

The Wesleyan.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

"Observer," in a letter from New York to *Zion's Herald*, says: "It takes most churches about two years to get over the results of a 'big preacher.'"

It is a very rare thing for a man to stand still in mental ignorance and make progress spiritually. Some have tried it. We have never known one to succeed.—*Golden Censer*.

Has a preacher a right to shut his eyes and then blindly preach the gospel to his hearers? Or should he look all the time at the top of the house? So asks an exchange.

If you are right, and the Church is wrong in any thing, it needs you. If the Church is right, and you are wrong, you need it. So, in any case, you should be in the Church, and laboring for the Lord.—*Southwestern Meth.*

The "good fellow" with money and social position, whom the easy-going preacher fears to offend by plain talking in the pulpit, will seek counsel and help from a bolder and truer man whenever he sets earnestly about saving his soul.—*Nashville Ad.*

The *Dalhousie Gazette* hopes the attack upon the provincial treasury by the denominational colleges will be unsuccessful. Such expressions from a college which derives a part of its revenues from a legislative endowment, come with rather bad grace.—*Acadia Athenaeum*.

Archdeacon Farrar has met the challenge of the brewers with firm and manly front, they having threatened to aid in the work of disestablishing the Church if the clergy dared to oppose the liquor traffic. Speaking recently at Leeds, he said the Church of England had faced popes and kings and was not going to recoil before the threatened rage of publicans and brewers.

"When a man," says Spurgeon, "gets to cutting down sin, paring down depravity, and making little of future punishment, let him no longer preach the gospel. As for me," he adds, "I believe in a hell that is bottomless and in a heaven that is topless." It will be well for all preachers to be careful lest they whittle eternal verities to the small end of nothing.—*Christian Visitor*.

The Roman Catholic bishop of Nebraska has notified the faithful of his vicariate that he will grant no more dispensations for mixed marriages. If any of his flock wish to marry persons of other religious faith than Romanists they must make their application to Rome. This is a confession that we had not expected from such a quarter. We doubt whether it will be long confirmed to either in letter or spirit.—*Central Ad.*

A California writer in the *Index* declares that in the University of California liberality has reached the limits of the possible, and that this "institution is thoroughly and uncompromisingly secular." Among other proofs of this, he says: "There is no chapel, and there are no religious exercises." In the Faculty there are represented all shades of religious thought from Methodism to Agnosticism.

There is a story of Sparta that it will be well for teachers—especially Sunday school teachers—to remember. When Antipater demanded fifty children as hostages of the Spartans, they sent one hundred chief men instead. Two to one is a high estimate, but if those pagans paid too much respect to their children, we Christians certainly tolerate too many baby farms and Crowley folds and barred convents.

Yarmouth, the old no-license county of Nova Scotia, took the lead after the proclamation of the Scott Act camp sign. Now Oxford, the gem of the Western Peninsula of Ontario, follows. Other counties should fall into line rapidly. Not a day passes now a day without some important temperance event. Public opinion is at last awake on the subject, and not in Canada alone, but in all Anglo-Saxondom.—*Montreal Witness*.

The Episcopal Bishop of Argyle, who, before his promotion, was an advanced Ritualist, has come before the public in a rather peculiar way. During a recent visit to Jerusalem, he celebrated the communion at the Holy Sepulchre. The priests there took him to be a Roman Catholic from his dress and practices, allowed him to say mass at Calvary, and presented him with candles. This procedure by a clergyman would be improper, but what when done by a bishop!—*Methodist*.

Mr. Willis announces his intention to move this week a resolution declaring that the legislative power of bishops is prejudicial to the Commonwealth; and the *Spectator*, never backward to say a word that may cement the union of Church and State, heartily wishes to see the resolution carried, and considers the position of the bishops in the House of Peers one of those "deck cargoes" that endanger the safety of the ship.—*Methodist Recorder*.

According to the *Times* there are doubts, at least, as to the high antiquity given to the manuscript lately discovered—"Teachings of the Apostles." It appears to be disfigured by peculiarities and subtleties which discredit the probability of its having proceeded from the Apostle Barnabas, and, "if not enough to prove it unauthentic, serve at least, to show the gulf Divine Inspiration has left between the apostles and their immediate disciples themselves."

Among the books that should be more widely circulated is the *Methodist Discipline*. Every family in our congregations should have a copy. In times of awakening it is often found that persons hesitate about offering themselves for membership in the Church, because they "do not know just exactly what the Methodist Church believes on all points." Now we have no reason to wish to conceal our doctrines: on the contrary, the more widely and the more thoroughly they are known the better it is for us as a denomination.—*Western Ad.*

The *Church Guardian* has this suggestive paragraph on "perverts": "The way of the 'Vert' is hard. Almost invariably he or she returns to the true fold or else wanders into the ranks of infidelity. The latest instance is that of Mr. Hutton. Cardinal Newman, in 1879, contributed a preface to an attack upon the validity of 'The Church of England.' The Rev. A. J. Hutton, a clergyman who had been a member of the Oratory at Birmingham. Mr. Hutton has now made another change, having totally renounced Christianity."

Says the *Kansas Methodist*: "The past week a very interesting case has been tried in the supreme court in this city. John Foster, county attorney for Salina county, some months ago refused to prosecute the cases brought before him for wilful neglect of his official duties. He denied the charge, and demanded a jury. The case was tried, and after an absence of about thirty minutes the jury found a verdict of guilty of all the charges made against him. This will oust him from office."

Thirteen thousand two hundred and thirteen petitioners in Massachusetts have asked the Legislature to bestow the right of municipal suffrage upon woman. Four thousand eight hundred and sixty two have prayed for the privilege of voting on all questions relating to the control or suppression of the liquor trade. Four hundred and sixteen have asked for the equal right of suffrage for woman with the other sex. Among the signers are some of the best known and most influential men and women in the State. They will probably pray and work until their petitions meet with a favorable answer.—*Zion's Herald*.

The *New York Witness* justly observes: "It is sad to reflect upon the many crooked ways adopted to raise money for 'the cause of Christ.' Let pastors, superintendents, and Sunday school teachers think carefully over this matter, and, to say the least, permit no entertainments to be given the tendency of which is to injure the youth committed to their charge, and dishonour Christianity." Those churches which resort to such expedients either for the "amusement" of young people or the raising of money are simply pulling down with one hand, what they are striving to build up with the other.—*Evening Churchman*.

The infidels are talking in a despairing way. One has said: "After all we have done for the past thirty years, the people flock to hear these ministers and fill up their mourners' benches and anxious seats, and give their money, and we can't get any money for anything." Yes, friend; it was always so. Run over the history of infidelity, and you will see your doom. Five weeks after you are dead you will be forgotten, but the Church lives on, for it is founded on a rock, and it has prevailed; does prevail; and will prevail. Neither you nor your confederates on the one hand, nor hypocritical professors on the other, can permanently check it.—*N. Y. Ad.*

ST. PAUL ON RETRIBUTION.

But what of the world of eternal loss to which Christ had but a few years before given such appalling vividness? What has this hopeful, progressive, exultant, and triumphant apostle to say of it? We find that he treats it as men are wont to treat a truth which has reached its maturity and is now full grown and fixed beyond debate. He accepts it as serenely as our Lord delivered it. He adds nothing, abstracts nothing, changes nothing. He explains nothing, proves nothing, vindicates nothing. He handles it as a truth which has passed beyond the stage of apology or defense. It is imbedded in the groundwork of his theology. He has now only to build upon it as a foundation, and to use it as a moral force in his practical instructions.

How is it that other men are accustomed to treat principles or facts which have crystallized in a system of general belief or of social order? They treat them chiefly by casual allusion. They put them to use in practical affairs, not pausing to prove or to defend them. In our jurisprudence, for instance, the principles most firmly rooted in civilized government find no statement in statute books. They exist unwritten in common law. They are recognized as authority by courts and juries. Men build empires upon them without once putting them into written speech. So, in ordinary life, usages and precedents which have the prestige of the common consent we do not constantly restate and vindicate. We take them for granted. We use them as things which nobody assails because nobody doubts. Nobody asks for proof because nobody denies.

Thus it is that St. Paul handles the retributive teachings of the older Scriptures. He treats them mainly by allusion here and there. He assumes them, hints at them, gives a glimpse of them and passes on; but never are they contradicted; never are they blinkered or evaded. He applies them to the demands of his case in hand with the same calmness of assurance with which Christ proclaimed them in terrific symbols. No more here than there do we find apology or argument or reserve truth. Never by a word or a silence or speech askance is the idea suggested of any possible misunderstanding of those symbols. Still less is any hint given of their retraction or displacement by later revelations, or their obsolescence through unfitness to later ages.

Fragmentary allusion and practical assumption, however, are not all that the Pauline theology advances concerning retributive truth. We find two distinct affirmations which have great significance in the framework of the retributive sentiment, as it appears in the apostolic range of thought.

One is the positive declaration that life in this world without a knowledge of the Christian faith constitutes a full and complete probation. In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the chief premise, without which the argument means nothing, is the sufficiency of the light of Nature to give to the heathen conscience a knowledge of God, and therefore, an equitable moral trial. The whole force of that magnificent reasoning is invalid, except on the assumption that men, ignorant of the Christian salvation, have a "fair trial." Even under the moral obligations of hereditary paganism, man, so long as the stars glisten and the rivers flow, has that above and around him which will prove to him the living God. If he sins he is without excuse. If incorrigible in sin his damnation is just. The indignation of God is righteously displayed in his destruction.

The other declaration, equally significant and to the same purpose, is that a knowledge of Christ aggravates the retributive destiny of those who reject him. That is to say, so far as it from being essential to the equity

of moral trial, that men must be put into the Christian range of belief and opportunity; that the working of such privilege, if abused, is to augment both guilt and penalty already incurred. The Epistle to the Hebrews, whoever was its author, may be fairly taken as representative of the Pauline theology. Its argument turns in part on this pivot: "Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?"

This, in its bearing on the point in hand, can mean but one thing. Christian birth and training do not create the probation to which man is subjected here. They intensify that probation. The rejection of the Christian offer of salvation does not create the doom of incorrigible guilt, nor is it essential to the justice of that doom. It aggravates both the guilt and the penalty. Two distinct systems of moral trial are here going on. One is superinduced upon the other. The light of Nature illumines the one; the light of revelation illumines the other. Each is complete in its way. Trial under either is perfect in its kind. Guilt under either is perfect in its kind. Guilt under either is proportioned to its conditions. Punishment under either is graduated to guilt, and is therefore just.—*Austin Phelps, D. D., in Independent*.

DISCIPLESHIP.

Perhaps there never was a time when it was more necessary than at present to set forth the obligation and duty of Christian discipleship. The tendency of the period is toward religious isolation, and the loosest possible relationship to the Christian Church. We are anxious to bring over the multitude outside into the Church of God, but the fact is that within our sanctuaries are thousands who fail to enter into acknowledged fellowship with us, and we need to address ourselves earnestly to these on the power and blessedness of Christian profession. Many of these have a real knowledge of Christ and of his saving grace, but it is the prevalent notion that it is just as well to decline anything like a bold confession of Christ and to move unnoticed in the background. Our sanctuaries abound with these silent, unconfessed, but in some sense, real followers of the Master, and very much indeed would be gained if these on any considerable scale could be made to feel the virtue of an open acknowledgment of Christ. Secret discipleship is often prompted by very worthy motives, but it is none the less a profound mistake, and one fraught with gravest peril. The first Christians were strong on the question of confession; so the Church has ever in its heroic ages been definite and emphatic on the matter; so our Methodist forefathers insisted on witness bearing. In these days the teachers of the church need to point out the fallacy of drifting along with a vague character, instead of taking up a distinct position in the Christian ranks, and standing before society with a sharp unmistakable religious character. "They overcame by the word of their testimony" is truly a text for the times; men need to understand afresh that a full, uncompromising confession of Christ is a grand element of success, an essential condition of moral triumph.

All profession is in some sort an inspiration. The very act of being true to our convictions, speaking out what is in us, extolling those whom we admire, taking our place publicly with the party which has our sympathy, at once renders our convictions themselves more vivid, and enhances our enthusiasm and courage. This we know to be true in relation to religious sentiment. Whilst we conceal our religious sympathies, disguise our truest self, denying by silence our convictions, we are consciously and increasingly faint; but testifying in any fashion is an invigoration and ennoblement. And many in our con-

gregations need to be taught that they must not wait for the fullness and maturity of Christian life before they acknowledge Christ, but must testify from the very beginning of their religious life and experience. We are told of Dr. Bushnell that for seven years "he was the confessor of Christ without the power of Christ." These years were years of religious doubt and difficulty, years of dim vision and weak faith; but through all that space Bushnell felt in some degree the majesty of Christ, the authority of revelation, the loftiness of the Christian standard, and the grandeur of the Christian hope, and so he still held to the Church of Christ, and was known through his college as a Christian. At length his firm but trembling loyalty was rewarded, his doubts resolved, his heart filled with assurance, gladness and power. We need to enforce on many of our hearers that with little of the power of Christ they should still be confessors of Christ. He who acknowledges Christ as far as he knows Him will soon know him better, and ever be able to bear a grander testimony. The order is not overcome and then testify, but overcome through testifying.—*Methodist Recorder*.

AN HOUR OF TRIUMPH.

The memory of Gobat, first bishop of Jerusalem, is revived in a French work styled "At the School of God, with Jonah the Prophet." The recollection begins with his mission, half a century ago, to Abyssinia, which he proposed to undertake from Malta. But the ship's captain besought him, although he had taken passage, to wait for another opportunity, learning, as he did, that crew and passengers were bent on giving him a rough reception if he persevered. "God will protect me," quietly said Gobat. "He it is who has sent me to Abyssinia, and my errand is urgent." And so he went on board. The captain's prediction came true. In a few days the lone missionary was the butt of annoyances and enmities without number. Turks and Catholics were united in their sarcasms. Whenever he crossed the ship's bridge attempts were made to trip him up. The patience with which he bore all served but to encourage malice. One day a fire broke out, defying all efforts to put it out, and it spread close to the powder store. "We are lost," cried the captain, "the vessel will be blown up!" All was despair. Some blasphemed, others called up on "Allah," and other some on "the Virgin and the saints." In the midst of the hubbub the calm voice of Gobat was heard in prayer. Then, approaching the mast, and holding his Bible in the left hand, he read in firm tones the Luther Psalm: "God is our refuge," and so on. At this point, the flames were arrested, and the ship was saved, with every soul on board. Next morning, when Gobat came to the breakfast table, the whole company arose, and a Romanist priest, who had been the ringleader of his persecutors, stepped out to meet him. "Sir," said he, "I am requested by my fellow-passengers to beg your pardon for all you have had to suffer from them. The calm you showed last night in the face of death, whilst we were all despair, amote us with admiration at your patience and gentleness under all our unworthy mockings. Oh! tell us, we entreat you, whence you obtained that strength to look death in the face and to vanquish with love the wickedness of men!" "The hour of Gobat was come," says the author from whom we quote: "He announced that Gospel which he had lived till then, and had the joy of leading to Christ a number of the passengers, and the priest with the rest. Thus it was that the fire on board revealed to all the fact that they had a man of God among them." As we often heard an excellent preacher, now at rest, remark, "The application is easy."

INDIA.

The twentieth session of the North India Methodist Episcopal Conference, just closed, was one of peculiar blessing and power. The workers have been baptized as never before. Right from the opening devotional exercises, led by our beloved former superintendent, Dr. Butler, down to those at the close, also led by Dr. Butler, the mention of the Holy One rested upon all. There have been 1,169 baptisms and conversions, an increase over last year of 264. Over 600 members have been added, making an increase of over 200. There are now nearly 18,000 Sunday-school scholars, an increase during the past year of nearly 2,000. This great success, as far as converts and inquirers are concerned, has been mainly in Kumaon and Rohilkhand, but Oudh is now falling grandly into line. Bro. Knowles, at Gouda, in the province of Oudh, has baptized a large number, and has also gained many inquirers. The way is also opening in other parts of Oudh, and we may soon look out for great success. Dr. Butler's presence at the Conference was of great blessing. As he surveyed the position and saw all that God has wrought during the past twenty five years, he was quite ready to say, with Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' Both the good doctor and his wife have a warm place in the hearts of all the brethren. The doctor's words, as he led the devotional exercises, 'Brethren, I esteem this privilege more than any other in my life, will never be forgotten. One instance will show what our native brethren are doing; Abraham Solomon, born in 'Bethlehem of Judah,' baptized eighty-six persons during the year. He is full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Thus converted Jews are engaged in bringing these gentiles to Christ. Everything indicates a very prosperous year. We are taking God at his word, and expect that many souls will come to Christ.

POWER OF A GODLY LIFE.

The manifestations of a risen Saviour in the lives of His followers is a witness for Him before all people. The Living God is seen and known by His wonders, His faithfulness, and His love, and the world will discern that there is something among a people who love and follow a Living God which is not among those who serve and honor Him not. Laban would have retained Jacob in his service: "I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry; for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." This witness is still called forth by many a godly servant in an ungodly household, by many an upright clerk in a warehouse, by many a steward over the estate of his earthly master, by many a soldier over his dissolute companions, by many a converted child in a family at war with the "blessed of the Lord."

I asked a navy, lately converted, if the Holy Ghost had consciously dealt with him before the time he was outwardly changed. He answered, "Yes. I lived with a relative a farmer; he was a timid man, and never spoke to me directly of my soul's salvation, but I saw he was not like other men, and that he was a praying man. I heard him pray once when he did not know any one was near. I listened, and thought to myself, 'If this man, who seems to have nothing to repent of, can be mourning and crying for pardon of sin, what will become of me who do nothing but sin?' I was left in his service till his death, and then I saw him die; and this man, who bemoaned his sins, died with a smile on his lips—such a smile I never saw before nor since—believing his sins forgiven. I said, 'This is the end of a Christian. Could I die with such a smile on my face? Why, it was heavenly!'—*The Promise and the Promiser*.

Pickard Rev H. DD

105