

Pastor and People.

TWO OR THREE.

There were only two or three of us
Who came to the place of prayer,
Came in the teeth of a driving storm.
But for that we did not care,
Since after our hymns and praise had risen,
And our earnest prayers were said,
The Master Himself was present there
And gave us the living bread

We knew His look in our leader's face,
So rapt, and glad, and free;
We felt His touch when our heads were bowed,
We heard His "Come to Me!"
Nobody saw Him lift the latch,
And none unbarred the door,
But "Peace" was His token in every heart,
And how could we ask for more?

Each of us felt the load of sin
From the weary shoulders fall;
Each of us dropped the load of care,
And the grief that was like a pall;
And over our spirits a blessed calm
Swept in from the jasper sea,
And strength was ours for toil and strife
In the days that were thence to be.

It was only a handful gathered in
To the little place of prayer,
Outside were struggle, and pain, and sin,
But the Lord Himself was there;
He came to redeem the pledge He gave—
Wherever His loved ones be,
To stand Himself in the midst of them,
Though they count but two or three.

And forth we fared in the bitter rain,
And our hearts had grown so warm,
It seemed like the pelting of summer flowers,
And not the crash of a storm.
"Twas a time of the dearest privilege
Of the Lord's right hand," we said,
As we thought how Jesus Himself had come
To feed us with living bread.

ON PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

IX.—THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION—PHYSICAL.

Physical preparation holds an important place in reference to the proclamation of the truth of God. It may not be of as much consequence in every respect as the preparation of the mind or the heart, yet the body is the instrument of both, and is equally a part of the man. The body, therefore, is not to be slighted, or treated with contempt. Upon the care of it depend the fineness and freedom of the mind, and the tenderness and responsiveness of the heart. The condition of the body acts upon the mind—if it is vigorous and healthy;—thought will be unfettered and strong and discursive; but if it be sickly and weakly thought will be difficult and in every way unsatisfactory. Healthy, vigorous strong-thinking demand a body and a brain untouched by the vitiating presence of disease. This, however, requires qualification, for there are diseases that do not materially interfere with the free action of the brain but rather help it. These are pulmonary and lung diseases, especially in their earlier stages. At that time they impart freedom to the mind to act. They do not depress the mind and darken it like liver complaints. They seem to give it wings rather than lay upon it weights.

But ordinarily sickness impedes the action of the mind and interferes with the flow of thought. It loads the blood with bad humours and oppresses the heart with dark thoughts and miserable feelings that in the most effective way handicaps the worker and spoils his work.

In the life of Payson of Portland we are informed of the effect of a severe sickness upon him in this brief sentence: "Weak in body and mind." The great Dr. Johnson had a morbid melancholy lurking in his constitution, which affected him in a grievous manner, changing entirely the complexion of his life. Boswell tells us that "while he was at Lichfield in the college vacation of the year 1729 he felt himself overwhelmed with a horrible hypochondria, with perpetual irritation, fretfulness and impatience; and with a dejection, gloom and despair, which made existence misery. From this dismal malady he never afterwards was perfectly relieved; and all his labours and all his enjoyments were but temporary interruptions of its baleful influence."

Well might the adoring biographer exclaim: "How wonderful, how unsearchable are the ways of God!" Johnson, who was blest with all the powers of genius and understanding in a degree far above the ordinary state of human nature, was at the same time visited with a disorder so afflictive that they who know it by dire experience will not envy his exalted endowments." Had Dr. Johnson not been afflicted in this way how much more sweetness, and light, and love, especially to Scotchmen, might there have been in his life! This truth is pressed to the front by the experience of Johnson, that very much of the peevishness, irritability, impatience and capriciousness exhibited by men and women has its root in bodily illness—in physical disease. And therefore good health is a necessary pre-requisite to a pleasant and happy life. Aye, more than that, to a good moral life, and a joyous spiritual life. Good health is one of the prime elements of success in preaching, and in all the preacher's work. And therefore pains

ought to be taken to secure it. Mark! "pains," care, thought and work. The minister is greatly exposed to attacks of sickness and disease by the very nature of his work. He preaches earnestly and vigorously and the result is a heated condition of the body. Immediately thereafter he speaks to a parishioner at the street corner for a few moments, and receives a chill that oppresses him for a week, even if no more injury is sustained. He visits the sick in every possible condition of his own health, and is liable to be trapped by some infection. He is so much engrossed with his own sacred duty that he hardly ever thinks of himself. It is a marvel that amid so much carelessness he is so little incapacitated for the onerous work of both mind and heart and body, which he has to do. Dr. Guthrie, of Edinburgh, in his work among the poor of the Cowgate—where typhus and typhoid fevers are always slumbering, and often break out as devastating spirits,—was looked on as having a "charmed" life. While both doctors and ministers were stricken with fever, he always escaped. And this he attributed to this simple precaution: "I insisted," he says, "on the door being left open while I was in the room, and always took up a position between the open door and the patient, and not between the patient and the fire-place; thus the germs of the disease thrown off in the breath and from the skin of the patient, never came in contact with me, but were borne away to the fire-place, and in the very opposite direction by the current of air that came in at the door, and passed me before becoming charged with any noxious matter."

The Doctor knew something of medicine as he had attended lectures in the Sorbonne, and walked the hospitals of Paris for five months. All ministers should be acquainted at least with physiology and hygiene. Better still they might do as Dr. Guthrie did and take a course in medicine. It would be of advantage both to themselves and their parishioners. Then they could keep themselves in good condition. If the racer and the rower and the wrestler must train themselves into good condition to compete for a prize, surely it is worth while for the minister of the Gospel to take pains to secure the best physical conditions for his work. What is the prime necessity for him? We answer: Good sleep; sound refreshing sleep. Sleep rests the brain and invigorates and refreshes it, makes it strong to labour. The best sleepers are the most efficient workers. Sound sleep is a sign of good health. Broken sleep is a mark of an impaired constitution, that is, when it is not occasioned by unusual noises without or poisonous air within the house. A cool sleeping chamber with plenty of fresh air is within the reach of every one. Another thing that contributes to sound sleep is, exercise in the open air. This the minister has continual occasion for in shepherding his flock. If he does as the Apostle Paul did, "visit from house to house," he shall have a sufficiency of exercise. Sir William Jones put the rules by which he governed himself in reference to health in these three lines:—

Secure six hours for thought, and one for prayer,
Four in the fields for exercise and air,
The rest let converse, sleep and business share.

The division of our time, so as to get the best and most suitable portion for each duty incumbent upon us, is wise. Study in the morning when the mind is fresh, visiting in the afternoon when exercise is demanded, and family life, or pleasant social services in the evening when use and wont gathers either the family or the Church together.

No man can long violate the laws of health without suffering the penalty. In our changeable climate we must take note how the wind blows, and dress to suit the changes. We are told that the Duke of Wellington never dressed of a morning without putting his head out of the window to determine the temperature and the wind, and dressed accordingly. Happy man he, who had sufficient changes of raiment! If not so well stocked as he in this line we yet may compass the same end by judicious alterations in our garments.

In the actual work of preaching, the bodily condition affects us to a marked degree. Can a man chilled with cold preach? We think not. If he does at all, it will be under serious disadvantages. To secure the most favourable condition of body Dr. Joseph Parker, of London, walks every Lord's Day from his own house to the City Temple, a distance of several miles, and so gets into a glow, and is well supplied with pure oxygenated blood. This is in harmony with what Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton assured his son—that no man ever broke down in a speech who had perspired freely before; due preparation having, of course, otherwise been made. How often is the throat a trouble! It is either hoarse and hollow or thick and indistinct. It is out of order so frequently, what shall be done with it? "Listen to Dr. Parker as he speaks in one of the least known of his works, "Springdale Abbey":—

"Cannot sufficiently express the value which I set on cold water as a tonic for the throat. Have tried many tonics, but this is the only one effectual. I wish all vocalists would try it; take a rough towel and bathe the throat every morning with the coldest water, the colder the better, lave it on until the throat is numb, and then rub it till the throat glows like fire. It has improved my voice amazingly; I had nothing of a voice to begin with, but now it is quite strong."

That treatment suggests bathing the entire body. What so invigorating as that! I often think that every minister should go, at least once, to an hydropathic establishment to learn the uses to which water may be put. To know what it is as a curative agent. I am sure that then there would be employed more water and less drugs. A good bath followed

by a brisk rubbing helps every organ of the body to perform its functions better and easier. And taken in the right temperature is a capital preparation for preaching. It has not only an enlivening but a sweetening effect. It even bids hope arise, and joy to flow, and prayer to ascend. It renews the man. There is true philosophy in the Talmudic sentence "Outward cleanliness is inward purity." Dr. W. B. Richardson, who insists on a daily ablution, puts it this way: "You want something no doubt; but all you really want is these six things. Half a gallon of water. A lump of soap. A piece of flannel or a sponge. A hand basin in a washing stand to hold your water. A rough towel. There are very few people who are not set up in all these little requirements, and they are all that really are wanted."

You pour some water into your basin; you stand in your tub before the basin; with your sponge or flannel you give yourself a complete soaking and rinsing letting your head and feet have their full share, and then you dry yourself thoroughly with your rough clean towel.

Time required for the whole process, five minutes.

METHODIST TRIBUTE TO PRESBYTERIANISM.

The *Mid-Continent* says: The following kindly and able tribute to our people is contained in an article written by Rev. Dr. Jacob Ditzler, in the *St. Louis Christian Advocate*. The honoured writer is intellectual and learned and is counted as the best posted man in the Southern M. E. Church, especially in history of churches and doctrines.

He is publishing in the *Advocate* a series of strong and attractive articles on "Methodism in Missouri." From one of these we take our extract. To be kind, faithful and just in the treatment of sister churches of our blessed Lord gives proof of the love of Christ in the heart. It likewise operates directly and powerfully to exalt the Master and to promote the responsive spirit of brotherly unity. If Christian brethren would always refrain from saying mean things of each other, and would speak kind words and let the world see that the denominations stand shoulder to shoulder, they would win higher honour from men, make more converts, and receive a richer divine blessing. Dr. Ditzler says:—

There are in America to-day three great denominations of Protestant Christians. On these, more than on all the others together by an almost infinite degree, depend our highest spiritual welfare, and our domestic and social as well as political prosperity rests upon their shoulders—the Presbyterians, the most influential in our great cities, and the oldest by a century of the three, the Baptists, next to us the most numerous Protestant body in our country; and the Methodist, the youngest of the trio but largely over a century in this country, but the most numerous of all professed Christians in the United States, when only adult communicants are counted.

The Presbyterians originated in a combination of causes, in Switzerland, 1533-1550; in Scotland, 1550-1593; in England, 1572. They made the first and grandest stride from medieval ecclesiasticism and ritualistic religion to the simplicity of faith and Church order and government. Faith and emulous piety, education, ecclesiastical simplicity based on the New Testament order of ministers, and the restoration of constitutional liberty, with strong curbs on the rulers of the people by balances in government, legislative, judicial and executive, were the great principles that originated and developed the great body.

These exhaust the older list of English denominations of any influence in Christianity. The Presbyterians, above all others, organized modern education in Europe, and from Europe the work spread into America. What the Congregationalists did so well in New England they had been taught in Europe through the influence and teaching of Calvin and Beza, or their pupils directly or indirectly. Above all denominations, the establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland under Beza's great learning and the fiery eloquence of Knox, between 1550 and 1593, and in England in 1572 in the midst of Elizabeth's reign, laid the foundations of that love of constitutional law and liberty that later—1639 to 1689—won the Bill of Rights, the Petition of Rights, did away with the famous Star Chamber, secured in 1679 the *Habeas Corpus*, and finally in 1691 exiled the infamous James II., abolishing the bloody reign of the tyrannical house of Stuarts. The Low church Episcopalians, Congregationalists and the few poor Baptists aided heartily and suffered their part in those stormy years; but, above all denominations, the world owes most to the Presbyterians for modern learning and constitutional liberty.

BLESSED.

There is a beautiful ideal suggested by a story to be found in Grecian mythology. The story is to explain how the island of Cypress came to be so very beautiful. We are told of a goddess who walked with soft and delicate tread about the island, and that, following her steps, every green herb and lovely flower sprang up by the way. This may become a literal fact in the life of every Christian young woman; for if into her soul God has been welcomed, along her footsteps every plant of Christian usefulness may spring up, and every beautiful flower of Christian adornment may grow, until all shall unite in calling her "blessed." And there can be no higher ideal for any Christian young woman than merit being called, not so much bright or beautiful, as "blessed."