

the advice of the people" (Epist. 6). During his banishment he requests them to perform their own duty and his, that nothing which related to discipline or diligence might be wanting (Epist. 5). He apologizes to them for conferring the office of reader upon Aurelius without consulting them (Epist. 33). He both "exhorted and commanded" them that those of them whose presence there might be the least insidious and attended with least danger might perform his (i.e., Cyprian's) part in managing those things which the administration of religion required (Epist. 14). The presbyters of Rome, in returning answer to their brethren at Carthage regarding the propriety of Cyprian's concealment, say, "It is incumbent on us (i.e., presbyters) who seem to be set over the flock to keep it in the room of the pastor." Cyprian himself has preserved for us a letter of his bosom friend, Firmilian, Bishop of Caesarea, in which these words occur: "All power and grace are established in the Church where elders (*maiores natu*) preside, who possess the power of baptizing and confirming as well as of ordaining."

(To be concluded next week.)

ENGLISH HYMNS.—II.

SOME RESULTS OF THEIR USE.

BY W. M. R.

The fact mentioned at the close of the last paper reminds us that though Christian hymns are not inspired, they contain divine truth, and are constantly being directed by the providence of God and owned by the Spirit of God for the very highest results.* Our author furnishes many illustrations in point, and the thought naturally arises that it would in all probability be much oftener the case if those on whom devolves the selection of hymns were more constantly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and those who sing them more constantly sing "with the Spirit and with the understanding also." Mr. Spurgeon, emphasizing the point, says: "An ungodly stranger, stepping into one of our services at Exeter Hall, was brought to the cross by the words of Wesley's verse, 'Jesus, lover of my soul.' 'Does Jesus love me?' said he, 'then why should I live at enmity to Him?'" "A Mrs. Lewis, of Norwich, England, many years ago, went to hear Mr. Hoole preach at the Tabernacle, being under great distress of mind. She had determined to attend divine service once more, and if she obtained no peace she intended then to drown herself. The first hymn which the preacher announced was 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' which so startled her and suited her condition that she supposed 'he had made this hymn for her sake,' for she had no doubt that some one had informed him of her state of mind. As a result of this experience she was hopefully converted." "An actress, in one of the provincial towns, while passing along the street, had her attention arrested by singing in a cottage. Curiosity prompted her to look in at the open door, when she saw a few poor people sitting together, one of whom was giving out Hymn 168,

Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?

which they all joined in singing. The tune was sweet and simple, but she heeded it not; the words riveted her attention, and she stood motionless, until she was invited to enter. She remained during a prayer which was offered up by one of the little company, and which, though uncouth in language, carried with it the conviction of sincerity. She quitted the cottage; but the words of the hymn followed her, and she resolved to procure a copy of the book containing it. The hymn-book secured, she read and re-read this hymn. Her convictions deepened; she attended the ministry of the Gospel, and sought and found that pardon which alone could give her peace. Having given her heart to God, she resolved henceforth to give Him her life also, and, for a time, excused herself from attending on the stage. The manager of the theatre called upon her one morning, and urged her to sustain the principal character in a new play. This character she had sustained in other towns with admiration, but now she gave her reasons for refusing to comply with the request. At first the manager ridiculed her scruples, but this was

unavailing; he then represented the loss which her refusal would be to him, and promised that, if she would act upon this occasion, it would be the last request of the kind he would make. Unable to resist his solicitations, she promised to appear at the theatre. The character which she assumed required her, on her entrance, to sing a song, and as the curtain rose the orchestra began the accompaniment. She stood like one lost in thought; the music ceased, but she did not sing; and, supposing she was embarrassed, the band again commenced, and they paused again for her to begin, but she opened not her lips. A third time the air was played, and then, with clasped hands and eyes suffused with tears, she sang—not the song of the play, but

Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear—
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?

The performance suddenly ceased; many ridiculed, though some were induced from that memorable night to 'consider their ways'—to reflect on the power of that religion which could influence the heart and change the life of one hitherto so vain. The change in the life of the actress was as permanent as it was singular, and after some years of a consistent walk, she at length became the wife of a minister of the Gospel of Christ."

Of the multitudes who profess to have the light and hope of salvation in the meetings held by Messrs. Moody and Sankey, it is said that the former credits the singing of the latter with as large a share of these blessed results as his own preaching. And this we need not wonder at when we consider the distinctness with which he enunciates the words which contain the saving truth as well as the attractive beauty and power of their musical rendering. Of the "Ninety and Nine" we are told the story of its discovery and introduction by Sankey, sung to the well-known music of his own composing before it was written, May 16, 1874, soon after the death of its author, Miss Clephane, of Melrose. "One of the most thrilling incidents connected with its use is the effect its distant singing produced on the heart of an impenitent man. Clear and sweet the song rose up, 'I go to the desert to find My sheep,' and the man on the hillside heard and was saved." One more extract must for the present suffice.

"Lieutenant G—, an officer of the Union Army, having received his death-wound in a gallant charge at the head of his regiment, was visited in the hospital by the chaplain, who inquired how he felt. He said he had always been cheerful, and was now ready to meet God in peace. He thus proceeded: 'Chaplain, I was once passing through the streets of New York on a Sunday, and heard singing. I went in and saw a company of poor people. They were singing "There is a fountain filled with blood." I was overpowered with the impression the hymn made upon me, and gave my heart to God. Since then I have loved Jesus, and I love Him now.' That was his last speech. As the chaplain listened, the voice faltered and the minister said, 'Trust Jesus.' The officer whispered, 'I do trust Jesus,' and then expired."

No doubt such events are far more common than at present is known, and we cannot but reflect would be more common still were they more constantly expected and prepared for. How? (1) By earnest prayer for the guidance of the Spirit of God in making our selections for the praise of the sanctuary. (2) So also in the preparation and performance of that important part of worship—prayer from every believing heart in the sanctuary, but especially from our leaders of praise. All honour to our gifted singers. They are largely painstaking, self-denying and successful in contributing in a large measure to the attractiveness and profit of our services. But are they as devout as we could desire? They are generally avowed Christians. Why should not prayer be an element of recognized value in their preparation for Sabbath? It would if they only knew how much it has to do with the success of such men as Sankey, Bliss, McGranahan, and we hope there are instances where this is already the case among our church choirs. They know better than most of us do how the last ten minutes, before going to their places in the church, are often spent. May we venture the hope the day will come when they will be universally spent in prayer. If so, we may be sure they shall have

such a reward as the world or the Managers' Board could never give. Will the reader help the writer to make this a blessed reality?

"IS IT FAIR?"

MR. EDITOR.—Under the caption, "Is it Fair?" a correspondent, "Fiat Justitia," complains, in your issue of the 14th ult., that at the last Assembly some ministers were received from other bodies who had not gone through a full college training, specially some Methodist ministers. From time to time, such complaints appear in print, and generally about that season of the year—near the Assembly's meeting.

Now, I beg to say that I, for one, count these complaints as little better than carping, for there is really no grievance of any account to attack.

For (1) in the very nature of things, applications from the Methodist Church must only be very few. Few of their men are prepared to expose themselves and families to the uncertainties of settlement under our candidating system, when in their own Church they are sure of unbroken employment in the pastorate, and of settlement immediately on ordination.

If, occasionally, a man or two comes out prepared to run all risks with us, in connection with our fickle permanent pastorate, let us receive him good naturedly, if we deem him a worthy man.

(2) "Fiat Justitia" himself says: "It is not denied that ministers received from the Methodist or other Churches do effective work, and *just as effective work as those whose educational standard is higher.*" (The italics are mine.) Now, does not such an admission cut away the ground from under "Fiat Justitia's" feet, as regards any grievance? He admits that these non-graduates do as effective work as our own graduates; and is not effectiveness the main thing we want in men. Is it not a fact that those men who are oftenest out of a place, and who have traversed our land longest in search of a place, are not men received from the Methodist Church, but men who have taken their full literary and theological course in a Presbyterian College?

While we admit that our own ministers will compare favourably, as speakers, with any other body of men, is it not a fact that only too frequently a Presbyterian graduate is found, who, as a public speaker, is painfully inferior to another man, labouring alongside of him, who has not gone through college?

If a man belonging to the latter class does occasionally seek admission into our body, let us not make too much of one item which is a flaw, and overlook all qualifications besides, which have proved him to be a man fitted for doing good work.

John Bright, of England, and Alexander MacKenzie, of Canada, and others that might be named, are not college graduates; yet, as both regards effective speaking and efficient working, they will suffer nothing, when compared with some who hold a piece of parchment.

(3) Thus, with the present safeguards in possession of Presbytery and General Assembly, we can well afford to keep our minds easy, as regards the quantity and quality of applicants from other Churches.

GRADUATE.

DR. STOCKER, of Berlin, writes and prints one sermon each week. When he began this work four years ago only 600 copies were distributed, the circulation being confined to the German capital; but now 110,000 are distributed every week, being sent to all parts of Germany and to her Colonies, while 5,000 come to America. They are simple, practical Gospel sermons, gladly received by the thousands who do not attend Church because they have to work on the Sabbath. The circulation of these discourses is doing much good.

THE cholera this year does not seem to assume the fatal proportions which were anticipated by the medical men. It is perhaps premature to speculate on the result of the year, but thus far, after three months' progress, it appears to be confined to Italian States, and the whole fatality, as reported by cable, amounts to little over 1,800. In 1884 the total death list reached over 25,000, and last year over 100,000, which includes the ravages of the disease in China and Annam. As the death rate has been steadily decreasing for several days past, it looks as if the worst was over, unless the disease should break out in other localities.

*ENGLISH HYMNS: Their Authors and History. By S. W. Luffield. (Funk & Wagnalls, New York; pp. 675.)