

SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS PRESS.

SIR,—The press has become a rival to the pulpit. There seems to be a great falling off in pulpit force. There is quite an exodus from the pulpit into the editors' sanctum. Many preachers write new heads and tails to their sermons and send them forth as moral essays, contributions to magazines, and this is done by clergymen of every school of theology. In the time of Queen Elizabeth the powerful discourse delivered at Paul's Cross influenced public opinion. And so we find in Wales in the present day, the pulpit is the chief means for conveying information to the people. What the newspaper is to the English, the pulpit is to the Welsh. Public opinion is moulded to a great extent by the pulpit. The tendencies of the age is to substitute newspaper literature for books. Formerly, men got their knowledge from books. They now get it from newspapers. No doubt the press, by its daily and weekly sheet, has aided wonderfully in the spread of general intelligence. In this respect, it has done and is doing an invaluable service. It can present facts as they occur. It can daguerreotype the living features of the age, and it can bring before us with graphic power the world's moving panorama. There can be no broad and thorough discussion of important subjects in the newspapers,—questions in theology, morals, science, &c. Hence no one, who is a mere reader of newspapers can be deeply versed in any department of knowledge. The author of a good book is really the silent preacher, he steals into the study of his reader's imagination and moulds his thoughts. The majority buy papers for amusement and curiosity, and then throw them away, and forget them, even whilst they repeat their thoughts and circulate their truths. A reader of newspapers knows something about everything, but all superficially. This kind of knowledge may answer very well as the small currency of social life, but will never produce a thorough and well grounded information as derived from reading books. The newspaper, next to the pulpit, is the chief mode of directly influencing the people. The great power wielded in the political world by the great dailies is apparent to all, and is largely so in the religious world as well. The potency of the press for good or evil is recognized everywhere, that it is "mightier than the sword," is fully admitted. The press wields an immense power. In 1886 there were sent by mail over the Dominion of Canada, 76,844,064 copies of newspapers. Napoleon the First said that he would rather have three armies opposed to him than three powerful editors. In France, a ready newspaper and acute criticism are the best means for raising a man in society, and making him a political personage. Thackeray in one of his novels speaking of the power of newspapers says, "There she is, she never sleeps; she has now at this moment ambassadors in kings' palaces." Sir Thomas Brown says, "Scholars are men of peace, they bear no arms, but their tongues are sharper than Actius' razor; their pens carry further, and give a louder report than thunder. I had rather stand in the shock of a basilisk, than in the fury of a merciless pen. A man may be a good clergyman without being a Jeremy Taylor or Chrysostom, so a man may be a good newspaper editor without brilliant intellectual parts. Some think a newspaper article can be thrown off in a scrap of leisure time. They look upon it as a mere evanescent work and not worth much carefulness. Hasty writing is a prolific cause of controversy. An immature article is published, and then some censor, with equal haste, rushes to the defense, and a controversy is precipitated that does no good. A pious old lady once said to me, "I read recently a piece that I liked very much, but a week or two after, it was torn to pieces by another writer, and I was left bewildered." Of course, debate is sometimes necessary. Certainly a man often prints through haste what he would like to take back. The great Dr. Arnold founded and supported for a time a newspaper of his own, conducted in the interest of social reform. It is a fact that in a vast number of families, the books are on the shelves, and the newspaper is the reading matter of the household. That which is readable is not always useful. There are a great many morbid appetites, even in Christian homes. People do not want to be edified, but only to be amused. They will read a story if it is spicy, but will not read an essay no matter how instructive. It is a question whether many ministers really appreciate the value that the religious press may be made to them in their work. The clergyman who sees that every family in his congregation is supplied with a religious paper has done up a large part of his pastoral work and visiting and oversight in that one matter. His families will be visited fifty-two times a year, making them more intelligent in regard to the Church's life, work and benevolence, its missionary operations, and its living questions. It comes with words of advice and admonition and instruction. It has a message for every member of the family, and has as its object the making people more desirous of seeking after Christ and more steadfast in His Church. There are ministers

who do not perhaps, reflect upon the value of a religious paper in the homes of their people. It supplants worldly, and often criminal and scandalous reading. It enforces the truth and persuasions of the pulpit. The religious newspaper is a constant teacher of righteousness in the home, and yet there are homes—homes of professed Christians, in which a religious paper cannot be found.

October 24th.

PHILIP TOCQUE.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

25TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. NOV. 18TH, 1888

Saul's Despair.

Passage to be read.—1 Samuel xxviii. 3-20.

Saul's life is now drawing to a close. It is going out in sadness and despair. All hope for him is gone. He has been growing worse and worse for years, and is now utterly wretched and miserable. His great adviser Samuel is dead. David has long since been driven from him as an outlaw, and he has few real friends left.

I. *The Crisis*.—And now the Philistines, Israel's old enemies, have come again. They have gathered a large army and have penetrated into the very heart of the country. They are encamped at Shunem, in the modern province of Galilee. Saul must fight with them, and so he gathers his troops together on Mount Gilboa a few miles to the east. From the heights he can see across the plains. The Philistine host is in view, and Saul trembles! Oh why does this soldier, the man of many battles, the anointed of the Lord, fear? Because God has forsaken him. He knows it. He feels this to be the crisis of his life, and he is overwhelmed with dread.

II. *The Coming Fate*.—And well he might be! For he would now look over the dark past. He would remember how God had favoured him, how men had honoured him, how successful he once had been. And he would feel that by his wickedness, of which he had now repented, he had lost all this. The desolate present would rise up before him. He would see himself alone, without Priest or Prophet to advise or comfort. And the dread future! In his fear and misery he seeks to enquire of God. But God has forsaken him, and answers not.

III. *The Visit to En-dor*.—And now Saul turns to one of those impostors who pretended to be able to foretell the future, and to call up spirits from the other world. All such persons were specially condemned by the Jewish law (see Deut. xvii. 10 12, Lev. xx. 27), and Saul had himself put them away from his kingdom (v. 3). But one remains still at En-dor, about seven miles away, and thither Saul goes that he may consult her. Saul disguised (v. 8.), but the witch, knowing the king's enmity to those of her class, is afraid lest the stranger may betray her. Saul swears that no harm shall come to her, and desires that she will call up Samuel. Samuel accordingly appears, at which the woman cries out, and becomes aware that it is Saul who is with her (v. 12). Being reassured by Saul, she describes to him the person who had appeared, from which Saul knows that it was Samuel.

IV. *Samuel's Message*.—Then Samuel addresses Saul. "Why," he says, "hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" Saul replies, that it was because God had departed from him, and would not answer when he called upon him. Then Samuel delivers a fearful message. The kingdom had been taken from Saul and given to David because of Saul's disobedience (vs. 17, 18). Moreover God would deliver Israel into the hands of the Philistines, and very soon Saul and his son would be numbered amongst the dead. (v. 19).

In vain then where all the wretched man's efforts to obtain comfort or hope.

NEVER HEARD OF "DAVY CROCKETT'S COON"?

That's queer! Well, it was like this: Col. Crockett was noted for his skill as a marksman. One day he levelled his gun at a racoon in a tree, when the animal, knowing the Colonel's prowess, cried out, "Hello, there! Are you Davy Crockett? If you are, I'll just come down, for I know I'm a gone coon." Just take a dose of Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets, and see how quickly your biliousness and indigestion will emulate the example of "Davy Crockett's coon," and "climb down." They are specifics for all derangements of the liver, stomach and bowels.

—The Church Army occupied their new hall, the old theatre on Rivard street, near Croghan, on Monday evening. Addresses were made by the rector of Christ Church, by the Rev. R. W. Clark and the editor of the MICHIGAN CHURCHMAN. There was a very large attendance. Capt. Eccleston has done a noble work, and has made many converts.

THANKSGIVING HYMN.

I thank Thee, Father, for a year
Of blessings undeserved by me;
A year with love and goodness crowned,
And rich with precious gifts from Thee.

For every season flying fast,
That showered its blessings at my feet;
For days of sun, and days of rain,
And all that made the year complete.

Thanks for the lessons it has taught,
So slowly learned by heart bereft;
Thanks for the higher, holier hopes,
And the sweet memories it has left.

Thanks for the bitterness and pain
Whose hidden good I could not see;
Thanks for the friendships that have made
This life so beautiful to me.

For every token of Thy love
That failed me not, by night or day;
For sweeter thoughts of Heaven and Thee,
For clearer knowledge of Thy way.

For ills averted, dangers passed
Unthanked, because unconsciously;
For answered prayers, for needs supplied,
And all Thy care and thought of me.

For timely smoothings of my way,
My way of pain, that but for Thee,—
But for Thy sympathy and aid,—
Had been too dark—too hard for me.

Thanks that within Thy father-heart
Place of a child beloved is mine;
Thanks that Thy reconciled face
On me forevermore doth shine.

Thanks that of my appointed years
One less of earth to me is given;
Thanks that, through Thee, to-day, I stand
One year the nearer home and Heaven.

When I remember all the way
By which Thy Hand hath led me on;
When I recall Thy hourly care,
And count Thy mercies, one by one.

I marvel at Thy wondrous love,
I wonder what Thine eye can see
In heart like mine, to make Thee think
So kindly, tenderly of me.

Nothing but love dost Thou conceive,
Nothing but blessings dost Thou give;
Nothing but mercies I behold,
Nothing but goodness I receive.

For all my years, bright with Thy love,
Thanks, only thanks, my lips can speak;
Thanks overflow my heart, for which
All mortal words are cold and weak.

Thou knowest, Father! Thou canst take
These words that come so stammering,
And make of them a song of praise
Worthy of all Thy gifts, and Thee.

F. H. MARR.

THE INVALID CHILD.

Once I knew a workingman—a potter by trade—who had one small invalid child at home. He wrought at his trade with exemplary fidelity, being always in the shop with the opening of day. He managed, however, to bear each evening to the bedside of the "wee lad," as he called him, a flower or a bit of ribbon, a fragment of crimson glass—indeed, anything that would lie out on the white counterpane and give a colour in the room. He was a quiet, unsentimental Scotchman, but never went he home at nightfall without some toy or trinket, showing that he had remembered the wee face that lit up so when he came in.

I presume he never said to a living soul that he loved that sick boy so much; still he went on patiently loving him. And by and by he moved that whole shop into positively real but unconscious fellowship with him. The workmen made curious little jars and tea cups upon their wheels, and painted diminutive pictures down their sides before

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