

PULPIT, PRESS, PLATFORM.

I AM not afraid to trust the people. Put in their hands a free Bible. Give them a free pulpit, a free Church, a free ballot, a free conscience, and a free heaven. — *Palmage.*

FOR one I would have every church member who is convicted of giving bribes in elections, large or small, expelled from God's house. I would have the Church far more wakeful than it is at the present moment concerning the duty of sending all citizens to the polls." — *Joseph Cook.*

THE "Christian at Work" says: "No discoveries of science and no scholarship of exegetists will ever invalidate the claims of the Bible as a revelation of God to fallen, sinful man, teaching him his duty and destiny." That is true. Say it, and say it again. And then add, with equal emphasis, that no exegesis and no theology will ever invalidate one iota of what God teaches us through his Book of Nature. Both Books are true; both are sacred; and both must be diligently, reverently, and trustfully studied. — *Independent.*

THE Sabbath rests on the Fourth Commandment. Take away that foundation, and there is no Sabbath, except the vague and visionary one derived from tradition and physiology. Those "ten words" which God wrote with His own finger (whatever that may mean, it certainly is something supernatural) and ordered to be preserved as the central object of care in the innermost sanctuary could not have been for the Israelites as a nation, but as the Church of God. That Church is one, down to the judgment day. These "ten words" are not to be abrogated, but maintained, not always to be shut up in an ark (that would do only when the Church was national and local), but hidden in the hearts of God's people. — *Dr. Howard Crosby.*

Is it necessary or wise to issue a declaration which shall imply, or seem to imply, that the doctrinal basis of fellowship in Our Denomination is one thing and the doctrinal basis of the fellowship which we have, or desire to have, with churches or ministers of other evangelical sects is another thing. Do our Denominationalists desire to be in a narrow sect rather than in an ecclesiastical fellowship as broad as the Gospel of salvation through Christ? Does it seem to them necessary, does it seem wise, to exclude from Our Denomination, or to warn away from it, any truly evangelical churches that reject the prelatical and presbyterial theories of church government and desire to be members of the conferences in which Congregational churches confer with each other for the advancement of God's kingdom among men? — *Dr. Leonard Bacon.*

ONE of the most needed reforms just now within the Church, is that which will restore its local business credit, and make the repudiation by occupants of pews of their pecuniary obligations as dishonourable, and personally as damaging, as the repudiation of debts to the stores where they trade, or to the banks with which they keep their accounts. Those conversant with the business management of the churches tell us that there are parties who rent good sittings every year, and as regularly fail to pay. The names of such may be found on every society's books, as in arrears for their pew rent. We cannot afford to have one code of honour for "the street," and a different one, at all events, a lower one, in the church. The regular payment of dues to the ecclesiastical society ought not to rank in imperativeness and promptitude below the settlement of store or bank accounts. Defaulters in pew rents are no better than those who default in payment of house rent. — *Advance.*

AS to finding in my system and teaching very little place for the atonement and for the Saviour, I have to say that but for my belief in the atonement and the Saviour I should not preach at all. I have literally nothing else to preach. Everything else is incidental to that one great central and controlling fact. . . . God so loved the world that He gave His Son to die for it. It is the very nature of the divine soul to be atonement. It is the original, unchangeable nature of God,

interpreted in the largest way by Jesus Christ, to be the cure of sin. . . . It is the teaching of Scripture that God thinks of men, including the poorest and the least, in the proportion in which they are in need, and that He does it not because He has earned the liberty to do it but because He is God. This patience, this mercy, this tender consideration of imperfect men is not something imported into divine government by the death of Christ. It is God's nature. Atonement is God's heart. — *Recent Sermon by H. W. Beecher.*

Do not question the validity of your baptism because it was succeeded by a fierce temptation. Do not say you must have been mistaken when you thought the dove descended from heaven and alighted upon you, otherwise you could never have been subjected to this succession of thunder storms. Read the life of your Lord and Master, and find from that life that our relationships to God seem, in their outward aspects, to change suddenly and even vitally. You are a son of God, standing on the bank of the river, and you are just as much a son of God when tormented and vexed by all the forces of hell in the wilderness. Your sonship does not depend upon your moods and feelings. You are a child of God, whatever may be your momentary relationship, either to heaven, earth, or hell. Be sure of your adoption into the family of God, and then leave yourselves to be operated upon by all the discipline which is of heavenly appointment, for it works only to the maturing and the cleansing of your soul, and the ripening and sanctification of your redeemed powers. Jesus Christ was a son when the dove alighted upon Him, and He was a son when the devil set his whole force of genius and subtlety to bear upon the citadel of His faith. — *Dr. Joseph Parker.*

THE SIFTING OF PETER.

A FOLK-SONG.

"Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." — St. Luke, VIII. 31.

In St. Luke's Gospel, we are told
How Peter in the days of old

Was sifted;
And now, though ages intervene,
Sin is the same, while time and scene
Are shifted.

Satan desires us, great and small,
As wheat, to sift us, and we all
Are tempted;

Not one, however rich or great,
Is by his station or estate
Exempted;

No house so safely guarded is
But he, by some device of his,
Can enter;
No heart hath armour so complete
But he can pierce with arrows fleet
Its centre.

For all at last the cock will crow
Who hear the warning voice, but go
Unheeding;

Till thrice and more they have denied
The Man of Sorrows, crucified
And bleeding.

One look of that pale suffering face
Will make us feel the deep disgrace
Of weakness;
We shall be sifted till the strength
Of self-conceit be changed at length
To meekness.

Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache;
The reddening scars remain, and make
Confession;

Lost innocence returns no more;
We are not what we were before
Transgression.

But noble souls, through dust and heat,
Rise from disaster and defeat
The stronger,

And conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
No longer.

— *H. W. Longfellow in "Harper's Magazine" for March.*

SOMETHING ABOUT AMUSEMENTS.

How the amusements and recreations of our young people may be rendered morally healthful to them is as yet an undecided problem. What to select and

what to taboo there is no general consensus of opinion about in Christian circles. That the young will have some play is as certain as that kittens will frolic and lambs will gambol. Their vigorous nature leads them, we had almost said forces them, to some form or other of recreation. Maturity and age grow out of that playfulness to a great extent, but to youth it is essential. And he would be a wise man who was able to guide the young feet into paths of recreation where they should find no stone of stumbling, no rock of offence.

Extremists deal with this delicate subject, both in the family, the pulpit, and the press. Some allow too much. Others allow nothing, or next to nothing. How to adopt a wise mean between these extremes is the matter of difficulty! In most Christian circles denunciation of amusements is most frequent. But merely to denounce is not to render help in the crisis. The advice of Dr. Vincent on this point is very valuable. He says:

"Let us beware that we do not condemn everything that is for amusement. Let us not denounce everything that is pleasant. It is not wrong that the young want amusement. Fashion is right within certain limits. It is right that the young cultivate muscle. It is right that young men acquire intellect. I think that we shall hold our young people by keeping up the standard, not lowering it to the level of those whom we are trying to lift up. I do not denounce card playing, dancing, nor the theatre. I do not allow my children to indulge in any of these; yet they never heard me say one word against it."

If we understand the Dr. rightly, he believes more strongly in substitution than in denunciation. And in that we agree with him unhesitatingly. It avails little with the young people to be perpetually saying, "You shouldn't do this." Show them what they can do which will be healthful and pleasant to them and leave no trace of folly behind. And this leads us to say that we question if the brains of our best Christian men and women and our ministers and editors have been sufficiently exercised along this line of substitution. They have contented themselves with saying "Don't," when they should have contrived some harmless amusement as a substitute and supplanter of one thought questionable. Can it be that with all the ingenuity possessed by Christian men, they cannot discover or invent something which shall take the place of the dance the game of cards, the theatre? Is the devil richer in invention than the disciples of Jesus Christ? Must we knuckle under to him? Or can we beat him by inventing something as fascinating for the young mind but infinitely purer than his productions?

We believe that the responsibility lies heavy upon parents first, and preachers next, to indicate specific plans for youthful amusement. It is time we were done with negative teaching on this matter, and were able to come to something positive and practical. It might cost thought and application and research and patience, but the expenditure of all these and more will be little compared with the incalculable benefit of furnishing our young people with healthful and elevating amusements. This is a question which surges up against the shore of every family and every church; and the sooner its presence and potency is acknowledged, the better for the young, for the household, for the Church.

HINTS TO CONGREGATIONAL EMIGRANTS.

BY REV. M. G. DANA, D.D., OF ST. PAUL, MINN.

It is a humiliating confession to make, that a large per cent. of the Congregationalists who go west is lost to the denomination. It used to be the fashion to say that it made no difference whether those leaving the old mother churches of the east adhered to the faith and polity of the latter on coming west, or not. We are beholding now the consequences of this falsely called "undenominational spirit," in the large numbers of Presbyterianized New Englanders all over the west. We have lost the ground we might have occupied, and instead of building up churches