

that time there was so prevalent, the effects on him were too apparent. Always, indeed, the gentleman and man of honor—according to the usual acceptance of the term—yet no more. Under the fine exterior there was no supreme love to God, no true faith in Jesus Christ. He was a sceptic and a man of the world. The many prayers offered for him during his boyhood and the dreaded dangers of succeeding years, seemed to be unheard—and had the bombshell or cannon ball or sea monster's teeth prevailed, alas! alas! for his immortal soul. But He whose thoughts are not as man's—the Hearer of prayer—had mercy on him, and saved when again threatened with death at this time, in the usual manner of man, on a sick bed, in Sydney, New South Wales, towards the close of the first quarter of the century. How changed now, in spirit and aim and deportment! A good soldier before of an earthly prince, but now of the heavenly Jesus Christ. The change showed itself in many ways, but prominently in the skill, through grace acquired, in conquering himself. When home on leave of absence from 1824 to 1826, the writer, then a young lad, greatly younger than he, the eldest of a large family, accompanied him on many, many fishing excursions to river bank and rock of the seashore; when, from his lips, the account of the escapes above given were received. Some other precious traits of his character—signs of the saving change there seen, and under the parental roof, where he lodged—are still remembered; others at this great lapse of time are forgotten, but this never can be forgotten—the dearly purchased loveableness of the man in the skill he acquired in conquering himself.

The Spirit of God not resisted as before; the decision now fully made for the Prince of the Kings of the earth; the wanderer returned, death is not any more threatened him. It actually comes not again as the brink of a fathomless abyss, but as a way paved with love into "the Palace of the King." The eventful checkered life on earth terminated in Government House, Bombay, through fever caught while on duty, riding in from the country under a mid-day burning sun. "Scarcely," yet truly, "saved." "Through fire and water brought to a wealthy place."

An occurrence remains to be spoken of, yet with hesitation, not on account of any doubt as to its truth, for of that there is none, but on account of the construction that may be put on it, or on the speaking about it, in the skeptical spirit of the time. The occurrence is this: In the early morning of Sabbath, near the end of May, 1827, the writer dreamed that he saw, at a short distance off, an angel coming up towards the place where he stood, and then pausing. The countenance of the heavenly visitor surpassed all that the writer had ever seen in expression of intelligence, benevolence, serenity, gravity, with other corresponding traits. The face—person, too, so far as the splendor of the clothing would admit of its being seen—had, the glory and perfection of the countenance doubtless excepted, a most striking resemblance to that of his brother in the army. The dream had no ridiculous incoherency, as with dreams so often. The impression made on the mind was very different from that by common dreams, favorable as well as unfavorable. It was very different from that left by the sight of the most brilliant pageant, or any scene whatever of earth. It was more like to the indescribable light, solemnity and peace of the believer's best minutes while in the vale of tears, near the Lord. At the first meeting of the family, in the advanced morning, the scene of the sleeping hours was placed before them, with no small effect. The father, a God-fearing man, of large general knowledge, keen discernment in spiritual things, and whose specially prominent characteristic trait was standing for the things of the Lord, when clearly revealed, whatever the consequences, choosing to face suffering rather than sin, and whose soul was so bound up in the soul's well-being of the first-born in his trying course, was so struck by the description, with its closing words, "and he was like brother William," enforced as it was by the unusually impressed appearance of him who gave the description, that soon after he wrote down the date and particulars of the scene. Lo! on the arrival of the first mail from Bombay, about two or three months thereafter, a letter, dated in the end of May, reached us from the widow of Captain William Mackay, of the Buffs, with the mournful tidings that her dear husband had departed this life at the exact time of the occurrence of the dream!

Philosophy might try to explain most or all of this on mere natural principles, in an account of the oper-

ations of the brain. True philosophy, however, will not try to shut out God from his works, or deny that He can employ them as He chooses for His righteous purposes.

*Shakespeare, Oth.*

### FUNCTIONS OF THE PULPIT.

MR. EDITOR, - I have been reading with much interest the discussions in your columns on *Pulpit Methods*, and have been led to a re-perusal of the admirable article you refer to in the "British and Foreign Evangelical Review." I shall not attempt to elucidate farther the points presented by yourself and "Equity," but shall invite attention to the transcendent matter submitted to all the consideration of all thoughtful readers toward the close of that article, viz. "*Pulpit Matter*." I had the privilege of meeting the writer some years ago, and know him to be a man of large heart, earnest and profound thought, and much experience, indeed, one in the front ranks of the profession in Scotland. His views deserve profound attention. Some brief extracts will make them plain.

"Men who were completely loyal to the evangelical creed were wont to make the subject matter of their preaching, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. They accentuated the distinction between men as saved and lost, whilst not neglecting the building-up of believers, and the exposition of the whole Christian doctrine, they kept in the foreground always the Lord's atoning death, introduced it in all their sermons, whatever was the immediate subject, and counted it a grave and condemning defect in any sermon if an anxious sinner could not find from it the way of life. With these preachers the test of success was winning souls—turning men to righteousness." Upon the point of expounding Old Testament Scripture, he takes the clear though not extreme position that it will ever be done in the light of the cross by "the preacher who realizes that he is not a lecturer, but an ambassador from God to His aliens, or, 'May he not suspect that his creed has not mastered his soul as it ought to have done?'"

His next paragraph deals with what is really the most important practical question of the hour, and in a way that we can only do justice to by reproduction: "Passing on, for these are mere hints, we are told that the spirit of the age must be recognized in our preaching, and that difficulties which have made it so ill at ease, should be met in the evangelical pulpit. It is doubtful how far the spirit of the age has penetrated average congregations, and equally doubtful whether most preachers are able to meet it. Still more questionable is it whether the pulpit is the true place for debate—whether it is not a seat of authority and certainty. Evangelical preachers have to confess with shame that Evangelicalism of the pronounced type has become almost synonymous with ignorance; and this in spite of the fact that Evangelicalism, more than any other creed, ought to be preached by the most learned and cultured. The reason is clear. Conceive the absurdity of singing its rapturous hymns after sermons based on probabilities! It must speak *ex cathedra*, and just because it must it ought to speak from fulness of knowledge and breadth of sympathy. We would not have the evangelical preacher confront the spirit of the age, but we would have him able to show that he understands it, and has conquered it so far as it is antagonistic in the secret battle-ground of his own soul. It does not need much speech to show this. Oliver Wendell Holmes speaks strikingly of the revelations made unconsciously even by pronunciations. Some pronunciations are pedigrees. Even so there are modes of speech—there are words and phrases—which to the instructed ear make it clear that he who uses them knows what manner of spirit his age is of—what currents are flowing and in what direction. It is very gladdening and reassuring to hear the blessed Gospel preached simply and earnestly by such; and those who preach it should seek to be able to do so from such a vantage-ground."

As to the preaching of "*Morality*," of which there are many advocates, he points to the conspicuous failure of moderatism, yet suggests an improvement in the way of more largely enforcing relative duties upon purely gospel grounds, and emphasizing righteousness as related to God and Christ, and not merely to the law.

His announced conclusion, that evangelical preaching is the necessary outcome of an intelligently held evangelical creed, he maintains against Mr. Dale's

recognition of the evangelistic gift in some without disparagement to others (in his Yale "Lectures on Preaching," in a way that must be very comforting to a large class of faithful men who have never gained the position of "popular preachers." The work of the preacher is to preach the gospel of redemption through blood. What is the test of his success? Are evangelical men unanimous in replying, "Bringing souls to Christ?" Once it was so, he replies, and asks, "Must we depart from the old ground?" If in this he includes bringing men to holiness as well as to acceptance of pardon, we would agree with his conclusions and press his searching inquiries. "Is it quite certain that a minister is doing the will of Christ when he gathers men round him to listen to a certain type of preaching? Is it any profit to them to 'detain them before the Lord' without bringing them to the Lord? Is it not adding a heavy weight to their condemnation at last if they know so much and yet remain outside? Ought not the preacher to ply them with all manner of pathetic inquiry and importunity—cultured young men though they be—to plead with them as perishing sinners, that he may save them from the most terrible of all fates—entering into death having two eyes?"

GOSPELLER.

*Nov. 23rd, 1878.*

### SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION.

MR. EDITOR, - Knowing that your columns are always open for the recording of Christian work, I thought it might interest some of your readers were I to send you a few notes of the late annual convention of the North York Sabbath School Association. Our Convention met this year at Queensville on Thursday and Friday, the 7th and 8th inst. There was a fair representation of superintendents and teachers, and other warm friends of the Sabbath school cause. Mr. David Fotheringham, public school inspector for the northern division of York, and whose name is so well known in connection with Sabbath school work, was chosen President of the Association for the ensuing year. For a number of years Mr. Fotheringham has acted as secretary of the Association, and to him, more than to any other, is due the present state of Sabbath school work amongst us. The Rev. William Frizzell, of Newmarket, was chosen Secretary. Addresses, by speakers previously selected, were given on the following topics:—"Missing links in Sabbath School Work, and how to supply them," "Parental Responsibility in Sabbath School Work," "Systematic Bible Study," "How the Pastor may help the Sabbath School," and "Illustrative Teaching." These addresses, and the discussions which followed, awakened a very general and lively interest. We had also reports from delegates to the Convention at Peterboro', held last month. Mr. Fotheringham gave an interesting report of the Atlanta Convention of last April, to which he went as our delegate. "The Continuation and Improvement of Normal Class Work in the Riding," called forth a good deal of discussion, and at the close of the discussion a motion was carried unanimously instructing the Executive Committee to make such arrangements as they should deem best for holding a Normal Class in the riding some time during the winter. There was also a specimen Teacher's meeting, led by Mr. Fotheringham. On the afternoon of the second day a mass meeting of children was held, when addresses were given by Rev. S. P. Rose, Rev. Mr. Millard, of Toronto, and Mr. Fotheringham. It is but right to say here that the Association of North York owes much to Mr. Millard, secretary of the Canada Association. His presence added not a little to the interest of the Convention, this year as well as in former years.

The Convention was composed of representatives from the various denominations amongst us, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Friends, etc. The tone of all the sessions was kindly and Christian, and the addresses and discussions indicated on the part of many, if we may not say of all, a very sincere devotion to the work of Sabbath school instruction.

WALTER AMOS.

*Aurora, Nov. 16th. 1878.*

THE Japanese Government have agreed to grant a loan of \$1,500,000 for the purpose of working some of the coal fields which spread over an immense area in the island of Yezo. Recent surveys by geologists warrant the estimate that there is workable coal enough in that island alone to produce a yearly yield for 1,000 years equal to that of all Great Britain.