability to preach Christ or project his Gospel. He may preach many good things about Christ, and say many fine, new things about His gospel, but these are far removed from that preaching that enthrones Christ in hearts, and makes His gospel felt as an aggressive and constraining force.

The New York Observer some time ago had an editorial on the vacant pastorates in the Presbyterian church, and their young men in the ministry. It declared that somehow their young preachers had lost the spirit of sacrifice and hardness which were absolutely necessary for success in the ministry; that their young preachers would not deny themselves and work on small salaries and with small, obscure churches; that they demanded city churches and fine salaries. This condition of things had brought about lamentable results. The custom prevailing in many churches of furnishing money to educate young men comes in for a large share of the blame. It is said that:—

A venerable clergyman in New York recently declared that the modern plan of offering to impoverished young men a support through college serves as a kind of bribe to many to take up a calling for which they have no taste nor moral and intellectual fitness. "It is a free-lunch route to the altar," he said, "and nothing better could be expected from it than that it should produce a race of weaklings. Men really fitted for the work of the ministry would have managed to get into it without anybody's help."

Whether this solution is the true one or not, the fact seems patent not only as an existing one in the Presbyterian church, but as an existing and growing one in other churches. We fear that this principle of self denial, the very foundation and life of our itinerancy is becoming weak with us.—Christian Advocate.

Receipts for Sunshine in the Soul.

- 1. Look at your mercies with both eyes, and at your troubles and trials with only half an eye.
2. Study contentment. Keep down the accursed spirit of grasping; "what they don't have" makes thousands wretched.
3. Keep at some work of usefulness. Work for Christ brings heart health.
4. Keep your heart's windows always open toward heaven. Let the blessed light of Jesus' countenance shine in. It will turn tears to rainbows. This last receipt is the best one. It is all very well to say, "Do right and you'll be happy," but there is something more than that needed. We must let the spring of our lives be in Christ, letting His Spirit guide us in all we do.—Theodore L. Cuyler.

The Humbug of Proverbs.

A proverb has been defined as "the wisdom of many and the wit of one." Into many proverbs are packed pithy suggestions as to conduct and generalized experience of mankind. They are sarcastic, hortative, minatory, mirth-provoking, but they are not wiser than the people who make them. Hence, many of them, some of the most widely current, are arrant humbugs. If they were once true to experience, under certain conditions, they are true no longer. To say this is flat contradiction of the well-known proverb, "Nobody is wiser than everybody." But even that is one of the humbugs. It not infrequently happens that a single man is wiser than his whole generation. Such men become first the leaders, then the martyrs, of their age, but are the saints and heroes of the ages which follow.

As a flagrant instance of proverbial un wisdom and humbug, take the distich which has been dinned into the ears of unnumbered generations of children:

"Early to bed and early to rise, Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

This is a terse and witty generalization of the experience of a pastoral community, where to get on in the world it was necessary to work in the fields from "sun up" to "sun down." It has no application whatever to town life. The wealthy and wise men of towns are men who work late and rise late; and as to health, it is notorious that no part of our population so suffers from all manner of diseases as farmers and their families. Yet how many have been deprived of their natural sleep by a superstition, begot of this wretched rhyme, that early rising is conducive to health. It is only in recent years that people have had the courage to take the sleep which nature demands. The man who did so a generation ago was called "lazy"—the most intolerable of all epithets. Franklin even aimed a proverb at him: "Men need five hours' sleep, women six, children and fools seven." Nowadays the man who takes less than eight is the fool.

Take some of the maxims inculcating shrewd business policy: "A penny saved is a penny earned," has ruined many a man who could not persuade himself to spend money with judicious lavishness in enlarging his business. The penny saved was so large in his eyes that it hid the dollar lost by his foolish economy. "Out of debt, out of danger," and "Better go to bed supperless than rise in debt," are a precious pair which have brought many to the poor-house. Debt is the only salvation of many a man. Not debt recklessly incurred in the purchasing of a home or the establishing of a business. Where would modern commercial affairs be but for credit? But credit means debt; for if A trusts B, B must owe A. Debt makes many a man careful and saving who would spend all he gets if he had no pressing obligations to meet. So he is forced, as it were, in spite of himself, to provide for sickness and old age.—New York Examiner.

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