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The Theologian and the People.

"The heart makes the theologian," according to an old axiom. Heart has very little to do with much of the investigation and speculation that pass for contributions to theological science; but heart has everything to do with the permanence of doctrines and the abiding influence of truth upon mankind. A man of cold, unsympathetic nature but keen intellect may discover new aspects of truth which contain the germ of a great popular movement. But his discoveries pass current only among scholars and the discriminating few until there arises some warm-blooded, simple-hearted man to whom the neglected truth comes as a revelation rather than as a conclusion; who delights in it not so much because it satisfies his logical faculty as because it feeds his hungering soul; who cannot rest quietly in his study and frame finished paragraphs dwelling upon the precious promises of faith, but must go forth and herald them in the ears of the common people, wherever he can find a hearing.

A frequent argument against all novel tendencies in theological thought is that the men most active in promoting changes of belief are not successful in leading large numbers of people to enter the Christian life, or even in developing the devotion and efficiency of those who are already disciples. It is said that higher criticism never converted a sinner, and new theology never comforted a discouraged saint or soothed the pain of a suffering Christian. Adherents of "progressive" views are challenged to produce instances of successful and widely beloved pastors who belong to the so-called liberal element of the denomination. On the other hand, it is observed, nearly all the churches of large membership and steady, healthy spiritual life have pastors who perhaps "learn backward" in their anxiety to keep clear of specious novelties in sacred things. With reference to the young man going forth from the seminaries at the present time it is asked, which of them do the best work in the five years after ordination—those who delved deeply in Ritschl and Wellhausen, or those who spend their time in doing mission work, organizing Sunday-schools, and studying the Bible "devotionally?" In such ways it is sought to divide religious leaders into two sharply separated classes, and to characterize the one as scholastic and therefore inefficient, the other as free from undue intellectual curiosity and therefore successful in winning men.

This appears to be a superficial and inaccurate analysis of the situation. The facts are, with minor exceptions, admitted by both sides, namely: that the larger churches, the churches most successful in gaining numerous accessions, are in the majority of cases best satisfied with pastors whose attitude towards the constantly changing currents of contemporary thought is that of on-lookers rather than of investigators; and also that the theological students of "advanced" views and the theological professors of deep erudition frequently cannot get or hold an audience which ministers of far less intellectual training can guide and sway at their will. But it is not a sufficient explanation of these facts to charge the comparative barrenness of the one ministry to the intellectual principles of the advanced thinker, and the fruitfulness of the other to the conservative attitude which he assumes. The difference lies deeper. It is a matter of temperament, of character. The one man has not been made cold and deprived of his richer spiritual life by his critical studies, and so unfitted for his work as a leader; rather it is because his nature was from the beginning of the speculative, undemonstrative type that he has become so thoroughly absorbed in ideas as to be unacquainted with men. The other man has not necessarily acquired his fervor, his sympathy, his power over the hearts and wills of others, by adhering to some specified view of truth and declining to admit possible alternatives; rather he was originally so endowed with the great gift of spontaneous sympathy, with instinctive faith, with some feature of face or tone of voice that attract the confidence and love of others, that he could not help being a

successful preacher if he wished. In other words, the two men are different not only in their acquired but in their original characteristics; and it is the latter, quite as much as the former, that determine their effectiveness.

That the life which a man lives while he is a student profoundly influences his future career is of course self-evident. Having pointed out the fact, sometimes forgotten, that the most conservative and orthodox teaching and learning will not make an evangelist out of a metaphysician, or a philologist, it is worth while to add that it makes comparatively little difference to a young minister's future success whether he is familiar with advanced thought or not, unless he is acquainted with the most advanced thinker of the ages—Jesus Christ. It makes little difference whether he holds one theory of the atonement or another, whether he is sound on inspiration and the Old Testament, unless theories and formulas are entirely subordinate in his mind to the great abiding truths of sin and redemption and eternal life. Just a word to the aggressive progressives among our theological students and young ministers: try the experiment of ceasing to defend yourselves against attacks by argument, whether scriptural or rational. No matter if you are convinced your theology is genuinely biblical, and the older views only apparently so. Let it become known by your Christlike lives that you live with God. The world will listen to any message that is really divine. It may not listen at first, or willingly, but it will hear somehow that which God has spoken. Dodge the issue as we may, the only true test of a doctrine is the fruit of that doctrine in human life. Popular instinct is right, though popular judgment is often wrong. If ideas which you are convinced are correct fail to win acceptance, the difficulty may be not with the ideas but with your own failure to appropriate them in their largest and richest fruitage to your own personal spiritual life.

And to the leaders, the mature thinkers whose services to the world cannot be measured, who explore the star-lit spaces of celestial fields yet unknown, we would appeal for a little more sunlight. The moon is cold, the stars are cold, your shining telescope and your glittering lens are cold. The sun is a homely, cheering orb, not highly esteemed by astronomers because he compels them to sit up all night. But his brilliant, all-illuminating rays are the glory of the world. They send the currents of life vibrating through the tiny leaves of the forest flower, and make the lordly beasts of the jungle to rejoice; they bring gladness to the chamber of the sick, and the thrill of noonday vigor to the strong man at his work; through their ancient labors the ship is driven swiftly through the midst of the seas, and through their silent energy to-day our fields will be freshened by to-morrow's showers. It is the sun that the world wants. And it matters little whether we know the angle of its declination or the lines in its spectrum, if only we may bask in its rays. Then come down sometimes from your lofty station, devout astronomers, and help carry the maimed and the helpless from their dark homes out into the blessed glow of God's love. It is well to study the composition of light; but remember the shadows.

The Parson's Barrel.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

"Well, parson," said Deacon Goodfold to his pastor, "that last Sunday mornin's sermon was number one prime; may I ask which end of the barrel that came out of? Your barrel is like the widder's in scripser; it never seems to give out."

"I am glad that my sermon suited you," replied the genial dominie, "for I got part of that at your house, part came from Neighbor B——ts, and part from poor Mrs. C——, in whose sick room I spent an hour, and one hint in it came from your boy Frank, who rode by my house on 'Old Gray,' without any saddle or bridle. I picked up some of the best things in that discourse during an afternoon spent in pastoral visiting."

Pastor Honeywell was a shrewd man, and a faithful, godly pastor. He had not a great many books; and his family increased faster than his library. His Bible he had at his fingers' ends; it was his one great unexhausted storehouse of heavenly knowledge. But he also had a book of human knowledge second only to God's Word. In the forenoon he studied his Bible, and in the afternoon he sallied out with horse and buggy and studied his people. He rode with his eyes open, finding illustrations—like the divine Master—from the birds of the air, the flowers of the field, and the sower or ploughman by the wayside. His mind was on his sermon all the week. If he saw a farmer letting his team "blow" under a roadside tree, he halted and had a chat with him. He observed the farmer's style of thought, gave him a few words of golden counsel and drove on, leaving the farmer something to think of and something to love his pastor for also. If he saw a boy on his way from school, he took the lad into his buggy and asked him some questions which set the youngster to studying his Bible when he got home. Parson Honeywell caught his congregation when they were young.

Deacon Goodfold was curious to know more about the way in which his minister had gathered up that last Sunday's sermon. "Well," replied the pastor, "I was studying on the subject of trusting God in times of trial. First, I went to the fountain-head, for my Bible never runs dry. I studied my text thoroughly, comparing Scripture with Scripture; I prayed over it, for a half-hour of prayer is worth two hours of study, in getting light on the things of God. After I had put my heads and doctrinal points on paper, I sallied out to find my practical observations among our congregation. I rode down to your house, and your wife told me her difficulties about the doctrine of assurance of faith. From there I went over to your neighbor B——'s house; he is terribly cut down since he failed in business. He told me that with the breaking down of his son's health, and his own breakdown in the store, he could hardly hold his head up, and he had begun to feel awfully rebellious towards his Heavenly Father. I gave him a word or two of cheer, and noted down just what his difficulties were. From his store I went to see poor Mrs. C——, who is dying slowly by consumption. She showed me a favorite flower that she had put into her window-sill to catch the sunshine, and said that her flower had been a daily sermon to her about keeping her soul in the sunshine of her Saviour's countenance. Her talk braced me up, and gave me a good hint. Then I called on the Widow M——, who always needs a word of sympathy. Before I came away she told me that her daughter Mary could not exactly understand what it was to trust Christ, and was finding no peace, although she had been under deep conviction of sin for several weeks. I had her daughter called in and I drew from her all her points of difficulty; I read to her such texts of Scripture as applied to her cases prayed with her, and then started for home. Your boy rode by my house on the old horse, who went along without any bridle, and stopped when he got to the bars that lead to the pasture.

"Before I went to bed I worked in all the material that I had gathered during the afternoon; and I studied out the solution to the difficulties of your wife and of your neighbor B—— and I wove the answers to such doubts and difficulties into my sermon. The cheerful experiences of good Mrs. C—— in her sick chamber helped me mightily, for faith in action is worth several pounds of it in theory. I went to my pulpit last Sunday pretty sure that my sermon would help three or four persons there, and if it would fit their cases I judged that it would fit thirty or forty more cases. For human nature is pretty much alike, and sometimes when I preach a discourse that comes home close to my own heart's wants, I take it for granted that it will come to plenty of other hearts in the congregation."

"Yes, parson," said the deacon, "your sermons cut a pretty broad swath. I often feel 'Thou art the man' when you hit some of my besettin' sins.