

*cadit questio*, you cry. Not at all. There is, as with Martha, one thing needful, which nullifies all the rest. There is a pin missing in the machinery; the key-stone is wanting in the arch. The defect may be expressed in the one word, *character*. A member of a council or board will not generally ask himself, "Is this right or wrong?" and act at all cost as his conscience dictates; but will say to himself: "How will this help me or mine; will it put a weapon in our hands; will it increase our influence, salary or dignity, etc.?" And then with honeyed phrases argue accordingly. It may seem unkind to say so. On this rock many a good scheme has been wrecked—rather than be, or even seem to be, unkind, we steer a course which we know is not the true one, till we crash into the breakers. Or, to change the metaphor, we may call the dentist unkind when, with unrelenting grip on his cold, steel forceps, he wrenches a molar from our agonized jaw! Yet it is childish to do so. No, facts and sentiment are often best kept apart; and it is a simple fact that the native church is not fit for self-government for *lack of conscientiousness*; and as to putting a missionary under the control of such petty councils, one might as well put a collector under the control of his Taluk Boards. It must not, however, be concluded from what has been said above that on such councils there are no exceptions, for there undoubtedly are such. But not only do "exceptions make bad law," but they make bad laws, or, in the case of these councils, bad rules.

It is always a dangerous thing to ignore the lessons of history. We know that every one of St. Paul's churches in Asia Minor relapsed, leaving not a trace behind, and we know from St. John's Revelation the reason why. Again, we learn from Lord Roberts that the two fatal errors which led up to the Indian mutiny were the old age of the administrators and an over-confidence in the native officers. We know also the feelings that prompted the Poona murders and the disloyalty of a portion of the Bombay native Press. A missionary who knows these things, and also knows the mind of the native church, cannot help feeling alarmed. Until religion becomes less superficial, till mission agents are willing to lose rather than gain by adopting their profession, till there is more self-denial, whole-heartedness, and above all more conscientiousness, till the clerical life, as a Bishop lately remarked, becomes a "vocation instead of a profession," we cannot be too cautious and must take *festina lente* as our motto. It is worse than useless for us to shut our eyes to the fact that there is much disloyalty and much love of money. The ever decreasing funds and the ever increasing salaries have already put a rope round the neck of the infant church which bids fair to strangle it.

Next comes Evangelization. This is *par excellence* real missionary work, and is also the most difficult branch of that work. To teach a B. A. class in English is a very simple thing compared with haranguing a mixed, and sometimes hostile, crowd in Tamil. It may seem easy enough work for a native, but all depends on the way in which it is done. A pastor or catechist, who may be a graduate and one who has passed in theology, will often speak for half an hour without saying one word that will reach the heart of his audience. Ask him (*e.g.*) to give an address on the Fall or Ten Commandments as a preparation for another person who will speak on the Atonement, and he will probably miss every point that ought to be made, such as (say) the meaning of the word "sin" from the Hindu and Christian point of view. The Fall is to him a tale to please the ears, not the starting point for the whole system of the Redemption. Another difficulty is to be ready with an answer to objections after the addresses—the objector's aim being not to ascertain the truth but to puzzle the speaker. Experience is the only school to learn such work in, and with it of course must be coupled intense earnestness to carry conviction and an utter disregard of self. A catechist who can do this work in this way is invaluable to a missionary. Of course plenty of objections can be raised to this method of evangelizing, but the necessity remains and the results are undeniable. Immediate results, however, are not to be expected. Instances could be quoted of the seed on good ground, taking from fifteen to twenty years to grow. The C. M. S. has an admirable rule requiring candidates for Holy Orders to learn their practical work in this rough school before passing to the theological college for rhetoric training. The S. P. G. lays less stress on this work, and spends comparatively little money on this most important branch, in spite of its name. It is imagined that every clergyman and catechist will do evangelistic as well as pastoral work; but as a matter of fact he can do little or nothing single handed. For every ten people he can collect, a regularly organized staff will get a hundred. At lantern exhibitions it is not uncommon for the latter to have an appreciative audience of from one to two thousand.

Undoubtedly, this kind of life is very trying to both body, mind and spirit, but it is of the very essence of missions. "Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel," said the greatest of all missionaries. A great deal of roughing it must be put up with—travelling across country in a blazing sun or drenching rain, fording swollen rivers, sometimes going without food for many

hours, and so on. Of course the English missionary must set the example and lead the way, however trying he finds it in such a climate as this. Let me bring this article to a close with an illustration. One may have had three, four or five addresses to deliver in the course of the day, to have had to ride or tramp miles across the fields and to wind up with a late dinner at 9.30 before tumbling off to sleep. Then suppose you are awakened (as the writer sometimes has been) in the dead of the night by a cold, slimy thing moving over your face. That is a wet tent giving you notice that it shortly proposes to fall all in a heap with you inside, if you are not smart. It is a way tents have. When they are pitched the ground is hard and dry, and the pegs won't go in properly. Then at midnight the wind gets up and the rain comes down in a desperate hurry. Soon the pegs yield as if they were stuck in butter, and one side of the tent begins to sway and reel about as if it were not quite sober. It is then that you wake up—or rather, that I did. The servants pulled, and hammered, and jabbered, and hammered again, and finally gave it up in despair. Then they slipped off one after another to the village "to call ten men." I knew what that meant. It meant that they would not be back under half an hour at the least, and that if the tent had really made up its mind to collapse, it would not wait half an hour for ten men to come and prevent it. The hour for spirited action had arrived, the chokra, who remained and who had got more water without than spirit within, found there was a trifle too much action in "master" to suit his taste. Suffice it to say that master, clad in part of a bicycle suit, promptly "went for" those pegs and slammed for all he was worth. Then as the wind tore along and the rain came down in regular Niagara style, the lantern must needs blow out. Splash and slip up and down in the slush; grope about for matches in the wobbly, slimy tent; then again slam—slam—slam till the thing was done. All the main ropes were secured, and by the time sleep was beginning to creep back again, the storm had passed away, and the ten men (resolved into one) came to counter around, inspect the work and tie up useless ropes.

Cold shower baths in the middle of the night and such like adventures are good enough to laugh at when they are over, but at the time when they occur they cannot be called pleasant.—Madras Mail.

### Echoes From British Pulpits.

W. H. WARREN.

To give a Canadian's impression respecting British pulpits and preachers is the aim of the present article. It is scarcely necessary to speak of the genuine pleasure two pastors from the Maritime Provinces experienced in wandering at their sweet will among churches of various evangelical denominations and listening to the gospel as it is preached by English and Scottish divines. We commend this privilege to other brethren in the ministry.

That our kinsmen beyond the Atlantic are a church-going people is very obvious to even a casual observer. In all directions we noticed that the congregations were encouragingly large. The pulpit seems to maintain a strong hold upon the masses. The forms of religious service, however, appear to show more distinct differences than among our Canadian churches. Here these differences are minimized by the intermingling of all classes in each denominational organization. But in England the great lines of separation seem to be intentionally emphasized by the more prominent religious bodies. The Establishment seems to take special pride in running its ritualism to the utmost extremes; whilst Dissenters are as zealous as their Puritan ancestors in showing their antipathy towards this ostentatious ecclesiastical display.

The great cathedrals and abbeys were, of course, visited by our party, and the imposing services participated in with becoming solemnity. We were much awed by the dim religious light, the grand symbols with which superstitious art has embellished these sanctuaries, and especially by the gorgeous ceremonials connected with the services. Amid showy robes and glittering furnishings we could not keep from our minds the suggestive words of the inspired historian who, in Acts 28: 14, quietly but significantly remarks, "And so we went toward Rome." Without any prophetic vision or inspiration we may safely predict a serious cleavage between the upper and lower strata of the national church.

The splendid performances in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral are certainly impressive. But it was plain to any observer that the restless audience did not to any considerable extent join in the exercises. People came and went during the services much the same as they do at ordinary exhibitions. There did not appear to be any marked spirituality in the ceremonies. And, so far as we could form any opinion, this condition of things seems to characterize the services of all churches of the same faith and order.

Among non-conformists we met something more pleasing. Rev. Thomas Spurgeon preaches to a congregation of three or four thousand who listen

to his earnest words with the most marked attention. The stillness of the great assemblage, the manifest interest taken in the preacher's words, and the heartiness with which the entire multitude join in the service of praise give unmistakable evidence of the spirituality pervading the dissenting classes. Non-conformist congregations generally bear the stamp of this higher type of religious life.

More than once it was our privilege to listen to the fine discourses of Dr. Clifford, who wields a powerful influence in western London. Possessing a highly cultured mind and a perfect mastery of the English language, he speaks with a clearness and energy unsurpassed by any other preacher. He grapples fearlessly with the errors and shams of the present age, and with keen lance punctures the specious sophistries of modern religious adventurers. He has long held his present pastorate, nor does he show any signs of losing the confidence and esteem of his people. We were led to wonder whether the elder Spurgeon would now be disposed to regard Dr. Clifford as a leader in the "down grade" movement.

In Dr. Joseph Parker, of the Temple, we recognize a speaker of marked versatility and strength. His brilliancy surprises and dazzles sedate Canadian parsons. We are captivated by his new and striking interpretations of Scripture; but we sometimes more than fear that he sacrifices truth to his love of novelty and to his passion for making things appear different from what we thought they were. But he holds a vast congregation with a firm grip, and his printed works are exercising an influence for good over the wide world.

At Regents Park, where the Baptist church can easily be mistaken for a private residence, we had the pleasure of hearing our American Dr. Lorimer. His audience was such that but little space remained unoccupied in any part of the building. His sermon was a typical American effort—loud, spicy, serio-comic and brilliantly sententious. The audience laughed and stared by turns, as though they scarcely knew what to make of such a speaker. Dr. Lorimer's voice has become badly shattered by unnecessarily loud public speaking. But he is a marvellous man in his way, a pulpit hustler who will always get a hearing in any part of the English-speaking world.

In our rounds among the churches we did not intentionally pass by any evangelical denomination. We heard several admirable Presbyterian sermons, and a number of the warm, earnest discourses characteristic of the Methodist body. The limits of this brief article forbid any attempt to particularize in relation to either speakers or congregations.

While in Edinburgh we had a still larger number of eminent divines. Among these was the well-known Dr. Newman Hall, now almost eighty years of age. He retains much of his early vigor and tenderness, and his touching sermon resulted in leading about a dozen persons to rise for prayer in a meeting immediately following the preaching service. We also heard the distinguished Dr. White, whose literary productions are becoming of late so numerous and so widely popular. But it is only honest to confess that we failed to understand what there is in his sermons to bring such vast crowds every Sunday to hear him.

At old Tron church we heard a young Presbyterian divine reading his well-prepared theological essay; but our thoughts went back to the days of Wishart and Knox and Chalmers, whose burning words would set the world in a blaze whilst our modern neatly-dressed essayist was lighting his match. We learned from a number of intelligent Scotch church-goers that anything like earnestness or energy in the pulpit is not at all relished by the people. The gospel must be served up to them in smooth and polished periods. The rude Devil is ignored in refined circles; and Hell is too repugnant a word ever to find its way to cultivated lips. The average Scottish sermon is an intellectual feast, very soothing to the worldly conscience, and but little adapted to trouble the minds of unconverted persons. Some of the sermons, however, which were preached in our hearing, were marked exceptions to this rule. There are noble men in the Scottish as well as in the English pulpits who do not hesitate to sound the old-time notes of warning to the people to "flee from the wrath to come." We shall not soon forget the faithful sermon of good old Dr. Wilson in relation to the importance of giving timely heed to the voice of conscience, and the awful consequences of disregarding its warnings.

On the whole, our little party came to the unanimous decision that, all things considered, we would prefer the average preaching of the Maritime Provinces to the average preaching of the Fatherland. What our preachers lack in fine rhetoric and in captivating elocution they more than make up in downright earnestness and Scriptural simplicity. There seems to be more meat and less dressing in our average Canadian sermons than in those of the old country. But wiser and more impartial judges may entertain very different opinions respecting this question. We must gratefully say that there are many noble workers in the Master's vineyard beyond the Atlantic. Their faithful efforts have already had a rich fruitage, and we have no fears as to their thorough devotedness to the glorious work of spreading the tidings of salvation among perishing men.