

The Wesleyan.

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FROM THE PAPERS.

Thought nowhere pays better interest than in the prayer-meeting, if one has grace enough to be brief.

"Methodism," says the *New England Methodist*, "is concerned not so much about the preservation of its 'historic creed,' as the historic spirit."

There is not a religious book in the world so closely up with the times as the Bible is; nor one so well adapted to the wants of a man pressed for time.—*Congregationalist*.

Beware of lowering the standard of Christian attainment because of the defective practice prevalent in the churches. Your Lord beckons you up to the heights of holiness: go, if you must go alone.

The following from the *Cincinnati Gazette* is worth passing round among the churches. "There are those who sneer at the zeal of fresh converts, but the sneerers are those who never have any pious zeal."

It is worthy of notice that the bill which admits women to practice in the courts of law, was passed without a word of debate. Some voted for it who voted against suffrage. Will some one of these explain why it is more "unwomanly" to vote than it is to practice law?—*Salem Observer*.

Urban Citizen and Gazette: "Harrison, the boy preacher, undertook, after concluding his fatiguing labors at Cincinnati, to enter upon another siege at Tiffin, but broke down the very first day. If there were not so many Church members 'resting' all the time there would be no opportunity for one man to break entirely down."

The *Nashville Advocate* says, referring to the "collection for the saints" which St. Paul proposed to the Churches of Asia Minor: "There are some in the Churches now who had been in Corinth when his letter was read would have said that he had spoken a good thing by 'talking about money.'"

The man who furnished the following for the papers must have drawn upon his personal experience: "The man who goes fishing, and sits in a cramp-involving position on a narrow thwart from early morn to dewy eve, and calls it 'fine,' is the same man who never goes to church because the pews are not comfortable."—*Central Advocate*.

Congressman Moore, of Tennessee, thus explains politics: "If I have any politics, it is practical politics. I mean that sort which believes in holding the offices when you are in and keeping everybody else out." Anybody can understand that creed, and every decent man ought to despise it and vote against the party that adopts it.—*N. Y. Independent*.

If what Mary Clemmer intimates in the *Independent* is true, that the fine portrait of Mrs. Hayes, framed in rich carvings by the elegant handiwork of the women of Cincinnati, is crowded away from its proper position in one of the public rooms of the President's house at Washington, it is a cruel indignity to the noblest and best womanhood of the land.—*Zion's Herald*.

Through three columns the *Methodist* tries to explain why so many of its best preachers get tired of Methodism and seek other "folds." Now let Bro. Laffery explain.—*Religious Herald*. Hard work and moderate salaries don't suit Demas. Methodism loses one in a thousand, but the apostles lost one in twelve.—*Richmond Advertiser*.

The *New York Times* is not far out of the way when it says, "The essentially immoral principle which underlies the spoils system taints all with which it is associated, and produces in the great patronage mart of the country (Washington) a lower tone of public opinion than can be found in any other community of its size in the United States."

While hereabouts we are talking of Civil Service Reform—and only talking—Japan is going right ahead in developing the idea, only those educated in the universities being allowed to hold office. And not only so, but according to the latest returns not less than 71 per cent of the entire school population of Japan is in school all the time.

Of the whisky sellers in the city of New York, 2,004 have served their time in different State prisons, 2,655 have been confined in county prisons, and 1,700 have been "cooled off" in the station-house, leaving only 1,016 out of 8,034 who have thus far successfully cloaked their delinquency from the police. Of the whole number 502 are

Americans, 2,179 Germans, 3,041 Irishmen.

The London correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* says at the next annual gathering of the Society of Friends, to be held almost immediately, a proposal will be made for a revision of the book of doctrine, practice, and discipline, with the view of modifying that work in accordance with the spirit of the age and the present tone of thought amongst the Quakers. It is nearly twenty years since the last revision was made.

The *Medical and Surgical Reporter* is authority for the statement that the records of the Police Department of Philadelphia disclose 195 cases reported as missing or having run away, 45 of whom were afterward found. Fully one half of this number were boys and girls, who, having drunk in the inspiration derived from dime novels and other productions of that character, ran away from home to seek fame and fortune.

"Frontier Christianity" is the phrase which the *Sun* of this city applies to a large part of the policy which the Government has pursued toward the Indians for nearly a century. The policy, in a word, consists in the theory put into practice that Indians have no rights which white men are bound to respect, and hence, that treaties made with them may be broken whenever it suits the pleasure or interests of white men to do so. This is "frontier Christianity."—*N. Y. Independent*.

Dr. Gervase Smith, may be said to have been represented at the meeting of the Metropolitan Wesleyan Chapel Building Fund in the person of his son, Mr. Clarence Smith, who briefly addressed the meeting. One of Dr. Smith's sons (Mr. Alfred Owen Smith, B. A.) is in the ministry, and his other sons are in close connection with Methodism; in this fact we perceive a beautiful testimony to the value of religious education in the divinely appointed institution of a Christian home.—*London Watchman*.

In 1770 John Wesley said some strong things in the Conference. The report contains this paragraph:—"Who does as he would be done by in buying and selling, particularly in selling horses? Write him knave that does not. And the Methodist knave is the worst of all knaves." I have been reminded of this by an humiliating case tried last week in the Central Criminal Court before the Recorder. This case has caused not a little talk around our tables. There is some satisfaction in observing the shock which such a case causes among the Methodists.—*London Methodist*.

The *Journal* of Dayton, Ohio, has had the good fortune to be "boycotted" by the rum-sellers and rum-drinkers of that town. These gentlemen have withdrawn all their subscriptions and advertisements from it because of its strongly expressed approval of the liquor laws recently passed by the Legislature of that State. This is a pretty sure evidence that the *Journal* has been doing good work. No better indication that a man has been beaten or a cause damaged, could be asked for than the stoppage of a subscription to a newspaper. It never hurts the paper and it always stultifies the man.—*Christian Union*.

Bishop Clark, of Rhode Island, in his late sermon at Reading, is said to have given advice to his brethren, "not to depend on proselyting and proselytes from other churches for their growth, but to raise up a seed of their own. All true and lasting growth," he said, "comes from within, and not without. One reason why the Church is so much divided into parties, is the fact that so large a number of their members are 'strangers' and not native born. When these get into places of position and power in the church, their early education and prejudice will crop out and cause disturbances."—*Church Guardian*.

The fact that the soul of man was originally planned for benevolence is sufficiently attested by the fact that giving is ever found to be more blessed than receiving; that the most exquisite joy mortal man can show is that born of self-denial to do good. The colored boot-black hero, who the other day, in New York, by climbing to the top of a telegraph pole, and liberating his end of the wire cable, extending from the pole to the third story of a building, provided means for the escape of three persons from a horrible death, says that when he saw one of the imperiled men take hold of the wire and descend safely to the ground, he felt so happy that he came near losing his hold and falling from the pole.—*N. E. Methodist*.

DR GERVASE SMITH.

We well remember his genial presence and the fine impression he made when on a visit to this country in 1874. He was with us some days during the session of the Rock River conference that year. That was the season during which a telegram came informing us of the unexpected translation of Dr. T. M. Eddy—gone home like a seraph clapping his wings of fire, and shouting, "Eternity dawns! Hallelujah!" Those who were present at the anniversary of the Church Extension Society at that conference will not easily forget Dr. Smith's address on that occasion. The representative of the society present at that time was what Chaplain McCabe calls the "Extension" part of it. Dr. Kynett. The doctor in his speech went into a considerable self-complacency concerning this "great country of ours," and endeavored to show at some length how it exhibits all the variations of the climates and the zones, from the chills and frosts of the north down to the palms and magnolias of the South, etc., etc. Some felt a little sensitive that the excellent secretary should happen to put on so much of the Yankee boast just then in the presence of our English visitor. But when, after the doctor sat down, our guest was called on, he proved himself at once equal to the emergency. His forthrightness and humor seemed touched by the previous speech, and, in a quiet and playful way, he appeared resolved to pay him back in his own coin. The audience was in the mood to enjoy, most generously, the "tit-for-tat" as Dr. Smith opened by saying: "I am a small man, and come from a very small country, but I have just been over on the Atlantic coast dependencies of that country, whose territory is considerably larger in extent than all the territory of the United States." He had been over to Canada. Drawing from his store of experience as secretary or agent of the chapel building fund, his address sparkled with wit, anecdote, and telling hits. One thing I remember his mentioning was, the Bible being sold in Italy disguised with a strange outward title, which was this, "borrowed from one of its enemies: 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.'" Another fact he gave was concerning an obstinate and prejudiced English landowner who refused to sell a certain much desired chapel site to the Methodists. "A friend of his, who was considerable of a wag, heard of it; and went to him with a sober face to warn him of the danger to which he had exposed himself. 'I will tell you,' said the friend, 'how these Methodists will go to work now: they will go to praying against you; they will call you Stumbling-block, and will ask the Lord to remove the Stumbling-block; and when they begin like that, God will kill you as sure as you are born.' The result was that he was thoroughly frightened by this disclosure, and went so far as to give the Methodists the lot in question on one condition—made as sure as the laws of the Medes and Persians—that they were never to mention 'Stumbling-block' in their prayers!"—*Louis Meredith in N. W. Advocate*.

ELECTION OF BISHOPS.

The Conference-room was so packed with the throng of spectators as scarcely to allow working-room. Ladies and gentlemen, young ladies and young gentlemen, venerable fathers and friends of the Church from Nashville, and from all parts of Southern Methodism, were present. Chairs were in demand. Some were fortunate enough to get tightly jammed into the seats of their Conference delegation. Some stood in the aisles; all vacant space toward the rear was pre-empted by an overwhelming, self-constituted standing committee of men and women. They all arose "to question of privilege"—of seeing and hearing what was done, and how it was done.

The Bishop said: "It would be proper, before entering upon the duty before us, for the Conference to engage in prayer." A hymn was sung, the Conference all standing—members with pencil in hand, ready to write their ballots, and keep an account of the voting. Dr. T. L. Boswell, one of the oldest members, being called to the platform, led in prayer. Four tellers were appointed to assist the secretaries. The name of each Conference was called, and the chairman of the delegation stood up and deposited the ballots of his Conference in a hat in the hands of a teller, who counted "one," "two," "three," etc., as the slips fell into his hat. Two hundred and forty-one ballots were thus deposited. Necessary to elect, one hundred and twenty-one.

Everything in readiness, a teller draws a ticket from the hat and calls out the first name—"A. G. Haygood." As the balloting proceeds A. W. Wilson came promptly to the front and advances almost *pari passu* with the first name; Linus Parker comes up with a strong following; J. G. Granberry is close behind him; and R. K. Hargrove soon runs well ahead of many other names receiving votes. There is unwonted silence throughout the packed audience while the counting goes on. Intent ears are listening and busy hands in all parts of the house are keeping tally. Wilson has scored twenty-four tallies, one more will elect him bishop, and scarcely has the name been called again when a clapping of hands and applause resounds from all parts of the large audience. Haygood is but a few votes behind; but the ballots are all out when he lacks just two votes of election.

A second ballot in the afternoon resulted in the election of Dr. Parker. Haygood, and Granberry. Dr. Hargrove having received a large vote up to this time came in on the third ballot. Each time, when the vote necessary to elect was reached, the name was scarcely out of the lips of the teller when the coming bishop was greeted with a hearty round of applause.

Hand shaking and congratulations followed as there was opportunity. Attempting to get a hand into one of the "de jure" Bishops, I was prevented by the crowd. Dr. McFerrin passing by just at that time, I said, we will extend our congratulations another time. "O yes," said the Doctor, "we can shake hands with a Bishop on every street corner."

Next morning in the midst of the Conference session, a paper was read from Dr. Haygood, respectfully declining the office of bishop. The announcement fell upon the Conference like a thunder clap from a clear sky, and elicited various comment. A delegate said, "I am done with Haygood. I shall not vote for him again." Another said, "It elevates him five hundred per cent. in my estimation." Another said, "Bless the Lord, he is still on our side." Another thinks it will render his name immortal in the annals of the Church.—*Nashville Daily Advertiser*.

IN ME YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

Diligent readers of the New Testament have not failed to notice the sorrowful question that Jesus put to the twelve, when, after his mystical discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of John, "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." "Will ye also go away?" Let the answer be observed, after a clear view of the circumstances, and picturing the scene just set forth in the most amazing claims. The thoughts of Jesus were hard to be understood, and presented under figures of comparison that were apparently offensive. He could not explain his meaning fully without anticipating history. There the two parties stood: He knowing that his word was truth, and they misunderstanding Him, and not capable of understanding Him, until events had become more fully developed.

Many went away just because the saying was hard, just as many now give up Christianity to their own doubts or fears. The twelve, however, remained; yet they showed no alacrity of faith. Their countenances expressed perplexity so evidently that the man Jesus, seeming to fear for, if not doubt, their consistency, said, "Will ye also go away?" Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." As if he had said, "We cannot understand this discourse, and like the others must confess it seems to us a hard saying, but we cannot go away, for there is no one else to go to. Moreover, in deserting Thee, we leave what our consciousness assures us is the source—or the channel of the words of life."

This conviction of the heart and mind and soul, this strong confidence and personal assurance in Jesus is what Christianity relies upon for its central power, as it is the strongest pillar in the world. Every man is a centre, and yet the common consciousness is not an aggregated, but a united centre of the same. To each man's true consciousness, and to that of all mankind, it makes appeal. Doubtful or not doubtful, as Christianity at times or in parts may appear to our minds, it alone contains the word of eternal life. Not only is man convinced negatively that if Christianity was given up nothing could be found to take its place, but he is also convinced positively, that it is Truth, and that God is, and that He orders its ways.—*Baltimore Presbyterian*.

A GENEROUS ACT.

The Wesleyan Missionary anniversary meetings this year, says the *Christian World*, "More than sustain the best traditions of that community for enthusiasm of feeling and practical munificence on behalf of missionary enterprises." Two of the preliminary sermons are spoken of as having unusual excellence, and evidently prepared the way for what followed. The Missionary Society has for some years been so burdened with debt as to force unwilling retrenchment and cause unpleasant apprehensions. It has been thought that Dr. Punshon's anxiety in regard to the condition of the Society hastened his death. This year's report showed that after the amount assigned the Society from the Thanksgiving collections, it was still £40,000.

At the annual breakfast meeting an apparently spontaneous impulse suggested the payment of the debt, and although the number present was not large, half the amount was secured. The meeting on the following Monday night at Exeter Hall was a grand one. After three hours or more of impressive speeches from the first men of the connection, some of whom had spent years on mission fields, the financial question was taken up, and the entire sum needed was realized. One gift was characteristic. It was from a venerable minister, James Calvert, who had spent years of faithful service in Africa and Fiji Islands. Not long since his friends in Africa had presented him £250 as a testimonial of their affection and no doubt intended to ease his declining years. On this occasion he gave it to the Society. Such an act of Christian generosity and self-denial made a profound impression and probably ensured success. The occasion was one that will be long remembered. We notice that Bishop Harris was present at the Exeter Hall meeting, and made a brief speech moving one of the resolutions of thanks on behalf of the Society.

THE PROPER SERMON.

A sermon that is to accomplish an end and to be worth listening to, must embody real thoughts, thoughts that have some connection with the interests and issues of life, and must be instinct with the living convictions of

the preacher. To be such a sermon, it must come from the preacher's mind and warm heart, with the very life-blood of his soul at the moment of its delivery. But how a preacher can stand up before an audience, and proceed to read as a message to living men a sermon which he wrote thirty, twenty, or even ten years ago, I cannot understand. When written, the sermon, doubtless, was a real transcript of the writer's thoughts, convictions and emotions. But during the rush of intervening years, what changes, if there has been a soul within him, have passed over his spirit? To write that sermon now would be simply impossible. And yet he tries to put himself into it, and in that guise presents himself to an audience of thinking people. An old coat that he wore twenty years ago might be aired, and the dust whipped out of it, and he present himself in it with much more propriety than in that old sermon. No treatment of the sermon can relieve it of its smell of age. Like an old bouquet of flowers, its once delicate fragrance has sunk into a sickening odor.—*President Robinson*.

ADOPTION.

Some professors of religion consider every affection short of ecstasy as nothing worth. Hence many, it is to be feared, substitute mere animal excitement for joy in the Holy Ghost, and thus deceive themselves. A person may bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, have much of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and yet not be able, from some mental cause, to exercise that filial confidence toward God in which the Spirit of adoption in a great measure consists, although none can possess this Spirit without bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. Others, from some peculiar temperament of body, may be prevented from feeling great transports of joy, while at the same time they can taste the sweets of inward serenity and composure of mind. Others, again, from a deep view of their own corruption, cannot or dare not recognize in themselves a holy conformity to God, though they hate sin and truly love the Saviour.

Now shall we say that such characters have not the Spirit's witness, because they cannot feel the ecstasy of delight? Must the work of the Spirit be overlooked in the absence of rapturous feeling? Shall we make those sad whom the Lord hath not made sad? O how needful it is, for the enjoyment of true comfort, to place our experience on the right foundation!

Now, if joy, when is the Christian's delightful privilege, be the effect of the Spirit's witness rather than the witness itself, then the humble follower of Jesus, who has the testimony of his conscience that he has chosen God for his portion, and cleaves wholly to his Saviour for righteousness and strength, ought not to despise because he cannot rise to those heights of joy which some favored believers are permitted to attain! He may, however, and he ought to take courage from this inward witness of the Spirit to his conscience, to aspire after so happy a state of mind which conduces so much to the glory of God, and to the spiritual growth of his own soul; for "the joy of the Lord is our strength."—*From "Christian Retirement."*

Gibbon testifies as to the Christians of the first three centuries: "In their weekly assemblies every believer presented the voluntary offering for the common fund." "Every believer" giving—and giving "weekly." That was obedience to the Christian law of benevolence. 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

A beautiful answer was once given by a little girl in one of the London Homes for the Destitute. The question was asked why Jesus is called an "unspeakable gift." There was a silence for awhile, and then, with trembling voice, this dear child said, "Because He is so precious that no one can tell all His preciousness."

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