

## IS A SECOND SERMON ON SUNDAY DESIRABLE.

Rev. Robert Hall, when asked how many sermons a minister could prepare in a week, replied: "If he is a man of pre-eminent ability, one; if he is a man of ordinary ability, two; if he is an ass, six." This is a cutting criticism on the rank and file of our faithful ministers, if the great Baptist divine is correct. Two sermons are the weekly allowance of our pastors, as we all know. That the sermons are of varying degrees of merit, we also know.

Great sermons, like epics, are rare occurrences. They are masterpieces. You can count them on your fingers: John Caird's Religion of Common Life, Canon Wozley's Divine Revelations of Human Judgments, Jonathan Edwards' Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, Horace Bushnell's Every Man's Life a Plan of God, Robt. Hall's Modern Infidelity, the funeral orations of Bossuet and Massillon. These have a grandeur of thought, a fitness of expression, that appeal to the admiration of the ages.

"True wit is nature to advantage dressed,  
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

Thousands of lectures have been delivered during the last fifty years, but few will be remembered. They had no enduring quality. Wendell Phillips' Lost Arts, John B. Gough's Orators, Bishop Fowler's Abraham Lincoln, were the delight of their generation. But they were not prepared in a week. Goldsmith's Deserted Village took seven years. Toils is the law of excellence, says Ruskin.

But in the case of the ordinary minister two sermons seem a necessity. It is the custom. Congregations expect them. So he selects his texts and labors at his discourses. Saturday night finds the good brother very tired, and Monday morning very much exhausted. He is ready to exclaim with Cowper:

"O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,  
Some boundless contiguity of shade!"

An exchange of pulpits or the visit of a missionary is always heartily appreciated.

Even if there is ability to prepare two weekly sermons, what time is left for other duties of the faithful clergyman. Pastoral calls? In a membership of several hundred, to make a round only once a year is a serious undertaking. It is certainly important. Was it Theodore Cuyler who believed that a house-visiting pastor made a church-going people. A shrewd woman remarked of her minister who was a close student that he was invisible during the week, and incomprehensible on Sunday.

What about reading? The mind is not an unfailing spring, but a falling reservoir, which needs constant replenishing. The minister should be well equipped. He should see the dailies and magazines for the topics of the day, and religious literature for the current thought of the time. He cannot depend upon his early acquisitions at the seminary. Spurgeon and Moody had large libraries. James W. Alexander discussed new books in his letters. Hillis reads several works every month.

Paul, himself a scholar, advised Timothy to "give attendance to reading." Emerson was a thinker, but he quotes several hundred authors in his essays. To meet the expectations of a congregation, week after week, a minister requires something besides his own. The salary of the average clergyman will not permit many new books, but he should get an occasional volume of later writers, like Meyer, Morgan, Black, Matheson, Jowett, to enlarge his vision. Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind, Dr. Forsyth's Yale Lecture in 1907, has "flash after flash of insight and illumination."

If the church is willing to relieve the pastor of the labor of a second sermon, what shall take its place? Addison in the Spectator has a remedy. The chaplain of Roger de Coverly made a list of the discourses of Tillotson,

Barrow, Calamy, South, and other sound divines, and read one every Sunday. And Addison adds this comment: "I heartily wish more of our clergymen would follow this example; and instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavor after a handsome elocution to enforce what has been penned by great masters. This would be easier for them, and more edifying to the people."

Almost two hundred years afterwards, Joseph Parker, of London, made the same suggestion. "Why should third-rate men harass themselves to produce sermons, while the sermons of great preachers lie idle on their shelves?" Echo answers why. Few families in any congregation have printed sermons, and if the ministers were to read a discourse of Brooks or Maclaren, it would lose all the charm of novelty, and at the same time, be more inspiring than their own. If Campbell Morgan can preach the gospel better than you, why not let him occupy the pulpit?

"In holy duties, let the day,  
In holy pleasures pass away."

In case a second sermon is not desired, the service may be profitably occupied by a Bible reading, exercises by the Sunday school, the missionary society, a pastoral commentary on the international lesson, a song evening with Watts or Cowper, a programme by the young people's societies, a teachers' meeting. The devices are various and helpful. Let all things be done decently and in order.

## NOT TRUE FOLLOWERS.

It is maintained by "new theology" men that one may be a loyal follower of Christ and yet deny many things in the Bible, which conservative Christians regard as being fundamental to soundness in the faith. One of the editorial writers of the Christian Outlook, recently came to the defence of Professor Foster, of the University of Chicago, and the notorious R. J. Campbell of England, and also others of heretical fame, expressing grief at their treatment from men who are opposed to heresy. That writer says: "In none of these cases has complaint been made that these men were not followers of Jesus. As a matter of fact, all of them have declared that they accept Him as their Lord and Master, and that they have but one object in life, namely, to preach His gospel." He also says: "The accusations against all these men are based on theological differences and not on disloyalty to Jesus, or the religion He revealed to the world." That writer makes a bad exhibition of himself. In his zeal to defend heretics of the worst type he makes decidedly untrue statements. He ought to know that much more than merely "theological differences" are involved in all of those cases. They are bold deniers of the Divine inspiration of the Bible, its records of miracles, many of its historical declarations, the deity of Christ, and other eminent truths. How vastly absurd it is to say that those men are "followers of Jesus!" Their declaration that they accept Christ as their Lord and Master amounts to nothing; it is even worse than that, it is utterly false. If they really did accept Him as their Lord, they would never deny His deity, nor seek to belittle His great miracles, nor contradict His plainest and most emphatic utterances. The apostles had a great deal of trouble from men who professed to be followers of Christ, and yet denied Him by their unbelief, their false teachings and their conduct. And what nonsense there is in saying that those men referred to in that editorial, are preaching Christ's gospel! What a contradiction of terms! What they preach is as unlike Christ's gospel as falsehood is unlike the truth. Verily, such ones are not followers of the true Christ. C. H. WETTERBE.

When a Christian finds himself desiring more of the world, it is a sure sign that he needs more of Christ.

## DR. FLECK'S RESIGNATION.

The Rev. Dr. Fleck has resigned the pulpit of Knox church.

Dr. Fleck's resignation brings to an end a pastorate of thirty-three years, the conditions of which have verged on the ideal. The bonds of love which bound the people to their minister and the minister to his people, were such as are too seldom found in these days of short pastorates. How strong those ties were was demonstrated some twenty years ago, when a clamorous call came from the West. The feeling of Knox church was so unmistakably and forcibly expressed that Dr. Fleck could make but one answer to it—and he always made the same answer to calls. He stayed in Montreal and in a very few years the congregation had outgrown the church building, and the present comfortable edifice was erected. Last year the people noted with deep sorrow that the work of caring for a large congregation, the bounds of which were extending into new suburbs every year, was becoming too heavy a task. It required some diplomacy to make Dr. Fleck take even a temporary rest, but he was persuaded to avail himself of six months' leave of absence and the assistant minister became acting pastor.

On Wednesday evening last the congregation received Dr. Fleck's resignation. The change had not restored him to health, and the family had taken a house in Belfast—in his native land—for the winter. With every manifestation of the deepest sympathy with Dr. and Mrs. Fleck, the resignation was accepted, and in recognition of the connection of a lifetime with Knox church, he becomes pastor emeritus, with a substantial allowance.

It was immediately decided by unanimous vote to offer the vacant pastorate to the Rev. I. A. Montgomery, B.A., who was ordained early in the summer. An influential delegation was appointed to lay the matter before the Presbytery. A special meeting was held on Monday, when the call was sustained and placed in Mr. Montgomery's hands.

The tremendous strides that Christian missionary work is making in India at present and the extent to which Christianity is becoming a factor in the social life of the natives of Central India were illustrated last week at the annual meeting of the Gwalior Mission, held in St. John's Church, Broadview avenue, Toronto.

The report of Rev. Dr. J. Wilkie, missionary at Jhansi, said that in the four and a half years of their work they had gradually extended their operations until now the Gospel was preached in forty different villages. They had to-day five out-stations, whereas a year ago they had only two. As showing that the natives of India were now more ready than ever before to receive Christianity, the report stated that in the past year more converts had been made than in the whole four preceding years.

An interesting phase of the work is the attempt being made to adapt the Presbyterian form of Church government to social conditions in India. Dr. Wilkie has organized Christian villages and communities along similar lines to the caste organizations from which the natives were excluded upon becoming Christians, thus forming as it were a new caste. Short addresses were made by Rev. Dr. D. H. Fletcher, of Hamilton, Rev. Dr. John Ross of Port Dalhousie, and by Mr. J. K. Macdonald, who presided.

Every man has felt that awful pull of the Old Adam. He can pull us toward himself so powerfully because there is part of himself in each one of us. The only safety from him is to get another and a better self—"put on Christ, the second Adam."

The seventy-second anniversary of Erskine Presbyterian Church was celebrated on Sunday. Rev. Robert Law preached in the morning, and Rev. D. C. Hoessack at night.