

like with him." This I know is quite incomprehensible to some excellent people.

"I am surprised, Dr. South," said the Bishop, "that you allow yourself to indulge so freely in wit when you preach." "Ah," said the ready divine, "Your lordship was never tempted in that way; God never gave your lordship wit."

Any one person in the congregation can set himself to insult or worry the preacher, and unless the disturber promptly finds his match in the pulpit the preacher is humiliated and defeated.

Mr. Spurgeon has always been perfectly appalling in his readiness to deal with insolence in the house of God. The finest case on record is perhaps one in which three young fellows came in and settled themselves conspicuously in the gallery with their hats on. In vain the officials requested them to uncover. Of course Mr. Spurgeon's eye was soon upon them, and leading his discourse round to the respect which all Christians are bound to show for the feelings of others. "My friends," he said, the other day I went into a Jewish synagogue, and I naturally uncovered my head; but on looking round I perceived that all the rest wore their hats; and so not wishing to offend against what I supposed to be their reverent practice, though contrary to my own, I conformed to Jewish use, and put on my hat. *I will now ask those three young Jews up in the gallery to show the same deference to our Christian practice in the house of God, as I was prepared to show them when I visited their synagogue, and take off their hats.*" He would indeed be a pedant and a prig who could refuse a sympathetic smile of approval, even in the sanctuary, to a rebuke so genial, so witty, and so just!

Whitfield, one hot summer's day, was preaching on the duties, yet difficulties, of self-denial, and the necessity of entering by the narrow gate, when he perceived the attention of the people to be wandering, and he suddenly let off, and began trying to catch a gnat that buzzed pertinaciously about his face. "You think it quite easy to enter the strait gate, and secure salvation. Oh! just as easy as it is for me to catch this gnat," (grasping at the insect again and again). Then, after a pause he opened his hand and said, solemnly. "*But I have missed it.*"

A cunning choice of texts has always been a favorite device with quaint preachers. Of two rival candidates for a lectureship on trial, the one preached in the morning from the text, "Adam, where art thou?" His rival in the evening capped this with, "Lo, here am I," and his ready wit won him the lectureship.

Rowland Hill's text when ladies wore their *top knots* ridiculously high, has almost become a matter of history, "top knot come down!" i. e., "Let him that is on the house top not come down!" But nothing but the exceeding quaintness of the preacher could possibly excuse such a liberty with the sense and sound of the sacred text.

But I am forgetting that your space is limited. Let me just add Mr. Haweis' closing paragraph:

When I listen to the stilted and artificial utterances that I am occasionally condemned to hear when I go out of town on Sunday, I am often reminded of Garrick's advice to a young preacher, and I would it might be more often followed:

"My dear young friend, you know how you would feel and speak in a matter concerning a friend who was in imminent danger of his life, and with what energetic pathos of diction you would enforce the observance of that which you really thought would be for his profit. You could not think of playing the orator, studying your emphasis, cadences, gestures; you would be your-

self, and the interesting nature of your subject informing your heart would furnish you with the most natural tone of voice, the most fitting language, and the most suitable gestures. What you would be thus in the parlor, be in the pulpit, and you will not fail to please, to affect and to profit."

Nor could I find any better words wherewith to close my remarks on life, spontaneity, wit and humor in the pulpit. "*Be yourself*," said the great actor; only what comes from the heart can ever go to the heart. It is far more what you *are* than what you *say* in the pulpit which affects your hearers; what a responsibility, what a solemn function to impart *yourself*—you cannot help it, you must do it, if you are a preacher at all, and not a mere puppet. Wit, humor, anecdote, everything has to take a back seat. Let them all alone to come or go, so only you labor to be what you seem. In other words exchange self-consciousness for sincerity. Be always receptive, always aspiring, always acquiring, always sympathizing, always working, always praying. You need not fear to preach if you do not dare to deceive. In the pulpit above all things, though you should be a master of wit and humor, "*be yourself*," or you are nothing.

R. J. D.

Correspondence.

LETTER FROM MR. CURRIE.

CISAMBA, May, 1891.

DEAR SIR,—Some of our people seem to be afraid that I am growing weary of well-doing, for they complain that I do not write as often as I was wont to in the past. In part they are right. I have not written many letters of late; partly because I could not; and partly because I thought the abundance of what I wrote in the past ought to have been enough to weary even my best friends. I send you herewith the substance of my report to the mission for the past year. If you think well to give it a place in the INDEPENDENT, it may help many of our people to understand how my time has been employed.

I seldom lose a number of the INDEPENDENT, and always read it with keen interest.

Yours sincerely,

W. T. CURRIE.