

GENERAL READING
OLD THOUGHTS ON AN OLD
THEME.

A reader of the Christian Union, the pastor of a small country church, desires to know how to make good prayer-meetings. His problem and his complaint are both old; and our counsel must be as old as the question he asks. For there is nothing new to be said upon it; only old truths to be reiterated.

The first condition of a good prayer-meeting is to have something to say, and then to say it. The underlying cause of poor prayer-meetings is that the pastor has nothing in his head and the people have nothing in their hearts. You cannot bring chaff to the Lord and pass it off as wheat. If the people are empty, more reason why the pastor must come full. If they have nothing to say to each other he must have something to say to them. If they come cold he must come warm. You cannot make a tropical meeting by gathering together a hundred ice-berg Christians. He must be a gulf stream to melt them.

The next thing is to get rid of formality. Pews and benches are murderers of prayer-meetings. Meet in a parlor if you can. How often do you see a dull prayer-meeting break up, and then after the meeting is all over, the people gather about the stove in one corner and spend half an hour over a subject of real live interest, and the best part of the prayer-meeting is after the prayer-meeting is dismissed. The story is told, we believe it is authentic, of an eccentric but successful pastor who opened his prayer-meeting as usual with a hymn, a Scripture-reading and a prayer, and then called on the brethren for remarks. No one stirred. Would any brother lead in prayer? No one did. "Well then," said the pastor, "if no one wants to speak and no one wants to pray we had better go home; receive the benediction;" and he dismissed them. They gathered around the stove and discussed their prayer-meetings, and made a new beginning that night. The method might fail in other hands, but the principle was sound. Anything to break the dreadful formality of a prayer meeting that is as stiff as a brook in January because it is as cold.

In the third place, how can we expect to make good prayer-meetings when we cut off the help of the best religious element in the church, that of the women? That is as if you were to turn out the clarionets and flutes and instruments of melody from a band, and leave nothing but bassoons and bass violi to make music with. They can rumble away down in the bass, but who cares for such music? A woman is sentimental, and a prayer-meeting is a place for sentiment and feeling, and as long as we do not get that in our meetings, and have a leader who knows only the bass and tenor in spiritual things, we cannot carry our meetings very high. Better call our meetings conference meetings, but do away with the name religious meetings, than to put on the bellows and blow up the coals when there is no wood, or when the wood is as green as red oak.

And it is not impossible to get women to take a part in the meeting if they are wanted. But they are sensitive and shrinking, and they will not take part if they are not wanted. In morning prayer-meetings in times of revival we had no difficulty in getting women to take part. A woman, in answer to a call for requests, says, "I wish prayer for my husband;" and we ask, "Where was he born?" to which she is very ready to reply; a second question brings a second reply, and so on; and before she knows it she has given us the inspiration of a real experience. A mother asks prayer for her absent child. "Where is he?" "At sea." "Was this child consecrated in prayer?" "Yes." What have you done yourself for your child? "I have been in the habit of daily prayer for him and with him." Pretty soon we get the whole history of the child, those things that no one can say but a mother, and she does not feel as though she were making a speech at all.

We get letters from women continually that are full of a devoutly inquisitive spirit in regard to the most vital points in religious life; and women naturally search out those things, and feel the fine lines a great deal more than men do. They are the ones who are naturally interested in spiritual topics, and their interest ought to be not merely passive; it ought to be actively exercised.

Another condition is promptness and vigor of movement. The minister must, at every hazard, keep the meeting going. It never ought to last more than three quarters of an hour, and ought to begin at the stroke of the clock, and end with equal promptness. "Whatever you have to do you have got to do it quickly, for this meeting is going on;" that ought to be the spirit of the leader. And in one way or other we must get rid of the spiritual parrots who get up and repeat what has been said over and over for forty years. A weak man cannot do it; and a weak man cannot

make a strong prayer-meeting. Do you say, "I have no adaptation to any such work as that?" Well then, you have no adaptation to carry on a prayer-meeting. If a man can only drive a half-blind horse that is so lame that he cannot run away, he would better not drive any kind of horse. Ministers are continually telling sinners they must change their habits, must reform their lives, must re-cast their characters; that by God's grace they can do it and ought to do it; and when you tell them to go into this kind of work they will say, "Oh, my nature is not adapted to anything of that sort;" just as if ministers' natures are not capable of being changed as well as those of any other sinners.

One other thing: you can never make a good prayer-meeting by dragging or coaxing people to come out to a Barmecide feast. The hungry man may take the joke for a single night but he will not keep it up for a year. Give them something to come for and they will come. The only way to make a good prayer-meeting is to make the prayer-meeting good.—Chris. Union.

"SWING OF CONQUEST."

From the rocks of Gibraltar comes another ringing sentence destined to live as long as the Anglo-Saxon race, or the English language. In reviewing the English soldiers at Gibraltar, Gen. Grant gave his opinion of the soldiers of Europe. He said he had seen most of the soldiers of the continent. That he liked the German soldiers; that the Spanish soldiers only lacked good officers to make them very superior soldiers; but that he had seen nothing to compare with the English. That he did not see how their discipline could be improved. "There is something about them not found in any other soldiers—it may be in their Anglo-Saxon blood—they have the swing of conquest."

This is history condensed. There is also in it a prophecy. This swing of conquest imposes its duties as well as brings its glory. Swinging through the centuries, and over the continents, it must bear up and forward the religion of the Bible and the freedom of Protestantism. The man who drives a swift horse must hold a steady rein. The Churches that ride behind this swinging, conquering race must keep faith with God, as well as step with events.

THE LIGHT ON THE WAVES.

The following is the eloquent conclusion of Dean Stanley's sermon preached in New York and printed in the Tribune:—"May I close these remarks by an illustration which I once heard from the lips of a rough seafaring man—one of few survivors of a great shipwreck which took place some ten years ago in the Bay of Biscay? As soon as those who had escaped from the sinking vessel found themselves in a small boat in which they had taken refuge, in the midst of the raging sea they found their chief danger came not from the solid massive sweep of waters, but from the angry breaking waves which, from time to time, descended upon them, and against which every eye and hand had to watch with unabated attention. As the shades of evening drew on, so the survivor told me, their hearts sank at the thought that in the darkness of the night it would be impossible to see those insidious breakers, and that sooner or later they would be caught and engulfed by them. But with the darkness there came a corresponding safety. Every one of these dangerous waves as it rolled toward them was created with a phosphorescent light which showed its coming afar off, and enabled the seaman to guard against it as carefully as if they had been in the full light of day. The spirits of the little crew revived, and those from time to time—the cowards and desperadoes among them—were for turning back to the ship, were guided by these corruscations through the night, and in the early dawn they caught view of a distant vessel by which they were at last saved.

"Mark that crest of phosphorescent light. On the top of those breaking billows is the light of Divine grace, the compensating force of Providence. In the darkness of this mortal life, and on the wave of this troublesome world our perplexities and dangers and griefs bring with them—or may bring with them—their own remedy. On each bursting wave of disappointment and vexation there may be grace of heavenly light which reveals the peril, and shows the wave and guides us through the roaring storm. Out of doubt may come faith, out of the grief may come hope, and to the upright and godly disposed there rises light from darkness. With each new temptation there may come a way to escape, with each new difficulty there may come some new explanation. As life advances it does indeed sometimes seem to us as a vessel going to pieces as though we were broken fragments of a ship or a solitary skiff on the wide waste of waters; but so long as our mortal existence lasts we must never give up the duty of hoping. The sense that keeps us

back in youth from all intemperate gladness—that same good instinct forbids unprofitable sadness. We must persevere until the morning breaks. That speck on the distant horizon may be a vessel by which we will shape our course. Forward not backward, must we steer. The speck becomes a mass, and the mass becomes a ship. Have patience and perseverance, and believe that there is still a future before every one, and so we shall at last reach the haven where we should meet."

THE BRAVERY OF BRITISH SEAMEN.

Glorious proof of the gallantry and discipline of British seamen is furnished, says a writer in the Daily Telegraph, by the narratives which have reached us from her Majesty's ship "Thunderer." We know at length how that huge ironclad was cleared for action at a signal from the admiral; how the water-tight compartments into which the vessel is divided were closed, the men at their stations, and the guns loaded. We learn how, following one broadside fired at an imaginary enemy, there came "a strong report, with a sound 'altogether different from that which a broadside makes,'" and after what fashion the ship's company became aware that something was wrong. Then comes the story of how the men remained, each little party in its own compartment, with the lights all out by reason of the concussion, and the knowledge that whatever had happened they must prepare to die, if need be, without opening the partition doors, in order to save the ship. One who is at the bottom of the ladder which leads to the battery-deck is sent to sound the bells, and as he tries to pass along the deck he finds the man hatchway choked with a torpedo, and filled with smoke and flame, himself and his comrades "like rats in a trap." When eventually he succeeded in his mission the sight which meets his eyes is terrible in the extreme. Men who but a moment before were hale and well are lying blackened and disfigured so as not to be recognizable; others are striving to lead away those more injured than themselves; while from some of the dying comes a cry that comrades "who are even worse than they, should be attended to first." There is no unseemly fright manifested, although at this dreadful moment no one can tell the cause or the extent of the catastrophe. For aught that any man on board knows, the hold of the vessel may have been rent, or some other accident have occurred seriously imperilling the safety of the ship and the lives of the crew. Yet no one quits his post, the dead are reverently taken up, the wounded carefully removed, the debris of the broken gun and turret is cleared away, and then the ship's company "set to work coffin making," while those whose number will hereafter be missing from the mess are prepared for interment. It is, with all its lamentable accompaniments, a grand and instructive scene. Not a word is heard of irregularity; for though as many men have been killed and wounded in a single moment as would have suffered from a general action, and by a cause altogether unknown at the time, yet that good ship's crew stands at general quarters, and despite the alarm and the carnage, bears itself as English sailors alone know how to do. In the annals of our navy there is many a brave record, and the tale of how our seamen have done their duty is known in every land; but, from the foundering of the "Birkenhead" until to-day, has no story been related in which these marvelous qualities have been more plainly set forth than on the occasion of the explosion on board the "Thunderer."

THE CASUISTRY OF THE CONFESSORIAL.

The mistress and the Irish cook are in colloquy. "Indade, missus, and what for should I stave from ye? I must go and tell it all to the priest. I kneel down to confess me sins; and he asks me so many questions; there's nothing in me that he doesn't find out. I daren't tell him a lie. I must tell him just what I took from ye and all about it; the tay, the sugar, the coffee, and all unbeknownst to ye. He asks me just what it was all worth; and I must tell him to a penny; for I mustn't tell a lie to him, ye know. 'Is that all?' he says, says he. 'Ye stop and think, and tell me ivery thing;' and his eyes look into me very sowl. And I takes care to put it high enough, to be sure of me sowl. Then he says to me, says he: 'Have ye got the money wid ye?' I says, 'Yes, Father B.' Ye know ye must have the money about ye when ye go to confess. And thin he points up to the poor-box, hanging there before me eyes; and he says, says he: 'See that ye dont lave this house till ye've put ivry penny of that ye stole into the box yonder, forint the post.' And I must do it, missis, jist

as he tells me, wid his eyes looking at me so; or I go home wid a lie to the priest; and then what's the good of confessing, and what becomes of me sowl? So what's the good to me, if I staves your sugar?"

The above was a veritable occurrence in the city of Boston, not long ago. It carries internal evidence of truth, so far as this—that an Irish servant would not be likely to originate the adroit casuistry of giving to the poor the proceeds of her pilfering. Some shrewder mind than hers started the idea. But is that the casuistry of the confessional? A certain old Book declares of the Almighty: "I hate robbery for burnt-offering."—Congregationalist.

QUICKFOOT.

An Indian who had been out hunting had killed a deer, from which he cut off a joint of venison, and hung it up as high as he could in his wigwam. He then went off into the forest to look at his traps. He was not long gone; but when he came back, to his surprise and anger, he found that his fine joint had disappeared and no trace of the thief was to be found—at least neither you nor I could have noticed any, however carefully we might have looked. However, the Indian snatched up his tomahawk, and off he went in hot pursuit of the culprit, straight through the forest.

He had not gone far before he met a friendly white man, a trapper, who was fixing him going along with his eyes fixed upon the ground, asked him what trail he was pursuing.

"I seek," said Quickfoot. "A little old white man, with a small gun, who has got with him a little dog with a stumpy, bushy tail. He is a robber, for he has entered my wigwam and stolen my venison. I will kill both him and his dog."

"My brother, I saw not far from here just such a man. But how dost thou know him so well? For you have not yet seen him."

"I am in haste, but if thou wilt know, listen: 'I found a pile of stones under the place where my venison was hanging. Had the robber not been short he would not have required these to stand on. He was old, for his foot steps were close together. He was white, for his toes turned in, which an Indian's never do. If the gun had been long, it would not have left a mark on the bark of the tree, as it did when it leaned against it. So, thou seeest it was easy, having eyes, to detect the thief."

"But how did you know the cur, even to his tail?"

"Of what use would the eyes of Quickfoot be, if they had not shown him the dog's feet were close together, as he walked on the sand; and that the short bushy tail measured itself as he sat wagging it, while his master was helping himself to my dinner? But farewell, I must hurry or I shall not get back my venison from that white thief."

With these words Quickfoot hurried away, and was lost amid the deep foliage of a Western forest.

FAMILY READING.

HOW A SUCCESSFUL LEADER LEADS HIS CLASS.

I know a class-leader who has had for three years a class of about fifty members, ranging from ten years old to eighty. It includes various grades of society and intelligence. The average attendance is about thirty members weekly. The following are his rules, which he carries out systematically:—

1. He visits at their homes all the members of his class; knows them and their families: never fails to make the children of the family glad to see him.

2. He is careful to speak to his members on the street; chats sociably with them, and tries to leave a good religious impression on their minds. He never fails to let the "stay-aways" know they are missed. He opens class on the minute; after the prayer and second hymn, he reads a few verses with especial reference to some topic which he has previously selected for the evening, and all the members, when called, are expected to speak upon the topic, though they are at liberty to add to it anything else they may desire to talk about. He only speaks to the members in reply when something seems to him to demand it, frequently passing ten or twelve with only a single sentence or a line of Scripture, or if an appropriate verse has been sung, saying nothing. The evening before any special service, such as love-feast, communion, missionary day, baptism, reception of members, he selects a topic appropriate to the coming occasion, and always instructs his probationers in the questions and answers that will be put to them the following Sabbath, lending them either a "Discipline" or the "Probationer's Manual." He is a

bright, active and cheerful business man, and endeavours to make his classroom a cheerful, social gathering, without in the least degree lowering the tone of its religious character. He calls his members more according to their Christian experience than by position in the class, so as to give variety, trying to alternate the disheartened with the bright, the young with the old. None are required to speak, and it is so understood in the class—freedom in this as in other things. Reproof he leaves for private application. This is no fancy sketch, but a truthful description of every-day life.

He believes the topical plan to be a good one, as it breaks up uniformity in giving experience from week to week. By viewing a topic from all sides it impresses it very much on the memory. All his members like it. If it be communion week, he reads about it, impresses its importance upon the members, and then asks of each one, "Do you partake of it? If so, why do you? If not, why don't you?" If it be love-feast week, similar questions are asked.

At one meeting he read Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, and requested the members to relate their conversion. At another meeting he read 1 Peter iii, 15, and dwelt especially upon the words, "Be ye ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you," and every member spoke clearly upon the "reason" of his hope.

Another night he read the incident of the ten lepers, and dwelt upon their unquestioning obedience, and drew the lesson for the class, in giving their experience, of the advantages of obedience to the commands of God and the church, and the results of disobedience, with such particular incidents as they deemed best. Another time he dwelt upon rest in heaven, and the necessity for effort; and inquired of the members their chief hindrances, and how they overcame them.

And thus, week after week, varying the programme, frequently drawing a lesson from the Sabbath school lesson. The class look forward with desire for class night, expect to enjoy themselves and to be profited, and are not disappointed.

"PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD IMMEDIATELY."

Roberts Annan, the Christian hero, put up an iron plate near his house in Dundee, with the words boldly painted on it, "Prepare to meet thy God." I frequently pass the place, and my attention was called to it by a friend as being much effaced. I went to the agent for the property on which it was fixed, and got permission from him to renew the paint and the inscription. I then employed a painter to have it done, but he was a long time in getting it finished. I went to his shop several times and spoke about it; but one day, as it was still unfinished, I requested him to enter it in his books to be done immediately. I looked over his shoulder afterward, and saw the words written, "Prepare to meet thy God—immediately." I called his attention to it, and said, "That is just what we have to do, for we know not the moment we must pass away into eternity. What awfully solemn examples we have had of tales of death coming to crowds of our fellow-creatures in a moment!" Then, reader, "be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." (Matt. xxiv. 44.) And I desire that Christian friends would pray that this repainted board might be greatly blessed to souls by the Holy Spirit of God; and, also, that many readers of this sketch might seriously now obey the friendly warning:—"Prepare to meet thy God—immediately."

COMPOSE THE TEST OF STRENGTH.

(Observer.) We mistake strong feelings for strong character. A man who bears all before him—before whose frown domestics tremble, and whose bursts of fury make the children of the house quake because he has his will obeyed, and his own way in all things, we call him a strong man. The truth is, that is the weak man; it is his passions that are strong; he, mastered by them, is weak. You must measure the strength of a man by the power of the feelings he subduces, not by the power of those which subdue him. And hence, composure is very often the highest result of strength. Did we never see a man receive a flagrant insult, and only grow a little pale, and then reply quietly? That was a man spiritually strong. (O did we never see a man in anguish stand as if carved out of solid rock, mastering himself? or one bearing a hopeless daily trial remain silent, and never tell the world what it was that cankered his home-peace? That is strength. He who, with strong passions, remains chaste—he who, keenly sensitive, with mainly power of indignation in him, can be provoked, yet can restrain himself and forgive—these are strong men, spiritual heroes.

CANON GAY
A man grows into his most familiar facts of and holds good in every ear, the poet, what is their shape and form, before to the ideal existing imagination? The man his own work never if not notorious that skill the more critical please, and sees def which, perhaps, year ed with complac Whence this sensiti Has he lost his ski his sense of beauty or harmony? Not has simply grown, a his conceptions hav one compare his wo his work as a child, at the difference, same with the con the intellect. The all our nature. T quired a sense of s He has lost nothing —has gained a ne ness. The facts of main what they w have soared into a he has breathed a

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SET YOUR AIMS HIGH.

CANON GARBETT.

A man grows into his aims, and rises or sinks with them. It is one of the most familiar facts of daily experience, and holds good in every sphere of action. Take the artist, the musician, the poet, what is their effort but to give shape and form, before the eye or the ear, to the ideal existing in their own imagination? The man satisfied with his own work never can be great. Is it not notorious that as he advances in skill the more critical and difficult to please, and sees defects in work on which, perhaps, years before, he looked with complacent satisfaction? Whence this sensitiveness to fault? Has he lost his skill of eye and hand, his sense of beauty and form, or color or harmony? Not in the least. He has simply grown, and as he has grown his conceptions have grown. Let any one compare his work as a man with his work as a child, and he will smile at the difference. And it is just the same with the conscience as it is with the intellect. The same laws pervade all our nature. The man who has acquired a sense of sin has simply grown. He has lost nothing, but he has gained—has gained a new conception of holiness. The facts concerning himself remain what they were, but his thoughts have soared into a higher sphere, and he has breathed a purer atmosphere.

UNCONSCIOUS SERVICE.

(Examiner.)

We love our friends all the time; when we are so absorbed in working for them that we seldom think of them, as well as when telling them of our regards. Thus, if it is the fixed purpose of our lives to glorify God—if we have given ourselves to him with unreserved affection—the hours that we give to diligence in business will be hours in which we serve him, just as truly as in our conscious worship; and in such service we shall make constant progress in Christian experience.

DO CHILDREN "HOLD OUT"?

"It is well enough to teach children the gospel, but we should remember that they are not apt to hold out in religion." Such are the sentiments we sometimes hear. But we believe them mistaken. Of a hundred converts among children, taking them just as they come, and with the spiritual care or neglect they on the average receive, we believe as large a per cent. of them continue as of a hundred adults taken the same way.

Children need help in order to "endure." Do not old sinners when converted need the same? Is a man any more apt to "hold out" in religion for having long "held out" in sin? Are disobedience and ingratitude and hardness of heart a good school for permanence of character in righteousness? Not if we understand human nature. "But children are easily influenced." We know it. And this is the very reason why they should be put under the full influence of Christianity at once. Do not leave them to be chilled by worldliness during all the formative years and fondly hope they will thus learn to be strong in right.

SOBE THROAT.—The best cure for sore throat is a gargle of Pain Killer and water—it acts like magic.

CONSUMPTION.—Many say that this disease cannot be cured, but the proprietors of Allen's Lung Balm will satisfy any one that it has been cured in very many cases of the worst description. They have hundreds of testimonials from thankful individuals who willingly admit it has saved their lives.

HAVE you inflammatory sore throat, stiff joints, or lameness from any cause whatever? Have you rheumatic or other pains in any part of the body? Is so, use Johnson's Anodyne Liniment. It is the most wonderful internal and external remedy known to medical science.

We caution all persons not to buy the extra large packs of dust and ashes now put up by certain parties and called condition powders. They are utterly worthless. Buy Sheridan's Cavalry Condition Powders, if you buy any; they are absolutely pure and immensely valuable.

COUNTLESS sufferers find the balm of relief, and the fountain of their health and strength, in Ayer's Sarsaparilla. It is the most potent of all the alternatives to purify the system and cleanse the blood. It possesses invigorating qualities, so that it stimulates the faded vitality, and purges out the corruptions which mingle with the blood, promoting derangement and decay. We are assured by many intelligent physicians that this medicine cures beyond all others of its kind, and we can fortify this statement by our own experience.—Pittsford, N.Y. Argus.

APHONIA CURED.—Fellow's Compound Syrup of Hypophosphites.—Aphonia or Loss of Voice is remedied in a short time, no matter whether the cause be from inflammation of the lining membrane, from cold, or from nervous derangement.

LAME BACK. WEAK BACK. BENSON'S CAPSICUM PAIN PLASTER. This article is one which really possesses extraordinary merit. By consulting reliable physicians in your own locality, you will find that the above is far superior to the ordinary plaster plaster, all the so-called electrical appliances, and to all external remedies whatever. It contains entirely new elements which cause it to relieve pain at once, strengthen and cure where other plasters will not. Rheumatism, Neglected Colds, Female Affections, and all local aches and pains, it is simply the best remedy ever devised. Sold by all Druggists. Price 25 Cents.

JOYFUL NEWS FOR THE AFFLICTED.

PORT GEORGE, Annapolis Co., N.S.

June 12th., 1878. Messrs. C. Gates, Son & Co.—Gentlemen In the Autumn of 1877, my little boy, about two years old, was in very ill health on account of worms, which destroyed his appetite, and made him peevish and poor. The strongest symptoms of the disease being starting out of a sound sleep and crying loudly. I had never previously used your medicine for any complaint to which children are subject, but concluded to try them in this case. I administered your No. 1 Syrup according to directions with amazing results. One symptom after another speedily disappeared before it, (it carried off worms four or five inches long), and when only two bottles had been taken a perfect cure was effected.

In March last I gave the little fellow two bottles of your No. 2 Bitters as a Spring medicine to purify his blood, he having been ailing on account of impurities therein. It cleansed his blood, built him up so that he increased in flesh and strength in a very short time. And ever since he has been well and hearty. I may also say that two swallows (and not very large ones either) of your No. 1 Syrup before mentioned cured me in about fifteen minutes of a very bad cramp and pain in the stomach, such as I never experienced before or since. I can state further that I have seen your Acadian Liniment applied to cattle for the cure of claw distemper (so called) in the most astonishing results. A gentleman of my acquaintance had a pair of oxen severely crippled by this terrible complaint, but by the use of 5 or 6 bottles of the Liniment aforesaid a cure was effected in about ten days. I helped apply the medicine myself and know this to be a fact. I am quite sure no other Liniment or other preparation in his country could have done so much in a similar case as this Liniment did. I have also used your Nerve Ointment with complete success for the cure of sore tests on cows. There is nothing I ever tried or heard tell of that will cure them so quick.

Yours with gratitude, ISAAC B. SPINNEY.

Sworn to at Wilmot, before me, the undersigned, June 13th, 1878.

WOODBURY BROS., DENTISTS, NEW YORK.

Dr. H. WOODBURY, Graduate of Philadelphia Dental College, OFFICE OVER CONNELLY'S BOOK STORE, CORNER OF GEORGE AND GRANVILLE STREETS, Halifax, N.S. Entrance No. 97 Granville St. 4210c

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GOSPEL HYMNS, No. 3. By Sankey, McGranahan & Stebbing. JUST PUBLISHED.

The songs in No. 3 are for the most part New, but very few of them having been issued in No. 1 or No. 2. The price is the same as No. 1 & 2. Music and Words, stiff covers 0.35 " " " paper 0.30 Words only paper 0.06 Mailed post at these prices. METHODIST BOOK ROOM, Halifax. Nov. 17, 78

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THE WESLEYAN

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1879.

Rev. C. W. Dutcher wishes us to say that in his communication of week before last, instead of \$50 Supernumerary Fund grant, should have been inserted \$20.

Dr. Nelson, one of the heads of the New York Book Concern, was lying very low, of paralysis, last week. He had been quite well up to the evening of the day he was prostrated. There were slight hopes his recovery.

Signs of revolution are showing themselves in Mexico. It is a revolutionary country—the most so of any country in the world, France not excepted. The Presidency of Mexico is a bubble which ambitious men chase and grasp, only to find it bursting in their hands. Dr. Butler at the head of a Methodist Episcopal Mission there, will find it worse than India in respect to popular fermentation. It is to be hoped he will succeed as well as in India with mission enterprise, notwithstanding.

Dr. Green, the genial, honored patriarch of our General Conference, departed this life, at his residence in Toronto, last Thursday, aged 78 years. He had been Book-Steward for a long period, and occupied several positions of trust in connection with both General and Annual Conferences. Dr. Green always commanded respect as a prudent counsellor and an intelligent student of Methodist law. He showed indications of considerable decline in physical health during last General Conference at Montreal. Telegrams received here during a few weeks past intimated that the venerable man was gradually sinking to rest.

Books are bread. Persons of reflective mind, especially those called to feed others, cannot live without books, and thrive. Our people should remember this. Poor sermons often come from poor salaries. What cravings exist among that large class who are required to work hard on slender diet! Cravings for something fresh, sweet and strong. We are persuaded this is not the least among modern deprivations resulting from enforced economy. How joyous it would be, could each parsonage be supplied with a fair library, to be replenished from year to year, and kept in good condition by some executive oversight. The church would soon reap the fruits of such a seed-planting.

After passing through an extraordinary career of mystery, Esther Cox is to be exhibited as a scientific phenomenon. Surely if her "visitations" have been an affliction, as it was affirmed, this last indignity ought not to be added. It is sufficient humiliation for humanity to endure the rhapsodies which are uttered as an assumed explanation of this girl's condition, without pointing to her in public as a being distinct from the rest of human kind. Besides, there are peculiarities in her case, if we hear the truth, which cannot be explained to a mixed audience. We advise that either the case be submitted to science, absolutely, or Miss Cox be permitted to retain her womanly instincts by keeping in retirement.

The Reporter of this city was disposed, last Saturday, to question the propriety of our remarks upon the display at Ottawa. On Monday the Reporter itself found it necessary to speak out strongly enough upon the State Ball held at the capital last week. A Baptist minister in Ottawa, it is telegraphed, gave his audience some very plain, pointed talk upon that disgraceful affair, at which intoxication was supreme. If the friends and guardians of morality were to remain silent on such subjects, the religious portion of them would soon be held up by the secular press to ridicule. It is hoped the scenes said to have been presented to the eyes of our Princess at that Ball are overdrawn. If not it is high time Canada came to its feet in indignant remonstrance.

How much consolation may be carried in our day to darkened houses and stricken hearts! Sad as may be the visitations of disease to others, to ministers of the gospel they may be bring opportunities for doing that which will, afterward produce much comfort in the review of life. Sons of thunder attract most attention, and, in their own sphere, accomplish much for humanity; but sons and daughters of consolation have great legacy of privilege and mercy. And the records of our rather remarkable mortality in these times, show that death is at work chiefly upon children. That is what causes the human heart deepest affliction. A little child leaves usually a large blank and a heavy burden, when called from earth. To those of tender sympathies God calls loudly now, to take the sorrowing by the hand, and lead them, while in a tender state of mind, to Him who speaks peace to the raging elements.

THE PROTESTANTS WHO SURVIVE.

The multitude of old Protestants are dead. They fulfilled their mission and went to their reward. There was a protest against idolatry, against bigotry, against religious despotism. They lived long enough to see an immense company emancipated from the tyranny of the Papacy, to see the remaining powers of Rome hemmed about by liberal laws, to see the Pope stripped of his usurped temporal authority, to place the reformed faith well upon its feet. Then they died. Their voice is no longer heard in the land. When Popery again attains to dangerous proportions, there will be a resurrection of Protestantism, unless God designs to close the drama of this world's history in darkness and blood—according to a spirit of prophecy which we never can believe.

But there are still idolatry and bigotry and religious despotism. And there are still Protestants.

Some venerable Christian stands alone in a congregation, his watchful eye and ear always open to detect departures from old customs, or the introduction of new-fangled ways. With the warm blood of his ancestors in his veins, he is incited to speak out. He protests. Quiet mothers in Israel endure a life of persecution amid husbands who drink, and sons who forsake the house of God. They submit, but with a firm, subdued expression of manner which perpetually rises as a protest before these domestic sinners. A lady with large income, who might wear her diamonds, moves about in plain alpaca, among befrilled and bespangled leaders of fashion. Her spare money she gives to God's poor, while her demeanor holds its place in sight of the rich, saying, "I protest." A merchant protests against the prevailing depravity of that bankruptcy which hoards enough before the crash to live upon when it is all over, by insisting upon square dealing to the last, and determining to begin life anew rather than continue under false appearances. The politician who disproves the modern aphorism—"It is impossible to live in the contagion of political life without becoming diseased" is a Protestant against this calumny upon a noble profession. That solitary voice in the pulpit which declares against a growing tendency among preachers to indulge in trickery and rant, is the voice of a Protestant. These are echoes from the cries of two hundred years ago, which themselves began at Galilee and thundered upon the Mount.

Protestants have always been in danger of being misunderstood and maltreated. Ours are subject to this possibility. It is fashionable to ridicule people of tender consciences yet adamant spirit, who speak among church officials only to warn and deprecate against coming, growing extravagances. They are good subjects for sly wit and banter. They make fine centerpieces for burlesque poetic works of art. But, wait till they die. We always see their worth then, if never before. They cease then to be "old fogies."

Protestants are the heritage of the ages. There has been no period so dark that it had not some light of heaven flashing upon it from one side or another. The light of moral Protestantism is its horror of bad maxims, bad systems and bad example;—and this light shines forever. In the most idolatrous dynasties there have been bold, brave men, sent of God, to stand in front of the infatuated multitude and press them back from the brink of destruction. Mankind are like statesmen—they are apt to run to extremes when without a good showing on the opposition benches. "Her Majesty's loyal opposition" is always a valuable element in churches as well as Houses of Lords and Commons.

Instead of chafing under the seeming shame of having these antiquated people amongst us, we should endeavor to make a proper use of them. There is a measure of truth in the rebukes they deliver, and truth is seldom pleasant to the erring. It would be a sorry judgment for us should God take away every critical eye and sil-

ence each tongue of warning. A breakwater may be seen to have much rude treatment from the elements. Washed and lashed by winds and waves, with both coming and receding tides bearing down upon it, it has the antagonism of all laws of heaven and earth. Yet the breakwater is the one object most necessary to the prosperity of commerce. Can our readers see the point of this illustration?

THE SERMONIC ART—POINT IN PREACHING.

In some respects the ceramic art and the sermonic art are very much alike. The one is typical of the other. The ceramic art, which Longfellow has made classic in his matchless KERAMOS, stands first among all the arts in its antiquity. And it is also the most natural, being, literally, the "counterfeit and counterpart" of Nature herself, modelled from her own materials. The very clay is shapen into forms of beauty "whose music is not heard but seen;" and so natural is this "Child of Nature" that in it

"We trace The features of the mother's face, Her aspect and her attitude, All her majestic loveliness Chastened and softened and subdued Into a more attractive grace, And with a human sense imbued."

How true is all this, but in a higher sense, of the sermonic art. If it does not equal its type in its antiquity, it infinitely surpasses it in its character and aim. Not clay but moral forces; not inanimate matter which rises "to meet the master's hand" and obeys "his slightest touch," but living men endowed with kingly reason and omnipotence of will—these are the precious materials upon which the sermonic art exercises itself. Not Nature, beautiful as are its models, but God—the divine image, is that which is sought to be reproduced. And if, in the lower sphere,

"He is the greatest artist, then, Whether of pencil or of pen, Who follows Nature,"

so in the higher sphere, he attains the greatest perfection and is the most successful preacher, who is the means, under God, of making the human soul "the counterfeit and counterpart" of "the divine nature."

Now the first element in the sermonic art is point. And by point is meant, a uniform tendency of thought towards unity of impression. All the lines both of argument and illustration, from the exordium to the final appeal must converge in one focal point, so as to leave the mind of the hearer face to face with some one vital issue which is seen to imperiously challenge his immediate concern and settlement. Point in preaching supplies an answer to the hearer's question:—What do you want me to do? A sermon is more than a display of truth. It is not a mere mosaic of many-colored doctrines skillfully constructed for the delectation of the mind. Nor is it a panoramic picture of charming scenes and events of passing interest. It is rather the bow from which the barbed and pointed arrows of convincing truth are directed to the conscience. The one bow commands a well-filled quiver, but its aim is one. It will thus be seen that sermonic point is perfectly consistent with plurality and variety of means. What is required is not so much unity of thought as a uniform tendency of thought. There may be variety of argument and amplitude of illustration, but all must tend towards unity of impression. Take for instance, the text:—"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The central thought or theme of this Scripture is The Love of God; and that love is here presented under various aspects—in its intensity, in its outcome, in its scope, and in its limitations. Thus a single thought—the love of God—becomes, like the sun, the centre of a system, around which revolve subordinate and subsidiary thoughts, that share and reflect its light. And all these thoughts uniformly tend towards one grand impression—a disposition to concur in the purpose of this love. Point in preaching is, therefore, equally possible, whether the sermon be expository,

textual or topical. Whatever tends towards unity of impression is what is meant by sermonic point.

Now, as to the conditions necessary in order to attain this result two or three things are absolutely indispensable. There must be accuracy and clearness of conception. Looming thoughts indistinctly imaged upon the mind are too spectral and intangible to be effective. Fogs are not favourable for rifle practice, and under such conditions the best marksmen are not likely to make a bull's-eye. The mind must make sure that the truth is accurately conceived, and clearly defined, and then let it be levelled with an unerring aim towards the conscience. They were smooth stones whose angularities had been worn off by the waters of the running brook, that David wielded as his weapons against Goliath. So the most effective truths are those that have been well rounded by a constant current of thought, severely outlined before the mind, and made incisive by a force of expression. Force of expression depends largely upon its form. Then the two most forcible forms of expression are the antithetical and the interrogative. The former assists the apprehension while the latter awakens the interest. Antithesis makes every thought a world-image having two hemispheres correlative and yet identical; while interrogation enlists the interest and sympathy of the mind that is addressed. How much these two contribute towards sermonic point it is easy to perceive; and therefore they are among the conditions of success.

Here lies the secret of point in preaching which is so essential to sermonic art. A uniform tendency of thought towards unity of impression, facilitated by accuracy and clearness of conception, and an antithetical and interrogative style of presenting the truth, is what is meant by sermonic point. And with this statement of the case before us, we may say of true sermonic art what the poet says of Nature:—

"Never man, As artist or as artisan, Pursuing his own fantasies, Can touch the human heart, or please, Or satisfy our noblest needs, As he who sets his willing feet In Nature's foot-prints, light and fleet, And follows fearless where she leads."

PRAYER-MEETING MARPLOTS.

The name is a harsh one to use of Christian assemblies and Christian characters. It has a signification, too, not strictly religious. A marplot is a person who comes on the stage at the moment when an act has reached its chief interest; and, either through ignorance or design, introduces a ludicrous element and spoils the play. At least this is the meaning given by authorities as regards the designation.

And yet we are acquainted with no word which better conveys the precise meaning of our subject at this time. There are, in very many prayer-meetings—so many that we shall not be in danger of any accusation for localizing our remarks—one, two or three persons at least who almost invariably speak when they ought not, and in a way that is next to certain to do more harm than good. Verbose Christians, having a harvest of words and a famine of ideas; cynical Christians, perhaps professing great things, but sustaining their profession only by scolding in a sanctified way; injudicious Christians, who are sure to introduce irrelevant subjects—these we do find on earth as it seems quite likely we shall find in heaven. For, to draw the moral line to the tightest, most of this class of persons have a measure of goodness, and must not be ruled out of the company of the faithful. They are defective, some of them, in intellect, and so are as God made them; or they are wanting in education, and are not to be measured by advanced standards; or they lack in that mysterious quality which is not to be ranked as common sense, and cannot be cultivated—the gift of good judgment. Good people, in their way; worthy to be retained in the ranks; but so little to be depended upon in battle that their nearest neighbors dread their shot which is intended for the enemy.

Who has not smiled and sorrowed

by turns over the mishaps and surprises and distresses caused by those misguided people? It is really a serious matter, however, when any attempt is made to bring them into line. They are possessed with a spirit of talk for one thing,—a spirit not easy to cast out. Our best members, those who carry real weight in a community, are usually modest, retiring, and disposed to conceal their light in public. This class are forever trimming their little lamp and holding it up to notice. They are often stubborn, too, especially the sanctified, scolding class—stubborn in the conjecture that they are commissioned to rebuke an unfaithful, worldly-minded church. Few ministers have sufficient courage to confront them. A church is sure to meet trouble that attempts to reform them, for they have their sympathizers and perhaps their followers.

There are, consequently, two evils following the indisposition to cure this religious defect. One pastor holds the prayer-meeting constantly in check, allowing only as many to occupy the time of service as he may choose to call by name. This hampers very materially the cause of God. It is in contradiction of the professed object of Methodists, at least, in worshipping socially together. To edify the body of Christ, to encourage a freedom of witnessing for the Master, there must be spontaneity, freedom, perfect freedom of utterance. This can never be if only a specified number are to be allowed to engage from week to week in the service of religion. It is our joy and pride that amongst us at least "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."

Another method is to bear with this class, which means, to bear all the extravagances and vagaries which they may choose to perpetrate. Some good prayer-meetings have been next to ruined in this way. Christian worshippers may occasionally be laughed at under the most sacred circumstances; but when assemblies of God's people come to be laughed at perpetually, their influence in a community has waned sadly. We owe it to ourselves and to Christ to see that all things be done "decently and in order." The sons of men must be rebuked by our devout, consistent, sincere profession. The world shall be overpowered by believers, only when believers have gained the world's homage of respect and commendation.

What then is to be done? Educate your converts from the commencement. Let them feel the obligation of duty. Train them to work, and to work smoothly, in a way becoming the Gospel of Christ. Where persons are found with these habits contracted, meet them gently but firmly. If defeated in this measure, hale them before two or three members of the church whose lives and judgment compel respect. Bind them about with cords of love and wisdom. If all this fails, bring them under discipline. As shepherds of the flock, we must protect tender lambs from injury, nor can we afford to frighten from the fold those that otherwise would come in amongst us.

Two beautiful pieces of Art have come under our notice during the week. One was a specimen of Mr. S. E. Whiston's penmanship, a copy of the address presented by the North British Society to the Marquis and Princess. This copy of the address is illuminated with rare taste. The body of the address is in old English characters. Messrs. Buckley & Allen have issued an engraving of the Arches erected at the time of the great reception in Halifax. It is a neat and very faithful representation of several points of interest at that exciting time.

The North American Review is now a monthly publication. It is ably edited. For March we find exhaustive articles on the negro question, the philosophy of Jonathan Edwards, the Indian problem and other topics of great public moment. It is published by D. Appleton & Co., New York, at five dollars a year.

The Gold Room, by A. S. Barnes & Co., New York, is an entertaining pamphlet, taking in the marvellous history of the various institutions which grow out of the anomalous gold business in the United States, it gives details of great interest and value.

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