

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

PASTORS AND THEIR FINANCIAL ENGAGEMENTS.

No pastor, who expects to maintain his standing as a minister of the Gospel, and do well the Lord's work, can afford to neglect his finances. Unpaid bills have effectually buried many young men, who were apparently rising to positions of great usefulness. Promises made in good faith should be sacredly kept. Prominent among other characteristics, in a Christian's life, should be doubly refined, purely extracted Bible honesty. Every person should be strictly honest. Every Christian must be rigidly so; and no successful minister of the cross can afford to leave a doubt, well founded, in the mind of any person, relative to his strictest integrity. All business is founded upon a financial basis. In every profession money is essential to a complete success. Confidence is established and maintained among business men in accordance with their promptness in meeting their financial obligations. Every man is a financier. Every man is, or ought to be, a business manager. Every one has to do with the perplexing question of financiering. It is the duty of every person to study—carefully, too—the most practical means to a rigid economy. A very large per cent. of pastors have a wide field of study here, and varied circumstances under which to apply the numerous principles involved in its most rigid sense. If a pastor finds, after repeated efforts, that he cannot successfully manage his finances upon a credit basis, he ought to abandon entirely the credit system, and compel himself and family not to go beyond his income, and do it strictly upon a cash basis. I have known the principles of scepticism to be much strengthened in the minds of business men by the indifference of pastors pertaining to their pecuniary obligations.

A business man said to me, not many months since: "Mr. — has been owing me a bill of thirty or forty dollars for three years. I have dunned him until I am ashamed. He does not want to pay me. He gets a salary of ten or twelve hundred dollars per year, but will not pay his debts. I have not a particle of confidence in such men." I heard the proprietor of a successful business house say: "That man cannot get goods here on time, if he is a preacher—because he will not pay his debts. I am disgusted with such men."

This brings us to consider, next, the necessity of churches paying promptly their pastors' salaries. No other class of men are so perfectly dependent upon the promises of the people as the pastors of our churches.

A church calls and settles a pastor. A positive understanding exists between the two parties. The pastor has no other source of income but his church. Carelessness upon the part of the members will soon bring want into the pastor's home. Pay day, although it was thirty days off has come around; and the grocer, bookseller, tailor and landlord all want their money, and of course they all expect "the preacher to be prompt." The pastor is perplexed—almost ashamed to pass along the street; because he has pledged himself to pay his bills to-day; and now he finds it impossible to do so, because the church has not fulfilled its part of the agreement. His honour as a man and a minister, has gone to protest, and that, too, when he was doing all within his power to avoid it. He must go and make an explanation of the matter; but this does not pay the accumulated bills that are now due. In some instances this need not produce any special feeling; but in other cases the man of business will be disappointed, and in some instances will discuss, in his own mind, if not to his intimate friends, whether these statements are true or not. The pastor's standing is lowered, and it will require months, and perhaps years, to reinstate himself in the confidence of the business men in his town. This is sad, very sad! The pastor, under such circumstances, cannot study or do any other work well, because his unpaid bills haunt him by day and by night. He begins to feel that the church is not satisfied with him as pastor; and he, too, is disappointed in his expectation. His word is too sacred to him to be sacrificed in this way. He feels grieved and hurt. The church has disappointed him. Soon a watchful deacon or some good sister makes a sad discovery. The pastor does not preach so well as he did.—*Journal and Messenger.*

THE SCEPTICAL SHOEMAKER.

"I have read," said the shoemaker, "a good deal about the heathen gods, and I believe the account of Christ is taken from some of the heathen writings."

"Will you abide by your own decision on two questions that I will put to you?" said the Bible reader. "If so, I will freely do the same. I will abide by your own answers; by doing so we shall save much time, and arrive more quickly at the truth."

"Well," said he, "out with it, and let us see if I can answer; there are few things but that I can say something about."

"Well, my friend," replied the reader, "my first question is, Suppose all men were Christians, according to the account given to us in the Gospels concerning Christ, what would be the state of society?"

He remained silent for some time in deep thought, and then was constrained to say, "Well, if all men were really Christians in practice as well as in theory, of course we should be a happy brotherhood indeed."

"I promised you," said the reader, "that I would abide by your answer; will you do the same?"

"Oh yes," he readily replied; "no man can deny the goodness of the system in practice, but now for the other question; perhaps I shall get on better with that. You have a chalk this time against me."

"Well, my next question is this. Suppose all men were infidels—what then would be the state of London and of the world?"

He seemed still more perplexed, and remained a long time silent, the reader doing the same. At length he said, "You have certainly beaten me, for I never before saw the two effects upon society. I now see that where the Christian builds up, the infidel is pulling down. I thank you; I shall think of what has passed this afternoon."

The sequel was that he was fully persuaded in his own mind to give up all his infidel companions and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. But the change did not stop here. When first the reader called, he had to sit on an old, dirty chair, with a number of half-starved children sitting in their rags on the floor around him, neglected and uncared for; now they have removed to a better home in a cleaner street. Within, all is cheerful and happy. The father, no longer faithless, delights in the company of his wife and children, all of whom are neatly dressed; and his chief happiness is to read and speak to them of the things which belong to their everlasting peace.

GOD'S INSTRUMENTS.

The grandest era of the world's history was ushered in by nobodies; by persons who, like their leader, were despised and rejected of men. To any one of them it might have been said, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence."

Observe carefully that the persons whom our Lord had been employing were not only obscure in origin, but they were of a low degree of spiritual understanding, were, in fact, babes in grace as well as worldly wisdom. Their joy, when they came back to tell what had been done, was evidently childish as well as gracious. They joyed in their success as children do in their little achievements; but their Lord was thankful, because He saw the open-heartedness and the simplicity of their characters in the gladsome way in which they cried, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name!" and He thanked God that by such babes as these, such children, such true-hearted children, and yet such mere children, He was pleased to make known His Word among the sons of men. Rest assured that our Lord even at this day finds a delight in the weakness of the instruments He uses. Not you, ye scribes, who have counted every letter of the Old Testament, does He elect to be filled with the Spirit. Not you, ye Pharisees, who so abound in outward religion, does He choose to spread the inward life and light. Not you, ye Sadducees, who are versed in sceptical philosophy, and boast your cleverness, does he call to preach His Gospel to the poor. He hath taken to be the heralds of His glory men from the Sea of Galilee whom ye despise;

men, simple-hearted, ready to learn, and then as ready to tell out again, the message of salvation. Our Lord was by no means displeased with the absence of culture and learning in His followers, for the culture and learning of the period were utter vanity, but He was glad to see that they did not pretend to wisdom or astuteness, but came to Him in all simplicity to accept His teachings, because they believed Him to be the Son of God.—*Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.*

THE STORY OF A MISSIONARY.

The Rev. S. Macfarlane, of the London Missionary Society, narrated at Exeter Hall, at one of the May anniversaries, a profoundly touching and impressive story of work commenced and accomplished during the last few years in the island of New Guinea by himself and his companions, native and European. Mr. Macfarlane thus summed up his reflections upon his experiences:

"I shall never forget the first night I landed; and I should like to compare it with the last night before I left. I remember the feeling that came across me the night I landed. I could see the fires through the grove of cocoanut trees; I could hear the drums beating; and I heard sometimes the shrieks of women, I knew there was heathenism and cannibalism all around. Ah! but as I sat on the verandah of my little house at Murray Island, the night before I came to this country, you must try and understand what my feelings were then. I was coming home to my own country and family; the opening up of the mission had been mostly accomplished, and here I was sitting on the verandah of this house, and I saw a fire in the cocoanut grove, just as I had done on that night before I landed. And, as I sat there and thought of the work that had been accomplished during the six or seven years, there was a sound that came warbling up the hill—it was not the shrieks of women, but it was one of Moody and Sankey's hymns. These people were engaged in their evening worship; and after the singing of the hymn and prayer, and the talking of the teacher, there came about two hours of singing—for they are very fond of it; they know nearly all Moody and Sankey's hymns. All this has been accomplished within eight years."

The singing of these melodies, we need hardly add, was but a token of a vast and wondrous transformation. The work of Christianization in New Guinea is as yet only just begun; but already some thirty mission stations have been established, numbers of people have been reclaimed from cannibalism, idolatry, and every form of heathen degradation and cruelty; four languages have been reduced to writing, portions of the Scripture and other books have been translated, and a system of education has been started, and public worship has been established. This record is a wonderful testimony to the vitality of the Christian faith, and to the continuance of its ancient power of bringing light and gladness to the dark places of the earth.—*Sunday Magazine.*

TO HUSBAND AND WIFE.

Preserve sacredly the privacies of your own house, your married state and your heart. Let no father or mother or sister or brother ever presume to come between you, or share the joys or sorrows that belong to you two alone. With mutual help build your quiet world, not allowing your dearest earthly friend to be the confidant of ought that concerns your domestic peace. Let moments of alienation, if they occur, be healed at once. Never, no never, speak of it outside, but to each other confess, and all will come out right. Never let the morrow's sun still find you at variance. Renew and renew your vow; it will do you good, and thereby your minds will grow together, contented in that love which is stronger than death, and you will become truly one.

HOPE is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.—*Samuel Smiles.*

I HAD rather have a church with ten men in it right with God, than a church with five hundred in it at whom the world laughs in its sleeve.—*George Whitefield.*

"EPOCHS of unbelief," says Goethe, "however glittering, are barren of all permanent good." It is not your intellectual *persiflage* whoever makes anybody happy; it is faith—trust—that is the well-spring of love.