

WHEAT AND CHAFF.

AN OPEN LETTER.

Dear Editor: How wud it do fur all the preachers in the provinces to rite an akount every month of what their churches are adoin'. I think it wud be a good thing, and the paper wud be a powerful site more interestin to those of us who aint on the ground to hear just what is goin' on.

Yours without a struggle,

BILDAD.

In spite of the splendid crops that this year ha' ve blessed our land and their prophecy for better times, there will be found, not far from every one of us, men who will declare that the crops twenty years ago were like this year's all the time; and if those good days would return they would give more money to the church than old Squire Silver-dollar. But, alas! the times are so hard, crops bad, that they can't do any better this year than they did when the crops, by universal consent, were a dead failure. 'Tis ever thus.

"Although the devil is the father of lies he seems, like other great inventors, to have lost much of his reputation by the continual improvements that have been made upon him."

Our thoughts may trouble us, but sometimes the thoughts of others trouble us a great deal more.

In many congregations there are a few people who delight "to puzzle the parson" with hard but unprofitable questions. If he happens to know a little more than the average member of his flock there are always one or two who can be heard saying: "Our preacher's a smart man, one uv these kollige chaps who knows purty migh everything, but he can't tell us no more about Melchisedick than could Bruther Lumberjint, who never seed a kollige." And to these minds this fact serves as a brake which is occasionally put on "the preacher with all his larnin', just to keep him from gottin' too fast." Of course, after a man has been to college he must be prepared to answer every question that might possibly arise, and if he can't locate on the map of North America the place where Columbus was born "he don't know much more than the rest uv us, and we never got no furdur than the third royal reader."

Imagine a church member spending two dollars at a circus and giving one dollar a year to the church, singing, "Take my all and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee."

There is something wrong with the man who goes wild with excitement when talking politics, but sits "like a knot on a log" in the prayer meeting.

THE LABOR QUESTION SOLVED.—Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.

An exchange, speaking of a debate between two gladiators—one a Baptist and the other a Disciple—remarks that these performances furnish food for gossips and are a good monkey show. The gentleman who so wisely makes this observation should be invited to preside over the show for the very best of reasons, "that a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."

"A liar begins with making a falsehood appear like truth, and ends with making truth itself appear like falsehood."

Good words like rain do the most good where most needed.

We can return the borrowed money of the wise but not their thoughts; they become the property of the world, and so long as they are used with

the superscription of Cæsar on their face, Cæsar is well pleased; but as soon as the superscription is defaced or removed Cæsar howlth furiously.

It does not follow that because an editor has an easy chair that he has an easy time.

Our creditor may be longsuffering, but is hard for us to believe it.

"Like to the falling of a star,
Or as the flight of angles are;
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
Or silver drops of morning dew;
Or like a wind that chafes the floods,
Or bubbles which on water stood;
Even such is man whose borrow'd light
Is straight called in and paid to-night,
The wind blows out, the bubble dies;
The spring entomb'd in autumn lies;
The dew dries up, the star is shot;
The flight is past, and man forgot."

The preachers who discuss politics to the neglect of Bible themes should remember that political speakers never discuss Bible themes to the neglect of politics.

Better is a large hearted preacher and a small salary therewith than a small hearted preacher with a large salary.

It is hard to listen to the jokes at the corner grocery without getting your religion soil'd.

Economy begins at home, but with most people it ends there.

God will not judge you by the length of your prayer.

Where you find a long-winded man, longsuffering is a necessity.

No mistakes are rectified after the bank closes, is as true of the bank of heaven as any other.

GOD AND MAMMON.—Positions of honor in our day cover a multitude of sins. Honor and wealth are clearly allied, commanding the homage of the masses, so devoutly paid as would honor the sanctuary. It is only a repetition of the golden calf in the wilderness. As has been said, "the Israelites worshipped the golden calf and we worship the gold of the calf." What will not men do for honor, wealth or fame? And when either or all are secured man is but a step from omnipotence in this world. He commands attention, reverence, worship. Among all the thousands who worship mammon no skepticism is found. Anything like the higher criticism is yet unborn, and every doubt dies while it is nourished in the brain. Christ has millions; so has mammon. Alas! alas! that the spirit of the latter gains too often the stronger hold. Men can be found who, under the influence of its power, speak in flowing tongues of eloquence, and will fight it may be for a party devoted to mammon. Men also talk for Christ, but how many have stammering tongues, talk with a mental reservation, an apology, a parenthesis, and as for fighting for our religion, why that was done in the dark days of the crusades. Truly the god of this world hath blinded the mind of believer and unbeliever alike, and our prayer should be, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." May we see men not as lords of creation, not as men in the mire, but as worshippers of Christ; men with precious souls that Christ died to save. Let us look at and seek for, not the drapery, but the soul. It is this that God sees and seeks.

Instead of hitting the devil below the belt, too many preachers are satisfied with patting him on the back.

The hardest part of doing wrong comes after we do it.

If a substitute does your work a substitute will get your reward.

Faith is not ashamed to be seen on its knees.

The test of wisdom is not in giving advice but in carrying it out.

It is easier to go down hill than up. Church members who have a weakness for worldly amusements should remember this.

A hungry man has no trouble in paying for his dinner in advance. After dinner he may walk out and forget it. Newspaper subscribers should remember this.

BILDAD.

RUTS.

There are thousands of these in the path of every preacher. Were they as easy to get out of as to get in, nothing need be said about them. But this is just where the trouble begins and sometimes never ends. Few preachers during their allotted stay of twenty-five thousand five hundred and fifty days on this mundane sphere escape these ruts, and if they do it is for the same reason they escape death—because they cannot help it. They never worry about getting in, their attentions are wholly absorbed on the problem of getting out, and depend upon it, no one can lift himself out by his boot straps. An ounce of getting out is worth a ton of getting in. But if the preacher is especially anxious to be extricated and will exert himself in proportion to his anxiety, freedom is possible; but to forget the long, weary, toilsome way that lead to it is wholly impossible. Ruts! What do you mean? For one thing I mean the same weary round of platitudinous services without the slightest interspersions of variety, Lord's day after Lord's day, a doleing out of spiritual food in stereotyped words and phrases, a prayer substantially the same on all occasions regardless of circumstances, reading favorite to the neglect of appropriate scriptures, singing a few hymns ill-selected as the one you gave out at the close of your farewell sermon to your former congregation and which they sung so heartily, "Believing we rejoice to see the curse removed," familiarizing your audience by tiresome repetition with your little stock of ideas so that at all times they may precede you and know what is coming next—in fact to do almost everything as if such a thing as variety did not exist. These are a few of the ruts that preachers fall into, and all because it is a little more difficult to find a new path occasionally than to walk in the old one. In other words, ruts widely advertise the preacher as one who takes things easy, and as a result the preacher in influence is as a man who lives not among men but has his being under ground.

The effect is not more unsalutary upon the preaching than upon the congregation. They are wearied beyond expression and cry dolefully, Do take us over another road though it be less smooth; so long has it been since we were shaken up that blood seems as thick as bone; or take us a little further, or not quite so far—anything for a change. Spirits depressed, ambition dead, everybody discouraged, spirituality so low that the church anytime is likely to be stranded, are the legitimate products of ruts.

How shall they be avoided? How can we get out? The best way to get out is not to get in. To avoid, be diligent, aggressive, alive to the demands of the hour and the needs of your people. A preacher will whip his horse out of the ruts, but who will whip the preacher? Should anyone try he may get unruly and tear a wheel off and then you are in a predicament. But by his own desire and judicious management of the congregation by not bearing too heavily he may get once more on level ground. Pull hard, and if you do not get out there will at least be variety in pulling.

E. B. B.