

Dignity in the Service of the Church.

To secure the proper ends of congregational worship, dignity is essential, and it is a good sign of the times that this is recognized widely to-day. There is an increasing sense of the solemnity and grandeur of the hour when the people meet to worship God. We want to feel that God is waiting to receive what we should be prepared to give; that we must render to him truly the sacrifice of the heart; and that we must use conscientiously and thoroughly the best means at our command to express in an outward way what we are attempting to do in the soul. In carrying out this intention the mistake is often made of confusing beauty with dignity. They are far from being the same. Indeed, they may be contradictory. A service may be too beautiful, and so defeat its own purpose. Emphasis on exquisite but intrusive irrelevances distracts the mind and lowers the tone of the sacred hour. When men are in earnest in desiring to worship God they do not want to be disturbed by fussiness over trivialities, or to be delayed by artistic entertainment of any sort.

The dignity of the service depends almost wholly upon the minister. He determines and imparts the temper of the hour. To make a service what it ought to be, he should bring it to an evident spirit of profound reverence. He should be prepared perfectly at every point, so that the people may feel respectful, confident that everything will come exactly into place. For this it is necessary that he should have the order of service before his eye, should have every page found in Bible and hymn-book, and should have settled in mind the way in which the words he speaks ought to be spoken. He must be careful, brief and prompt without haste. It degrades the service when the minister neglects the portion in which the people happen to be engaged, in order to hunt out what comes next. He himself should be worshipping, should share in what he is supposed to be leading. If one were to construct a series of ministerial "Don'ts," it would include, don't be colloquial in the pulpit, or use slang, or raise a laugh; don't plan your service as though you did not know at what hour it is supposed to end; don't forget some notice in its place and drag it in at the announcement of the closing hymn to dissipate the spiritual impression you have labored hard to produce. It is important to have a plan in the service, an idea running through the whole. There should be nothing haphazard, nothing unworthy.—N. Y. Observer.

Advice to Ministers.

Rev. F. B. Meyer gives the following good advice to fellow-ministers:

1. Let our ministers beware of drifting into preaching on social topics and questions of the day, apart from the person and work of the Saviour.
2. Let us maintain the custom of expository and experimental preaching.
3. Let us not announce sensational subjects to draw congregations.
4. Let us be strict to keep outside of our churches objectionable ways of raising money.
5. Let us carefully maintain church discipline, and let people understand that if they want cards, balls, theatres, etc., they must dissociate themselves from our churches, and be one thing or the other. If they feel able to serve Christ in these things, let them

stand or fall to their own Master, but let them do it apart from the church, lest they invalidate her testimony and impair her life.

6. Let us see to it that we act as light and salt on the movements of the time, not allowing the government of affairs to drift into the hands of irreligious and professional politicians.

7. Let us avoid having too many paid officials in our church work, and train our members to fill the various functions of church life.

8. Let us avoid throwing on the evangelist duties to which God has not called him. His work is not primarily with the Church, but with the world; and he should not be called in till the Church is in a healthy condition, and there is already a symptom of God's work through her upon the world.

The Busy Minister.

Christian ministers who do their duty lead as busy lives as any class in the community. They work hard from Sunday morning to Saturday evening, if they attend with any measure of fidelity to the calls of pastoral visitation, philanthropic activity, committees on church and conference work, preparation for the pulpit, and the frequent demands for sermons. The better the minister the more unceasing is the strain on his time and energies. No workingman has such long, hard hours as the average preacher of our day. With realizations of this fact misapprehensions as to lazy lives and easily earned salaries of ministers must pass away from the mind of every honest artisan, and compel him to admit that here at least, no just cause of reproach can be found.—Northern Christian Advocate.

Pulpit Mannerisms.

No man, however fluent his speech, however fertile his mind, however broad his culture and deep his spiritual life, can keep fresh and attractive in his pulpit utterances without constant care against hackneyed phrases and against slavish adherence to a certain order of procedure and manner of speech. The most catchy phrase, the most apt expression, and the most forceful formula of truth reduced to a mere mannerism falls upon the ear as a vain and empty thing.

Why should any man indulge a pulpit tone and a repulsive pulpit manner? Why should a preacher in the pulpit habitually shrug his shoulders, toss his head, stroke his beard, nervously thrust his hand into his pockets, and do a dozen other things that are as ungraceful and unnatural as they are absurd? Why should a man punctuate and puncture his sermons with Ahs! and Ohs! and with "Bless you!" "For God's sake!" and similar expressions.

Not long since some of our exchanges were passing a paragraph relating the instance of a young minister who was so addicted to the use of that convenient phrase, "Along this line," that in an address of seventeen minutes he repeated that sweet morsel fourteen times. The last time we saw that paragraph the editor added, "Give us a rest on this line." It is related of a certain evangelist that he was in the habit of addressing his audience as "Dear souls," wherever he happened to be conducting services. When he was at Belfast it was over and over, "Dear Belfast souls;" at Dublin, "Dear Dublin souls," and at Cork it was "Dear Cork souls," in which instance his audience was overcome with laughter before he knew what he had said.

Some preachers are in the habit of gazing at some fixed point on the floor or ceiling much of the time during the delivery of

their sermons. With others preaching and whining always go together. There is no good reason for being victims of such habits in pulpit work. They are mannerisms. They are artificial, unnatural performances. Some of them are extremely annoying to the hearer, and all more or less detract from the force and effectiveness of the sermon, and should give way to that which is natural and most pleasing to God and man.

It is important that the preacher guard against emphasis that does not emphasize—such as violently and frequently stamping the floor with the feet, or pounding the Bible with the fists, or indulging in hysterical shriekings, so that utterance is rendered almost if not altogether unintelligible thereby. This habit becomes so fixed and extreme in some instances that the solemn and pathetic portions of the discourse are sent crashing over the heads of the people like so much grape and canister from an overloaded artillery. A stamp of the foot may in rare instances be proper and appropriate, and may possibly help drive the truth home to the hearts of the hearers; but such instances are too rare to allow that form of emphasis to become a characteristic of a man's delivery.—Evangelical Messenger.

The Parties in the Anglican Church.

The Rev. John Watson, D.D. (Ian MacLaren), in a recent article writes in a very illuminating way of the various parties in the Anglican Church. The article itself is on the troubles and controversies in that ancient communion. He says there are really three parties, and describes them as follows: "There is, first of all, the High Church party, which rests upon a solid historical basis, and represents the views of those who never desired to separate from the Catholic church but only were weary of the abuses of the papacy. This party would have been satisfied, at the time of the Reformation, had moral scandals been removed and the ecclesiastical tyranny of Rome been reduced. The second party represents the tendency at the Reformation which was called Calvinistic, and somewhat later in England, Puritan. Low Churchmen were determined to go to the farthest length in rescuing, as they believed, Christianity from superstition and doctrinal error. Their idea of worship was, and is unto this day, praise sung by all the people, extempore prayer in which the people are able to join, the preaching of a sermon, and the administration of the two sacraments after the simplest and sometimes baldest form. Low Churchmen accept, of course, the service of the Church of England, but they reject as much as they dare of what is Catholic, and introduce extempore prayer where they can. . . . The Broad Churchmen occupy a detached position as regards both Anglicans and Puritans, since they do not hold the high doctrine of the sacraments and of the ministry, while at the same time they are in favor of an ornate and reverent service. Everything which is historical and everything which is aesthetic appeals to their culture, but they are, at the same time, cleansed from a belief in ecclesiastical authority and doctrinal obscurantism. Their cardinal tenets are the Fatherhood of God and the true humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnation as a perpetual force in human life, and the salvation of the race through the spirit of Jesus."

The Church of Christ has been hindered in her enterprise by her over-estimate of human gifts and graces, dependence on eloquence and learning. What we need above all things is a return to the apostolic conception of power from on high.—Rev. George Hanson, D.D.