

The Pastor and People.

Church of England—High Church.

Then take the High-Church party, who in spirit of holy orders claim infidelity. With Greek and Roman strings of preface, and spin all Nonconformists from their side. With ecclesiastical worship-book for guide. They flout the dress, march, and turn, and bow, Do fool the cross and candle; and would now into the stream of Pagan error glide. To these we say, the Church is not composed Of torpid bishops and presumptuous priests; The Scriptures little care how men are posed. Admit no safe-days, claim no fasts or feasts. The Christian Church will keep the Gospel plain, Not bid in ritual obsolete and vain.

Consistency in Religion.

Woe an inhabitant of some other world, who was well acquainted with our Bible and our religion, to travel through this county, and take a minute survey of the manners, customs, character, and conduct of its inhabitants, it might be difficult for him to determine, at the end of his tour, whether the religion of the Bible was professed here or not. He would see some things which might lead him to think that it was professed, for as he travelled from place to place he would see Bibles lying on the shelves, and would occasionally lodge with a family in which was offered up the morning and evening sacrifices of prayer. He would observe that one day in seven was not spent any other way than like the rest, and that in some places it was observed with a tolerable degree of conformity to the law of the Sabbath. He would find a goodly number of houses for public worship and a class of professed preachers of the Gospel. He would witness rites resembling the ordinances of the Gospel, and might occasionally meet with a fellow-traveller who was disposed to confer with him on the subject of religion. These things, and perhaps others, he would set down as indications that we were a Christian people—that we professed to receive the Bible as true and to conform our lives to its precepts.

But then this evidence, far from conclusive in itself, would be greatly weakened, if not destroyed, by much that was of an opposite character. For, though our proposed visitor would see Bibles in our houses, he would be satisfied that many of them were kept up for ornament than use, as they had the appearance of being but little read. And, though one day in seven was not spent in the same manner as other days, yet in most places he would see it spent so differently from the design of the Sabbath that he would be in doubt whether it was considered as a holy day or a holiday, as a season of sacred rest or a season of amusement. And, though he would hear much that purported to be a preached Gospel, he would find it in many instances so unlike the Gospel of Christ that he would conclude it must have been learned from some source aside from the volume of inspiration. And, though he would see rites administered resembling the ordinances instituted by Christ, he would find the subjects of these rites living so much as others lived that he could hardly determine whether anything was intended by them or not.

Nor would this be all the evidence presented to him that the Bible was little if at all regarded among us. He would see many things allowed and practiced which this holy book forbids, and many other neglected which it solemnly enjoins. He would know the deeply interesting nature and paramount importance of the religion of the Bible; and yet he would find this religion in most cases exciting but little attention, taking no deep hold of the affections, and exerting a scarcely perceptible influence on the life. Instead of everything being made subservient to it, as he might suppose it would be, on opposition it was cordially received, he would find it cast into the background, and almost everything attended to sooner and more than this.

On the whole, it is concluded that such a visitor would hardly know what to think of us. He would not find us just what he might expect on supposition we received the Bible; nor just what he might expect on supposition we rejected it. He would have much occasion to reproach us with inconsistency; and, were he, on departing, to give us any advice, it might be precisely that of the prophet to the children of Israel: "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." If the Bible be true, receive it; and be consistent; or, if it be false, reject it and be consistent. At least, be consistent somewhere. Come to some fixed conclusion in regard to this momentous subject, and act accordingly.

And would not this be good advice? Would it not be such as it became one rational being to give to another?

We have in our hands a book purporting to have come from the God who made us and to contain His words. And, certain it contains solemn words, solemn messages, whether they are to be relied on or not. Now there are but two suppositions we can make in regard to these messages. They are either true or false. They are to be either received or rejected. And, to whatever conclusion we come in regard to them, the adoption of it involves a great deal. If we will reject the Bible and be consistent, we have a hard and dreadful task to perform; for, in coming to this conclusion, we must go not only in opposition to the influence of education and custom, but in face of the earliest evidence and light. We have as much reason to believe the facts stated in the Bible as we have to believe anything on the evidence of testimony. The most of us never saw the city of London, and yet we do not doubt that there is such a city. But the evidence of the truth of the Bible is the same in kind and not less in degree than that on which we believe that there is beyond the wide Atlantic such a city as London. Yet all this evidence we must put out of sight and reject as worthless if we would come to the conclusion that the Bible is not true. And when we have sought our way against light and evidence thus far, and the conclusion is adopted, our difficulties are but just begun. For, having de-

ned the truth of the Bible and cast off its authority, we must go on with the denial and carry it through. We must wage everlasting war with the Bible and with the religion it inculcates. We must do all we can that every Bible on earth may be destroyed, and the Sabbath abolished, and every Christian temple thrown down, and every minister silenced, and every church dissolved. We must exert ourselves to the utmost that the ordinances of the Gospel may be done away, that the voice of prayer may be hushed, and that no trace or vestige of the false and exploded religion may remain. Now this, it will be seen, is dreadful work, and the miserable beings who will reject religion and be consistent have a hard and dreadful task to perform.

Suppose, then, that we shrink from this conclusion and adopt the other. Suppose we receive the Bible as true and the religion it inculcates as a reality. But this, also, be it remembered, involves very much. To be consistent in such a conclusion and carry it through is no trifling matter. It is something more than merely to think pretty well of the Bible and to entertain an idea of attending to it occasionally and at some future day something more than a general opinion of its correctness—an opinion floating about in the head, which has little or no influence on the heart and practice; something more than a desire to keep up the appearance of religion and to have about as much of it as will conduce to one's supposed respectability and interest. Yes, to believe the Bible and to carry the belief of it consistently through is something more than such solemn tidings as this.

When we have settled the point that the religion of the Bible is a reality, if we will not with any face of consistency, we must give it our immediate and undivided attention. Truths such as those disclosed in the Bible, if indeed they are truths, must not be put off. They present a concern to every mind which apprehends them of all others the greatest and the most pressing urgency. These momentous truths must be permitted to sink down into the heart and take a deep and everlasting hold of the affections. And not only so, they must regulate the whole future life. If we will receive the Bible and be consistent, we must consent to live no longer unto ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again. We must set the religion of Jesus above everything else, and regard every other concern of life as secondary and subservient to this. If we admit the Bible to be a reality, I see not how we can stop an inch short of all that has here been stated.

I know that many do pretend to admit the Bible and yet stop far short of this. Some would have the credit of admitting it in the gross, while they reject it piecemeal. They would have the credit of admitting it, while they are bent upon explaining its solemn truths away. But, if persons do not like the truths of the Bible and are resolved not to receive them, it would certainly be more consistent to reject the whole openly; for what good can the mere covers of the Bible do us when its contents are all torn out? What good can the words and letters of the Bible do us when its solemn meaning is all discarded?

And some there are who profess to receive the Bible as true and yet live as though there was not a word of truth in it. They profess to believe that there is a God, a Saviour, a day of judgment, a Heaven and a Hell, and yet live as though all these were the merest fictions. But what gross inconsistency, what moral insanity is this? "If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." If the Bible be true and its solemn announcements are to be depended on as realities, then let us give them our immediate attention. Let us rouse up to a consideration of them all the powers and affections of our souls. We admit consistency in everything else. Let us show that we have a religion and that we mean to be consistent in it. If this religion is a reality, it certainly is a momentous reality. If it is anything, it is everything, and should be so regarded and treated by mortals.—E. Pond, in N. Y. Independent.

Do Thy Minister No Harm.

There are many ways in which a minister may receive harm from his people. He may be injured by their slattery. Ministers have become so puffed-up by praise, especially young men, that they begin to think they were lords over God's heritage, and rendered themselves ridiculous. Where this is the case the man's usefulness is soon destroyed for the time being, while in the end it may turn to his future usefulness, when God has humbled him.

But, on the other hand, he may be injured by the want of a proper appreciation of his ministerial abilities, by speaking lightly of his sermons and pastoral labours; and this is the side on which most of the errors are made in this criticising age. If a minister is not very original and very eloquent he is no preacher at all. Some heads of families destroy all the effects of the sermon by their wicked criticisms in the presence of their children. This is one reason why there is so much less reverence for the ministerial character by the rising generation than there was fifty years ago. What can we expect where parents speak lightly of a minister's labours? Religion will always be respected by the young in proportion to the respect they have for those who propagate it. Thousands of children in this country have been ruined for time and eternity by the unguarded tongues of parents. It is a duty to speak well of our minister both at home and abroad, defending his character whenever assailed by any one in our presence. If we cannot do this let us be silent in such a way as to show no sympathy with those who would detract from his usefulness, avoid the nodding and shrugging of shoulders.

Another way in which we may do him great harm is to keep him so poor that he cannot buy books and periodicals. To expect a man to keep up with the age, and be a successful preacher without books, is like ordering the Jews to make bricks without straw. Many of our preachers are not able to buy two good books in a year, and yet they are expected to be sensation-preachers. This is an evil of no small magnitude, now when books are so cheap. It does him positive harm.—Fidelity (Presbyterian) and Liberty.

Wanting Rest.

"How I long to be at rest," wrote an aged Christian lady to a Scottish relative. "I'm weary, faint, and worn; life's a dreary burden; all my early friends have left me; I'm standing almost on the threshold of eternity; and, if it were not for the fear I might at last prove a castaway, my prayer would be, O Father, bid me rest!"

The letter was duly received, and read to Dr. Guthrie, who was on a visit to the family at that time. The next morning he gave them the following lines, which he said the letter had suggested to his mind during the night. They were sent to America to the old lady, and highly prized by her during her life. The prayer was soon afterward answered, and her weary body is resting, "life's duty done," in the Presbyterian church-yard of Woodcock, Md.; and Dr. Guthrie, with the tears of a nation following him, hath entered the golden portals and though strangers on earth, they have now met in their eternal home, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest!"

—LINES BY DR. GUTHRIE.

I'm kneeling at the threshold, weary, faint and sore,  
Waiting for the dawning, for the opening of the door,  
Waiting till the Master shall bid me rise and come  
To the glory of His presence, to the gladness of his home.

A weary path I've travelled, 'mid darkness, storm and strife,  
Bearing many a burden, struggling for my life;  
But now the morn is breaking, my toll will soon be o'er—  
I'm kneeling at the threshold, my hand is on the door.

Not think I hear the voices of the blessed as they stand,  
Lingering in the smushings of that far-off, sinless land!  
Oh! would that I wore with them, amidst the shining throng,  
Mingling in their worship, joining in their song!

The friends that started with me have entered long ago—  
One by one they left me, straggling with the foe  
Their pilgrimage was shorter, their triumph sooner won;  
How lovingly they'll bid me when all my toil is done!

With them the blessed angels that know no grief,  
Nor sin—  
I seek them by the portals, prepared to let me in!  
O Lord, I wait thy pleasure. Thy time and way are best—  
But I'm wearied, worn, and weary. O Father, bid me rest!

—Presbyterian.

Three Score and Ten.

That age, when it is reached with a comfortable exemption from earth's trials, is about as happy as any other. When the old frame is literally rags from infirmities, and the mind is clear, and faith strong, and temporal wants supplied, and family ties pleasant, and the retrospect of life peaceful, and no hopeless grief for the dead or the living of kindred is upon the soul, and there be peace with God and man, there is a condition of things that leaves no room to envy the youth or the middle-aged, or the most prosperous of earth in mid-career of success and honor. It is a period full of ripe experiences, usually also of calm passions, of enlarged charity, or deep humility, and of growing heavenly-mindedness, the reflex of a nearer approach to the better land. And then death generally comes easier to the aged than to others, as ripe fruit is readily plucked, and as the worn-out labourer soon falls asleep when the day's toil is over. Our Lord says the old cloth must be put with the old garment, as matching best together, and so the old age of the Christian joins in happily with the older eternity God Himself gives the promise: "With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation," as a reward and favor, and so it is. Happy are they who have reached a serene, peaceful, religious three score and ten. Let them render thanks to the God of all grace, who has brought them through the wilderness to that Nobo on its border; let them stand there and look awhile on the goodly land beyond, and then yield up the soul into the hands of a most merciful God and Saviour, and the body to His keeping for the Resurrection of the Just.—Rev. Wm. H. Lewis, D.D., in the Churchman.

The Plagues of Egypt.

It is impossible as we read the description of the Plagues not to feel how much of force is added to it by a knowledge of the peculiar customs and character of the country in which they occurred. It is not an ordinary river that is turned into blood; it is the sacred, beneficent, solitary Nile, the very life of the state and of the people, in its streams and canals and tanks, and vessels of wood and vessels of stone, then, as now, used for the filtration of the delicious water, from the sediment of the river-bed. It is not an ordinary man that is struck by the mass of putrefying vermin lying in heaps by the houses, the villages and the fields, or multiplying out of the dust of the desert sands on each side of the Nile valley. It is the cleanliest of all the ancient nations, clothed in white linen, accumulating, in their fastidious delicacy and ceremonial purity, the habits of modern and northern Europe. It is not the ordinary cattle that died in the field, or ordinary reptiles that were overcome by the rod of Aaron. It is the sacred goat of Mendes, the bull of Apis, the crocodile of Omboi, the carp of Latopolis. It is not an ordinary land of which the flax and barley, and every green thing in the trees, and every herb of the field, was smitten by the two great calamities of storm and locust. It is the garden of the ancient eastern world—the long line of green meadow and corn-field, and groves of palm and eucalypt and fig tree from the Cataracts to the Delta, doubly refreshing from the deserts which it intersects, doubly marvellous from the river whence it springs. If these things were cald titles anywhere they were truly "signs and wonders"—speaking signs and "ocular words"—in such a land as "the land of Ham."—Stanley.

Oratory in the Pulpit.

The Christian Advocate makes an appeal for the cultivation of oratory and eloquence in the pulpit, and says:—

"Eloquence is the medium of the pulpit. Behind this provision of nature the preaching of the Gospel entrenches itself. We find here an authority in reason which certifies the authority of inspiration. So long as preaching is eloquent the world must listen—nay, it will listen. To the magical word, look, gesture, action, it cannot be indifferent while the sense of the word remains. To the same law, then, as any other profession, the vocation of preaching stands or falls. The sacred profession cannot rest in the fact of a Divine appointment for its success, and disregard the natural laws to which, in common with all other vocations, it is answerable. Here lurks a fallacy which in the history of the church is a most baleful one—depending upon its Divine authorization to compel men to it, and neglecting the work which is necessary to win them. The preacher stands with folded arms, expects the people to hear him while he speaks because he is ordained of God, without making the exertions which would enable him so to speak that they could not get away from his words. It is very easy for the pulpit to content itself with retailing in a stupid manner dull and stale platitudes, and allow the eager, restless masses to drift away from it, and then soothe itself with the plea of a rejected gospel. But to make itself respected for its adaptation to human life, for the eloquence with which it seizes and presents to men the most stupendous truths which they can contemplate is not so easy. It requires much study, and much study is a weariness to the flesh, and Christian ministers, believing with Solomon, too often accept his advice and prefer to spare the flesh. The almost superhuman efforts of men in secular life are enough to put preachers to the blush. Literary men, musicians, dramatists, artists, to say nothing of ordinary business men, are, as a rule, indefatigable workers—working persistently in the line of their art to bring themselves to the highest perfection in it, and to compel the attention of others. Shall the pulpit complain that the press is superseding it, when the press puts itself abreast with the times, and gives to the people what they want to read, while the pulpit lags behind and fails to give the people what they want to hear, or that which in the hearing appeals not to their deepest nature? . . . One of our first American scientists acknowledged to the writer that he had made a great mistake in neglecting oratory. He saw and regretted his error. With the fullest information, he could not speak to an audience, and, consequently, was losing a large source of profit and a great means of usefulness. No amount of reading can ever destroy the desire for the inspiration of the living orator. The pulpit more than any other calling, possesses the domain of eloquence; and if superseded in the reverence, love, and confidence of the people, it must be because of the recreancy of those who occupy it."

A Triumph of Oratory.

A writer in the Literary World recalls a scene which he witnessed at Edinburgh at a meeting of Dr. Guthrie's ragged schools. The Duke of Argyll was in the chair, and a brilliant audience was present. To underscore the allusion it must be remembered that a venerated clergyman named Guthrie suffered as a Covenanter in 1661. At the close of the meeting Dr. Guthrie came to the front of the platform to move a vote of thanks to the chairman. Surveying the audience for a minute or two without saying a word, until expectancy was awakened the orator turned to the Duke and with great deliberation said, "It is not the first time, your Grace, that an Argyll and a Guthrie have met in the same place to further a good work, in this city of Edinburgh." The effect of the sentence was wonderful. It went like a shock of electricity through that vast assembly. The Grassmarket and the two martyrs' had risen on the view of every one there. The people, as of one man, started to their feet; and the Duke, rising from his chair, stepped forward and gave his hand to Guthrie. There the two men stood face to face, and hand in hand, while the audience burst again and again into joyful acclamations, the tears streaming down the faces of stalwart men. It was a scene not soon to be forgotten by those who were present; and it seemed to the writer as in all probability the greatest feat of oratory that Guthrie ever achieved.

Fine Music not Worship.

At first thought this may seem to be a very needless statement. But it is not. It is no mere man of straw to be knocked down by a paragraph. There are many people who make no distinction between musical employment and religious feeling, who seem to accept the awakening of their musical sensibilities as the working of a genuine religious experience. A writer in a secular paper, speaking recently of different concerts, made use of the following language:—"Moreover, Oratorio is religiously welcome to our Sunday evenings, for it is the grandest form of sacred music, often the noblest utterance of Holy Writ. Who can preach more eloquently than Handel and Haydn? What sermon is so good as a chorus of the Messiah?" This is, no doubt, the reflection of a very general public opinion, but the position is a false one, and harmful in its tendency. Who ever heard an audience, or any portion of an audience, on leaving a concert room where the Messiah had been performed, conversing about the saviour as if their minds had been specially turned to Him or to His work, by the performance they had heard? Who ever heard of a conversion resulting from the very finest possible rendering of any song or chorus in that wonderful Oratorio? No; the effect is musical, and that alone, and we cannot but feel that anything which confirms the opposite impression must be exceedingly injurious. The idea that the finest music without the spirit of worship, is either acceptable to God or beneficial to the congregation, is a delusion and a snare.—N. Y. Musical Gazette.

Business versus Prayer.

The life of a genuine Christian should be a prayerful life. The spirit of prayer should permeate his thoughts, and so assimilate all his actions as that, by their displayed affection and devotion, they might show him to be according to his profession. The Christian heart is full of life. Like the artery and heart in the body, it goes on beating with measured beats, and forces impulsive by its beating time. It beats and sighs. A man both sighs and groans. When blown and trials and distress afflict with urgent need, his sighs are more, and prayers increase. Prayer is the pulse of life. It beats in unison with the heart. There is force of circulation in this united action, and through the Christian system there are forced the spirit of health and prayer.

But in active business men we often see a conflict. The conflict is sometimes tremendous. A Christian life is not always a healthy life. It may be very sickly life. When the business of the world conflicts, it stagnates life. It weakens prayer, and cuts the heart. Business has its own peculiar nature. It naturally engrosses the attention and absorbs the energies from anything that seems to be foreign to itself. Starring business is very attractive. A man soon finds his pleasure in it—both all his recreation and all his amusement. When his bodily health is vigorous, his engagements are ambitious, his emotions move in unison with his actions, and all his actions bespeak emotion. His mind and heart and soul are each absorbed. He may be lost as in useless reverie. He values nothing except for wealth or position, for fame or gorging appetite.

Business often almost kills our prayerful men. It may not do it, but it frequently does do it, and on this account they are not only less watchful, but they sometimes cease their prayers. The living Christian is not so dead. We call him living who has prayerful energy. He lives by prayer, his strength is from it, and God is glorified in his business. In business diligent, he is fervent in spirit and diligent in prayer. His example is like Paul's, who laboured night and day, and prayed night and day—always at his appointed seasons. And then, though in the world, he is above the world; his prayers are earnest, and business with him prospers. But a worldly man cannot pray. It is hard for him to think of prayer. He trusts, and lives on—trusting. If he over thinks no hopes for future leisure. He may seem to pray; and puts off till tomorrow what "could be done to-day. With him it is motto "Business first and prayer afterwards" is greatly cherished. The world for present and heaven for future use is but a snare of Satan for present sin and future hell; for Isaiah says, "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight."

Church Taxation in California.

Rev. C. C. Babb writes from California to the Herald and Presbyterian of Cincinnati:—

The Catholic influence in this State is not so great as I expected to find it. The memory of these missions and of their mode of dealing with the natives, is not fragrant. Besides, in the days of their prosperity and power, the padres were very jealous of foreigners. They would order vessels away that touched at their harbours for supplies. They refused to sell their own necessaries of life. They wanted to keep this beautiful region from the knowledge even of the rest of the world, and herd here a sensual paradise with the natives as their slaves. Of course they had no sympathy with "the American Conquest," as it is called, and the immigrants from the States have not had much for them. As a result of this anti-Roman feeling we have a law here taxing all Church property. When it was passed the Catholics held probably ten times as much in churches, school, etc., as all the Protestant denominations combined. They still hold a great deal of valuable property.

Their Female Seminary of Notre Dame, in this city, occupies two squares very near its business center. I am told that they pay taxes in this country alone nearly a quarter of a million of dollars; and, as the taxes here are from twelve to twenty mills on the dollar, this is a pretty heavy burden, and absorbs a great many of the "Peter's pence" that otherwise would be sent to Rome. The Protestants do not complain of the taxation of their churches, for they see that it is necessary in view of the vast possessions held by the Romanists.

Value of a Single Soul.

It was but a few weeks ago that I visited the tower in London. We were shown through its various rooms, and called to examine the various mementoes of 1530-ages that are there preserved, and as we were passing out the guide asked us if we would not like to visit the jewel-room. We told him yes, and were conducted thither. There we saw the crown with which Queen Victoria—God bless her—(cries, hear, hear!) was crowned. We saw all the royal plate, and, with Yankee inquisitiveness, we asked the person in attendance what the present value of those jewels and that plate was. She replied £4,000,000 sterling, or \$20,000,000 in gold. The next day, in company with two beloved ministers, I visited schools for ragged children, where gathered 1,500 children from the worst dens in London; and as I stood at the desk of the principal, there stood before me a little girl, she may have been thirteen years of age, barefooted, bare headed, uncombed hair, and unflushed face, and, as I looked down into her bright eyes, and thought of the jewels in Queen Victoria's crown, I said to myself, that little girl is the possession of more value than all the crown jewels of England; for I saw in those eyes a gleam that told me she had faith in Jesus, and that she had faith when all else has passed away from earth.—Geo. H. Stewart, at the Meeting of the Evangelical Alliance.