

Pastor and People.

Earnest Words to Preachers.

We like the ring of the following from The Christianian:-

Make no apologies. If you have the Lord's message, declare it; if not, hold your peace. Have short prefaces and introductions. Say your best things first, and stop before you get prosy. Do not spoil the appetite for dinner by too much thin soup. Leave self out of the pulpit, and take Jesus in. Defend the Gospel, and let the Lord defend you and your character. If you are lied about, thank the devil for putting you on your guard, and take care that the story shall never come true. Do not grumble about your pay. If you want more money, go to work and earn it. Let your beard grow. Throw away your cravat. If you don't want to "break down," make your shirt collar an inch larger, and give your blood a chance to flow back to the heart. Do not get excited too soon. Do not run away from your hearers. Engine drive-wheels whirl fast on an icy track, but when they draw anything they go slower. It takes a cold hammer to bend a hot iron. Heat up the people, but keep your hammer wet and cool. Do not bawl and scram. Too much water stops mill-wheels, and too much noise drowns sense. Empty vessels rattle the loudest. Powder is not shot. Thunder is harmless. Lightning kills. If you have lightened you can afford to thunder. Do not scold the people. Do not abuse the faithful souls who come to meeting rainy days, because others are too lazy to attend. Preach the best to the smallest assemblies. Jesus preached to one woman at the well, and got all Samaria out to hear him next time. Ventilate your meeting room. Sleeping in church is due to bad air often rather than to bad manners. Do not repeat sentences, saying: "As I said before." If you said it before, say nothing else after. Do not end sentences, passages of Scripture, or quotations with "and so forth;" say what you mean, and stop. Leave out all words cannot define. Stop preaching and talk to folks. Come down from your stilted ways and sacred tones, and become "as a little child." Tell stories; Jesus did and the common people heard him gladly. Relate your experience; Paul did, and you can hardly do better than he. One fact that you have seen or felt is worth a bushel of mouldy ideas dug out of mouldier books. Change the subject if it goes hard. Do not tire yourself and every one else out. Do not preach till the middle of your sermon buries the beginning, and is buried by the end. Beware of long prayers, except in your closet. Where weariness begins do not end. Look people in the face and live if you are not afraid of them. Take long breaths. Fill your lungs, and keep them full. Stop to breathe before the air is exhausted. Then you will not finish each sentence with a terrible gasp, as if you were dying for want of air, as some good people do, and so strain their lungs, and never find it out, because their friends dare not tell them, and so leave them to make sport for the Philistines. Inflate your lungs. It is easier to run a saw-mill with a full pond than an empty one. Be moderate at first. Hoist the gate a little way. When you are half through, raise it more. When you are nearly done put on the full head of water. A nail at a mark; hit it! Stop and look where the shot struck; then fire another broadside. Pack your sermons. Make your words like bullets. A board hurts a man most when it strikes him edgewise. A pound of feathers is as heavy as a pound of lead, but it will kill as quickly. An ounce bullet will kill quicker than a sack of wool. Do not condense too many words into a few thoughts. Make your discourse proportionate. If your talk is narrow and shallow, do make it short. If it is deep and strong, the stream may run longer. Do not think every brook is deep, because you cannot see the bottom of it, nor call a man a deep diver because he always brings up mud. Have a clear head and your words will be clear. Know what you are talking about; then you will make others understand you. Stand for God, if you stand alone. Keep out of the clutches of party hacks and religious politicians. Preach a straight Gospel, and live up to it. Keep your distance from sin. Do not play with edge tools, nor fool with temptations. Look to stars instead of weather-cocks for guidance. Be in earnest, but not wild. Keep open ears and a close mouth. Do not be a clown. Let the devil make his own fun, carry his own mail, settle his own quarrels, and foot his own bills. Make few promises. Learn to say no very sweetly. Keep out of debt. Do not let anyone owe you more than you are able to lose. Speak to the people like your Master, as they are able to hear. Do not feed bones to babies. Do not abuse people for believing what you once believed yourself. Respect honest convictions. Judge no man. Be patient towards all. Make friends with the children. Be cheerful with the young. Keep clear of gluttony, dyspepsia, and pious grumbling. Remember each sermon may be the last you shall preach, or your hearers shall listen to. Keep the judgment in view. Please God and you will please Christians. Let others praise you. Live for Christ. Preach the Word.

Singing All Together.

BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

Church music has been greatly hindered by bitter discussion. Some liked organs, and some hated them as an invention of the devil. Some liked in church a "bass-viol;" and others rose up crying, "Out of the house of God with that fiddle!" Some would have the tune dull and lifeless and dreary, while others would have it wreathed into fantastic, branching out into jets and spangles of sound innumerable, rolling and twisting into most surprising convolutions, as in displays of fireworks long after you think the piece is exhausted, it bursts into other wheels, rockets, blue-lights, and serpentine demonstrations. Some would have an instrument played only in the interstices of worship; and then with unappreciable gentleness; while others are not satisfied unless all through the service they hear startling contrasts, quick spazzatos, and staccato passages, that make the audience jump with strained eyes and hair on end, as from a vision of the witch of Endor.

Others have contended that the singing of the church should be done by delegation. Now imagine a few of Heaven's choicest spirits deputed to do the singing for the Upper Temple. They are gathered in one place! One! Two! Three! Four! Yes, just a heavenly quartette! With subdued and almost inaudible sweetness it will begin. Hark! they have begun! No! they have not! Yes, they have. Thrones and principalities be silent! Hush, David! though thou art the sweet singer of Israel! Saint Paul! be still, although thou hast received the crown of rejoicing. Richard Baxter! hold! though this is "The Saint's everlasting rest." Capital music! But such propriety cannot long be kept. "Hallelujah!" cries a soul from the altar. "Praise the Lord," sings a martyr from among the trees of life. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory!" cry a thousand redeemed voices. A myriad spirits catch up the songs of Moses and the Lamb, and the hundred and forty and four thousand break forth into rejoicing. See how the palms wave. Look how the thrones quake. Stop that loud singing. All out of taste. Stop! But they will not cease. You might as well try to drown the thunder of the skies, or beat back the roar of the sea; for verily I believe that every saint in heaven has resolved to do its own singing.

Within the last two or three generations the Psalmody of the Church has become more artistic and correct, but in unanimity of performance it has retrograded. I have been told that in olden times everybody sang, and not with tooth shut, the tune strained out thin and weak, but with mouth opened and the enthusiasm of the battle-shout. When they were thoroughly cheerful they sang "Colchester." Were they meditative, then the clap-boarded meeting-houses rang with "South Street" and "Saint Edmonds." Were they smitten with deep tenderness of soul, then they sang "Woodstock." Were they confident in the honor and progress of the Church, then they sang "Ariol." But here we sit and hum ourselves to sleep over themes about which the angels of God cannot keep their composure.

It shall not always be so. I imagine that there is a magnificent tune yet to be composed. I know not who shall do it. But it will be in the last days of the Church. From all the national airs of the world the most triumphant strains shall be gathered for that one tune; and from all the innumerable chants and anthems that for hundreds of years have been the delight of Christendom there shall be collected the most thrilling passages of music to be set in that one great harmony; and the most jubilant expressions of heaven's joy shall be brought down to pour their richness into it, until genius and piety and rapture and heaven itself can add no more to the glory and pomp of that one tune. All nations shall learn it. The universe shall sing it. Covering every mountain and stretching through every valley of the redeemed earth shall stand a great choir; and when Christ shall give the signal for the beginning of earth's last great song of triumph, from the groves of India, and the cities of China, and the jungles of Africa, from all islands, from all zones, from all continents there shall ascend a sound of exultation in which the armies of heaven shall strike their cymbals of victory. Until that great harmony shall have some better name, I will call it "THE GRAND MARCH OF THE CHURCH MILITANT!"—The Christian at Work.

Advantage of the Pew System.

Somewhere near Boston is a Church, whose pastor has become so distasteful to the people, that a general desire for his removal was manifested. The matter of his retention or dismissal was to be decided (after a long and bitter discussion), by a vote of the church. To the surprise of most of the people, who expected an overwhelming vote against him, the result was a majority of one! The thing was so strange that inquiry was set on foot as to how the result was brought about. The voting was according to pews; each pew counting one vote.

Investigation revealed the fact that the pastor's father-in-law had suddenly become the owner of a number of pews, which he put in other people's names. In fact he had bought up all the cheap pews in the gallery, so as to vote for the continuance of the young man. On being interviewed, he frankly admitted having done so, and he added that business was business, and that this was a clear business transaction. He knew that the young man was not very acceptable, but he had him on his hands to support, and wanted a place for him. If he did not like it, he was very sorry, but hoped they would make the best of it.

They said they thought he had the best of them. It is more than likely that a proposition to abolish the pew system in that church would meet with the most lively approval of a large part of its membership.—Christian at Work.

Christianity of the South Sea Islands.

The Rev. Dr. Nesbit, of Samoa, addressing a committee of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, gave an interesting account of the mission work of the London Missionary Society in the South Sea Islands. He stated that he had been a missionary in Polynesia for about thirty years. Sixty years ago every island in Polynesia was under the spell of heathenism. There were now about 400,000 Polynesians who professed Christianity, who had been reclaimed from heathenism, and from many of whose islands cannibalism had been extirpated. Had Christian missions been a success in Polynesia? It must be borne in mind that these missions were still in their infancy. Their converts were children. It could not be expected that they would develop the same exalted standard of moral excellence and moral communities. In these latter communities Christianity was the growth of many ages. The Samoan group comprised ten islands, large and small, having a population of 85,000. European missionaries took up their abode in these islands 80 years ago. Then the Samoans were a heathen, barbarous people, without any written language. Heathenism had been rooted out from among the Samoans as a people. The 84,000 Samoans were a professedly Christian people. Ordinances of religion were observed, and there were schools in every village. The people were a church-going people, both on Sundays and week-days. The Bible had been translated into their language, and they had an increasing Christian literature. From Samoa the Gospel was being sent to regions beyond, and the voluntary Samoan contributions to the cause of Christianity averaged upwards of £1,000 a-year. About 80 Samoan students were now in the training institution there, which institution sent forth some 20 students yearly. The students had spread far and wide for the purpose of teaching Christianity among the islands of the Pacific and their teaching had been very effective. He then alluded to the kidnapping trade. From one of the Pacific islands lately occupied by the missionaries, a thousand inhabitants had recently been taken away. Since one of the teachers had been stationed at another of these islands, about three years ago, 80 men had been taken from that island by labour expeditions. He could hardly trust himself to speak about the abominations of this labor traffic. At last, however, this traffic was to receive a death-blow. Polynesia had great and special claims on the churches of Australia; and he might state that it was for the commercial interests of Australia to open up and maintain a trade with the Polynesian islands. The Samoan imports and exports alone ranged from £50,000 to £100,000 a-year. If Australia reaped the benefit of Polynesian earthy things, surely Australians should endeavor to make the Polynesians partners of their spiritual things. With regard to New Guinea, he said that a mission had lately been established on that island, on which there was a population numbering 1,000,000. A very encouraging beginning had been made there. There were other large islands near New Guinea, which, it was hoped, speedy efforts would be made to Christianize.

Honorary Degrees.

"Honorary degrees" originated about the middle of the twelfth century, during the pontificate of Eugenius III., and were primarily intended to encourage a deeper study of the canon laws and doctrines of the Romish Church—at that time the prevailing religion of the world. Bower, in his History of the Popes, vol. 2, page 484, says that:

"In the times of Eugenius III. was made by Gratian, a native of Chiusi in Tuscany, and a monk of the monastery of St. Felix in Bologna, the famous Collection of Canons that form the canon laws" (of the Church of Rome.) "That collection was first published in A.L. 1151; and Eugenius ordered all causes to be tried in the ecclesiastical courts by the canons it contained. He likewise instituted, in order to encourage that study, the degrees of bachelor, of licentiate, and of doctor—degrees mentioned by no writer before Gratian's time. But they were soon after introduced" (into the divinity school) "at Paris by Peter Lombard, commonly known by the name of 'the Master of Sentences,' and bestowed upon students in divinity as well as in canon law. Gratian collected all the ancient canons, and Lombard all the sentences" (religious dogmas) "of the ancient fathers, whence he was distinguished with the name I have mentioned. Both flourished at the same time, but were not brothers, as some have pretended, the one being a native of Chiusi in Tuscany, and the other of Novara in Lombardy. Peter Lombard, whom we may also stye the author of school divinity, was, after he had taught divinity for several years in Paris, preferred to that see; but resigned and died A.D. 1164."

Thus does it appear that "honorary degrees" and "schools of divinity" have much the same antiquity, and were intended to convey the same useful purpose, a deeper acquaintance with indispensable learning.—A. W. Chamber.

A Little Hero.

A gentleman, while passing through a street in New York, heard a child's voice from a basement, crying, "Help! help!" He ran in, and found a little five-year old boy holding a bed-blanket around his sister, two years younger, who had caught her clothes on fire, and the little hero had succeeded in putting out the flames. The boy, in answer to the question why he wrapped the bed-blanket around his sister's burning clothes, said his ma had told him that was the best way to put out fire, and as to why he cried "Help! help!" that he was afraid he could not do it, and wanted some one to help. He was then asked why he did not leave his sister, and run into the street, and cry for help. He answered with tears in his eyes, "No, I never would have left her. She was my sister. Had she burned up I would have burned too."—Child's World.

"I Take the Other Hand."

On a lovely day in the commencement of Spring, a young lady, who had been anxiously watching for some weeks by the bedside of her mother, went out to take a little exercise and enjoy the fresh air, for her heart was full of anxiety and sorrow. After strolling some distance, she came to a rope walk, and being familiar with the place, she entered. At the end of the building she saw a little boy turning a large wheel. Thinking this too laborious employment for such a mere child, she said to him as she approached:—

"Who sent you to this place?"
"Nobody, ma'am, I came myself."
"Do you get pay for your labor?"
"Indeed I do; I got ninepence a day?"
"What do you do with the money?"
"Oh, mother gets it all."
"You give nothing to father, then?"
"Do you like this kind of work?"
"Oh, well enough, but if I did not like it, I should still do it that I might get the money for mother."
"How long do you work in the day?"
"From nine till twelve in the morning, and from two to five in the afternoon."

"How old are you?"
"Almost nine."
"Do you ever get tired of turning this great wheel?"
"Yes, sometimes, ma'am."
"And what do you do then?"
"Why I take the other hand."
The lady gave him a piece of money.
"Is this for mother?" asked the well-pleased urchin.

"No, no, it is for yourself, because you are a good little boy."
"Thank you, kindly, ma'am," returned he, smiling, "mother will be so glad."

The young lady departed and returned home, strengthened in her devotion to duty, and instructed in true practical philosophy by the words and example of a mere child. "The next time duty seems hard to me," she said to herself, "I will imitate this little boy, and take the other hand."—Kind Words.

"Almost Up."

"Almost up—almost up!" was the cry of the wounded sergeant, as they laid him down on the battle-field, and watched tenderly his dying struggles.

"Where did they hit you, sergeant?"

"Almost up."

"No! sergeant, but where did the ball strike you?"

"Almost up," was the reply.

"But, sergeant, you do not understand—where are you wounded?"

Turning back the cloak which had been thrown over the wound, he showed the upper arm and shoulder, mashed and mangled with a shell. Looking at his wound, he said: "That is what did it. I was hugging the standard to my blouse, and making for the top. I was almost up, when that ugly shell knocked me over. If they had let me alone a little longer—two minutes longer—I should have planted the colors on the top—almost up, almost up!"

The fight and the flag held all his thoughts. And while his ear was growing heavy in death, with a flushed face and look of ineffable regret he was repeating: "Almost up, almost up!"

"Almost up." Christian, what is your ambition? Does the battle and the flag fill your thoughts? Oh! when Jesus leads his army forward, and his promises are yours, and victory is sure, are you, can you be forgetful of the conflict, and too much occupied in making money and enjoying the pleasures of the world, to take up your cross and follow Jesus in saving souls and redeeming a lost world?

"Almost up!" Let this be your cry in life, and your joyful shout in death; and then from the battlements of heaven you shall watch the battle, and swell the anthem of victory as the last stronghold of Satan is captured, and earth echoes back the angels' song: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to man."

Instant in Prayer.

Speaking of prayer, at the anniversary of the London Missionary Society, Mr. Spurgeon said, "Oh for more prayer! I had an odd illustration of its power the other day, in Italy. In hotels there, there are little ivory buttons in the wall upon which you put your finger. They communicate with electric wires which ring the bells down stairs. A friend came in to tea with us, and I put my finger on the button, but nobody came. 'Now,' said my friend, 'I will put you up to a wrinkle—keep your finger on the button. If you put your finger on it, it rings the bell; but if you keep your finger on the bell will keep ringing down stairs.' Well, I did so, but even then the waiter did not come. At length my friend said, 'We have a couple of bed-rooms here; I will go into one, and your friends into another; let us ring all three bells, and then we shall not fail to fetch up all the waiters of the hotel.' So we put our fingers on the three buttons, and kept them there, and I warrant you, that the passage was soon full of waiters tumbling over one another. They thought that the whole house was on fire. We simply explained to them that the ringing of one bell did not do, so we thought we would ring all three, and found it a capital plan; but if they would only come more quickly another time we would do it no more. Every man that prays, rings a bell in heaven! If two of you agree as touching anything concerning the kingdom, it shall be done unto you. There is no resisting it. If every man and woman here would begin to put their fingers upon the bell, the electric communication between earth and heaven, it would awake the very angels, and bring them down with untold blessings upon the church and upon the world."

Free Church of Scotland Missions.

From the "Statistical Abstract of the Free Church of Scotland's Missions," published in The Monthly Record, we have branch stations in India and 33 in South Africa; also 18 European missionaries in India and 6 in Africa. The total number of Christian agents in the two lands is respectively 172 and 63. Communicants in the native churches in India number 731, in South Africa 1,248. Total number admitted to the church since the commencement of the mission is: In India, 1,254; in South Africa, about 2,600. During the year the number of adults baptized or admitted to the church on profession of faith was: In India, 62; in Africa, 50. The members received from other stations were respectively 23 and 58, making a total of 85 and 117 new members; while those removed either to other churches or by death or suspension amount to 46 and 119 in the two missions. The number of schools sustained by this church in India is 121, in South Africa 29, in which 8,135 and 1,838 scholars respectively receive instruction. In regard to the colonial field it is reported that there are 859 congregations outside of Great Britain, with which the Free Church is more or less connected. Of these four are in Europe—at Odessa, Gibraltar, Madeira, and Malta; six are in Asia—at Calcutta, Simla, Bombay, Penang, Singapore, Batavia, and Rangoon; five are in Africa—at Capetown, King Williamstown, Durban, Pinetown, and Pietermaritzburg; while the rest are in America and Australasia. In the course of last year the Colonial Committee sent out twenty-four men to the colonies, most of whom will be engaged more or less in missionary work—13 to Australasia, 9 to America, 1 to Capetown, and 1 to Penang. The Committee for the Conversion of Jews employ 1 missionary at Amsterdam; 1 at Breslau; 1, with 4 teachers and a porteur, at Constantinople; 2 missionaries, with six teachers, a medical missionary, and a colporteur at Pesth; and 2 missionaries, 2 teachers, and a colporteur, at Prague; making a total of 7 missionaries, 12 teachers, and 3 colporteurs employed in behalf of the Jews. Besides assisting the native Protestant churches with grants, the Free Church sustains 13 stations of its own on the Continent. 2 of these, Nice and Montono, are in France; 6, Leghorn, Florence, Genoa, Naples, and Rome, are in Italy; 3, Montreux, Interlaken, and Lucerne, in Switzerland; 1, Stettin, in Germany; 1, Lisbon, in Portugal; and 1, Cadiz, in Spain. In most of these stations, although the efforts put forth are directly in behalf of the foreign residents, indirectly much influence is brought to bear upon the natives themselves.

Random Readings.

As the soul advances in the life of God, its natural or selfish movements decrease; and it depends less on the emotional exercises, and there is really less variation of the emotions.—Guyon.

It is no disgrace not to be able to do everything; but to undertake, or pretend to do what you are not made for, is not only shameful, but extremely troublesome and vexatious.—Plutarch.

Most people drift. To do this is easy. It costs neither thought nor effort. On the other hand to resist the tide one must have principle and resolution. He must watch and pray and struggle continually. And yet no thoughtful person who cares for his own soul will dare to drift.

A devoutly pious man, who lived some six miles from the house of worship, once complained to his pastor of the distance he had to go to attend the public worship. "Never mind," said the good minister; "remember that every Sabbath you have the privilege of preaching a sermon six miles long—you preach the Gospel to all the residents and people you pass."

Luther's portrait of a good preacher:—He should be able to teach plainly and in order; he should have a good head; should have good power of speech; he should have a good voice; he should have a good memory; should know when to stop; should be sure of what he means to say, and should study diligently. He should be ready to stake body and life, goods and glory, on its truth. He must suffer himself to be vexed and criticised by everybody.

It hath been the advice of some spiritual persons that such as were able should set apart some certain place in their dwellings for private devotions only, which, if they constantly performed there, and nothing else, their very entrance into it would tell them what to do in it, and quickly make their chamber-thoughts, their table-thoughts and their jolly, worldly, but much more their sinful thoughts and purposes, fly out of their hearts.—South.

A recent traveller says: "What always impresses me more than anything else, in Egypt and Palestine, has been the entire absence of cheerful and exhilarating music, especially from children. You never hear them singing in the huts. I never heard a song that deserves the name in the streets or houses of Jerusalem. One heavy burden of voiceless sadness rests upon that forsaken land. The daughters of music have been brought low. The mirth of the tabernacle ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth; the joy of the harp ceaseth!"

I am not afraid that in this contest between truth and error, truth will be worsted. I am not afraid of error if we place close beside it the truth. Let error run, urged on by skeptic shout and transcendentalist's spur; let it run! God's angels of wrath are in hot pursuit, and quicker than eagle's beak clutches out a hawk's heart, God's vengeance will tear it to pieces! Let it run, if you only let truth run along with it. In this great fight between right and wrong, the right will conquer as sure as that God is stronger than the devil. The church has never lost anything by generous advocacy of the truth, and we cannot have our own rights of religious belief respected, unless we respect the rights of those who differ from us.—Deeher.

ADROIT SUGGESTION.—At the great meeting in London to protest against the revival of the confessional in the Church of England, Lord Shaftesbury suggested that female confessors be appointed, a plan which, "if put into practice, would break up all confessional boxes in six weeks." His Lordship must evidently believe in the old heresy that women cannot keep secrets!

HEATHENISM.—The number of heathen temples in the city of Benares, India, is said to be nearly fifteen hundred, besides which there are large numbers of smaller shrines. The number of idols is reckoned at half a million, more than two gods for every inhabitant of the city! "How great is their darkness!" A correspondent of the Christian Intelligencer affirms that, notwithstanding these facts, Hinduism is every where slowly losing its hold on the faith of the people.