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Thursday, January 25th, 1900

Among the "Lives of D. L. Moody" that are already being hawked around America, two make a bid for first place. Beyond a doubt the wish of the great evangelist will be respected by all respectable publishers, and the standard work will be that brought out under the direction of his son, Mr. W. R. Moody.

The Southwestern Presbyterian thus sums up a vigorous protest against the multiplicity of organizations in our churches. "The argument for the existence of a society must be that it will do a work that would otherwise not be done and that in doing that work it will strengthen the church, increase the usefulness of the church and the glory of God." To this, endorsed by our contemporary, we cordially subscribe our endorsement. The usual plea for a new society is—"We want it!"

The death of John Ruskin was not unexpected. And yet he is not dead, nor even sleeping, for such as he live in a thousand lives whose thought he has moulded, and will live in thousands more, whom his words shall influence. He has spoken on many themes and spoken well on almost all of them. He has given us a form of English that is at once beautiful and simple. Not least in value are his religious teachings, which, though theologians have looked at them askance, have done much to make men stronger. We hope his works may soon become accessible, even to the humblest.

They are trying to figure out, across

the line, whether they have too many or too few ministers to fill the vacant pulpits. As a result of the discussion, the dust is beginning to fly, and two or three of the leading calculators have become ironically polite in their remarks, one to the other. We hope they will be warned in time. The question of what century we are living in has made sad havoc and this is a first cousin to it. We hope they will stop for our sake. The thing has appeared here. We heard a man declare that the colleges should be shut up for some years. He was perfectly sane too, but deluded.

Staked Out.

In the rush to a new mining camp when a man stakes out a claim he stays with it. If he does not the next man that comes along may promptly jump his claim. He may not do a turn, but so long as he keeps on watch he holds his own. Of course this does not develop the country, but that is not what he came out to that camp to do. He was looking out for number one, and he sticks to that policy.

Some congregations are wonderfully like mining camps, and some in those congregations are pursuing a policy closely of kin to the brother in the mining camp. Certain claims have staked out, and woe to the eager worker whose trespassing foot steps over the margin. Some sessions stake out the whole field and then undertake to sublet sections of it to others. To the men who are expert in worldly affairs is delegated the conduct of the business affairs of the congregation. To the studious and energetic is allotted the training of the young. To the ardent and vivacious who forget that forty summers lie behind them is committed the directing of the young people. But the Session holds the title, and may at any time call in the delegated authority.

Then too each of these sections of workers watches carefully lest some one overstep their borders. We have known the good people to watch so constantly for an invasion of privilege that they had no time to work the part committed to them. And somehow the spirit of standing on guard communicates itself till the whole congregation is in a state of armed neutrality. There is peace, everything is smooth on the surface, but the frozen smile with which one greets the other, being interpreted, reads—"You keep away from here!"

Meantime, while men and women watch one another the work they were sent to do remains undone. And the enemy steals in behind them and gets in his work. Nothing rejoices the adversary more than to find Christian men and women insanely jealous lest their rights be invaded.

The Touch of Faith.

In every crowded congregation, as in every humble meeting for prayer, there are some who touch the Master, whether all do or not. These persons receive His blessing and His grace, and go away with help and healing, peace and comfort, in their souls. To touch Christ in longing, faith and prayer is to come into saving contact with Him who has power to remove all sin and sorrow, and to bestow forgiveness and eternal life. To be so near Him that we might touch Him and yet fail to do so, is to have supreme opportunity without embracing it.

When a company, one day, while He was on earth, was crowding around Christ, a sick, discouraged and almost heartbroken woman came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment, sure that this would be enough to win from Him the power that would make her whole. It was enough. A vital relation was established between her and the Master, and she was healed. But the Lord would not let the act or the woman pass unnoticed, and made it known that, even in that dense throng, the timid touch of faith had attracted His saving power and His loving attention.

Wherever the word of truth is preached to-day Christ is as really present as He was that day on the road to the house of the ruler. He who gave us the gospel, and who is the life of the gospel, is present with divine grace and power wherever and whenever the gospel is proclaimed. It is the privilege of men to accept the salvation offered to them. Christ may be touched in faith. All that is necessary is to say to Him the word that expresses the desire, or the willingness, to receive from Him that which He offers.

We should remember that there are no times when Christ is more willing to bless than others. He is always ready to accept and save the sinner who comes to Him. We do not need to wait four months for the harvest. We do not need to send to the ends of the earth for some one to mediate with Him in our behalf. We do not need to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit from heaven, for he is here. We do not need to seek the coming of Christ from the dead, for He is risen, and is by our side. All that we need to do is to take Him at His word, to believe and trust Him, and to touch Him as our Saviour, who can give us life and salvation.

All through our land, in our churches everywhere, the gospel is preached Sabbath by Sabbath, and Christ is presented as the only hope for ruined sinners. Let us make it so plain that multitudes will touch Him in faith and love, and come to know for themselves, from sweet and unmistakable experiences, that Christ is able to save. It has often been said that any service is incomplete, and any sermon inadequate, in which there is not enough