

PREACHERS EXCHANGING VIEWS.

Conference, Not Criticism—Not a Review Section—Not Discussion, but Experience and Suggestions.

The Pastor as a Comforter.

I PRESUME that every clergyman is often perplexed over "personal experiences" that are conveyed to him by word of lip or by letter, and that he frame it at times very difficult to frame just the kind of answer needed. The letter below is from one who has an exceedingly tender conscience and is, I believe, a thorough Christian, but who finds it difficult to exercise a robust, sustaining faith. The answer that follows the letter has been very helpful to him. It has occurred to me that this answer may possibly be suggestive to other clergymen.

Rev. —

Question.

"I attended several of the Salvation Army meetings and have been greatly troubled in mind ever since. I saw evidences of an assurance, a hope of salvation, that I do not have, although I have striven for years to be a Christian. This has bothered me night and day. I feel that I am a great sinner, having done many things in my earlier days that were very wrong. But I am heartily sorry for the past, and, if I know my heart, I am willing to be just what Christ desires me to be. Now in this I comply (do I not?) with the terms of pardon and of peace, but I have not peace. Why not? Can it be that my sins are so great that God will not forgive? Is not my case a very peculiar one?"

Answer.

(1) Your experience is not a peculiar one. Tens of thousands of most excellent Christians have had similar experiences.

(2) Christ saves to the uttermost; He saves the chief of sinners; He saves whoever will be saved. Unless you are a sinner beyond the chief, and beyond the uttermost, and unwilling to be saved, you need not fear that God will not save you.

(3) Peace depends not on the fact that you are pardoned or saved; but on believing it. A child has done some naughty thing, and awakes from a

nightmare of a dream thinking that its mother is frightfully angry with it and means to punish it dreadfully. It screams with terror. The mother takes it in her arms, her heart bleeds for the child. She presses it to her bosom to console it, and tells it again and again "Do not fear, it is I—your mother. I forgive you, my darling; I would die for you." But the child cannot get rid of its nightmare and trembles with terror. Now, the lack of peace in the child is not because its sin was so great, nor because its mother has not forgiven it, nor because the mother is angry with it; but because, and only because, the child does not believe what is the fact, namely, that it is forgiven and is safe. Christ on the sea of Galilee, after He had rebuked the winds and calmed the sea, turned to the panic-stricken disciples and said, "Where is your faith?" To Jairus He said, "Be not afraid, only believe." "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Answer to a "Troubled Preacher."

In the August issue of THE HOMILETIC REVIEW, a "Troubled Preacher" asks how to make the Endeavor Society a help instead of a hindrance. My experience may be at least suggestive.

In the first place, I organized the Society and attend every meeting. I take no part in the proceedings, but privately aid those who need aid in the way of suggestions, etc. When anything does not meet my approval, I quietly go to those responsible and suggest that the matter occur not again. Consequently the young people feel I am as much interested in the Society as they, and gladly do or refrain from doing anything I wish.

The Society has greatly helped me—

(1) In caring for the sick and destitute