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THE CHURCH'S OPPORTUNITY.

We have recently read an admirable article in the *New York Churchman*, under the above heading, which we reproduce here, as it contains much that is worthy of serious reflection. We should, indeed, thank God for our historical position, our Apostolic Ministry, and our incomparable Liturgy; but, after all, what those around us will be most impressed and influenced by is the exhibition on our part of greater love and zeal for the conversion of souls, larger displays of Christian liberality and self-denying labours, and individual examples of humble and sincere piety and holiness of life. These are the things that will tell against the evils and corruptions of sin, and these are the fruits of a real Christianity, which the world ever recognizes, and is affected by.

Truly the time has arrived when, by aggressive work and by the display of great earnestness, the Church may draw to herself the lost and outcast, the irreligious and the scoffer, as well as enfold within her loving arms the best and most orthodox who now are known under other names.

We need to be aroused to the responsibilities and demands of our position, and to the possibilities which are before us in this land, if only we are true to ourselves and to our Church. Not only do the Laity need stirring up to give more liberally, to work more faithfully, and to live more consistently, but the Clergy must lose sight of personal interests altogether, and lead their people in all that is self-sacrificing, good and holy.

People from without are watching our course with an intensity of interest truly remarkable, and if only they see in us the characteristics of the children of God, they will hasten to join our ranks and live and work within the Church's fold.

We shall say no more, but let the *Churchman's* article speak for us.

"What the Church is in her admirable constitution and historic order the masses do not know and cannot appreciate. Her apostolic methods and wise appointments, her ancient creeds and well-tested articles of faith, the character and arrangement of her services, so beautiful and appropriate, these will remain as they are, and exact abundant admiration, but in themselves they will go but a little way to inspire faith in the multitude, and win them to discipleship. Of supreme account to them is it that the Church, like Christ Himself, brings herself down to their level, and is concerned in their necessities; that she is so touched with the feeling of their infirmities as to be a helper in trouble and a consoler in affliction; that there are no sicknesses and distresses of body or spirit but she finds a way to bring to bear her ministries of care and healing; and that now and here amid the hardships of poverty and toil, the disadvantage of lowly birth and humble surroundings, the temptations of the weak and the miseries of the sick and afflicted, she is, out of the fulness of a loving heart, in every way sympathetic, practical, and humane. They know and feel that what Christ was in His concern for all sorts and conditions of men, in His sympathy with them and sacrifices for them, that must be His Church.

"The Church's greatest opportunity, then, lies in the direction of this charitable work. Her apostolic order and 'admirable liturgy' will take care of themselves. They are a part of the constitution and methods of the Church, but cannot save it. What men want to know is, whether the Church is

alive to the necessities of the time; whether she so understands the spirit of this nineteenth century that in every reasonable way she is ready to adapt herself its minister and helper. Never had the Church a grander opportunity to be at the same time conservative and progressive; to abide by the old paths, and still adapt herself in whatever way to the changed surroundings. What can the Church do to minister more successfully in the great centres of population? How can she better organize her strength, and bring to bear her resources? What can she do for the intemperate, for the outcast, and the afflicted? How can she reach the irreligious, non-church-going masses, and better preach the Gospel to the poor? How can she make her work more inclusive and her spirit more humane? In the country parishes, again, how can she stir up that sluggish life in which religion so often resolves itself into two comfortable services on Sunday? How can she send her members out into the highways and hedges, compelling the wanderers to come in? How can she bring to bear a more enlarged missionary spirit, and carry the Gospel to the ever-increasing, outlying populations?

"These are the questions which it well becomes the Church, as a whole, to ask, as also every parish. The time has gone by when she needs to go into any apologies or self-defence. But it is only just beginning when she needs to make her work more practical and aggressive. Her supreme concern is to be about bearing better and more abundant fruits, and such fruits withal as come of carrying her ministering in a Christ-like way to all who most sorely need it and are ready to perish without it."

A GOOD SUGGESTION.

A CORRESPONDENT made the suggestion in our columns some months ago, which at the time we heartily endorsed, that our Synod meetings would be made much more interesting if questions having reference to the work of the Parishes were entertained and discussed. We should like to see at each meeting of our Synods a day taken up with the discussion of such subjects, and if the Synod were to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole on the state of the Church, there could be a friendly and beneficial interchange of views among the members. Such a course would, we feel sure, be productive of great good, both to the Clergy and Laity present, and in its after results upon the Parishes.

We morely name the subject now to keep it before our readers, we shall return to it at length another time.

SAYS the *New York Churchman*: "The faithfulness of the late Hon. E. R. Mudge in the giving of money for religious and charitable purposes was notable and significant, and was directed and controlled by Christian principle. Bishop Huntington was his former rector in Boston, and when he came to the selection of the preacher for the consecration of the memorial church which he erected at Lynn for the use of St. Stephen's parish, he chose his old rector to preach the sermon, because, he said to a friend, 'Bishop Huntington first taught me how to give.' It was a beautiful tribute to a rector's faithfulness to single members of his flock."

PREACHING.

(COMMUNICATED.)

II.

It would be well to consider what the real object and aim of the preacher is; whether it be to pose before the world, as a man of some scholarly attainments, a master of the English language, a thinker, a person of taste and culture, of penetration, of knowledge of human life, as a trained lecturer on religion, or whether he has not a high and noble aim, a direct object in view, to which he should bend himself with all his strength.

"A faithful dispenser of the Word of God" will not have in view so much the immediate effect as the final outcome and results in the lives of those committed to his care. Some sermons we hear which, at the time, are very attractive and striking, but two days after we could, perhaps, remember but very little that was said, and cannot point to any part of our lives as influenced by it. There are so many means and ways at the disposal of the preacher who is sincere in what he has undertaken; so many different ways in which he can tell those he addresses, "I mean this for you"; "I insist upon this as the truth," by look, manner, and gesture which will come naturally and without effort if the words are those which come up from the heart.

The argument, the exhortation, the appeal, the enquiry, will fall very flat if uttered as if by one who felt it was his duty to say such things, but had no further interest in what he says after the words have passed his lips. Merely reading a paper on a text or passage of Scripture cannot truly be called preaching. It may satisfy some, and, perhaps, the best informed among the congregation, but as a rule they are the few and not the majority. No properly educated person is less interested or moved by thoughts or arguments clothed in plain language, such as the simplest person in the Church could understand; rather he sees the art of the preacher in thus being able to express himself. So that while the subject matter requires and receives considerable care in preparation, division, enlargement and illustration, the mode of delivery is not an unimportant matter, and although a secondary consideration, it should receive some attention. Let every expression be most sincere, and every movement natural; the greater the sincerity the more natural they will become. And talking about sincerity and naturalness, nine-tenths of those who attend Church are acute enough to see and settle in their minds, and that, too, very near the mark, what kind of man he is who is thus addressing them, and accordingly are affected by what he says. It is quite possible for a time to disguise the real state of the case, and to make up for deficiencies in an artificial way, but the truth will out, and sooner or later the true condition of things is seen. The clergy should bear in mind that they preach every Sunday from their pulpits to reasoning people, who, if they listen at all, form conclusions in their minds, who do not, as a rule, lose sight of the man in his office, but are much influenced by the impressions they receive; therefore, it is not enough that the truths or exhortations be merely uttered, and the people considered as bound to receive and obey; there must be more than this or else it will be a sorry affair.

The power of speech when properly used is capable of producing great results; it is a lever which may be employed to very great advantage in the public ministrations of the Church; but it may be abused or rather mis-employed. It may be planted so low as to lift very little indeed, or so high as to be almost out of reach of the operator. To produce its best results it must be used with strict reference to the object in view. The position must be studied and every sentence planted so as to be most effective.

THE REVISED VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A Paper read by the REV. D. SMITH at a Rural Deanery Meeting, held at Cow Bay, on St. Luke's Day, 1881.

(Continued.)

II. I have spoken of the Church as "the Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ." And this leads me to notice an objection sometimes made against the Revised Version on the ground of the constitution of the Revising Company. First, the Convocation of Canterbury appointed an Executive Committee; and, afterwards, Companies were formed for the revision of the Old and New Testaments respectively, the co-operation of various persons eminent for scholarship, some members, and others not members of the Church of England, being invited. Subsequent to this, in accordance with a vote of Convocation, two Companies were formed in the United States to work with the English Companies. Now objection has been made against this course as a virtual abdication by the Church of her office as "the Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ." I am not certain that I did not second or support a resolution protesting against the constitution of the Revising Companies, which was passed at the time at a Rural Deanery Meeting in another part of the Diocese. But I must confess that I have long since changed my mind as to the wisdom and propriety of the step. The advantages of having a Version which all the Reformed Communions are willing to receive as the most faithful representation of the Original Scriptures which the best scholarship of the age can produce are so obvious that it is unnecessary even to mention them. But is it not absurd to expect that such universality of acceptance can be secured unless you make the constitution of the Revising Companies wider than the basis of the Church of England? For myself I must say that I cannot see any danger to Catholic doctrine in such co-operation, even when one of the Revisers is a Unitarian. True it is that in spite of a man's sincere desire to decide a question of reading or

rendering on purely critical grounds, he will often, unconsciously to himself, be influenced and swayed by his theological and ecclesiastical views, opinions, and predilections, and equally true it is that many passages are in the course of translation partly interpreted. But not only did the constitution of the Company preclude any possibility of danger from the influence of opinions opposed to the Catholic faith; but an additional safeguard was provided in the fifth of the "Principles and Rules,"—"to make or retain no change in the text in the second final Revision, except two-thirds of those present approved of the same." In a company, therefore, composed of twenty Churchmen, four orthodox Nonconformists, and one Unitarian, it is incredible that any change which weakened the doctrinal application of any passage, or the removal of any passage which had such doctrinal application, was made, which did not seem to be required by accurate scholarship and the rules of sound criticism.

But the objection remains that the Church has virtually abdicated her position as "the Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ;" and that a Version thus made has no claim on the acceptance of Churchmen. But such an objection seems to me to betray some confusion of thought. It is not the constitution of the Revising Company, but the Synodical action of the Church that can give valid authority to any Version of the Scriptures. So far the Revised New Testament is the work of the Revisers and the Committee of Convocation, and what authority it possesses arises wholly from their reputation for ability and scholarship. It may or may not be adopted and formally authorized by Convocation. But if adopted it will carry with it the same authority as if all the Revisers had been Princes of the Church. For my own part, I would rather entrust the maintenance and assertion of the rights and prerogatives of the Church to the Houses of Convocation than to many of their critics.

II. We come now to the most important part of our subject—the way in which the Revision has been carried out, the changes, omissions, and additions which have been made. And here I feel most oppressed by the weight of the task which I somewhat inconsiderately assumed. In view of the greatness of the abilities and attainments of the Revisers, and the materials and authorities at their disposal, one is almost afraid to venture a single word of criticism—it seems an act of audacious temerity to do so. But all of us have some opinion in regard to the work generally, as well as to particular passages; and, while conscious of the feebleness of our powers and the paucity of our attainments, and rendering to the Revisers all the homage that is meet, we should not shrink from the modest expression of our opinion which we have formed by faithful use of the slender means at our disposal, especially if the expression of it seems calculated to lead to useful and profitable discussion, the removal of difficulties, and the bringing out of the truth.

You will permit me to remind you, for the sake of clearness, that the alterations which have been made are of two classes; some are due to alterations in the Greek text of the New Testament, others are altered renderings of the text commonly received.

1. The former class, while much less numerous, includes the most important, and is attended by greater difficulty and labour.

The real text of the New Testament not being found in its integrity in any one Manuscript, it can be ascertained, sometimes with certainty, at other times approximately, only by a careful comparison of the different Manuscripts and Versions, together with the quotations found in the writings of the early Fathers. The relative weight of these authorities is in the order indicated. Where the principal MSS. are generally agreed, there we probably have the true text. But not certainly. For some of the Versions, viz., the Peschito or Old Syriac, the Curetonian Syriac of the Gospels, and the Old Latin (not the Vulgate), were made two centuries before the most ancient Greek MS. that is known. (Perhaps I should add that no existing MS. of any Version is of the same age as the Version itself.) Their authority, therefore, especially if the MSS. in which they are found are in agreement, is often sufficient to establish a reading which has not the balance of Greek Manuscript authority in its favour. The quotations found in the Fathers, while insufficient to establish any reading of themselves, are important as shewing what was contained in some of the MSS. of their own age, and in cases where the other authorities are pretty evenly balanced will avail to turn the scale. There are, again, cases in