

## Pastor and People.

### THE LIGHT OF STARS

The night is come, but none too soon ;  
And sinking silently,  
All silently, the little moon  
Drops down behind the sky.

There is no light in earth or heaven  
But the cold light of stars ;  
And the first watch of night is given  
To the red planet Mars.

Is it the tender star of love ?  
The star of love and dreams ?  
O, no, from that blue tent above  
A hero's armor gleams !

And earnest thoughts within me rise,  
When I behold afar,  
Suspended in the evening skies,  
The shield of that red star.

O, star of strength ! I see thee stand  
And smile upon my pain ;  
Thou beckonest with thy hand,  
And I am strong again.

Within my breast there is no light  
But the cold light of stars ;  
I give the first watch of the night  
To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will,  
He rises in my breast,  
Serene, and resolute, and still,  
And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou, too, whoso'er thou art,  
That readest this brief psalm,  
As one by one thy hopes depart,  
Be resolute and calm.

O, fear not in a world like this,  
And thou shalt know ere long,  
Know how sublime a thing it is  
To suffer and be strong. —Exchange

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**MODERN EVANGELISM.**

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To-day there is a goodly army of Evangelists doing service in Christendom. That they are urgently needed there can be no question. That they do in the main, a good, solid, enduring work no one will dispute. That their office is sanctioned by the word of God is clear to every reader of the New Testament. Although the sphere they labor in, is not regarded by all as the sphere contemplated in the Scriptures. They evangelized the professing church. They must have the countenance and co-operation of the churches. They even, in cases, stipulate for certain sums of money being raised, and certain accommodations being provided, choirs numbering so many being specially trained, and a platform being put up for the body of singers, and certain numbers of men being set apart to act in various capacities as "ushers" or as "helpers" in the meetings, and only the hymn-book that they sell being used. Everything is reduced to a science. And no fault may be found with all this machinery. But it is odd, when we look at the work of the Tennants, and of Nettleton, and Finney, and Burns, and Brownlow North in comparison—such deep, sweeping and effective movements, without any such machinery, but in simple reliance on the mighty power of God revealed through the word preached. It may be that by the skillful manipulation of machinery a revival may be got up. It often is, and it goes down just as quickly as it was got up. Man has such a nature that it may be played upon as a great organ. He may be made to weep, or laugh, or sing, or think soberly and devoutly. By well-told stories wonderful effects may be produced upon the human heart, and all the more readily, if there be a mass of men to act upon. And an individual may be caught at a particular point and given an interpretation of his condition that may be misleading and ruinous. One anxious to secure results, and it may be, not overly skilled in the analysis of human feeling, or the workings of the human heart, may affirm of certain conditions what is very far from the truth. He may give assurances of salvation when the individual is very far from it. He may cry peace, peace, when there is no peace, and so do incalculable harm. This case in point, was told by Dr. Hoyt many years ago in the *Christian at Work*: "Tell me about it," said Captain M— to me, as he stood there at the wheel in the pilot-house of a Missouri River steamboat, threading the winding treacherous channel, looking out for sand bars, now here, now there, reading the rippling boiling surface of that great river as intelligently as I

could the page of an open book. "Tell me about it," said he to me as I sat by his side in the pilot-house making my way northward against the surging current of that river ; "was I wrong or was I right ? I married my wife ; I loved her ; to please her I began to go to church ; I never could hear singing and not be moved ; the songs they sang in the church there touched me strangely ; they brought up forgotten memories, they unloosed all the springs of feeling ; I was overcome ; I could not help myself ; I wept—whenever I went to church and heard the songs I wept. Because I wept they all thought I had become a Christian ! Wife, minister, all of them, pressed me to join the church. No, I said, I cannot. I have simply been stirred up by songs as I always am. I knew I had not given up my evil ways. I knew I had not repented of my sins and given myself over to my Saviour. 'No, I cannot join the church. Deeper work must be done in me before I can do that,' I said. And yet when I went to church and heard the songs I always wept and could not help myself. Tell me, was I wrong in refusing to join the church, though songs touched me so, or right ?" Thus substantially the captain went on talking. And I answered, "Right, captain, right thoroughly !" A real religion is something fathoms deeper than feeling simply ; it is repentance ; it is faith, it is the organization of life round a new centre ; it is the acceptance of Jesus Christ as your Saviour and your Lord."

This captain was standing on slippery ground, but he was true to himself after a manly fashion, and was not deceived, and he fortunately fell into the hands of a good adviser. But how easily another might have been caught.

Evangelistic work if thoroughly done, is a great good to any community with a large non-church going population, who have drifted into indifference, and hardness of heart, and utter godliness. Its sphere is among those who have not heard, or who are not hearing, the saving truth of the gospel. And the best men, the deepest read in the knowledge of the heart ; men strongly tinctured with the rich experimental teaching of the old Puritan Divines, such as Brooks, Sibbes, Owen, Goodwin and Adams ; men of the highest culture should occupy the position of Evangelists.

True it is, any man who is saved himself, may preach the gospel, but he may not be able to command a large body of men so that they will listen. He may be so shallow in himself that his tale is soon told. It is not enough to inform men that they are sinners, and must be converted, and trust in Christ Jesus as the propitiation for sin. These are but the fundamental facts. It is dealing with the varied experiences to which they give rise that tests a preacher. The training and the character, and the associations of the hearers must be all considered ; else very many words will be wasted. Some need teaching of the most elementary character. Some need good lessons recalled and revived. Some need direction as to how to act. Some need inducements—motives, to teach them to noble issues. All do not stand on a dead level. Those bred up in godly homes and those bred up in godless homes ; those who have accompanied with educated men and those who have been the associates of uneducated men ; those who have been protected by moral influences, and those who have been debased by immoral influences and usages, the good, the bad, the indifferent, are all there. It is a large, indeed, a magnificent organ to stand before, and act upon so that sweet, rich heavenly music may be drawn from it, to the glory of God. Like many a fine instrument it is greatly abused very often by unskilled players.

Suppose, after an address that has only run the quarter of the gamut an appeal be made to the hearers to "stand up" as indicating their conversion and the leader leaps on a chair to count the heads. Wherein lies the true seriousness of such a proceeding ? It is not far short of a mockery, and it will be to many a delusion and a snare. If the work of evangelizing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well. It should be a matter of individual dealing. Each case should be treated separately by one skilled in soul treatment. Much of the success or non-success of our

spiritual life will depend on the character impressed on it at the first. Many then get into a mist that hangs about them for a long, long time. Many act through the magnetic force of others upon them at such a time, and can give no account of the hope that is in them. Many begin to utter religious words and phrases, at such a time, of whose meaning they are totally ignorant. Many are led to think, under teaching that merely scrapes the surface, and that does not even produce conviction of sin, far less repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that they are saved, when the saving process has not yet begun.

Ah, it is a perilous thing to put, or to allow, evangelistic preaching in the hands of one who sadly needs instruction himself. It endangers the lives of immortal men. Self-called and self-constituted evangelists ought to be guarded against. Men, who in many cases speaking not uncharitably, are just as anxious to save money as to save men, as some very interesting incidents and figures and facts might show. Only known men, chosen by the Supreme Court of the church on account of special fitness for this office, should be permitted to work in congregations in this capacity. That is, outside of the help one pastor may give to another.

One of the greatest evils and the most insidious snares of modern evangelism is the desire to make up a large roll of names. We have seen them reckoned up in order to the glory of the evangelist and published in large type as "saved," many of whom declared that they were forced by others to "go up to the front," or stand up in their place, when they would have done far otherwise. They were not even touched with conviction of sin.

Pressure beyond reason, and therefore beyond Scripture warrant, had been put upon them, and they in a moment of weakness had yielded, to be sorry for many a day after, that they did such a thing.

If a soul is under conviction, and asking "what shall I do to be saved ?" it will in these peculiar circumstances, need little pressing and urging. If a man has accepted Christ, he will not hold back, when many are coming out, and identifying themselves with the Lord's people.

It is here as in the service of the Queen, "one volunteer is worth ten pressed men." The word of the Lord is, "whosoever will let him come and take the water of life freely."

Another evil attending modern evangelism is the lack of the saving truths of the gospel such as Paul sets forth in 1 Cor. 15 : 1-4, and such as Peter in Acts 2, and John the Baptist in "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

The exceeding sinfulness of sin, and therefore the need of the sacrificial blood to atone for it, is not made prominent enough. More confidence is reposed in thrilling stories, which are frequently dressed up beyond the real facts of the case to catch the crowd, than in the simple word of God and the power of the Holy Ghost. And not unfrequently is a pure legalism preached that entirely obscures the grace of God in salvation. Great dangers to the souls of men and to the church of Christ lie in many of the devices that are adopted. Evangelism depends largely on the character of the evangelist. He should be sound in doctrine, wise in adapting himself to his conditions, and not greedy of filthy lucre. A man who lives to save souls, and that above all else.—

### AN OLD PSALM FRESHLY READ.

Behold how good it is and pleasant  
For brethren to dwell together !  
Like the fine oil upon the head  
Flowing down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron,  
That flows down upon the hem of his garments,  
Like the dew of Hermon that flows down upon the  
mountains of Zion ;  
For there hath Jehovah commanded the blessing.  
Life for evermore.—Psalm cxxxiii.

In the new edition of his book, "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," Dr. Robertson Smith says that the point of this Psalm is missed in all the commentaries he has looked at. We venture, says the *British Weekly*, to paraphrase his brief but extremely interesting and convincing exposition. The

good and pleasant thing is that those who are brethren in blood and heart also dwell together—a joy which came to Israel for a brief season during the three great feasts. It is not that they dwell together in harmony, but that in the solemn feast that has brought them together to Zion, they enjoy the privilege of being near to one another.

In the verses which follow, the scene is described under a figure—"The long lines of the houses of Jerusalem, and the tents of the pilgrims, flow down the slopes of the Temple hill, even to the base, like the oil on Aaron's garments—a blessed sight." All the piety of Israel gathered together thus, is as if the fertilizing dews on great Hermon—"whose white golden crown glistens into the blue heavens"—were all concentrated on the little hill of Zion.

Nowhere, says a traveller in the Holy Land, is so heavy a dew perceptible as in the vicinity of Hermon. When the dew of that mountain, covered with deep, almost eternal snow, descends upon the bare, unfruitful hill of Zion, it is a good and pleasant thing, and the pilgrim's heart is full as he stands within the gates of Jerusalem, and looks out upon the encircling hills.

Then the "sense of Jehovah's forgiving grace, and the certainty of redemption for Israel, triumphed over all the evils of the present, and filled his soul with humble and patient hope." There he felt that God had commanded the blessing to gather and go forth, and what could the blessing be but life—the sum and goal of blessings—"even life for evermore?"—*Observer*.

### THE VALUE OF A CHURCH PAPER.

It is astounding that some pastors, and the people generally, are so little interested in the circulation of a worthy denominational paper. Pastors stand sadly in their own light when they fail to encourage the members of their churches to take a good denominational paper. It is simply impossible for church people to be in the largest degree useful to their churches, to their denomination and to the cause of Christ at large if they do not take a religious paper. There is no investment of money which will bring larger returns for the church, for the denomination and for Christianity than what is expended in procuring good religious papers. Two to five cents a week for the year will secure the weekly visits of a great, strong, wholesome and altogether superb religious paper. The general circulation of such a paper in a church is worth as much to a pastor as is an assistant in pastoral work. Church members cannot intelligently give to or work for denominational societies and other objects of benevolence except they be familiar with the scope and manner of their operations ; and such familiarity can come only from the weekly visits of a great religious newspaper. In all our churches there are many young members who were brought up outside of our denomination ; there is also a considerable proportion of such who are more advanced in years. How can they know what our contemporary enterprises are, and how can they come into touch, either with the living present or with the hopeful future, except they take a weekly denominational paper ? Men of wealth could not do better with hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars than to aid the pastor in introducing a worthy denominational paper into churches and missions. A pastor in this city a few weeks ago paid for twenty copies of such a paper to be sent to as many families connected with a mission of his church. Could he have made a better investment of the amount ?—*Christian Intelligencer*.

The Good Templars of England held during Easter week their 25th Annual Session. There are over 2,000 lodges, nearly all of them meeting weekly, with a subscribing membership of 104,808. The Grand Lodge receipts for the year amounted to over £5,028 exclusively, £1,371 received on account of the official organ, and £2,231 for the Orphanage. About 10,000 meetings had been arranged in connection with the Order, and many hundreds of petitions in favor of the Local Control Bill had been presented to Parliament. Deputations from the Order had attended at the World's Temperance Conference at Chicago, and at the Supreme Lodge at Des Moines, Iowa, at which 12,789 branches, with a membership of 593,463, were represented.