

Pastor and People.

The Preacher in the Pew.

History tells us that a colony of white Jews once settled in Africa, and that after a while their skins became dusky like those of the natives. Other illustrations might be adduced to prove that man possesses the singular power of adapting himself to the climatic, political, social, and religious circumstances to which he may be placed.

Perhaps, as a class, God's ministers do know how to adapt themselves to the particular exigencies in which they may be found; but, after all, there is something very peculiar about preachers. They differ from other men in some very essential points.

It seems to be quite easy for members of certain professions to abandon their peculiarities and to assume a new role. Some of them are just as expert in this business as are sundry members, belonging to the lower orders of the animal kingdom, that possess the power of conforming to their surroundings. But this process does not work so well among preachers. There are some professional marks that cannot be rubbed out. It is hard for a preacher to imitate the peculiarity of a live frog or chameleon.

The pulpit is his appropriate place. Keep him there, and at work, and trust him well, and you will find that he is not a bad sort of a man. But drive him out of the pulpit, or let him abandon his calling, and in nine cases out of ten he is just "like a fish out of water."

Mythology tells us of the ancient hero whose garment became a part of himself. In a high and proper sense may it be said that the profession of a preacher becomes an important element of his identity. He may give up the work and cease to act as a minister, but there is a certain something that still clings to him and makes it impossible for him to be to the pew just what he would have been if he had never occupied the pulpit. Even a deposed member of the clerical body will be remembered less as a justly condemned criminal than as a fallen preacher. The guide in the penitentiary, whose duty it is to show the visitors our fellow-citizens who wear scort hair and striped uniform, will tell you with a knowing look that this man before his incarceration was a horse-thief, that man a murderer, and the other a preacher. He does this, not because he honestly believes that preaching is as bad as horse-stealing or murder, but simply because, in popular estimation, the fall of one who was God's ambassador was a more singular event than was the conviction of the other men for their alleged crimes. It is not so remarkable that they have been made to suffer for violating the law as it is that one of the heralds of salvation has actually disgraced his mission. The vendors of sensation papers that report police items can do far better with a criminal preacher than they can with a criminal lawyer or a criminal doctor. An item on the irregularities of the pulpit will draw far more effectively than anything that could be written on the irregularities of the pew.

In popular estimation, a minister in the pew is out of place. It requires wisdom of no ordinary kind for a preacher, who is a member of the congregation, to keep his feet out of mischief, and so to carry himself as not to make trouble for the regular pastor.

It was a wise caution by an eminent teacher of Pastoral Theology, when he said to the class, "Beware of trouble with a minister in your congregation, especially if you happen to have one in it who was the former pastor of the church that you are serving."

Many a hard-working, faithful, and earnest pastor has felt the force of that admonition.

During the whole of my experience as a minister I have had among my hearers beloved brethren in the profession, and they have been among my best friends and supporters; and I have known other pastors whose experience has been just like mine. But I recall also the sore trials of other pastors whose testimony is of a far different character, and who have been dreadfully afflicted by pew holders who once were preachers, but had found in exercising their gifts that they were killing churches, and retarding the work of evangelization, and so they abandoned their calling and became secularized; but after having done heaps of damage to the sacred cause they had not seen enough to keep quiet. Ever and anon the pastor finds his efforts foiled, his plans frustrated, and his expectations disappointed, just because of the untimely interference of the preacher in the pew. A word dropped by him at critical moments has served to start an influence for evil that can never be fully counteracted. A thoughtless or evil-disposed man can go into the most happy and united congregation and begin the manufacture of trouble. If he happens to be a minister, it is very natural for the members of the congregation to counsel with him, and he enjoys frequent opportunity to become entangled in the affairs of the people. It is the part of a wise and good man to keep clear, but it is the province of a fool to act otherwise in these emergencies.

Some of these preachers in the pew are vain in their conceits, and have short memories in reference to their own shortcomings and want of adaptation to the sacred work. It not infrequently happens that the poorest of these preachers entertain exalted ideas of their acceptability and popularity, and consequently they watch with a jealous spirit the actions of the pastor. If he fails to treat them with distinguished consideration, they are at once "down on him," and cheerfully undertake the task of making him feel humble.

Happy is the preacher in the pew who can so adapt himself to his surroundings as to make only a proper use of his antecedents. Happy, thrice happy, the preacher in the pulpit who is able to satisfy all the

saits, sinners, and preachers, in his congregation, and so to manage the affairs of his parish as to be recognized by all as God's instrument in promoting the scheme of redemption, and preparing a dying people for a happy and a deathless existence in a home beyond the stars.—E. B. Raufen speyer, in N. Y. Christian Weekly.

Sermon of the Sheaves.

The hot summer day was past. A beautiful summer's night had extended itself over the silent fields. Then a sheaf arose and cried out over the field: "Let us hold a harvest thanksgiving to the Lord under the calm night sky." And all the sheaves arose and by their confusion awoke the larks and quails that were sleeping in the stubble near by. The first sheaf began his discourse: "Bring to the Lord honor and praise; for He is good and His goodness endureth forever. He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. All eyes wait upon Him and He giveth them food in its season. Thousands of years have passed over the earth and every year has gathered its harvest and prepared its food. The Lord has over-docked His table, and millions have been satisfied. His goodness is now every morning. Bring to the Lord honor and praise. Then the choir of larks sang a thanksgiving song. And another sheaf said: "Having secured God's blessing, everything is secured. The farmer moves his active hand, ploughs the field and sows corn in the furrows, but the increase comes from the Lord. Many cold nights and hot summer days intervene between the sowing and the reaping. Human hands cannot collect the rain cloud nor yet avert the hail. The Lord preserves the tiny kernel in the bosom of the earth, protects the tender shoot and ripened corn. Fear not. He has been with us. Having secured God's blessing, everything is secured." Now the third sheaf took up the discourse. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. With a sad heart a son went out to sow. Alas! his father had died and his bereaved mother was weeping at home, for the hard-hearted creditors had emptied their barns. A compassionate neighbour lent him the seed, but tears fell with the corn in the furrow. Now he reaps a hundred-fold, for the Lord has blessed his harvest. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. They go out and weep and bear precious seed, and return with joy, and bring their sheaves with them." After that a fourth continued to speak: "Forget not to do good and to communicate; for such sacrifices are well pleasing to God. Could we shoot into the houses of the rich who are now filling their barns! Could we call to that hard-hearted man who yesterday drove the poor reaper from his field! He whom the Lord has blessed should open his hand that he may resemble Boaz who exercised mercy towards the pious Ruth. Forget not to do good and to communicate!" And the quails cried out aloud over into the village as if they wished to awaken the slumbering hearts. And the fifth sheaf closed thus: "Whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he that soweth abundantly shall reap abundantly. Why wonder that tares stand among the wheat! Had you sifted the wheat before you sowed it? He that soweth weeds shall reap toil. Whosoever soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; whosoever soweth to the spirit shall reap life everlasting." And all the sheaves around bowed themselves and said, "Amen, amen."—From the German.

Growing Old.

A man may die at three-score and ten, and die all too early for his eternal peace. He has not wrought the will of God. On the other hand, a child may drop out of life, and not too soon. It had more true wisdom than the man of many years. The prediction of the prophet may be fulfilled, "And the child shall die a hundred years old." Years of time are not the measure of life. The truest life brings eternity into its embrace. There is a depth and broadness about it which time cannot span.

I think I can imagine the feeling of a man, when the consciousness that age is creeping on, first impresses itself upon him, when he says for the first time, "I am getting old; the morning of life is all gone; the best part is past. I am on the downhill side of life—only the remnant remains." A sad moment for him who lives for this world! Living for the world, and the world goes from him—the best part gone. The idol slipping from his grasp, the while the worshipper clutches it, and he has nothing besides. Withering for the grave, and yet life's real work undone, and not begun; the very purpose for which God put him into the world cast aside. A sad state, nothing more sad! What solemn, dreary things must birth-days be to such a man! So many strokes of the death-knell heard beforehand! But oh, not sad to the Christian to grow old! His work is done. The past has been given to God, the future dedicated to Him. And if he dies, immortal youth is before him. In reality, the Christian does not grow old. The earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolving, that is all; but the spirit is young. It has but just entered upon its immortal life, and it will grow young without ceasing. The clock cannot tick the moments of eternity, and that the spirit has already begun. Listen to what the late Dr. Guthrie says of his advancing years: "They say I am growing old, because my hair is silvered, and there are crow's-feet upon my forehead, and my step is not so firm and elastic as of yore. But they are mistaken. That is not me. The brow is wrinkled, but the brow is not me. This is the house in which I live; but I am young, younger now than I ever was before." O, blessed religion, which can make a man look down into the abyss of the grave, and out into eternity, with such a spirit as that.—Rev. John K. Allen.

The Empress of Brazil has given Queen Victoria a dress woven from the webs of the large South American Spider.

Sorrows and Joys.

Bury thy sorrows, and they shall rise As souls to the immortal skies, And then look down like mothers' eyes. But let thy joys be fresh as flowers, That catch the honey of the showers, And bloom alike on hills and towers.

No shall thy days be sweet and bright,— Solemn and sweet thy starry night,— Conscious of love each change of light.

The stars will watch the flowers asleep, The dowers will feel the soft stars weep, And both will mix sensations deep.

With those below, with those above, Sit evermore the brooding Dove, Uniting both in bonds of love.

Children of Earth are these; and those The spirits of Intense repose— Death radiant o'er all human woes

For both by nature are akin; Sorrow, the ash on fruit of sin, And joy, the juice of life within

O, make thy sorrows holy—wise— So shall thy buried memories rise, Celestial, e'en in mortal skies

O, think what then had been their doom, If all unshrive n—without a tomb— They had been left to haunt the gloom!

O, think again what they will be Beneath God's bright serenity, When thou art in eternity!

For they in their salvation, know No vestige of their former woe, While 'thou' them all the Heavens do flow.

Thus art thou wedded to the skies, And watch'd by ever-loving eyes, And warn'd by yearning sympathies.

—Household Words.

Change of the Sabbath.

While there are some sects that deny the change of the Sabbath, and keep the seventh day as the Sabbath, there are also some Presbyterians who say they do not see any certainty that the first day of the week is the day we should keep, but say they are doing as the rest do, supposing it to be unimportant which day they keep. Therefore, if more clearness can be had as to what day God requires us to keep, we should diligently search for it. The fourth commandment very positively fixes the Sabbath on the seventh day, and if there is not very clear evidence that the time has been changed at the coming of Christ, the seventh day must remain obligatory. But there are several hints in the Old Testament that the time of the Sabbath should be changed, such as Ezekiel xlii. 27, Leviticus viii. 23; ix. 1. The Sabbatical year, every seventh year for forty-nine years, the Sabbath on the fiftieth, the first of the next seven, have appearance of some evidence in favour of the change of the Sabbath predicted. Christ's rising from the dead on the first day of the week, his appearing to the women, then to two of the disciples, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the disciples on the day of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week, and the assembling of the disciples on the first day of the week, all taken together make a very probable argument in favour of the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Yet when we consider the positive command to keep the seventh day of the week, we ought to expect something very clear to set aside that part of the command which specified the seventh day as the Sabbath.

But, in my opinion, there is proof much clearer than any alluded to above—or all that is usually presented in favour of the first day, Sabbath—buried under a bad translation. Take the 28th chapter of Matthew. Let any scholar take his Greek Testament and translate the first verse as literally as it will bear, and he will find it reads thus: "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first of the Sabbaths, etc., evidently meaning the end of the seventh day Sabbath, and the first (or beginning) of the first day Sabbaths, coming together without a secular day between them. This certainly gives the first day of the week the name Sabbath, and by using the plural number puts the whole succession of Sabbaths on the first day of the week, and should settle the question beyond a dispute. Some one might say that the word which we translate Sabbath in the second place means a week whenever it does not refer to the Jewish Sabbath. Sometimes it means a week, when used figuratively, but a day of rest always when used literally, and we should always translate literally when the connection and the sense will admit of it. This translation is also backed by good authority; and it carries in it more proof for the change of the Sabbath than all the other proofs put together, being of itself conclusive.

If wrong in this criticism, we will be obliged to any honest critic who will make the error clear.—T., in United Presbyterian.

Home and Children.

We are all endowed with humanity more or less, and some degree of intelligence which elevates us above the common level of the brute creation; but how few of us use that humanity and intelligence in making home and children the centre of attraction. Many, very many of our homes are dark and cheerless in the inside, and the outside is no better. If every man and woman in this nation would devote at least half their time to the comfort and social enjoyments of their families, and make their homes bloom in the sun light of love, and the hardiwork of God's creation, we would have fewer prodigal sons and daughters.

Fathers and mothers, think for one moment, and let that thought be for the adornment and comfort of your home and children. Already too much of time has been spent in idle gossip, office-seeking, and political strife. Supplant these with books, flowers, and music, and occasionally give them a draught of the honeyed milk of kindness, and see what a change you will make in the desolate hearts and homes of wanton neglect. If you cannot give them wealth, you can give them an education and kindness. Let us strive to make our homes attractive, so that our

boys and girls, when they have arrived at the years of maturity, may reflect upon the past with a sweet, sad pleasure, as being the happiest period of their lives. We were all boys and girls once, and not one of us is so far removed from the hey-day of youth that we have forgotten the pleasures of childish sports. Even while I write, pleasant recollections are crowding my memory, and filling my heart with youthful vivacity. When afflictions, adversity, unrequited hopes, and unsympathizing hearts rise up before us, faint would we say, "Oh! would I were a boy again." Then let us not, like an old polar bear, crouch down in our chill abode, where the very atmosphere that surrounds us is freezing everything into an iceberg. Think how many many hundred yearning hearts are craving to be anchored in the haven of home; how many thirsty souls are starving for kind looks and gentle tones. Then let us gain the confidence and affection of our children. Breathe into their souls the spirit of love and devotion, that they may look upon us as being the bright orb of cheerful contentment, whose luminous rays are able to light up all the crannies and crevices of our domestic abode.

Sharpening Laymen.

One of the encouraging signs of the times is the large number of Christian conventions being held. Laymen are not content that the clergy shall have the only opportunity of preparing for effective work. Hence the more promising members of our churches are coming together for the purpose of gathering information and sharpening their wits. When Doctor Vincent gets hold of a class at Chautauqua, or Mr. Jacobs seizes an audience at Lake Bluff, the people wake up to their deficits in knowledge, and become ambitious for high qualification. Such conventions are valuable grindstones for putting an edge on dull faculties, and for the more we have of such grindstones, and the more rapid their revolutions, the better. We have hundreds of Sabbath-school teachers who spend the hour before their classes in talking infinitesimals, or trying to explain that which they do not understand themselves, demonstrating by their behaviour that they have more interest in the set of their glove or the fringe of their hair than in the eternal destiny of their children. Such people need a course of conventions, and to be thundered at by men who have appreciated the magnitude and urgency of Christian work. Go on, then, with all styles of healthy conventions. A convention of church sextons would do good. Let the learned and eloquent Professor Doremus by experiment show them the difference between good and bad air, and some one else demonstrate in their hearing the difference between the noiselessness of slippers and the creaking of boots.

A convention of church officers would be well, with lectures on how elders should visit the sick, and deacons take care of the poor, and how the wives of officials should not get and distribute the private affairs of the church among tale-bearers and gadabouts. Conventions, by all means; but let their results immediately be felt. Unless they have practical bearing they are merely places of useless gab. What are you going to do with all you learned this summer about the different styles of Christian work? You have heard how to drive, now take your place on the box, gather up the reins, loosen the bridle, crack the whip, and be off. In our schools and prayer-meetings and churches we shall find this winter whether Martha's Vineyard and Chautauqua and Lake Bluff amounted to anything.—Christian at Work.

Take Them to Jesus.

Burdens are numerous and heavy. What shall we do with them? Many are carrying them. Is that the best we can do? They cling to us with great tenacity. They load us down by day, and worry us by night. It is thought to be a good sign for one to become sleepless under responsibilities. A shrewd financier was asked by a bank director how they could insure the success of the bank. His reply was wise from a mere worldly standpoint. "Get a president who will take the bank to bed with him." On the same principle we should seek pastors who will take their churches to bed with them. But there is a better way; take banks and churches to Christ, cast all burdens on him, for he careth for us, and we shall have rest, and yet not lose zeal. In no other way can we escape the burdens without loss of interest and energy, but in this way we escape worry and increase our energy; sleep sweetly, and work refreshingly; feel the full weight of the burden, and find Almighty strength carrying it. We learn to live well when we spontaneously hasten to Christ with all our cares; lay them all on him, and feel that he is our wisdom and strength at all times, in all labors and trials.

The Claims of the Bible.

In pleading for a thorough mastery of this volume as the bounden duty of every man, without regard to his profession, it is enough to say that this Book is the basis of all history, for a whole generation of centuries, giving history before other history begins—the basis of literature, science, and art. Josephus says, that whereas other legislators had made religion to be a part of virtue, Moses made virtue to be a part of religion. It is idle to ignore the Book. The man who affronts independence of it can yet scarcely think, or speak, or act, without confessing in fact his indebtedness to its oracles. Yet the ignorance remains. The lawyer must surely know that all jurisprudence among civilized nations finds itself upon the elements of law as given in this Book. And the politician may as well admit, though he may not consider or care, that the pattern and principle of all good government is found in the Bible. Dean Stanley has truly said:—Many who would be scandalized at ignorance of the battles of Salamis and Cannae know and care nothing for the battles of Bethoron and Megiddo. —Rev. M. W. Jacobs, D.D.

Random Readings.

Nay, sit down and brood over trouble of any kind. If you are vexed with your self or the world, this is no way to obtain satisfaction. Find yourself employment that will keep your mind active; and depend upon it, this will foreer out unweelcome thoughts.

When a person speaks coarsely, he has dressed himself clean to no purpose. The clothing of our minds is certainly to be regarded before that of our bodies. To betray in a man's talk a corrupt imagination is much greater offence against the conversation of gentlemen than any negligence of dress imaginable.

Our success in life generally bears a direct proportion to the exertions we make; and if we aim at nothing we shall certainly achieve nothing. By the remission of labor and energy it often happens that poverty and contempt, disaster and defeat steal a march upon prosperity and honor, and overwhelm us with reverses and shame.

Whenever usefulness love is the main-spring of men's actions; wherever happiness is placed not on what we can gain for ourselves, but on what we can impart to others; wherever we place our highest satisfaction in gratifying our fathers, our brothers and sisters, our wives and children, our neighbors and friends,—we are sure to attain all of happiness which the world can bestow.

I would fain know all that I need, and all that I may. But I leave God's secrets to Himself. It is happy for me that God makes me of His craft, and not of His council.—Bishop Hale.

Most of our difficulties and perplexities arise from our discussing what belongs to God. He does not reason with us, but replies to our suspicious reasoning by displaying afresh the love of His heart, and the power of His arm.—Bonar.

CHARITY.—Proportion thy charity to the strength of thine estate, lest God proportion thine estate to the weakness of thy charity. Let the lips of the poor be the trumpet of thy gift, lest, in seeking applause, thou lose thy reward. Nothing is more pleasing to God than an open hand and a close mouth.—Quarles.

When providences seem dark, and the way before me is not plain, do I still rest my faith on the wisdom and goodness of my Heavenly Father? Do I bear in mind that this world is not the world of results, but a state of discipline and trial? And looking forward to the future state, am I perfectly satisfied that they all will be made plain? And do I strive now to be found faithful in duty, leaving to the solution of the future all that is mysterious or painful in this earthly state?

Never teach false morality. How exquisitely absurd to tell girls that beauty is of no value—dress of no use! Beauty is of value. Her whole prospects and happiness in life may often depend upon a new gown or a becoming bonnet; and, if she has five grains of common sense, she will find this out. The great thing is to teach her the just value, and that there must be something better under the bonnet than a pretty face for real happiness. But never sacrifice truth.

CONSIDER THE POOR.—Do I constantly bear in mind that, as to all I possess, I am but God's steward? And as He has commanded, do I thoughtfully and habitually consider the poor? Do I aid them only when their necessities are forced upon my notice; or do I seek out the knowledge of their wants through my personal and self-sacrificing efforts? Is my aid given in a kind and sympathizing spirit? And do I seek to do good alike to the body and the soul?

HAPPY is the man who is out of debt, let his poverty be ever so small. The evils of debt have been most forcibly illustrated during the prevailing stringency of the hard times. Many a man who had money enough to make himself comfortable has lost every dollar by having it invested in property on which he had given a mortgage which he had been unable to carry. No matter how much a man is worth, if he is heavily in debt, his life is troubled. Let every young man lay down the rule, and stick to it, never to run in debt.

WORKERS NEEDED.—The greatest lack in the church to-day is not of members, but of workers. As it has been said that "the world needs not more men, but more man," so it may be said that the church needs not more servants, but more service. It is a rare church-fold where one in ten of the entire membership is active in the work of the church. If one member more in every ten could be brought into activity, the whole world would feel the influence, and respond to the labors of the new Christian workers.—Exchange.

Those good men who are so down on innocent amusements, who discourage checkers, backgammon, billiards, and even croquet, who think that we are doing too much for our young people, who frown on church socials and all that, do not know what they are doing. If they knew where many of the young men are now, if they knew what the devil is spreading before them, they would hardly think that the church is doing too much for them; they would perchance think it wise to increase the efforts to satisfy their demands for recreation by affording them entertainments that are at least innocent and clean.—National Baptist.

The very noblest result we ever achieve appears as nothing if it be seen that the motives prompting us to their performance were unworthy. A man is admired for his industry in a good cause. Men praise him for his liberality, his skill, his energy, and pass innumerable eulogiums upon his almost flawless work. But after all it is found he is a mere self-seeker, and that he has done all for his own elevation. Immediately he sinks in the estimation of those who have given him unstinted praise, and the shadow of his own constructions are made to fall upon his name and darken all his future. Even the mention of his name will be a reproach to the achievements of his life.—United Presbyterian.