

THE CHRISTIAN AT THE BALLOT-BOX.

"Some therefore cried one thing, and some another; for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not whither they were come together."

SERMON BY REV. T. DEWITT TALMAGE.

Ephesus was upside down. A manufacturer of silver boxes for holding heathen images had called his labourers together to discuss the behavior of one Paul, who had been in public places assailing image worship, and consequently very much damaging that particular business.

The whole scene reminds me of the excitement we have almost every autumn at the elections. While the goddess Diana has lost her worshippers, and her temples have gone into the dust, our American people want to set up a god in place of it; and they want us all to bow down before it; and that god is Political Party.

LESS OFFENSIVE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD

That is this all absorbing American partisanship. While there are honest men, true men, Christian men, who stand in both political parties, and who come into the autumnal elections resolving to serve their city or their state or the nation in the best possible way, I have noticed also that with many it is a mere contest between the ins and the outs—those who are in trying to stay in and keep the outs out, and those who are out trying to get in and shut the ins out.

Once or twice a year it is my custom to talk to the people about public affairs from what I call a Christian standpoint, and this morning I have chosen for that duty, I hope to say a practical word. History tells us of a sermon once preached amid the highlands of Scotland—a sermon two hours long—on the sin of luxury, where there were not more than three pairs of shoes in the audience.

WHO BELIEVES A TENTH PART

of what he reads or hears in the autumnal elections? Men who at other seasons of year are more careful in their speech, become peddlers of scandal. In the far East there is a place where, once a year, they let the people do as they please and say what they please, and the place is full of uproar, murder, and wickedness, and they call it the "Devil's Day."

been told at the city, state, or national elections since the foundation of this Government, and, though the perpetrators and their victims may have gone into the dust, in the last day judgment will be awarded.

COMMITTS A SIN AGAINST GOD

and the nation. Bribery is one of the most appalling sins of this country. God says, "Fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery."

Again: I ask you as Christian men to set yourselves against the dissipation that hover over the ballot box. Let me say that no man can afford to go into political life who is not a teetotaler. Hot political discussion somehow creates an unnatural thirst, and hundreds of thousands of men have gone down into drunkenness through political life.

How many mighty intellects have gone down under the dissipation of politics. I think of one who came from the West. He was able to stand out against the whole American Senate. God had given him faculties enough to govern a kingdom, or to frame a constitution.

You need not go far to find the worn-out politician. Here he is stumbling along the highway, his limbs hardly able to hold him up. Bent over and pale with exhausting sickness. Surely to anybody who respects him. His last decent article of apparel pawned for strong drink. Glad it, when going by a grocery, some low acquaintance invites him in to take a sip of ale, and then wiping his lip with his greasy sleeves.

That is what some of you will become unless by this morning's warning, and the mercy of God, your steps are arrested. Oh, there are no words enough potent, portentous, consuming, damning, to describe the horrible drunkenness that has rolled over this land, and that has bent down the necks of some of the mightiest intellects until they have been compelled to drink out of the trough of beastiality and abomination.

Again: I counsel you that when you go to the ballot box at the city or state or the national elections, you recognize God and appeal to Him for His blessing. There is a power higher than the ballot-box, than the gubernatorial chair, than the presidential White House. It is high time that we put less confidence in political platforms and more confidence in God. See what a weak thing is human strength. How little any wise men seem to know. See how, every autumn, thousands of men who are climbing up for high positions are turned under God upsets them. Every man, every party, every nation, has a mission to perform. Failing to perform, it will be gone.

Righteousness, and open the prison houses until the captive shall go free." House of Hapsburg refuses to do it. Down it goes. God says to the political parties in this day: "By the principles of Christianity remodel, govern, educate, save the people." Failing to do that, down they go, burying in their ruins their disciples and advocates. God can spare all the political intriguers of this day, and can raise up another generation who shall do justice and love mercy. If God could spare Luther before the reformation was done, and if He could spare Washington before free government had been fully tested, and if He could spare Howard before more than one out of a thousand sand dungeons had been alleviated, and if He could spare Robert McChoyne just as Scotland was gathering to his burning utterances, and if He could spare Thomas Clarkson while yet millions of his fellow men had chains rusting to the bone, then

HE CAN SPARE ANY MAN,

and He can spare any party. That man, who through cowardice or blind idolatry or party forsakes the cause of righteousness, goes down, and the armed battalions of God march over him. Oh Christian men, take out your Bible this afternoon, and in the light of that word, make up your mind as to what is your duty as citizens. Remember that the highest kind of a patriot is a Christian patriot. Consecrate yourself first to God, then you will know how to consecrate yourselves to your country.

Doctrine.

The doctrines of religion nourish faith. In proportion to our faith will be our desire to the increase of knowledge. No doctrines will be unimportant, though some will be closer to our bosom than others. But doctrine, doctrine, doctrine, is that which faith desires. It is lamentable that the Christianity of our day desires it not. There is a craving for what is a contradiction in terms—teaching which is not doctrinal. The cry is for literature, for illustration, for eloquence, for anything but truth. If faith ever rises to manly vigor, it must be by enlarging the mind's acquaintance with the whole extent of saving truth.

And to say, as has been said, that "doctrine is the skin of truth, stripped off, dried, and set up empty," is to predicate ignorance for the sake of momentary effect, if not to be treacherous to the high majesty of truth itself. Doctrine is the form of sacred truth, adapted to inculcation and transmission. Doctrinal preaching is supposed by some to be controversial or polemical. If any error, they need the schoolmaster more than the preacher. Doctrine is, above all, needed at a period of general awakening. A man convicted of his sins, asks how a sinner can be pardoned, in consistency, with God's justice; the answer to his question is doctrine. He asks what that work of Christ is, on account of which he may be admitted to heaven; the answer to his question, whether true or false, is doctrine. He further asks, by what means the benefits of redemption may be made his own; the answer to this is doctrine.—J. W. Alexander.

Living by Faith.

God takes occasion many times to dash all that ever is in us, and that never hath been done by us, God will write hyper-vanity upon it. He will make us read so at least. Dost thou see what thou art? There is no creature carnal, and in that thou hast done there is this crookedness and that hypocrisy, there is this guile and that, all is naught. Then the Lord by this teaches one to go on a highway without crutches; one of these saints teacheth one to go without a staff, alone. And thereon also is the glory of God, who is glorious in all his works of creation and providence, glorious in war, snapping the spear asunder; but His glory in the Gospel is more, that usually when God hath showed us our confusion and wickedness, to magnify His grace the more, then God takes these times to do more for a poor soul than ever he did at any time; the Lord will then give a new seal of the pardon of sins, and new discoveries of the mysteries of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ in the midst of these confusions. But it is the hardest thing in the world to live clearly by faith when sense is gone; this is what I live at all this while. I see poor creatures moping everywhere, and when sense is out, then their candle is out, as Job said, How oft is the candle of the wicked put out. So that sinner who lives by sense his comfort is no longer than he sees and feels grace, he hath assurance of God's love no longer than he feels grace. So there are but few of you that have a root of faith, that in all the ebbs and flowings of grace your comfort, and strength, and assurance by faith goes in its course as before. Now desire the Lord to bring you to live clearly, that according to this blessed proverb you may live by faith.—Walter Cradock.

Turning the Battle to the Gate.

"The most recent literature of the alleged 'conflict between science and religion,' shows conclusively that the attacking scientists are being rapidly forced to the defensive. Professor Tyndall 'rises to explain' that the paganism of his famous address was due to a fit of the blues, and that atheism is only the resort of shallow minds. Mr Huxley finds it convenient to declare that, notwithstanding all his glorifications of matter and materialism, he is 'no materialist, but, on the contrary, believes materialism to involve grave philosophical error.'" John Stuart Mill's posthumous volume on religion stammers his own disciples with its constrained tributes to Jesus Christ and to the absolute necessity of recognition and regulating the religious side of nature.

And now Christian scientists and philosophers who have patently sounded the depths and measured the height, and length, and breadth of the materialistic theories of the time, have assumed the defensive, and from many quarters have combined against the common foe. Like their challengers they are using the press, the platform, the professional chair, and meet them upon their own ground. Large and cultivated audiences greet the eminent lecturers who, like Principal Dawson in his recent course in this city, and President McCoak, and Chancellor Crosby, and others who might be named, have subjected the anti-Christian hypotheses to the severest tests of logic and of science, and upon their own grounds have proved them to be philosophically incorrect, and therefore unworthy of credence in their argument against the Bible.

Dr. Dawson, who is the foremost American opponent of these theories, and ranks very high among scientific writers, has shown in his lectures that genuine science is reacting against the dogmatic intolerance of the philosophers, quite as much as it does against that of certain classes of theologians. And he is but one of a corps of first class men in Europe and in this country, who are equally at home in religious and scientific fields of research, and whose learning enables them first carefully and candidly to examine the ground and then to expose the sophistries and assumptions of these hasty assailants of Christianity. M. Huxley's doctrine of Protoplasm has been riddled by such men as Lionel S. Beale, and I especially by Dr. H. Johnson S. Erling, of whose work Sir John Herschel, the astronomer, says: "Anything more complete and final in the way of refutation than this essay, I cannot well imagine." On every field where the Philistines have flung out their challenges, they have been met by men who are, at the least, their equals in learning and their superiors in argument, and while the clangor of battle still keep up it probably indicates a shifting of force and a change of tactics. Thus, as Isaiah says, the Lord of hosts is "for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate."

In the excitement of a first attack upon some new point of the defenses of Christianity there is naturally a popular ferment and an indiscriminate rush to arms, and every one who can seize a weapon feels inclined to strike a blow. Afterwards there is a marshaling of organized forces, and a more extended warfare, which brings the leaders to the front, and then the contest centres at the citadel where only the more skilful generalship heims in the foe and carries the day. This has been the uniform process in all the great controversies of Christianity with its enemies, and so will it continue to be until the last victory is won. For that victory and all that must precede it, God will prepare the men and the means. When Paul preached in the temple, "all Jerusalem was in an uproar," and when between the fierce dissensions of Pharisees and Sadducees, he was in danger of being "pulled in pieces of them," the chief captain sent him to the castle under a guard of Roman soldiers, "and the night following the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou also bear witness at Rome." The scene shifted, but the battle went on in Rome as at Jerusalem, and though the apostle became the martyr there, yet history tells us how the empire became Christian, and how the Gospel triumphed.

Pulpit Prayer.

(The Presbyterian Weekly pleads for more earnest prayer in the pulpit, and thinks occasionally the too formal, careful prayer can be well thrown aside.)

We cannot avoid the conviction that, as a general rule, pulpit prayers are too cold and formal. We have in our service an inveterate and too prayers. Two first is oftentimes a cold, formal address, made in a way and manner which no doubt often disposes the Spirit to stay away. The next prayer is what the people call the "long prayer"—a fixed, regular, stereotyped production, which has a character all the world over. How few men make it anything else. Short, warm, fervent prayers from the pulpit have power with God and men. The formality of pulpit prayer must be broken up, if God is to bless His Church with revival power. There should be earnest pleading. Never mind if the custom of your church expects you to make at least one long, formal, careful prayer; throw custom aside in so great a matter. That system is a tyranny that won't give a pastor a little freedom to direct his own services. Enter your pulpit from the closet, have your heart aglow when you pray, remembering whom you approach, and what you are who come, and how great the need for which you pray; such warm, earnest, heart services will lead men to Christ, and glorify God.

The Coming Blessing.

(While the eyes and hearts of Christians go out toward an unexpected revival, The N. Y. Evangelist, too, discerns the coming blessing, and says: "The petition 'Thy Kingdom come' is a comprehensive one. To feel its full significance, we must regard it not merely in the mass, as it were, but in detail. We need to consider what it includes. We are more moved to sympathy by one case of extreme suffering that comes directly under our eye, than by the general accounts of distant calamities in which scores or hun-

drods are the victims. We trust that the Week of Prayer will bring a blessing with it to all our churches. Already we discern some signs of promise. The bow is in the cloud. There are many who are praying and laboring for a revival of God's work. Some good influences stream hither across the ocean from Scotland and Ireland. With the memories of those great scenes in mind, inspiring hope and courage, let us bow before the Giver of every blessing, and on our bended knees welcome the coming year.

Missionary Intelligence.

The number of baptized Kols in the Chota Nagpore, India, is estimated at 26,000. About three-fourths of these belong to the German Gossner Mission, and the remainder to the Ritualistic Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

The Methodist Episcopal United States Mission in Mexico, is established at 12 stations, 5 of them being in the capital. The average attendance at these Mexican congregations is nearly 400. A small beginning has also been made with day and Sunday Schools. Eleven native preachers aid the work, and English preaching is kept up in 4 places.

The Baptist Mission in Slam, from which we recently reported good news, is continuing to prosper. At Ku-Buang, where a congregation was lately organized, twenty or thirty Chinese are waiting for baptism. At Su-Buang there is an equal number of converts. At several other places, and in Bangkok, there is also much encouragement.

The United Presbyterian (Scottish) Mission in the extreme north-eastern part of China, at Niu Chwang is moving on carefully, but with marked success. Mr. Ross, who has charge of this station, depends largely on native help, as he finds the Chinese less suspicious and more ready with their inquiries when the Gospel message is delivered by their own countrymen.

Dr. Berr, the medical missionary of the American Board in Japan, on a late tour, found himself greatly assisted by the labors of the mission who accompanied him, and around whom the Japanese women gathered everywhere in large numbers. He writes that he hopes never to make a tour into the interior again without being accompanied and assisted by female workers.

The British Bible Society employs two colporteurs in the Tyrol. They have been selling together from 50 to 700 Bibles per month. They met with much opposition, and were continually denounced by the Roman Catholic priests. It is now probable that one of them, named Raich, has been murdered in the southern part of the country. His body and cans have been found on the bank of a stream, but his body was not recovered.

The Presbyterian (North United States) have 20 missionaries among the Indians, 50 of whom are under the charge of the Home Mission Board and the rest under the Board of Foreign Missions. These missionaries are distributed as follows: 3 among the Senecas in New York, 3 among the Onipewas in Wisconsin and Montana, 1 among the Omahas in Nebraska, 3 (one of them a native) among the Dakotas, 1 among the Seminoles, 1 among the Cherokees, 1 among the Creeks, 3 among the Nez Percés in Idaho Territory, 2 among the Navajos in New Mexico, and one among the Indians in Washington Territory. Several of these are nominated by the Board but are supported by Government Indian funds. On the recent visit of a missionary to the Spokanes, whose reservation is in Washington Territory, 59 adults were baptized on profession of their faith and 18 children.

The Friend of India says, that at least 1,500 native women in and around Calcutta are being educated at their own homes, principally of the middle class—each paying on an average a rupee a month for instruction. The expense is met by a government grant, regulated by the number of pupils. In a single year the Bengal government paid 1,212 rupees a month for 1,416 pupils, in addition to local contributions to the amount of 2,002 rupees. It is estimated that for the past ten years 2,500 women have been constantly under instruction at their homes in India.

The last General Assembly of the Southern United States Presbyterians Church, organized its Chinese missionaries into a Presbytery. The missionaries themselves, however, while at first in favor, are now opposed to this step. They find that it does not work well in the Northern Presbytery Hang Chau. In this body they say that the Chinese Presbyterians form two-thirds of the body and are now the senior members. Grace does not entirely overcome race, and the result sometimes is that the Chinese will stand as a body on the one side and the foreigners in a body on the other side. It is also argued that a fusion of Chinese and foreigners would tend to perpetuate home difference which are not essential, and would create English, Scotch, Northern and Southern Presbyterians, instead of a single Presbyterian Church. They would have the missionaries retain their original character as evangelists, and by being merely advisory members of the Native Church, maintain its harmony and independence of action.

The American Board has recently sent forth a young Japanese convert to labor in connection with the Japan Mission. Rev. Joseph Neesima, grow up in the city of Tokio, without any knowledge of Christianity, but with the conviction that he needed help such as the Pagan systems around him could not give. In this state of mind he received from a friend a little book entitled, "Story of the Bible," from which he learned, in a dum way, to worship a Divine Creator. An account of this country, written in Chinese, by Dr. Bridgman, gave him a strong desire to visit America. His father forbade it; but, having escaped from the port of Hakodaki, the young man reached Boston, where he was kindly received by the Christian owner of the vessel. Having, through this merchant's generosity, pursued a course of study at Phillip's Academy, Amherst College, and Andover Seminary, Mr. Neesima was ordained at the Mount Vernon Church, Boston, September 24th, and has since returned to Japan.