

A VOICE FROM THE PULPIT.—The following is an extract from a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Cumming at the Scotch National Church, Crown Court, Covent-garden, on Sabbath last:—The great hero kings and cabinets vied with each other adequately to honour; whose likenesses painters, sculptors and artists felt it an honour to embody; whose eagle eye scanned the lines of Torres Vedras, and arranged the victorious squares at Waterloo; whose heroic heart quailed at no peril and despaired amid no difficulties, because conscious of doing the right work for right ends, and in the right way. The conqueror of Napoleon is taken from us. I doubt not that, if the World has lost a hero, Britain a champion, and our Queen a servant, whose name has no plural, and his career no parallel, the "better country" has received a new subject, not because he wore a conquering sword, but because he believed in Jesus. No public man ever lived, whose life was so slightly shaped by outer influences. There is not a proof in these four-score years and four that self-aggrandizement or thirst of glory gave tone or direction to the conduct of Wellington. In this respect he stands out in perfect contrast to ancient and preceding heroes, philosophers and statesmen. Themistocles could not sleep for envy of those who preceded him or were his contemporaries; Alexander sighed for more worlds to conquer; Caesar wept because at Alexander's age he had conquered nothing; Napoleon was scorched by an ambition sometimes childish, demoniac, always insatiable; but Wellington with purity of motive, singleness of eye, and simplicity of purpose, insensible to praise or censure, followed duty only. He sought noble ends by noble means from noble motives. Fame might follow him. He had neither taste nor time to follow her."

AN ELDER'S INFLUENCE.—A single elder may do great good. It is not necessary to this that he be a man of extraordinary powers, or of immense wealth; nor must we depict him, to account for his successful services, as a paragon of moral excellence. He has his failings, but he knows them himself, and an humbling consciousness of them sheds a sobriety over his bearing, and inclines him to be respectful in his communications with others. That abuses exist, he sees and deplures; and he applies himself, but with the meekness of wisdom, to effect the correction of them, and reckons it better, in accomplishing his object, to avoid a battle than to gain a victory. He throws his soul into beneficent enterprises, and it takes the mould of them, expands to their capaciousness, rises to their altitude, and recedes to their immeasurable distance from meanness and vice. In prosecuting the cause of Christ, he is drawn more into fellowship with Christ, imbibes more of the spirit of Christ, and hence becomes more thoroughly Christian in all his views, feelings and engagements. One can mark a discernible progress in his piety. There is a ripening aversion to evil, a deepening delight in true goodness wherever found, and a growing readiness for every good work. Even his friendship, always sincere and trustworthy, evinces more of a melting kindness, a purer tone of sacredness in its sympathy, more of that exquisite tender-heartedness which rejoices with them that rejoice, and weeps with them that weep. How valuable is such a man to all with whom the providence of God allies him! What a treasure is he to a minister!—what a treasure to a session!—what a treasure to a congregation! While he lives, he does far more good than is ever suspected by himself, or shall be known to others, till 'the day shall declare it'; and, when he dies, good men carry him to his grave, and make great lamentation over him.—*Dr. King on the Eldership.*

THE TEACHER WHO STARVED HIMSELF.

WHAT is it to be a teacher? It is to bring mind to bear on mind, to train, to instruct, to control the opening intelligence of the young, to bring

them under the influence of the same spells that have acted upon us. And the Sabbath-school teacher has this additional task, without which his distinctive character is altogether lost, and his labour a superfluity—to draw the object of his care within the influence of eternity—to speak of the things that concern the future, to turn a child's inquiring eye upon the records of Divine Truth, and the revelations of immortality.

And, if mind is to act on mind, and character is to mould character, if one will is to control another will, and one intellect animate and strengthen another intellect—if this is teaching, he that teaches must be a man of power.

First, he must have somewhat to teach, and then he must know how to teach it; and, in proportion as he fails (wilfully and by neglect) in either of these, just in proportion as his mind is dwarfed, or his experience limited, so far do I say without hesitation, that the teacher has starved himself.

So, alas! did our friend; and I will tell you how. That he would teach must first learn. You may smile at this as a self-evident proposition; but there are too many who do not act upon it; perhaps because they think their knowledge much more extensive than it really is. I have read of a man who undertook the charge of a school without sufficient previous education; but, being an honest and an active man, he spent his nights in studying the lessons for the following day.

Nor needs a teacher be a learned man; all I mean is, that he must not teach what he has not learned. He needs not talk about Greek roots or Latin derivatives, when he cannot construe Cornelius Nepos; nor (much less) presume to explain Scripture when his own mind has never worked at it.

How is a teacher to learn? He should read, he should observe, he should think, he should converse.

I am now going to give you a disquisition on each of these; I am only telling you the sad truth, that in all these various sources of mental nourishment our friend starved himself.

He starved himself in reading. And yet he was not too poor to buy books; I should charge him rather with being too poor to read them, for he was poor in that gem of character, a longing for knowledge.

Look down his book-shelf. He is a Christian by profession; and so you see yonder several religious works, but the bindings are far too neat and new. Yonder is Flavel, then Goode, Bridges, Bishop Newton, or Keith, as fresh as if just from the bookseller's; Baxter with the pages not all cut, Blunt the same; Scott's Commentary (a small edition), with a few others; and a tiny cobweb running across the edges. Then you will see one or two periodicals, *volume one*: whether they died thus young it were hard to say; if they did not, it was not because he had no desire to bury them. Ask him if he has read anything new lately, and he must rub up his memory for a minute or two before he can give you an answer. He thinks there was something that had interested him, but he really cannot recall the name, "his mind is so occupied."

There is a tradition that a friend once lent him a number of our magazine; but he returned it with the remark that he thought there was nothing in it!

So it always was; and thus, instead of his mind expanding, striking out fresh roots and fresh branches, it stood still—he starved himself.

Then he starved himself again in observation. He had two eyes, it is certain; but it is a question if he did not think one of them superfluous; at any rate, he used them as though he did not know their value. Nothing short of an elephant or a flash of lightning attracted his attention, and his ears were insensible to sounds less overpowering than a trumpet or a salute. If he walked in the streets, he saw "nothing particular," no incidents, no illustrations: if he had a country ramble, he never set eyes (as he said) on any thing but the commonest forms of animal and vegetable life. The flowers were all daisies and buttercups—the plants all common grass—the birds all sparrows—the trees all elms—the clouds all black. He rest-

ed in the shade, but he never remembered the "shadow of a Great Rock." He walked by the river, but he never thought of the Water of Life, or the Pool of Siloam; the twittering of the sparrow never reminded him that man was "of more value than many" such; the nests of the swallows under the eaves never made him think of their building in safety by the altar in the temple. He never saw the sun rise; and, if he had, it would not have recalled Malachi's words to him!

No! he had powers of observation—the eye, the ear, the touch—but he starved them all!

And did he think? No; there, too, he starved himself! But let me explain what I mean; he did not *task* himself in thought. Of course, from morning to night, thoughts of many kinds were flitting through his mind, but he never took a subject up with the mental determination, "I will think this out;" and so it came to pass that, whilst many thoughts passed through his mind, very few indeed took up their abode. There was plenty of traffic, but no accumulation; a splendid repast prepared, but no feasting; as though the old device of descending tables conveyed away all the viands before he had time to begin.

But perhaps he made up for all this by conversation? Perhaps he was a diligent attendant at lectures—always present at the teachers' meetings—glad to talk over the lessons—ready and thankful to benefit by the experience of older teachers!

Alas, no! there, again, he starved himself. He had no taste for lectures; they were all so dry.

He never could attend the teacher's meetings, the weather was always wet. The lessons he had entirely overlooked—the advice of experienced teachers he thought was generally either pedantic or enthusiastic. He did not think much good came of all this machinery—let every one do the best they can.

And so he contrived to starve himself. He went on teaching for some time: for (to do him justice) he thought it a duty; but what wonder that he took no pleasure in his work? What wonder that he was dry, pedantic, careless, monotonous? What wonder that he had finished his chapter long before the close of school, and gazed at the clock till he knew every inch of its face, its spots and scars?

Would you drive an engine with no fire in the boiler? Would you roll a gravel path with a reel of cotton? Would you fell a tree with a paper knife? When you can do these feats, then you may expect a teacher to be successful who *takes no pains*.

But I have one more sad thing to say of him. He might have read with diligence—have used his powers of observation with delight—have fixed his mind in thoughtful study—have received with gladness all the help that others could have given him—he might have done all this, and yet altogether failed, for want of that blessing from above, the condition of which is that for it we must PRAY.

Must I draw aside the veil, and tell you that when the early Sabbath bell was chiming its pleasant invitation, or the starry night was shrouding the last hours of the Sabbath—when the day's work was over—when the past required pardon and the future needed grace—when the world was without and he alone before God—that *then* he starved himself?

Alas it was even so! He did not, he could not altogether neglect the Throne of Grace—the sacred page; but from the treasures of the one, and the mercies of the other, he turned soon away. A hasty glance, a short prayer, and all was over! He lingered not with the sweet psalmist of Israel, the evangelical prophet, the great lawgiver, or the loved apostle. He knew not the full meaning of the words, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."

What wonder, then, that his best friends looked on him with mournful fear? What wonder that they sought in vain for the fulfilment of the promise to the true Christian. "He shall grow like the lily, and cast forth his roots like Lebanon!" —*Church of England Sunday-School Quarterly Magazine.*