

Dominion Presbyterian

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Notes and Comments

Any fool can doubt; it requires intellect to exercise faith.

[In a recent decree of the Vatican the Pope is called "our most holy Lord." What next?

The men of the future will want, not our creeds to limit them in their beliefs and actions, but our works to build upon.

In the destruction of the Theatre Francais, Paris France, by first recently several famous statues and paintings which adorned the foyer were lost.

"Less theology and more religion" is a popular cry. Why not vary it by saying "less strong meat and more muscle." Might it not be well to try how both would go together.

All the funerals in Paris are conducted by a single syndicate, which has a licensed monopoly of the business. There is a regular tariff of rates, a first-class funeral costing \$2,000 and a cheap or ninth class \$5.

A Catholic priest by the name of Zurcher has been suspended by his ecclesiastical superiors because he opposed the running of a brewery for the good of the church. Good for the priest, bad for the superiors.

"Boer" is the plain Dutch word for farmer or peasant; there is no opprobrium whatever attaching to it; it is the equivalent of the German "bauer." The English word, "Boor" is derived from the early Anglo-Saxon word, of the same root, which means husbandman.

Before British rule was established over India the problem of a famine was solved by simply letting the surplus population die. In the famine of 1769, for example, which was only an ordinary one among these periodical visitations, over 8,000,000 of the native population perished.

Finland is said to be a country without illiterates. There is in this country practically not one person to be found who cannot read or write. There is perhaps not a single peasant's hut in Finland where a political paper is not regularly read, and scarcely a Finnish peasant can be found who cannot recite from memory large portions of the writings of Runeberg and Topelius.

The question of the exclusion of Presbyterian troops from cantonment churches in India, built at the public expense, will come before the Synod by overture from the South London Presbytery. There is considerable feeling on the subject in Presbyterian circles and there is likely to be some strong speaking concerning it at the meeting of Synod.

A distinguished naval authority discussing the events of the last fifty years pointed out a curious fact—namely, that the Queen has never personally pinned the Victoria Cross on the breast of a sailor, though she has decorated hundreds of soldiers with her own hand. The same speaker also stated that Queen has never been on an ironclad or a turret ship.

Rome does not encourage the education of the people. The proportion of illiteracy in Roman Catholic countries is largely in excess of that in Protestant countries. Even Ireland is an example. In the last general election for the British Parliament there were in England and Wales 4619 illiterate voters, and in Scotland 4,577, while in Ireland the illiterates number 84,919. Rome keeps the people in the dark wherever she can.

More than once of late, those around the Queen have heard her regret that age should prevent her doing much that she would like. In the past week she observed to one of her guests at Windsor Castle after dinner that if she were only twenty years younger she would visit Australia. This is a remarkable statement considering her advanced age and breathes the spirit that impelled her Majesty to study Hindustani since taking the Indian servants into her immediate employ.

Dr. Parker was informed the other day that a Minister of Cabinet rank had listened to one of his sermons through the electrophone. "The wretch avoided his collection," he exclaimed. On Sunday night he announced that those who heard his sermons through the electrophone could contribute to the collection by sending cheques or postal orders. Dr. Parker has conducted his city pastorate for over thirty years, and on his 70th birthday his strength seems unaltered and the City Temple is crowded at every service.

The Queen is contemplating the publication of another series of her Diaries. This time, should the work be really given to the public, it will be found, says the Outlook, that the pages will deal with her impressions while at Osborne as well as at Balmoral. If the Queen does issue this work, the profits from the sale will go to the Mansion House War Fund, an act as gracious as it is characteristic of her open-handed interest in her gallant soldiers. And the sale would no doubt far surpass that of her Majesty's previous books.

The work of all the Protestant Missions in darkest Africa makes an impression when given as a total. There are 1,940 churches 120,000 communicants, and 1,000,000 adherents. There are 1,100 schools and 60,000 pupils. Africa will be the wonderful continent of the twentieth century, and if the native inhabitants only knew how necessary the civilizing influences of the Gospel were to their very existence in the struggle that is coming, how gladly they would welcome the missionaries and claim the protection of the Christian Churches, which still in all important matters control the conscience of the civilized world.

The Philadelphia Presbyterian says:—It is hard to get out a perfectly printed paper. There is not a religious or secular newspaper in the land in which typographical errors do not occur in nearly every issue. And the wonder is that they are not of more frequent occurrence. Proof-readers do their best, but they are not infallible. A few manifest mistakes in a given number sometimes call forth criticism, and even complaint, but if the critic was in the office awhile and saw the thousands of words that had to be deciphered, the pressure brought to bear upon editors and printers to get the paper out on time, the changes that have to be made at the last moment, and the mishaps incident to a type-setting machine and press room, he would rather extend praise for general accuracy than blame for occasional oversights in proof-reading.

The Michigan Presbyterian says: We once heard a minister in offering an installation prayer use the expression: "We have prepared the altar, and the wood, and the sacrifice." There are churches in which the idea of the new pastor as a victim for the sacrifice would be to suggestive for reverence. But — — —

It is not strange that we cannot all agree upon theological or ecclesiastical questions. It would be very strange if we could; for we cannot all agree upon any questions. Let us express ourselves fairly and kindly, and pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance, and while still we shall not agree in our conclusions, we shall only differ in a spirit of charity. If personally we have no desire for revision or a new creed, may we not be willing to grant it for the sake of those who do seriously stumble over some expression?

The ignorance of some literary men is amazing. Mr. Henry Seaton Merriman has written some books that have been favorably criticised and widely read. "With Edged Tools" is one of them. The friendship of two men is one of its best features. Mr. Merriman likened it to the friendship of Saul and Jonathan. Probably he never heard of a young man named David. Probably, also, Mr. Merriman has sufficient equipment and a special preparation for writing a religious novel.

In the course of a recent interview, the Rev. Dr. Parker, asked about the promise of preachers, replied:—"I am no pessimist in this matter. I believe the great preachers have all to come or are just coming. Preaching will cover its best traditions, and the pulpit of the future will be greater immeasurably than the pulpit of the past. We are now in a kind of transition state. People hardly know at this moment how to take the pulpit. Speaking generally, I would say that expository and truly Biblical preaching has in it above all other kinds the elements and guarantees of durability. The higher criticism and evolutionary theories have never cost him a meal or an hour's sleep."

The Rev. Dr. McCrie, of Ayr, has in hand a "History of the Divisions and Re-unions of the Church of Scotland," embracing the periods of Non-conformity, Secession, and Disruption, and including the approaching Union of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches. In addition to the inherited historic faculty, the possession of which was evidenced in his Cunningham Lectures on "the Worship of Presbyterian Scotland," Dr. McCrie has special qualifications to be a historian of the Union of 1900, his illustrious ancestors having been Seceders, while he himself is a member of the Free Church, and has been from the first a member of the Joint Union Committee. The work will be published by Messrs. Macniven and Wallace, Edinburgh, and is expected to be ready early in the spring of 1901.

We are sure the following statement of Dr. Nicoll the editor of the British Weekly, does not hold true of all the preaching in England by any means. But that he could have such an experience shows that there is all too great a dearth of the kind of preaching which has been most used of God in all ages. He says, "My experience in hearing sermons in many denominations and from many preachers is almost invariable. I practically never heard an appeal to the unconverted. It seems to be taken for granted that all who find themselves within the four walls of a church are Christians. That the assumption is absolutely false is quite evident; that it must result in a dearth of conversions is equally evident. That there is a dearth of conversions can hardly be questioned."