

them generously—not insisting on every phrase as if it were the best possible, or on every assertion as if it were distinctly inspired, but keeping to the line of the old theology there indicated, while giving to the teaching new settings, new balances, new adjustments, new shadings, and new extensions. It was not easy to see what other course they could follow if they would be loyal both to the past and to the present. He did not dispute that this mode of dealing covered some dangers. All generosity ran risks, but they were not going to give up generosity on that account. It was, however, quite possible that some of the more perfectly organized Churches would endeavour to harmonize their Confessions more fully with present beliefs. He did not understand what some people maintained that there could be no distinction between secondary and primary truths. Certainly there was such a distinction, and he believed that when the Churches were able to organize themselves on a simpler, but still on a clear and definite basis, a happier state of matters would exist.

SENSATIONALISM IN THE PULPIT.

As we try to formulate that vague conception which we have of the sensational, by putting it into words, we encounter difficulty. For it is immediately discovered that a certain kind and degree of the sensational enter into all eloquence. The orator, whether in the pulpit, or at the bar, or in the senate, seeks to persuade. But in pursuing that main design he uses certain tributaries, all of which are made by him to run into the swelling current of his speech. He employs ridicule to expose the absurdity of his antagonist's position; he uses pathos to enforce the appeal which he makes for the consideration of the weak; he turns imagination to account, by a harrowing description of the sufferings of those for whom he is pleading; and at length, by the united force of these influences, he carries his position and secures the consent of his audience to the course which he has been advocating. While he was dealing in ridicule his hearers laughed, and that was a sensation. When he was pathetic, the tears coursed down their cheeks, and that was a sensation. When he set the miseries of the suffering plainly before their eyes, they shuddered, and that was a sensation. Are we, then to condemn all this? And, if we do, must not our censure lie against every triumph that the orator has won? Plainly, therefore, we must admit that the production of a sensation is not, in itself, an evil thing in eloquence, and cannot be regarded as that which we designate sensationalism. The mischief lies in the prominence given to the sensation as an end in and of itself; and in the nature of the sensation as being out of harmony with the great purpose which every preacher of the gospel ought to have in view, and with the associations of the place in which his discourse is given. Much that would be proper on the platform, or at the bar, or in the senate, would be sensational in the pulpit, because there are certain restraints around the house of God, and the treatment of sacred subjects, the mere passing of which would be a shock to all reverent worshippers, and would tend to keep them from being suitably impressed by what is otherwise excellent. And, in every instance, the making of the production of an incidental and secondary effect a deliberate object must be pronounced objectionable. This, like the seeking of wealth, or the pursuit of pleasure, or the gratification of taste, for their own sakes, is more than an infelicity. It is the violation of an ethical principle. It is an immorality in rhetoric, and in the end it loses that which it desires, while the pursuit exposes him who enters on it to many perils. It might be too much perhaps to say that, like the determination to be rich at all hazards, it leads to evils "which drown men in destruction and perdition;" but it is undoubtedly true that they who will practise it do "fall into temptation and a snare."

These distinctions, as important as they are simple, will prepare us for defining sensationalism in the pulpit as the deliberate production by the preacher of an immediate effect which is not subordinated to the great purpose of his office, and is out of harmony with the sacred associations of the House of God. It is

differentiated by the character of the effect, and the intention of the speaker to produce it. The sensationalist aims at an immediate result, and loses sight of the great permanent object which the minister of Christ should have in view. Instead of seeking to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," he desires instant appreciation of his own performance. He sets a trap for the applause of his audience, and when that comes he has his reward. He does not seek to persuade, but to please, or to exhilarate, or to startle, or to excite, and so descends from the lofty position of the sacred orator to the lower level of the actor. He is not forbidden to do any of these things, provided they be not in themselves irreverent or ridiculous, and provided also they be made by him conducive to the highest interest of his hearers. But he rests in the doing of them as itself his success. Every true minister feels, as Chalmers has so eloquently illustrated in his sermon on "The Slender Influence of Taste in Matters of Religion," that his hearers are in danger of mistaking their appreciation of "the loveliness of the song" for their submission to the truth which it expresses. But that which is the incidental peril even to the sincerest preacher is made by the sensationalist the deliberate object which he seeks to gain. It is to him, above all things, indispensable that his "effort" be enjoyed, and the ultimate issues are of small importance.—WM. M. TAYLOR, D.D., in *North American Review*.

THE BIBLE.

At a late meeting of the Wake County, N. C., Bible Society, Gov. Z. B. Vance made, among others, the following good points:

That the Bible is true is apparent from the fact that in this most practical age of the world—an age when everything is subjected to the severest scientific investigation, and if not found to be useful and true, is mercilessly discarded, it not only holds its own, but is constantly extending the area of its influence, while the sacred books of other religions have either lost their power over the minds of men, or if respected at all, seem to have no power to make disciples.

Of a lady who claimed to disbelieve the Bible, and whose husband, an upright, honourable and virtuous Judge, also an infidel, she declared to be equal in moral qualities to any professing Christian of her acquaintance, he asked if she had never conceived the idea that her husband, good natured and true and honourable, as she represented him, might not be the product of Christianity, notwithstanding his rejection of that faith.

To this she replied that she had never thought of that, but Seneca among the Romans, and Socrates among the Greeks were good and true men without the help of the Christian faith. To this the Governor replied that they were doubtless good men after their light, but their light was very imperfect, and that there could be thousands of humble peasants in Scotland or this country, who, taught by this holy faith, were as far superior in all the moral elements of their character and in the conduct of their social relations to Socrates and Seneca, as the sun was superior to the stars of heaven.

He said further, that when disturbed by doubts as he had been at one time, and as every thinking man would be, as to the truth of the Bible, he had consulted a minister then present, as to what he should read to establish his faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures. The advice he received was to read the Bible itself, and he had found in his experience that the best evidence of Christianity was Christianity itself, and that the very best proof of the truth of the Bible was that blessed book without note or comment.

It was an edifying sight—the Governor of a great commonwealth pleading for the circulation of the Bible, before a large and intelligent audience, a large proportion of whom were members of the General Assembly of the State.—*Biblical Recorder*.

WOULD THEY BE MISSED?

A Paris journal makes the following pertinent suggestion: "Should the French nation suddenly lose

three thousand of its leading men, in the walks of agriculture, science, art, manufactures and commerce, the country would be left like a body without a soul, and would at once fall back among the second or third rate powers. But should she lose instead, three thousand politicians, orators, legislators, diplomats, and distinguished leaders of society, no one would know the difference in ten days, and France would still hold her place in the front rank of civilization."

"So say we all." A man who can hoe corn, milk cows, raise white beans, mend shoes, make clothes, manufacture books, build houses, construct steam engines, or do any other useful work, if missing, would be missed; but these crowds of office seekers, salary hunters and demagogues, if a mill-stone were fastened around their necks, and they cast into the depths of the sea, who would miss them, and who would ever think of fishing them up? The market is over-stocked with these slimy, eely, creeping things; and if the whole of them were sunk in the ocean there are plenty of others who would rush to fill their places.

And the churches have considerable of the same material that could be spared. There are scores of religious politicians, place hunters, caucus managers, wire-pullers and members of nominating committees, who are so small that their absence would hardly cause a vacancy; while it might afford honest men a chance to rub the dust from their eyes, see what was going on, and have an election or two that would fairly represent the will of their constituents, instead of being a snatch and grab game planned by a caucus, engineered by office holders, and arranged to keep incompetents in position which they never could have attained by their merits and abilities, but which afford them a more comfortable support than they would be likely to obtain in any even race along the path of life.

The hard-working, God-fearing, bill-paying, honest, upright men would be missed; but in that day when "many that are first shall be last" people will be astonished so see how small a place it will require to accommodate the hosts of scheming, blustering, "leading" men who profess to represent both Church and state, and manage their affairs in this world. *Common People*.

WHAT THE GOSPEL DEMANDS.

The argument of the liquor vender is: "No man is accountable for becoming the occasion of another's sins, because the sinner, as a free agent, might have refrained from the sinful act if he would." Now, will this principle bear? Let us try it. Here is a man who keeps a store of books and prints of the most pernicious tendency, got up, however, in a most fascinating style, and by their wit and elegance directly calculated to captivate and ensnare the minds of the young. Upon the principle laid down, this man is not responsible for the mischief he does, though scores of youths are drawn in and ruined. He may plead that they are free moral agents—it is not necessary they should be corrupted—if they would do as they might, they might improve their taste and their style, and experience no injury. Would this satisfy a parent, whose child had been ruined by these pernicious books? But is the book-seller worse than the rum-seller? Are bad books any more demoralizing and ruinous than intoxicating liquors? Let facts decide. Indeed, the principle of morality involved in this plea of the dealer is as wide from the morality of the Gospel as the poles from each other. The Gospel not only requires that we should not put "a stumbling block (or an occasion to fall) in our brother's way," but demands that, as far as in us lies, we should remove from his path the stumbling blocks that another has placed before him. "He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."—*Justin Edwards*.

The municipality of Paris, by a vote of 63 to 3, has resolved to reduce the salaries of the Romish clerical instructors in the schools to the lowest point allowed by law, namely, to 250 francs for males and 150 francs for females. The motive openly avowed is to induce them to resign, and to bring the government to agree to the substitution of lay teachers.