

in the same hesitating, uncertain, unbelieving way. Peter was in prison. His friends could do nothing to effect his deliverance—nothing but pray. So they assembled for that purpose. They had the promise of the Lord: 'If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.' But they did not believe it. They took some comfort in praying—as we do. But they did not expect any answer to their prayers. The thought that God might really afford deliverance never seems to have occurred to them. And when Peter, delivered by the angel of the Lord, came knocking at the gate of the house, and the startled disciples wondered what this midnight summons might mean, and the servant returned to report that Peter stood without, they laughed at her. 'You are mad,' said they. And when he persisted in his knocking, and she in her assertion, they added with trembling and underbreath to one another, in mortal fear: 'It is his ghost.' Anything was more credible to their minds than that God should have answered their united prayers.

"The promise of God is to the prayer of faith. But God is constantly better than His promise. He does not limit Himself by our expectations. He does exceedingly abundantly more than we can ask or even think. We are not therefore to be driven from our knees by our want of faith. I hear men talk as though prayer were of no avail unless we believe beforehand with assurance that we were going to receive all for which we asked. It is not true. We are not heard for our much asking, nor for our much believing, but for God's great mercy's sake.

"When the mission was first started at the Mill village, if I have understood aright, it was started on the application of the children themselves. They gathered around the school-house where the Bible class assembled. They had no expectation of instruction. When the first person came to the door to invite them in, probably half of them scampered away in fright. Did they expect all that has come? Or would any Christian worker have said, 'They shall not have a Sabbath school till they ask it, and believe that it will be provided for them?' And our Father does not wait for the prayer of faith. Like the father in the parable He comes while we are yet afar off. If we have faith enough to look wistfully and yearningly for a blessing, He has superabundant love to grant it."

And then he read, and we sang that most beautiful hymn:

"Oh! see how Jesus trusts Himself
Unto our childish love!
As though by His free ways with us
Our earnestness to prove.

His sacred name a common word
On earth He loves to hear;
There is no majesty in Him
Which love may not come near.

The light of love is round His feet,
His paths are never dim;
And He comes nigh to us when we
Dare not come nigh to Him.

Let us be simple with Him, then,
Not backward, stiff, nor cold,
As though our Bethlehem could be
What Sinai was of old."

Mr. Mapleson is very fond of music. Singing is a feature of all our prayer meetings. I have heard him say that he thought more people had been sung into the kingdom of heaven than were ever preached into it. Usually his rich voice carries the bass almost alone. But during the singing of this hymn he sat silent, leaning his head upon his hand. This silence was so unusual that it almost oppressed the meeting. When the hymn closed there was a solemn hush, a strange expectancy; it seemed as though no one dared to break the sacred silence.

(To be continued.)

THE REV. JOHN HALL, D.D.

William M. Taylor and John Hall are indisputably the Jachin and Boaz, the twin pillars, of the New York pulpit. They have stood in their places for twelve and seventeen years respectively, and have stood only the firmer and loomed the larger to the present hour. They are both Old Countrymen, the one Scottish, the other of the Scotch-Irish race, but they have thoroughly adjusted themselves to American life.

It would not be inappropriate to speak of the pastor of the Fifth Avenue Church as a new Bishop Hall, for his is the leading Presbyterian Church in this country; and his great edifice is a cathedral in size and grandeur, seating 2,000 people, and having cost over a million dollars. It is planted on the summit of Murray Hill, the citadel of metropolitan wealth and fashion, and is a massive structure of brown stone with two high towers. The audience-room is broad and lofty, with no pillars, the galleries sweeping around the entire building till they meet above the pulpit in an overhanging balcony for the precursor, which serves also as a sounding-board for the pulpit. The wood-work is of ash, elegantly carved, and, with the large, unstained windows, imparts a light and cheerful aspect to the interior. The acoustic properties of the house seem absolutely perfect. I have sat in various parts of it, and found no difficulty in hearing the slightest accent of the preacher.

In fact, Dr. Hall never makes an effort in speaking. His voice is naturally strong, and his normal action energetic. As he advances in his discourse the crisp, throaty quality of the voice increases, with a tinge of passion in the utterance. His manner, also, grows more vigorous and varied. His gestures are always simple and apparently unconscious, though never ungraceful or inexpressive. He has, however, none of the dramatic power of Dr. Taylor. I would say that his whole manner was exquisitely modulated. All pleasing and effective delivery must combine vigour with ease. Even if a torrent, as in the case of speakers like Dr.

Duff or Phillips Brooks, it must rush smoothly over the rocks, and nowhere stick or intermit its flow. Dr. Taylor's oratory, while differing from Dr. Hall's in a certain roughness of the surface, shares with it this flowing ease of the under-current. The latter's preaching always makes me think of the action of the walking-beam of a steamer, whose smoothness and quietness of motion conceal its impelling power. Like that walking-beam also, he always goes just far enough, and not a hair's-breadth farther, alike in manner and matter. There is never a sense of being jolted, or made to labour with nerve of ear or brain, in listening to him. Good speaking is, after all, essentially the same as good singing.

It is this quality of proportion which is the secret of John Hall. Many people wonder to this day why he is so successful. He has pre-eminently the genius of common sense. "He is the shrewdest man I know"; "He knows human nature as well as he knows his Bible." I have heard said of him. He never wears people by prolixity or repetition. When he has said a thing it is said, and he goes on to the next, without leaving his hearers in any dread of its ghost or echo coming back. He neither hurries you nor makes you wait for him. He is always instructive, interesting, animated, solemn, practical, winning. He never shocked a living being by an infelicity. He is direct and faithful in talking to his people, but always wise and discreet. He keeps knocking at their hearts, but never tries to hammer the truth in. He is not a blacksmith at his roaring and scintillating forge, but a carpenter pushing his keen and gliding plane over the rough surface of human nature. He never calls attention to himself by any eccentricities, or even idiosyncrasies, any more than does a fountain pouring out its clear and wholesome streams, or a plate-glass window letting in the light of heaven. His thoughts are so presented as to be not only plain to the ordinary comprehension, but level with the mental orbit of the simplest hearer. No preacher makes more thorough preparation, nor has made a more careful study of his art. But he entirely conceals the art, as well as the chips and sawdust of his work-room. There is a charming absence of any trace of self-consciousness, and he never lets his impulse or passion slip from under his control. He never preaches "into the air." He preaches the truth, not about it. He makes every one feel that he "means business" with his particular soul. His evident singleness and sincerity give an almost awful power to his words.

In personal appearance, Dr. Hall is of massive frame, with a stoop in his shoulders which gives one at first the impression that he must be suffering from a stiff neck. He was born in Ireland fifty-five years ago, his father being a plain farmer. He was educated at Belfast College, where he was not conspicuous as a scholar except in the study of Hebrew. He was not especially marked as a speaker in early life, and made his first "strike" in the General Assembly. He began as a missionary in the West of Ireland among the Presbyterian employees of the landed aristocracy. Here he also came in close contact with the Roman Catholics, whence his exceptional knowledge of that class and interest in them. His next charge was at Armagh, the place of his birth. He then removed to Dublin, and it was not till he had been some time there that he began to attract distinguished attention. He became known in this country as a delegate to the Presbyterian General Assembly from that of Ireland, and was soon afterward called to the Fifth Avenue Church.

Dr. Hall's salary is \$15,000, with a house worth probably \$5,000 a year. The income of the church is about \$40,000—the market price of the pews, assessed at six per cent., rising as high as \$6,000. But the expenses are equally great, the mission chapels requiring an outlay of \$14,000. Outside appeals to them through him have amounted to \$45,000 a day. He makes it a rule to make no personal appeals to his people for money. Their church offerings for benevolence aggregate \$100,000 a year.—Rev. F. Zabriskie, D.D., in the *Congregationalist*.

ONE AT A TIME.

One step at a time, and that well-placed,
We reach the grandest height;
One stroke at a time, earth's hidden stores
Will slowly come to light;
One seed at a time, and the forest grows;
One drop at a time, and the river flows
Into the boundless sea.

One word at a time, and the greatest book
Is written and is read;
One stone at a time, a palace rears
Aloft its stately head;
One blow at a time, and the tree's cleft through,
And a city will stand where the forest grew
A few short years before.

One foe at a time, and he subdued,
And the conflict will be won;
One grain at a time, and the sands of life
Will slowly all be run.
One minute, another, the hours fly;
One day at a time, and our lives speed by
Into eternity.

One grain of knowledge and that well stored,
Another, and more on them;
And as time rolls on your mind will shine
With many a garnered gem
Of thought and wisdom. And time will tell.
"One thing at a time, and that done well,"
Is wisdom's proven rule.

—Golden Days.

SPECIAL services were held by the churches in Edinburgh Free Presbytery, on 18th inst., in commemoration of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

A CHINESE colloquial New Testament has just been produced at the American Presbyterian Press in Ning-po, the first Chinese book in the English character that has ever been printed.

British and Foreign.

IN Geneva there is a wine shop to every seventy inhabitants.

OF the breweries in the United States nineteen-twentieths are owned and operated by Germans.

THE Pope has ordered the Bavarian Franciscans to brew no more Bavarian beer in their monasteries.

DR. JOSEPH PARKER has again tried his hand at a novel. The new venture is called "Weaver Stephen."

SINCE 1880, the receipts for foreign missions in the Baptist Church in England have increased more than 25 per cent.

THE county mission connected with Mr. Spurgeon's church is about to start a monthly periodical to be called *Saturday Night*.

THE Rev. Dr. Alexander Whyte opened Warrender Park Church, Edinburgh, built of iron at a cost of \$2,500 and to seat 400.

THE medical officers at the Brussels hospital state that eighty out of every 100 cases which terminate fatally are due to the effects of alcohol.

THE Rev. Charles M. Grant, B.D., of St. Mark's, Dundee, has a work in the press on "Bible Heathens, or Church and World in Scripture Times."

BISHOP COTTERILL, of Edinburgh, is seriously ill. An incurable growth in the cheek-bone disqualifies him from undertaking any active or public duties.

DUMFRIES Presbytery, at a special meeting, loosed Mr. Mackie, of Dalbeattie, from his charge that he may be free to accept the call to Kingston, Canada.

MR. MULLER, of Bristol, who completed his eightieth year on 27th ult., says he can work as easily with his head and pen to-day as he could sixty years ago.

THE Rev. Dr. Donald Fraser preached at the opening of the new church at Arrogat, an exceedingly handsome building, seated for 430, which has cost \$10,500.

THE Rev. James Barclay, nephew of the late Principal Barclay, of Glasgow, and minister of Mid Yell, Shetland, since 1843, has died at the age of eighty-three.

SABBATH, 11th inst., was "Children's Day" in the Free churches. It has been observed for three years past, as the congregational returns show, with eminent success.

BUCCLEUCH STREET Church, Dumfries, has been re-opened after undergoing repairs. Rev. Walter Dunlop, the humorist, was the first minister of this congregation.

AN English actuary has found out through long and careful investigations that between the ages of thirty and forty where ten total abstainers die, forty moderate drinkers die.

THE Rev. Duncan McGregor, of Chicago, gave a powerful lecture on land law reform at Greenock to a crowded audience lately, in the course of which he severely censured the Duke of Argyll.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury has sent forms of prayer for an approaching election to the Archdeacons of Canterbury and Maidstone, with the command that they be used throughout his diocese.

A DEPUTATION of students from Edinburgh University is holding a ten days' mission in Exeter Hall, London. Sir William Muir, Principal of the University, presided at the meeting on Sabbath evening.

THE Rev. John Barclay, of Greenock, when beginning the sacramental service on a recent Sabbath, was suddenly seized with illness in the pulpit and had to be assisted to the vestry by two elders.

THE late Mr. Ridgway, publisher in Piccadilly, was wont to tell of broken-down Oxford men, the victims of drink and debt, who had sought from him the employment of the boys who carry out the newspapers.

MR. NELSON'S intention to restore St. Margaret's Chapel in the Castle of Edinburgh has been endorsed by the Home Office. His generosity is also to embrace the improvement of the old Parliamentary Hall and Argyll Tower.

THE St. Giles's lectures are to be delivered this season in a number of towns in Scotland as well as in Edinburgh and Glasgow. At Stirling they will be read in the North Church by Rev. John Smith, the proceeds going to the Young Men's Guild.

THE Rev. Mr. Iverach, of Aberdeen, states that on one of the recent Sabbaths during which he officiated in the station at Lucerne, he had in his congregation no fewer than eight ministers, including Dr. Taylor, of New York, and Dr. Dale, of Birmingham.

A MEMBER of the Gladstone family corrects the error made in an account of the old North Leith Cemetery, in which it is said that Thomas Gladstone was an uncle of the Liberal leader; he was his grandfather, and was for many years an honoured elder in North Leith Church.

THE Rev. Thomas Pearson, M.A., Cupar-Fife, referring in his pulpit to the extension of the franchise, said the investing of the two millions with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship was simply an application of the law that in Christ Jesus there should be neither bond nor free, but one vast brotherhood.

LADHOCK Church, Galashiels, which cost \$22,500 exclusive of the price of the site, was formally opened by Dr. A. Bonar, lately, when a collection of \$1,565 was gathered. Special services, at which the collection exceeded \$2,000, were conducted on Sabbath by Principal Rainy and the pastor of the congregation.

A WRITER in the *Scottish Guardian*, the organ of the Episcopal Church, asserts that none of its congregations "that can get a decent Englishman will elect a Scotsman" as a minister, one reason being that the Church is now composed of "Anglicised Scotsmen who have been attracted to her, not generally by religious, but by merely æsthetic motives." The *Scottish Episcopal Church*, he firmly believes, "is the only place in all the earth where a Scotsman has got all the chances against him."