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Preachers and preaching

PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

BY

✓
REV. NICHOLAS MURRAY, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "KIRWAN'S LETTERS TO BISHOP HUGHES," "ROMANISM AT HOME,"
"MEN AND THINGS IN EUROPE," "PARISH AND OTHER PENCILINGS,"
"THE HAPPY HOME," ETC.

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TO THE

REV. GARDINER SPRING, D.D., LL.D.,

WHOSE MANNER OF LIFE FOR FIFTY YEARS IN THE MINISTRY
HAS FORMED AN EXAMPLE WORTHY THE IMITATION
OF ALL HIS YOUNGER BRETHREN,

This Volume is Dedicated,

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

EVERY book has a history; so has this, and it is very soon told. Its author was appointed by the Board of Directors to deliver the charge to the Rev. Dr. M'Gill on his inauguration as professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton in September, 1854. The theme of his charge to that learned and beloved professor was "The Ministry we need." With its preparation commenced the train of thought, the reflection, the observation, which have produced this volume. In a ministry of thirty years' continuance he has noticed the causes of the success and of the failure of ministers, and the good and bad conduct of parishes and people toward them; and the results are here stated for the instruction of all concerned.

The ministry in our day and land has a great work to do. Our country is vast in territory, productive in soil, and in population increasing beyond all example. It is the point toward which all the streams of emigration rising in the Old World are flowing; and what else than an earnest and truthful ministry can reduce to a common language and feeling, and bind to our altars, the nations, kindreds, tongues, and people that are seeking here a home?

And what else than such a ministry can prepare the Church for the fight of faith, and lead it forth to the conquest of the world? The nations are now

open to the Gospel as they never were before, and are waiting for its light. True, paganism has lost none of its sullen resistance to the truth; and popery is what it was in the days of its Gregorys and Johns; and Islamism is what it was in the days of its Omars; but the spirit of might has departed from them all, and the ways of access to their swarming millions are open; and we now, more than ever, need an earnest ministry to lead on the Church to enter these ways and to occupy the land.

And the objects of this volume are, in the spirit of brotherly love, to incite the entire ministry of the Church of God to higher zeal and earnestness in its great work; to make it more efficient at home and abroad; to raise it up to the place which God designed it should hold in the world's civilization, and to show to the Church its duty to the ministry.

Most of these chapters first appeared in the *New York Observer*, a paper widely circulated among all evangelical Christians, and extensively useful. For the favorable notice, as there printed, they have received from the religious and secular press, we desire here to express our gratitude. Somewhat altered and enlarged, they are now collected and published in the present form. With the desire that it may be judged in the light of its object, and with the fervent prayer that it may be blessed to the securing of its designed ends, this book is committed by its author to his brethren in the ministry, to the Church of Christ, and to the world.

Elizabeth, N. J., November, 1859.

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PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

CHAPTER I.

Religion an individual Concern.—Men will have some Religion.—
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State.

Religion an individual concern.

ALL men are sinners, and, as such, are separated from God and heaven. And the great object of religion is to restore man to that favor of God which he lost by violating his law and casting off his authority. And this it seeks to do by revealing to him truths to be believed and duties to be performed. And he that believes and "doeth the truth" is a Christian, and, as far as the future life is concerned, is restored to the state in which Adam was before he fell. He is re-bound to God and to all good. Hence the word "religion" (*ex religio*) is comprehensive of the duties of all men. Others can not believe for us, nor do for us, any more than they can go to heaven or hell for us. Other things we may do by proxy; with every man religion is an individual concern, and he who puts it into the hands of priest, pastor, or preacher, to be managed for him, for the want of time or inclination to attend to it himself, is simply cheating his own soul. The concerns of religion form the great concern of every man.

An order of ministers necessary.

While all this is very solemnly so, yet has it pleased God to institute an order of men to minister in holy things; not to be religious for others, but to explain to all men the way in which they may be religious toward him. These existed under the old dispensation; they are connected with every form of the religion of God or the superstitions of men; and they form the most important external element in the religion of Jesus Christ. Man will have a religion of some kind. This is a want of his nature that he will have, in some way, supplied, if not by a true minister of Christ, by a massing priest, a fakir, a soothsayer or "doctor," as among our own Indians. Travelers, explorers, missionaries, have yet to find a people without a religion of some kind, or a religion without a class of men devoted to its duties. Even the outlaws in the days of Robin Hood had their hedge priest. If a deluge of atheism could sweep from the earth all forms of religion, true and false, then would it establish a religion and priesthood of its own. The conscience of man would remain, amid the widespread moral ruin, and its demands must not be resisted. Hence we might infer that the God who made man would also give him a religion for his guidance, and would provide for teachers to explain its doctrines, administer its ordinances, and enforce its duties; and that religion, with its teachers, we have in the Bible.

The plan of God, in revealing his will to man, is in accordance with the great law of his providence—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the

Law of development.

ear; first the blushing dawn, then the rising sun, then its meridian effulgence. In the revelation of his will it was, first, the promise as to the seed of the woman; then the typical economy of Moses; then came prophets, who gradually unfolded the coming of a brighter day, when the Lord would make a "new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." And then, at the point of time where the lines of history and prophecy met and blended, called "the fullness of time," "the Word was made flesh." And in the person of Christ we see again the law of development. He was first the babe of Bethlehem; soon we see him confounding the doctors in the Temple; thence onward, to his baptism by John and by the Holy Ghost, he grew in favor with God and with man. And, having taught the Way of Life as it was never taught before, and having given the most convincing proofs of the divinity of his mission by the most astonishing manifestation of miraculous power, having finished the work which was given him to do, having revealed the great principles and laid the foundation of the new covenant, He went up to enter upon the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. And before he ascended on high he gave a ministry to the Church, some to be prophets, some apostles, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ. His own words are these: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

The ministry divinely authorized.

of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The ministry, then, of the Church of Christ is of divine authority, and in the highest sense of that phrase. True, the powers that be are ordained of God; a parent at the head of a family, a magistrate at the head of a nation, a judge upon the bench, an elder appointed to rule in the Church, these are all ordained of God for certain duties, but none of them are appointed to teach by the authority and in the name of God, and the duties of the ministry extend over them all. Its duty is to teach the parent how to govern his family, and magistrates and judges to rule in the fear of God, and to judge righteous judgment; to teach all in authority to be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well. As the teachers of all nations, they are the teachers of all men. But, if teachers by divine authority, they must not forget that they are confined to a divinely-authorized text-book. Nor should they so mix up things temporal and spiritual as to cause the temporal to interfere with the efficacy of the spiritual.

The ministry is also an element of vast importance in the state. If it is ignorant, so, generally, are the people; if formal, religion becomes a formalism; if fanatical, so are all that it influences; if truly in the spirit of Christ teaching the words of Christ and administering the ordinances of his Church, then are the people living epistles for Christ, known and read

Like priest, like people.

of all men. "Like people, like priest," is a proverb as true now as it was in the days of Hosea. How degrading the influence of pagan and papal priests upon the people! What tends more to the formation of national character than the teaching of the ministry of a nation? Who can spend a Sabbath in Rome, in Paris, in London, in Edinburgh, in Boston, without seeing the character of the ministry reflected in the conduct of the people? As it holds up the law of heaven, and teaches men their duty to obey it, and enforces that duty by divine sanctions, the people live in one way; as it fails to do this, and, with the Word of God on its lips, lives in the open violation of his law, they live in another way. And not only so, but a noble evangelical ministry, which teaches the people to fear God and keep his commandments, and then to fear nothing else, is a vast element of national greatness. "The people that know their God are strong and do exploits." Nor have we a doubt but that Britain and America, more than to any other cause, owe their present position among the nations of the earth to the ministry which has taught their people that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." The ministers of the Gospel were the men who resisted the cruel laws of bloody Mary, the hypocritical and treacherous canting of the Stuarts, the bloody troopers who, under Claverhouse, would force upon Scotland a faith which its conscience rejected; and in America they were the men who nerved the arm and the heart of our fathers to

The salt of the earth.

the resistance and sacrifices which secured our independence. And they are the men who are now scattering the preserving salt over these great Protestant nations, and who are teaching them that the people who honor God he will honor, and that them who despise him he will lightly esteem. These nations owe far more to the ministers of the Church than to the ministers of the state.

CHAPTER II.

Preaching the great Duty of the Ministry.—The Commission is to Preach.—Preaching at Pentecost.—The Example of the Apostles.—The Progress of Declension.—Return to Judaism.—Ministers not Priests, but Preachers.

THE great duty of the Christian ministry is to preach the Gospel. And it is made so by the terms of the commission itself: "Go ye into all the world, and *preach* the Gospel to every creature." The Gospel means glad tidings of Christ, of salvation through him; and the grand design of the ministry is to make known these glad tidings to all men. Gospel ministers are not *priests*, but *preachers*; are not mass-mongers nor repeaters of rituals, but teachers of the people. Their one object is to go into all the world, and to tell the simple story of the Cross to every creature; and to seek to persuade men, in Christ's stead, to become reconciled to God, and in the way and manner prescribed in the Gospel. And just in the proportion that ministers pass down from preachers to priests—that the pulpit is made to give way to the altar—that the sermon is supplanted by the ceremony, does Christianity recede toward Judaism; does the ambassador for Christ dwindle down into a servile priest of the Mosaic economy.

On the ascension of the Savior the apostles and

Power from on high.

disciples returned to Jerusalem, and there, in obedience to command waited until they were "endued with power from on high." Going into an upper room, they waited, with prayer and supplication, for the promised baptism. They were instructed. They were commissioned. But they felt that without the baptism of the Holy Ghost, however instructed and commissioned, they would be unqualified for their high duties. Their quiet, prayerful waiting for the descent of "the power from on high" is the most convincing testimony they could give that orders, instruction, commissions, of themselves, are insufficient to make true preachers of the Gospel. And when baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, they descended from the place of prayer, and went out amid the multitudes thronging the Holy City, and preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. The *preaching of the Gospel* was the great institution inaugurated at the feast of Pentecost. The altar, the sacrifice, the incense, the sprinkling priest, the formal ceremonial, however gorgeous, belong to the ages preceding the advent, and to a dispensation that has vanished away. Christianity is a system of great principles in reference to the fallen state of man, and the righteous government of God, and to the way in which God and man may be reconciled. Its great central truths are, Christ dying for our sins, and rising for our justification, and ever living to make intercession for us. And the mission of the ministry, and of the entire Church, is to *proclaim* these principles to the ends of

The only theme.

Effects.

the earth, and to entreat all men to embrace them; and in the way and manner of the apostles and disciples in Jerusalem. Surely, if the records of the Church of God have, in all their pages, an example for our imitation, it must be that of the Church of Pentecost, fresh from the baptism of the Spirit.

And that seems to have been the example copied by the first ministers of our religion. Wherever driven by the storm of persecution, or led by the Spirit of God; whether amid the rude Galatians, the voluptuous Corinthians and Ephesians, the refined and philosophic Athenians, or among the more devout Jews in their synagogues, they had but one theme, repentance toward God, Christ, and the resurrection. From these topics they seemed never to turn. There were no masses—no set forms—no incense or pompous Jewish ceremonial. The early ministers of Christ were simply preachers of the Gospel. And when Jews or Gentiles were converted under their ministry, they seemed as zealous in telling the story of a Savior's love to their relations and friends as were the ministry in preaching it. None were then regarded as converted unless they were so converted as to become instruments in the conversion of others. In this way it was that the Church, wading through the blood, and walking over the ashes of its martyrs, in the course of a few generations extended its influence to the extreme boundaries of the Roman world, and went up to the throne, and put on the purple of the Cæsars.

Tendency to backslide.

But there is a very active tendency in man to backslide—to return to what God has abolished. And with the martyr age of the Church passed away much of its spirituality. As the Jews once desired a king, in imitation of the heathen nations around them, so the Church relapsed into form and ceremony, in imitation, at once, of the Jews and of the heathen. Baptism, from being a simple ordinance, symbolical of our need of cleansing by the blood of Christ, and by which we are admitted to a standing in the visible Church, became a regenerating power. The Lord's Supper, instead of being an ordinance commemorative of the death of Christ, became "the holy and mysterious sacrament of the Eucharist," in which the bread and wine were changed into the real body and blood of Christ; and the minister of the Gospel became transmuted into a priest, clothed with the mysterious power of thus creating God, and eating him every time he said mass, and of making a real sacrifice of Christ upon the altar for the sins of men every time he galloped through the forms of the Missal. Even in the days of Chrysostom, the fame of whose stormy and all subduing eloquence, like that of Cicero, has come down to our times, the main duty of the ministry was made to consist in the administration of the sacraments. And soon the preaching of the Gospel was supplanted by a return to ceremonies and sacrifices, in form, and almost in substance, like unto those of the Jewish Church. Nor have fifteen hundred years been able to correct the great error thus com-

Illustrations.

mitted; to remove from the Church the idols thus introduced into it, or to restore the ministry to what it was when, after the baptism by the Holy Ghost, it went out into the streets of Jerusalem from that upper room, and commenced *preaching the Gospel* to every creature.

What mean those splendid cathedrals of Rome, Paris, London, York, or those cabinet editions of them in Montreal, Baltimore, and New York? Were they not suggested by the splendid edifice that once stood, one of the great wonders of the world, on the summit of Moriah? And what mean those cathedral services, whether chanted by lazy priests at Rome, or said or sung, by robed priests of a State Church, at St. Paul's, or Westminster Abbey? Were they not suggested by the priestly courses of the Temple? And what are matins and vespers, Papal or Protestant, but the morning and evening sacrifices of Judaism perpetuated? And what is the mass, and the *real presence*, but the sacrifice of the Temple repeated, at which the Shekinah was the symbol of the divine presence? And our contentions about orders in the ministry, and about the millinery of the communion table and of the ministry, are all suggested by the various orders of the Jewish priests, and by the garments which they wore in performing the duties of their office! It is high time we should learn that we are not under Moses, but under Christ; that ministers are not *priests*, but *preachers*; that they are not sent so much to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper, as to

Corrupters of the faith.

preach the Gospel to every creature. The Church lost its hold on the world when it ceased to *preach* the Christ; it will regain that hold on the world when it returns to that great duty. The present Bishop of London has done more good by his one sermon recently preached at St. Paul's than he would have done for a score of years by doling out homilies on "baptismal regeneration" and "apostolical succession," which none can prove, and which few believe, and which none can believe without strong faith and weak minds.

The ministers of the Gospel are not priests, but preachers. And the men, be they Protestant or Papal, who make the altar more prominent than the pulpit—who shorten the sermon and lengthen the ceremony—who exalt the sacrament and conceal the work of the Spirit, are corrupters of the simple faith of the Church. If not apostates, they are in the beaten track of apostasy. The duty of the ministry is not to offer sacrifice, but to point the way to the great sacrifice of Calvary.

CHAPTER III.

Who are true Ministers of the Gospel?—First, they must be Converted.—This the Mainspring.—Evils of an unconverted Ministry.—Secondly, there must be Ability to teach.—To preach and teach require high Talent.—The great Reformers united Piety with high Talent. — Paul. — Luther. — Whitefield. — Wesley.— Chalmers.

HAVING shown that ministers of the Gospel are not priests, but preachers, the very important inquiry arises, *Who are true ministers of the Gospel?* This is one of the questions which has been debated down all the ages, by which Satan has succeeded in dividing the forces of the Church into hostile parties, and which is very simple or very complex, according to the stand-point from which we discuss it. If we take our stand upon the Scriptures alone, and in their simple light examine the question, we readily come to one conclusion; if we add to the Scriptures tradition, and the jangled and jangling volumes of early Church History, and the discordant teachings of the Fathers, and in their cross-lights examine the question, we may reach almost any conclusion. But, instead of going into the general discussion, we will simply indicate the elements which, when united, form a true minister of the Gospel.

The first and most important of these elements is

Piety the first essential.

piety. The ministry is a spiritual work, and it requires in those who perform it a spiritual character. They must be renewed in the spirit of their minds; they must be inclined by the Holy Spirit to the work. In this sense the important remark of Newton may be quoted as an aphorism, "None but He who made the world can make a minister of the Gospel."

For the lack of this, no talents, however brilliant or attractive, can compensate. It requires but a minimum degree of piety to maintain a respectable character, and to pass through the required training for the ministry. The day of trial commences with its active duties. And, unless decided piety is possessed, the mainspring of ministerial action will be wanting or deranged, and painful defect will mark his whole life. There is difficulty in finding a field of labor; there is division attending his first settlement; his salary is inadequate; his people are lukewarm; his preaching is not successful; his talents are depreciated. Now comes the trial of his faith and patience; and, unless imbued with the spirit of Christ, he fails to accomplish many of the great ends for which the ministry was instituted.

The lack of piety shows itself in our day in straining after popularity. One is truly popular by the force of his talents and the fervor of his piety; another, because he seeks it as a main end. Between these there is a wide difference. One is simple and solemn, the other is magniloquent and affected. The one impresses by his thoughts, the other by his manner and

words. The one attracts by the solemnity and power with which he presents and applies divine truth; the other by his newspaper notices, his quaint subjects and texts, and his odd illustrations. The one wins converts to Christ; the other admirers of himself. The one preaches boldly the doctrines of the cross; the other withholds or modifies them, lest they should offend, and blunts every arrow lest it should penetrate, emulous only of the reputation of a popular preacher!

How many and sad are the lessons taught us by the history of the Church as to the great evils arising from an unconverted ministry! How sadly the Jewish Church suffered from false prophets! It was an unconverted apostle that betrayed the Lord of Glory. For how many ages were the boasted successors of the apostles the vilest of men! And how, even now, in Germany, the lowest infidelity is decked in the robes of the ministry; and, in England, the merest worldlings, because second or subsequent sons of the gentry, are promoted to Church benefices; and how, in communions regarded as evangelical, an unsanctified ministry are prostituting the order and ordinances of God's house to the purposes of superstition, and to the supplanting of a spiritual by a formal and ritual religion.

Piety, then, is the first great essential element of a true minister of the Gospel. Without this a preacher is but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. He is a minister only in the technical sense of the word.

Ability to teach.

Another element of a true ministry is *ability to teach*. There may be piety without mind to grasp the great truths of the Gospel—without education to teach; and these may be possessed without aptness to teach. Any stupid man may be a priest who can be taught, parrot-like, to repeat the forms of a ritual. Many of the bishops, and multitudes of the priests of the ages preceding the Reformation, could not write their names. And, no doubt, many of them now, in those countries over which the shadows of the night of the Dark Ages yet linger, can do but little more. And in the proportion that the form, the unvarying ritual, obtains in public worship, is the absolute necessity for ability diminished. A man may be dull and uneducated just in the proportion he sinks the preacher in the priest. But to be an efficient *preacher* of the Gospel requires a high culture and aptness to teach.

In the magnitude of its objects the preaching of the Gospel surpasses every other employment of man. There is but little intellectual culture, civil liberty, or social order but through its influence; and it is God's appointed means for the salvation of men and for the moral illumination of our world. To the scheme of redemption all objects and events are subservient. This is the radiant point where all the attributes and works of God converge into a blaze of glory; and if, as to the preaching of the Gospel, Paul, the great, and the gifted, and the inspired, who was caught up into the third heaven, where he heard those unutterable words which it was not lawful for man to utter, could

Examples: Whitefield, Wesley, Chalmers.

say, Who is sufficient for these things? then a pious, uninspired man should seek the highest qualifications for it. Every good man has his place and work in the Church; but mere goodness is no qualification for the pulpit, without an alliance with culture and aptness to teach.

The distinguishing mark of a good minister is this: "He shall feed his people with knowledge and understanding." And how can he impart them unless he possesses them? What but sound can an empty vessel give forth? It required the high talent and the refined education of Paul to cross the Rubicon of Jewish prejudice—to refute the Pharisee in the Synagogue—the sophist in the Areopagus and in the school of Tyrannus, and the subtle heathen in all the countries of the Gentiles. It required all the talent and education of Luther to breast the storm of papal wrath, and, like the towering Alps, to bear unmoved the tempest and thunder that played around him. It required all the ability of Whitefield and Wesley to wake up the Church of England from a state of dead formalism, which lacked nothing of popery but the name, and to inaugurate the great movement of the eighteenth century, that has given an impulse to the Church of God we hope it may never lose. It required all the great powers of Chalmers, drawn to their highest tension, to rouse the Church of Scotland from the influence of a chilling Moderatism—to resist the encroachments of the law upon the domains of the Church; and when the law could be no longer

“Men wanted.”

Analogy.

resisted, to lead out the Free Church of Scotland to the high position it now occupies, and at a sacrifice which has scarcely a parallel in the whole history of the Church of God. Indeed, wherever the Gospel has made signal and permanent conquest in changing the face of society—in moulding civil and moral institutions—in reforming the lives of the intelligent and influential, it has been always preached by men of high mental and moral endowments, who could feed the people with knowledge and understanding.

Nor in this respect is it different from other existing institutions among men. The reformations in the political world, in the literary, in the scientific, in the philosophic, have been all effected by great minds. All good men have their place and their work, but the place for weak men is not in the pulpit. And yet

“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”

CHAPTER IV.

Who are true Ministers of Christ? *continued.*—There must be Authority to teach.—The Manner of Christ and the Apostles.—The Form of conferring Authority.—In what Authority consists.—It may be variously conferred.—The Theory of apostolical Succession without Foundation in Scripture or true History.—Objections to it.—The Kalmuck Custom.

WE are yet discussing the question, Who are true ministers of the Gospel? We have discussed two of the elements which form such ministers—piety, and capacity, or ability, to teach. The only remaining element is *authority to teach*. How is this communicated? To our mind, the answer to this question is a very simple one; and so it would appear to all minds, if it were left to be determined by the Scriptures and common sense.

As Jesus Christ appointed certain persons to perform the offices of religion in his Church, so, as we learn from the practice of the apostles, there was a form in setting them apart. That form was by prayer, and by the laying on of hands. In this way they ordained ministers and deacons. And this simple form remained for a long time in the Church, without any superstitious addition to it. At first the laying on of hands was connected with the bestowal of extraordinary gifts; but when miracles ceased, the form

Import of the rite.

was continued, and simply designated the person upon whom hands were laid, and for whom prayer was made, as set apart to the office of teaching in the Church. The laying on of hands was of Jewish origin. After the ceasing of miracles, the form imparted no new gifts nor graces. The man, after it, was in mind, in heart, in affection, what he was before. Nothing was imparted which he could feel, or see, or hear, or of which his senses or conscience could take cognizance. What, then, was imparted to him? Nothing but simple authority to preach the Gospel and to administer ordinances. The person professed piety and a call to the office; and, having the requisite ability, the Church, in that form, expressed its approbation of his suitability, and set him apart to the work. The laying on of hands is merely the form; the substance is in the divine call, and its approval by the Church. Ordination to the work of the ministry is simply the conferring of authority upon a man, considered pious and capable, to preach the Gospel and administer its ordinances. This is performed by different branches of the Church in different ways; in one by bishops and presbyters; in another by presbyters alone; in another by the suffrages of the people. There is nothing plainer, from Scripture and from Church history, than that there was a diversity in the form of ordination. Some popish writers say that the Pope might make a priest by saying "Be a priest," without any ceremony. Neither Wickliff nor Knox believed in the necessity of

Priestly assumption rebuked.

the imposition of hands. Where the substance exists, there should be mutual forbearance as to the form, as the Church may express its approbation and confer its authority in a variety of ways. Nor can it be shown why Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall should not be universally regarded as ministers of Christ, as much as William Jay, or Thomas Chalmers, or Robert Leighton, or John Newton. For a little Puseyite priest, flitting around St. Barnabas, to say that Alexander Duff was not a minister of Christ, but that *he* was, would seem to be enough to wake up a broad smile on the face of Christendom.

These, then — piety, capacity, and authority — are the elements which, when united, form a true minister of the Gospel. And on the ground that the Church of Christ is one, the authority which is recognized by one branch of the Evangelical Church should be recognized by all. And thus it was until the papal theory of apostolical succession, which separates all not papists from the fold of Christ, was permitted to creep into the Protestant family of churches in the days of the infamous Laud. And as this is the only theory in opposition to our statement as to what constitutes a true minister of the Gospel, it calls for a brief notice at our hands. It requires too much faith ever to command extensive belief; and its consequences are such as must, sooner or later, place it, by the common consent of the Protestant world, among old wives' fables. To this eminence it is rapidly attaining.

The theory is briefly this, that the persons called bishops were each ordained by a preceding bishop up to the apostles, whose successors the bishops are; that not one link is wanting in this long line of successive consecrations, from the last performed up to the apostles; that ordination by these bishops alone is valid; that the persons ordained by them are the only true and authorized ministers of the Gospel; and that to them alone is confined the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And this is the theory of popery, of Puseyism, of High-Churchmen every where; and, we regret to add, of some very good men who are classed as Low-Churchmen. We can merely give the heads of argument in reply to this theory.

1. There is not any authority in the Scriptures for bishops at all, in the sense of the theory. The term bishop was originally applied to presbyters; and presbyters were the ancient bishops, and are the only scriptural bishops now.

2. The theory has no foundation in the New Testament nor in the conduct of the apostles.

3. In the ages immediately subsequent to that of the apostles, presbyters ordained presbyters.

4. If true in the sense of the theory, it is destructive of the status of those who make it. They are either in the line of the unbroken succession, or they are not. If in it, their ministrations are right and lawful; if not in it, they are neither right nor lawful, and they are imposing on the people. Now I put

The argument continued.

them on the proof that they are in it. Can they prove it? Impossible. They may go back a few links in the shore end of the chain, but soon they reach the deep waters which no line can fathom. Faith that they are in it is no proof that they are; and unless they can prove beyond all reasonable doubt that they are in it, if conscientious, they will never presume again to officiate for Christ. The proof has been often called for, but has never, and can never be produced.

5. If true in the sense of the theory, the dogma is destructive of the existence of the visible Church. If bishops, in regular succession from the apostles until now, are necessary to the existence of the Church, then is the very being of the Church a matter of conjecture—of the greatest uncertainty. If one link is broken, all depending on it fall; and that hundreds of links have been broken, Archbishop Whateley and others have made quite clear.

6. Some of the most able and learned bishops and scholars of the English Episcopal Church have denied utterly the theory, and have admitted the validity of ordination by presbyters.

7. The theory is greatly injurious to the character of those who teach it. Their baptism regenerates. Only ordinances administered by them are valid. They preach themselves instead of Christ—Churchianity instead of Christianity. Soon the form takes the place of the power; soon the hat is esteemed of more importance than the head it covers. And instead of being humble ministers of Christ, they be-

come violent sectarianists, and often as discourteous as they are exclusive and bigoted.

8. The theory is greatly injurious to the people to whom it is preached. If they confide in their Levite, and receive his opinions, they sink into formalism, and soon regard all zeal in religion as enthusiasm, and all preaching on conviction, conversion, and sanctification as far more fanatical than scriptural. The minister regenerates them in baptism; prays for them in set form; administers ordinances to them; and when they come to die, makes all right! Sometimes a mind shakes off this torpor, and asks as to the validity of the claims of the minister; or, if a minister, as to his own claims; and, finding them defective in title, passes over to Rome. And thus many have passed the Rubicon, and are passing it; and, if the theory is valid, there is no stopping on this side of it. Others inquire, and, finding the whole a fanciful priest-work, pass over to churches where faith in Christ, not faith in the Church, is preached as the one thing needful. But, as a rule, the people become formal, ceremonial, exclusive; neglecters of the commandments of God, and fiery zealots for a fiction.

9. If the theory is true, then piety and truth in the pulpit—the blessed influences of the Spirit accompanying ordinances—the faith, fidelity, and fruitfulness of the people, are no evidences in favor of preacher or people, if ordination by bishops is wanting; but if the true succession is possessed, then there may be ranting deism in the desk, blasphemy on the altar,

The Kalmucks.

A distinction.

and superstition among the people, but there is a true ministry, a true Church, and valid ordinances! !

Such are our objections to the theory of apostolical succession. It tends to "endless genealogies;" it leaves the Church defenseless against clerical oppression; it is an imposition upon common sense, and is without the shadow of a foundation in the Scriptures or in true history. It is the mainspring and the main stay of priestcraft.

The Kalmucks are great sticklers for the "succession," and give it to us in a way that we can understand it. When the high-priest dies, his body is burned, and the ashes are carefully collected into a bottle. Every day his successor mixes some of the ashes with water, and drinks it, until all the ashes are used up. And thus the high-priest is really taken into the body of his successor. This is "apostolical succession" among the Kalmucks. It is more easily understood than the theory of Oxford or of Rome, and is far more easily swallowed.

In all this we desire to be understood as not assailing episcopacy as *a* form of church government; we only assail the theory of apostolical succession, which is rejected by some of the highest and ablest ecclesiastics of the Episcopal Church, and which bases the Church and the ministry upon a vapor which any wind may dissipate and any sunbeam dissolve. Despots in church and state fly to divine right to sustain their claims only when reason, and logic, and history fail them. Claims based on divine right are put forth

What is the chaff to the wheat?

with equal boldness in Rome, Oxford, Mecca, and Utah; and, if equally bold, they are equally baseless. Nothing but the true has any divine claim on our faith. All else is but chaff which the wind driveth away.

CHAPTER V.

An old Adage reversed.—Education Societies.—Cornelius and Breckenridge.—Multiplication of Candidates for the Ministry.—Some Memories of Candidates.—Incompetent Ministers very useless Men.—The Need of strict Care as to Candidates.

THAT “no man should enter the ministry who could possibly keep out of it,” was an adage that once ruled on this subject. That was the day when every candidate was expected to receive such a spiritual impulse as to be able to say, “Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.” How the rule worked in all cases we do not know; as a Judas was among the twelve apostles, we may infer that no rule, however strict—that no scrutiny, however severe—can exclude unworthy persons; but at that time there were giants in the land, who laid the foundations of all those institutions which are now the glory of the Church and of the country. Under the influence of the now sainted Cornelius and Breckenridge, two of the brightest lights of the American Church, a new adage was substituted for the old one, and the converse of it, “That no pious young man should keep out of the ministry if he could possibly enter it.” Theirs was the age of revivals, when young men, in multitudes, were brought into the Church, and when, under the powerful appeals of these men, candidates for the

Discrimination.Education societies.

ministry greatly multiplied. The vast and increasing destitution of the country, and the cries of the perishing for the Bread of Life, were depicted with a gorgeousness of eloquence that has been rarely surpassed; and appeals were made to young men to go into the fields white unto the harvest, which but few having a spark of spiritual life could resist. The eloquence of Dr. John Breckenridge upon this subject, moving as the lyre of Orpheus, is yet ringing in our ears, though twenty winters have moaned over his grave. Societies were formed, and schools were multiplied, and money was raised for the purpose of preparing men for the work; and the danger was to neglect the *character* of candidates in the great desire to increase their *number*. And on this side lies our danger yet. We admit the number to be of great importance, in order to meet the wants of our population; but the character, and ability to preach, are much greater. One such man as Chalmers is worth an army of ordinary men; he commands the respect of men for the Gospel, while others might subject it to ridicule. A popish priest may be made of any material, as it requires no talents and but little education to say mass, and to hear confession, and to administer extreme unction. And so talent and education are the less necessary, as forms in the worship of God are multiplied. But where the *preaching* of the Gospel is retained as the great duty of the ministry, the greatest care should be exercised as to the reception of candidates. Our Education Societies have done an incalculable amount of good, but it is a

Cracked candidates.

serious question whether they have not too much facilitated the way of incompetent persons to the ministry.

We have some reminiscences which present themselves as illustrations of this want of care in the selection of candidates. Mr. A. was from Vermont, and in his freshman year. "How wide is the Pacific Ocean, Mr. A.?" asked the tutor one morning at recitation. "Eighteen miles and upward," was the reply. Mr. A. had never seen the sea and has never done any thing in the ministry. "Conjugate cerno, Mr. B.," said the professor to a young man, very good, but very green. "Cerno, cernere, crevi, cractum," drawled out Mr. B. That "cractum" sent him back to the plow, and saved to the world a good farmer, and preserved the Church from a most stupid minister. Mr. C. was the son of a baker. In the school of theology he wore a blue coat with gilt buttons, and wrote poetry, and did every thing—but study. He was good-looking, and knew it. He was licensed to preach, but his popularity did not rise to the point of his ambition, and he did not like praying extempore. He renounced the religion of his parents for baptismal regeneration, apostolical succession, and Puseyism generally. If yet living, he is up to boiling heat in Churchianity, a house of refuge for the feeble-minded.

A young man left college in his sophomore year because of ill health, and became an usher in a school. Wishing to study theology while teaching, he applied to the pastor to teach him. He consented, and told

The same sort.

him to procure Dick, and to study carefully a few lectures, and to come on a certain day, when he would hear him. He came at the time appointed. "Well," said the pastor, "how far have you read?" "To the fixed stars," was his reply. "You had better remain there," said the pastor. He had been reading Dick's Christian Philosopher, and thought he was studying Dick's Theology! "I want to be a minister," said a boy eighteen years of age, as he took a chair in his pastor's study one morning. After measuring him with his eye, the following brief conversation ensued. Are you hopefully converted? Yes, sir. When were you converted? About six weeks ago. Who converted you? The Methodists, sir. Have you had a good education? Yes, sir. Can you spell cough? Oh yes—cof. Can you spell laugh? Laf. Who did you say converted you? The Methodists, sir. The conversation ended in his sending him to the Methodist minister for advice, who agreed with him in the remarkable fitness of the young man to remain where he was.

And when an incompetent man enters the ministry, he is the least useful of all men. As an elder, deacon, or private member of the Church, he might be very useful; but his incompetency unfits him for the pulpit, and the fact that he is a minister unfits him, at least in his own estimation, for the ordinary duties of life. He thinks it degrading to his sacred character to engage in any secular calling, and rather than do so he will prefer to live on the charity of others.

Mistake of a lifetime.

There are ministers who were brought up in early life to professions, to which they can not be persuaded to return to make a living for their families, although unable, for years, to find a congregation which can bear for any length of time with their drawling dullness. They will wander from place to place—they will live upon their brethren—they will borrow money and incur debts without any prospect of being able to pay them; but they will not condescend to work. They are waiting and watching for vacancies, and when they occur they are filled by others. Like the infirm at the Pool of Bethesda, they are waiting for the movement of the waters; but when they move there is none to put them in, and another steps in before them. Some of these think the ministry is overcrowded, though millions in the land are famishing for the Bread of Life, and spend at least some of their time in carping at their more successful brethren, and at the churches which have so far departed from the simplicity of the Gospel as to prefer figure, and flourish, and fancy, to solid worth!

What we mean to say is, that the door which gives admission to the ministry should be more strictly guarded than hitherto. Ministers, Churches, Church Courts, and Educational Societies should increase their vigilance there. No candidate should be encouraged who does not give fair promise of usefulness; and when the promises given at first are not subsequently realized, he should be promptly advised that there are other departments of usefulness in the world for which

Character above numbers.

he is better qualified than that of preaching the Gospel. A course like this might diminish the number of candidates, but it would increase the efficiency of the ministry. It would save to other departments of usefulness the large class of ministers out of place. Character is to be preferred to numbers—quality to quantity. The three hundred men of Gideon who “lapped, putting their hand to their mouth,” were worth more than the thirty-and-two thousand who came together at the first sound of his trumpet. If God gave his only and well-beloved Son to purchase salvation for sinners, the Church should consecrate its most gifted sons to the preaching of the purchased salvation to all men.

The true minister.

Popes, cardinals, bishops.

CHAPTER VI.

Is the Ministry sufficiently isolated from the World?—Popery an Institution of the World.—English Bishops Legislators.—Turning aside from the Work of the Ministry.—Specimens and Illustrations.

Do ministers keep themselves sufficiently isolated from worldly entanglements? The true minister is a man set apart from a common to a sacred use. As a minister, he is to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. His one object is to save men by the simple preaching of the simple Gospel, in season and out of season. And if he ever turns aside to any secular pursuit, it should be as Paul turned to tent-making—to eke out a living; as the needle is sometimes attracted from its natural direction, to tremble back to the pole as soon as possible.

There was a time when popes made war and raised armies; when cardinals were ministers of state; when bishops led contending hosts to battle; when priests were recruiting officers, and sent forth their people to the deadly conflict from the altar and confessional. That was a dark period in the Church, when the sun which rose over Judea set at Rome. And yet is the Pope the temporal head of a kingdom of this world; the cardinals are his nobles; and archbishops are his rulers of the provinces, into which he has divided the

Popery of this world.

English bishops.

world, for the exercise of spiritual dominion every where—and of temporal, where it can be conveniently done. Hence popery is not so much a Christian as it is a worldly organization, framed and perpetuated for the purpose of maintaining a corrupt priesthood. It has abandoned the teachings of Christ and his apostles, and the state of the nations where it prevails is a standing protest before heaven and earth against it.

Nor is the ministry of the Protestant Church purged from this leaven of worldliness which it has received from the papal. In England bishops are legislators, and may be seen parading their lawn in the House of Lords. The Marquis of Westminster or the Duke of Argyle are there in the dress of private gentlemen, but a Bishop of Oxford or of Exeter, are there in full millinery, and are not unfrequently trailing their robes in the dust, if not dirt, of party politics. What a place for the successors of the apostles, who lived by catching fish, and mending nets, and making tents!! And the state of the Church over which they preside is a protest to heaven against such perversion of its ministry. It is the most richly endowed, and its people the least religiously instructed, and the most prone to apostasy, of any church of Protestant Christendom. This we say while we entertain love and reverence for the noble men who, in the spirit of their Master and of the Reformers, are seeking to leaven the nation with the simple Gospel. Even in the city of London, a minister of that Church

Questions as to American clergy.

Political minister.

could be found who could invoke the aid of the law to protect the poor people of an overgrown parish from the simple preaching of the Way of Life! Yes, and the law came bounding to his aid!!

But here, in our own country, where the Gospel is free, and where law has nothing to do with churches or ministers, save to protect them in their rights, are there no worldly entanglements detrimental to the character and to the efficiency of the ministry? Are there no turnings aside from the preachings of Christ and him crucified, to the promotion of doubtful schemes of reform—to political partisanship—to the pursuit of worldly gain? Does not the question suggest names to every reader of persons who are at once the proof and the illustration that there are? And does not the fact that there are so many such cases greatly weaken the influence of the ministry for good?

The Rev. A. B. was a man of fine appearance—of fluent utterance—of extended popularity, and of considerable success. Up to a given time he was heard with great interest by the good people of every name, wherever he preached. Parties in his state were nearly equally divided as to the candidates for the presidency; and as he was very popular with the people of his own Church all over the state, he was induced to run for Congress, with the hope that his name would bring many of the opposing party to vote for the ticket bearing his name. Soon the minister was lost in the politician. He was defamed and

A sneer.A talk in a Legislature.

applauded at "mass meetings." He became a heated partisan, and, for the time being, deserted the cross for the "hickory pole." Greatly to the credit of his own religious partisans, they refused to vote for him, and he lost his election, and his character too. As, when one member of the body suffers, all suffer with it, so did the ministry of the state suffer by the conduct of this reverend politician. "There is a fair specimen of your ministers," political witlings would say, "who are ready to desert the cross for Congress for 'eight dollars a day.'" What has become of "The Reverend Defeated Member of Congress," as he was sarcastically called, I know not; but he never could be the man he was previous to his somerset from the pulpit to politics.

But a few years since we were a looker on during a debate in the Legislature of one of our states. We saw in one of the seats a man who was once a minister, who preached in our pulpit, who was an able pastor, who became a speculator in stocks, and, last of all, a politician! "Who is that?" we asked of a senator who accompanied us, an acquaintance of former days. "Oh, that is Senator ——, the Rev. Mr. —— of former days, but who now cares less for his Bible than for the bill he is advocating," was the reply. "I wish," said our friend, "you would keep your ministers in their places; they come here on the tide of abolitionism and kindred excitements; I know not what they are as ministers, but they are the most corrupt politicians in the state." This we were prepared

People to be pitied.

The Rev. C. D.

to hear, because the man who can desert his position as an ambassador for Christ for the arena of party politics, and the party wrangling of a Legislature, must be weak in principle. We are sorry for the people whose preacher is a party politician, and for the Church which allows its ministers thus to serve God and Mammon.

The Rev. C. D. was a man finely developed, of intelligent countenance, well educated; a fine preacher, who could make his mark in any assembly of men. He was, besides, a man of business tact, of sleepless industry, and of no little knowledge of men. Had he continued with simple-hearted devotion to the duties of his calling, he might have risen to its highest positions, and have left behind him an enduring fame. But, unfortunately for him, the death of a relative placed him in the possession of some money, and he was soon seized with the burning idea of increasing it. Soon his skill for business became apparent and confessed. His property rapidly increased, and his desire of accumulation increased as rapidly. He embarked first in this scheme, then in that. He gave up the ministry as a calling. He was avaricious and ostentatious; sometimes the one passion, and sometimes the other held the reins of power, and his life seemed a conflict between them. His successes induced others to connect themselves with him. He risked much; he lost all. His character as a minister was gone; his property soon followed; those who trusted him cast out his name as evil, and the curses

True ministers suffer by such.

Rich ministers close.

of all that lost by him daily rested upon his head. And the entire ministry of the Church of Christ suffered through him.

And we regret to say that this is only one of a class of ministers who weaken their influence, and that of their more circumspect brethren, by undue worldliness—by making haste to be rich. Mr. R. was a beloved pastor of a large church; he was invited to a public position of importance; he was enticed into speculations; he acquired a love for it; he made money rapidly; he risked, on a prospect of great gain; he lost all. He was dismissed from his position, and without money or character he spent his declining years here and there, as he found any thing to do. Had he remained true to his profession, he might have been among the brightest lights of the American pulpit.

And when ministers succeed in making money, they are less liberal in the use of it than are men of the world. And this is reasonable; for, when men degrade their profession and violate their obligations in order to make money, it is not to be expected that they would be liberal in the use of it. We were told once of a minister, worth thirty thousand dollars, who subscribed twenty-five cents toward a library for the Sabbath-school of his congregation! Indeed, we have never known a minister to give way to a worldly spirit with any advantage to himself. To succeed, his studies must be deserted, his people neglected; his heart must become cold, and his affections alien-

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A bank failure.

Worldly ministers cursed.

ated from his work. And soon the love of money will overshadow the love of souls. A minister, long since deceased, invested his means in a bank. While looking over the morning paper at his breakfast-table, he read the astounding news that the bank had failed. In a mournful tone he exclaimed: "There, there, the fruits of a thirty years' ministry are gone at a blow." And where God has not blown upon the wealth acquired by ministers to the neglect of their profession, of their duties to God and to man, he has often made it a curse to their children. The children of faithful ministers have been a great blessing to this land, but not so of unfaithful ones. The minister who preaches against the world and yet lives for it—who discourses from the text, "The love of money is the root of all evil," and yet makes money his idol—mocks both God and man, and may expect to die as did Wolsey, rejected of his king and of his God. His children will be likely to reject his doctrines and to follow his practice.

CHAPTER VII.

Is the Ministry sufficiently isolated from the World? *continued.*—Other Illustrations.—Notoriety sought by Queerness, by isms, and Hobbies.—The Scotchman.—The Rights of Ministers, and the Limits of their Rights.

WE are yet discussing the question whether ministers keep themselves sufficiently free from worldly entanglements, and showing the effects of such entanglements upon them. And we are giving illustrations which may be considered imaginary or otherwise. Suffice it to say, that the last few years have produced too many answering the descriptions given.

The Rev. E. F., when he first rose to public notice, was one of the most promising young men of the Church. He was logical, and terse, and eloquent, and was invited to make addresses on public occasions all over the Northern States. He thus contracted an itch for notoriety, which seems to be more than a cutaneous disease with some persons. The surest and shortest way of securing notoriety is to become queer or peculiar, or to become fanatical on some of the *isms*. Lorenzo Dow obtained much of his fame by his blanket, and by now and then throwing one leg over the pulpit, when it was low enough to admit of it. The scarlet coat, and breeches, and stockings of a famous preacher in his day were his only attractions,

Maffit.

An abolitionist.

Suicide.

and these drew multitudes to hear him. The florid nonsense of Maffit often left such men as Mason, and Spring, and Romeyn to preach to almost empty churches. Mappin with his shilling razors, and Moses with his cheap trowsers, have taught many preachers the path of fame. That is not the quiet way by which the acorn grows up to the towering oak, but the noisy way of drum and trumpet, by which mountebanks attract a crowd.

Knowing the certainty of *isms* to lift up to notoriety, the Rev. E. F. seized upon abolitionism. He became a lecturer. He flourished at abolition conventions. He became a political abolitionist, and stumped his state for Birney. He denounced the Church and the State, because they permitted the relation of master and slave to exist. Finally, the Bible, in his view, taught nothing but anti-slavery, and he could preach, talk, or pray on nothing else. This was the Gospel by which he would reform men; this was the Christ he preached to men; this became the great point in religion and morals. And he obtained the notoriety he sought; for his name became a synonym for fanaticism when at white heat, which is the intensive of the red. And what became of him? As no Church was pure enough for him, he abjured all churches, and set up one of his own, of which he was the prophet, priest, and king; and a man who might have written his name upon the rock with a pen of iron, dwindled down to a fanatic; and, shorn of the lock of his strength by his own hands, has fallen into neglect, if not into contempt. Suicide is the worst of all deaths!

 Many such.

The ministry weakened.

 The Scotchman.

And how many ministers are following in the footsteps of the Rev. E. F.—turning aside from the great work of entreating sinners in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, to scolding on the subject of slavery, or some similar topic? Their people ask bread, and they give them a stone; for fish, and they give them a serpent. What have ministers to do with slavery more than apostles had? If it be a sin, up to the highest point at which it has ever been placed as such, is not the Gospel the best remedy for its removal? Nor can there be a doubt but that those whose Gospel is anti-slavery are weakening the influence of the ministry all over the country. The simple fact that a man was a minister used to carry him all over the land, and give him free access to all churches and to all good people; but now the name is no guarantee for sober, substantial piety—that the man bearing it is not a missionary of some one of the many *isms* of the day. A few years since, when temperance and abolition were, with many, the Old Testament and the New, a Scotchman traveled from Albany to Buffalo seeking for a farm on which to settle, with his family. He honored the Sabbath, and sought on that day the sanctuary, wherever he was. He returned, stating that he could not settle in that country, as he heard nothing from the pulpit on the Sabbath but sermons “about negroes and whisky.”

Now all that we mean to say is this, that ministers of the Gospel, far more than formerly, permit themselves to be drawn aside from their direct work to

A word to ministers.

Their right.

Slavery.

secular or semi-secular pursuits, and that by such a course they injure their own character and influence, and subject all their brethren to reproach. If a man, having selected the ministry, finds that he has mistaken his calling, let him give it up; but let no man seek to be a minister, a speculator, a politician, or a fanatical propagator of isms at the same time; and, unless this mingling of pursuits with the ministry, with which it has no connection or affinity, is checked, the Church and the country will reap the bitter fruits by-and-by. It has already produced many scoffing infidels.

We wish here to be entirely understood. The ministers of the Gospel are men, and have all the rights of citizens. They have a perfect right to their opinions upon all subjects which excite public attention. If they have property, they should take care of it; if they have not, none can blame them for prudent economy in seeking to save something for their declining years. Old ministers are too often treated as old horses, turned out into very poor pasturage, and by the people to whom their lives were the richest blessing. They have a perfect right to their opinions on all questions, political, and moral, and reformatory. We are free to say that slavery is a great national evil; that it is the great apple of discord among these glorious states; that, with our present views and feelings, we could not be the owners of slaves. We are free citizens of a free country, and have, with every other citizen, the perfect right of

One theme for the pulpit.

Not to be given up.

private judgment; but, with the Bible before us, we must not denounce all who differ with us on either side of this perplexing question. And, above all, as ministers of the Gospel, we must not make it the one theme of our ministry in the pulpit. There our one theme should be, "Repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." And when we depart from that theme, it is at the expense of our own character as ministers, and without conferring any special benefit on the cause we advocate. Our congregations assemble on the Sabbath day to hear the Gospel, to be instructed as to the way of life, to be told that the wages of sin is death, but that the gift of God is eternal life; and to pass from these high themes to fiery declamation on any of the isms of the day is to turn aside from the ascending commission of our risen Lord, and to ask our people to drink of the muddy waters of strife, instead of the pure waters of the river of life. As citizens we have our privileges, with which no man must interfere; as ministers of Jesus Christ, we are bound by every law of obligation and duty to abstain from "perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth," and to address ourselves to the great work of beseeching men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. The Gospel ministry is a great work; when men turn aside from it to be the missionaries of some ism, they are bound to magnify that ism far beyond its importance, so as to excuse their delinquency. Hence private citizens can afford to be moderate in their views

Fanatical ministers little trusted.

Charlatans.

upon given exciting topics; but the minister, who, to advocate them, ceases to preach Christ, in order to maintain his consistency, is compelled to be a fanatic; and hence, as a rule, fanatical ministers are the most fanatical of men, and the least influential and trusted.

In our early ministry we knew a man, gifted and eloquent, who turned aside from the ministry first as a reformer in eating, then in drinking, then in dress, then in religion. Then he would devote himself to any reformatory measure that would pay best. He finally took up lecturing on his own account, taking up collections for his support, and for the benefit of the cause! He fell into disrepute, became addicted to some of the vices from which he would have reformed the world, and died a sot. The reformation of the world is hopeless unless it can be reformed by the Gospel. Those who seek its reformation in any other way are charlatans.

Old ministers.

J. Q. Adams.

Marcy.

Cass.

CHAPTER VIII.

Old Ministers.—Why Exceptions to other old Men?—J. Q. Adams.
 —Secretary Marcy.—Chancellor Kent.—Some Ministers popular
 down to old Age.—Why are not all?—The Nature of the Ministry.
 —Drafts made on their Feelings.—The sudden Transitions from
 Scenes of Joy to those of Mourning.

MINISTERS are not exempt from any of the great laws of humanity. They live in no mystic Eden, within whose inclosures sin has never entered, and where its consequences are unfelt. Life, with them as with others, has its spring, summer, autumn, and winter. They grow old as do others. But why are old ministers an exception to the rule which obtains as to other old men? That they are so, as a rule, is quite obvious. An old physician, unless too old, is preferred to a young one. Lawyers, merchants, bankers, statesmen, artisans, scholars, soldiers, are often in the vigorous pursuit of their profession at seventy and upward, unless enfeebled by bad habits or by disease. John Quincy Adams was yet "the old man eloquent," before whose withering sarcasms the strongest men quailed, when approaching eighty. The late Secretary Marcy, whose sudden death filled the land with mourning, was one of the most able of living diplomatists at seventy. His venerable successor, Cass, now our political Nestor, went up to the bureau of State,

Kent.	Astor.	Radetzky.	Dr. Nott.
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it is said, in his seventy-fifth year. The late Chancellor Kent was consulted on all great questions when eighty years old. Girard and Astor managed their vast estates with great skill down to fourscore years. Wellington, and Radetzky of Austria, were at home amid the roar of the cannon, "with confused noise and garments rolled in blood," when far advanced in life. And the question arises why old ministers are not as acceptable in their profession, and as much sought for, as are old lawyers or old physicians?

There are, now and then, cases of ministers who continue popular and acceptable to seventy-and-five years. Such were Drs. Miller and Alexander, of Princeton; and Dr. Emmons, the last of the cocked hats; and Bishops White and Moore; such is the yet living President of Union College, Dr. Nott, whose heart yet glows with the fire of youth at ninety-five. But such men are exceptions to the general rule; and in looking over the long list of our acquaintances, we know but few living ministers at sixty who are not now less influential by several degrees than they were ten years ago. And the review is enough to make those of us who, like myself, are ranging between fifty and sixty to see well to our ways and to our habits. At the very age when congregations are unwilling to call a minister, or are seeking to dismiss him, or to buy him off on as small a pension as possible, physicians and lawyers are in the full tide of a lucrative practice; men are elevated to be presidents or governors of states, and to be directors of large

Nature of the ministry.Range of subjects wide.

moneyed corporations, or are sent by the state on missions to foreign courts; and merchants, artisans, and farmers are in the zealous pursuit of their calling. There must be a reason for all this, either in the nature of the calling of the ministry itself, or in the habits of ministers.

In accounting for this, we admit that much may be said in reference to the *nature* of the ministry. Ministers have to do daily with the most solemn truths and the most solemn realities. Their minds and hearts are, or should be, constantly occupied with the vanity of things temporal, and the infinite importance of things spiritual. Solemn, sombre thoughts, big with the fate of myriads of men, are those with which they have daily to do. True, there is an infinite range of subjects for their study and discussion; but yet all these, so far as their ministry is concerned, converge to one point—to *induce sinners to be reconciled to God*. As botanists, they may traverse all the fields of earth, and see the glory of God unfolded in every leaf of every tree and flower; as geologists, they may climb the mountains, and dig into the bowels of the earth for minerals; as scholars, they may master the languages of the dead past, and enrich the world by their antiquarian researches; as astronomers, they may soar among the stars, and, like Newton, weigh them in their balances, and tell the strength of the unseen chains that link the planets in their orbs; but yet, as ministers among the people, they are only to know “Christ and him crucified.” Their harp has many

Tendency to monotony.

Drafts on their feelings.

strings, but their tune is one. How far this tends to beget a monotonous state of mind, unfriendly to its continued freshness, down to old age, we may not now stop to inquire. It, no doubt, has some influence in that direction. But the variety of the converging themes, and the eternal importance of the great theme in which they all centre, should counteract that tendency to monotony, and should make the minister as much alive to his subject at seventy as is the lawyer of the same age in the advocacy of his client.

Much also may be said as to the influence of the drafts made upon the sensibilities and feelings of ministers. They are often unkindly treated, and by those they have most benefited. They are often impeded in their work by those who promised better things. There are those who would muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. And then, often, on the same day, they have to pass from the house of mourning to that of rejoicing—from scenes of the deepest sorrow to those of the most exuberant joy; and they are expected to sympathize alike in them all. If great and sudden changes in the temperature of the atmosphere are unfriendly to the health of the body, surely sudden changes like these must be unfriendly to the health of the mind. We have often passed, within a few hours, from the most solemn funeral to the most gay and brilliant wedding, and never without a felt shock to our sensibilities. No music could drown the sobs of the mourners; no hilarity could make us forget the sorrowing circle with whom we parted on the brink

 Contrast of scenes.

Overworked.

Nettleton.

of the grave ; no joy of parents on the happy nuptials of a child could make us forget the deep sorrow of those other parents who had just placed the light of their dwelling under the cold clod of the valley ! And then, when their ministrations are unblessed to the conversion of their hearers—when they are left to scatter the good seed on the thorny or barren ground—when but few come to the solemn feasts, they are greatly depressed ; and when the Spirit is poured out—when the incrustations of worldliness are broken up, like the ice in our great rivers by the freshets of spring, and sinners are flocking to Christ as clouds, and as doves to their windows, then are they overjoyed, and often overworked to such a degree as to enfeeble them for years. The great labors of Mr. Nettleton greatly enfeebled a naturally strong constitution, and, although he died at the age of sixty-one, he was an old man for many years previous to his departure. Indeed, while penning these lines, our eye has been arrested by the notice of the decease of a promising and lovely young minister, whose death is attributed to his great and exhausting labors in a revival of religion. These and other drafts made upon their sensibilities and sympathies may account, in some measure, for the failure in the power to interest which we so often witness in ministers who have passed the age of sixty ; but, when every allowance is made for the nature of their calling, there is very much to be charged to the account of personal habits.

Habits of study.

Loyola.

Wesley.

CHAPTER IX.

Old Ministers, *continued*.—Want of good Habits of Study.—Temptations to neglect it.—Bad Habits of Study.—Personal Habits.—Examples.—Long Sermons.

WE are yet discussing the question why old ministers are not as acceptable in their profession, and as much sought for, as are other professional men at the same age. Having in the previous chapter mentioned a few causes, we now proceed to the enumeration of others.

Much is to be charged to the want of good habits of study. We take it for granted that there has been a suitable preparatory education. The Scriptures give no countenance to an uneducated ministry; and the history of the Church proves that it exerts but little permanent influence, save where it has been used as instruments by superior minds, as generals command soldiers. Men of warm piety and of low education may do good on a small scale for a while, but they never can lay broad foundations, nor raise a well-proportioned and firmly-jointed superstructure of truth, or of error. It required the mind of a Loyola to construct the terrible system of Jesuitism, before whose power popes, princes, and nations have trembled; and it required the able and ardent mind of Wesley to construct the system of Methodism.

An ignorant ministry.

Disease of the ministry.

They may do good among the lower classes, in communities where there are educated men to mould and direct the public mind, and to command the public respect for the Gospel; but the Church or community surrendered to the guidance of an ignorant ministry will soon relapse either into formalism on the one hand, or into fanaticism on the other. Of this every branch of the Church seems now satisfied, as they are all putting forth their energies for the raising up of a qualified ministry. And this is one of the most hopeful signs of the times as to the future. God no more calls ignorant men into the ministry, than states send ignorant men to lead their armies or navies; than companies employ ignorant engineers and captains to guide their ocean steamers across the Atlantic. Embassadors for God, like those of civil governments, should understand their business. "The foolishness of preaching" is one thing; foolish preaching is quite another thing.

But a minister may be fully prepared for his duties, academically and theologically, and yet, by falling into bad habits of study, he soon becomes far less efficient than men of better habits, with far less education. The mental disease of the ministry, in this day, is the neglect of study; and this is generated by causes seen of all men. A young man of fine promise is settled as a pastor. Although his attainments are but elementary, such are the drafts weekly made on him, and such are the calls and the rewards of activity, that books and studies are soon neglected. Applaud-

One of many.

Pond running dry.

ed for his first efforts by those who praise without stint, because without sense, he soon learns to lean upon his genius and volubility. He has discovered a way to reputation other and shorter than the dull and beaten one of industry. He soon cuts the knot he can not untie, and jumps the difficulty he can not remove, and depends less upon patience of investigation than upon his intuition to comprehend texts, and doctrines, and methods of argumentation. And soon his mind, naturally fertile and productive, becomes a barren. His sermons, like bullets cast in the same mould, are all alike, whatever may be the text. All have heads, but no points. All have something old, but nothing new. He has drawn from the tap, without putting in at the top, until the barrel is exhausted, and it only gives forth an empty sound. That was a shrewd observation of a man, made at a parish meeting convened for the calling of a licentiate just from the seminary: "I like the young man very much the few times I have heard him, but I would like the call postponed a few weeks longer, as I fear, from what I have learned as to his habits, that his pond will run dry."

We once knew a pastor of excellent talents, of unquestionable piety, of large common sense. He was, besides, a man of property, and could have readily commanded a fine library. But he neglected study, had but few books, fell into the habit of talking commonplaces from the pulpit, and when he had reached fifty years was as dry as a chip, but not as easily ig-

 Not a rare sample.

Studious habits.

 Health injured.

nited. He had forgotten his academic studies to such a degree that he could not read his Greek Testament. His people asked for meat, he gave them milk; they asked for instruction, he gave them long exhortations, making up in quantity what they lacked in quality. Unprofited by his labors, his people sought his dismissal, and he was compelled to quit a field in which diligent habits of study would have sustained him, honored and useful, until the silver cord was loosed. Indeed, most of the unacceptableness of ministers past fifty with which we are acquainted may be traced directly to a want of right habits of study. Their ponds run dry.

And where studies are not neglected, they are often pursued in a way greatly injurious to health. By some the morning is given to sleep and to out-door duties; the night to study. By some, preparation for the pulpit is put off to the very close of the week. The pastor of a large church recently told me that he wrote two sermons between Friday morning and Sunday morning. I replied that he had hard work, and his people poor fare. To this rule we have never known but one exception. Such must have a very high estimate of themselves, or a very low one of their people. The man who, by six or eight hours study a day, can prepare one sermon a week, and attend to his other duties faithfully, will rise to the full stature of a man. The man who can write a sermon a day becomes a mere extemporaneous writer, and sermons written extemporaneously, and read, are the poorest of all ser-

The minister's fortress.

Social habits.

Dr. D.

mons. They fall as lightly upon an audience, and as cold, as do snow-flakes upon the river, and make an equally deep impression. The pulpit is the strong fortress of the minister. He who commands the attention and the respect of his people there, will wear to the last. Good sense, well put, never wearies.

Another cause for the failure of ministers to interest, as they are advancing in life, we find in the personal habits of the ministry. Some utterly fail on the social side of their character, thinking it undignified to descend to the ordinary level of life. Those who imbibe this notion at twenty-five are awfully dignified at fifty-five, and never collect around them the sympathies of their people. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly," is a proverb that has a special application to ministers, and that has very much to do with their influence and usefulness down to old age. The Rev. Dr. B. was a genial, warm-hearted, sympathizing man; his talents in the pulpit were only respectable. The children followed him into the street when he left the house, and ran to meet him as he approached it. He was venerated down to eighty. The Rev. Dr. D. was a fine scholar, a masterly preacher, but he had no sympathies. He passed parents in the street without recognition; he knew not their children. He was dismissed. At about fifty he found himself without a parish; and while his piety, and scholarship, and ability were beyond all question, no congregation was found to call him. He was a man of buckram, and people felt no

Too social.

Bad habits.

Giving up study.

interest in him. With the social qualities of Dr. B., he would have been pre-eminent as a minister. Some, on the other hand, are too social, and waste their time in a round of social engagements. Mr. E. was a genius; he read and wrote poetry, and preached eloquently; he was the life of every party he graced with his presence. He became wedded, beyond divorce, to fashionable company, sought popularity, lost his position, and died under a cloud.

The Rev. ——— was a brilliant man; his mind, as by intuition, grasped all knowledge and science. With good habits and continued life, there was no height which he might not reach as a scholar, writer, or preacher. He slept till ten in the morning, and always sat up till the noon of night, and often until the stars were burning out. He chewed tobacco, and smoked it inveterately. He became nervous, and excitable, and very irregular. And all his promises of high usefulness failed. He died when his sun was at its noon, and not too early.

The Rev. Dr. ——— was a most useful and excellent pastor. In many things he was a model. He preached with unction; he presented the truth clearly; he was often called to important posts in his Church. Up to fifty he was a pretty diligent writer of sermons, when, feeling that his congregation had greatly changed since his youth, and that he could write no better sermons than he had written, he ceased writing, and fell back on his old preparations. The effect upon him was soon visible. He was rarely in his

Still water stagnates.

James.

Long sermons.

study; he read but little; his sermons looked yellow, and smelt musty, and he lacked vivacity in preaching them. His preaching became an old story; and he was dismissed. The purest water, when prevented from running, will stagnate. The purest and sharpest blade, unless used, will rust. Dr. — has been always a close student, and a most careful writer of sermons; and now, at seventy-five, he is useful, and popular, and beloved. The venerable and venerated James, of Birmingham, now between seventy and eighty, is nearly as popular in the pulpit as he ever was, and has just sent forth a volume on "Christian Hope" from the press, adorned with all the attractive beauties of his more youthful works.

Some ministers, as they advance in life, greatly impair their usefulness by *long* sermons; by minute subdivisions; by long prayers; by crowding too many topics into the same discourse; by stickling too strenuously for old things, in opposition to new things, which may be better; by too much overlooking the young, to whose good their chief efforts should be directed.

"Some preachers cut the bread of life so small,
 The greater part does through the basket fall;
 So full of heads that nothing else there seems,
 No room is left for body, life, or limbs.
 Whate'er the text, the sermon still must be
 A little body of divinity.
 Sweet is the Gospel, and it well beseems
 To dwell with rapture on its glorious themes;

Sensible thoughts to be practiced.

Yet some discourses would be full as good
If they were more compressed in latitude.
They lose in substance what they gain in length,
As thread spun out too fine impairs the strength.
Some are more garrulous the more they're lost,
And when they've least to say, enlarge the most."

CHAPTER X.

Causes impeding ministerial Usefulness.—Apostolic Success.—Why the slow Progress of the Gospel?—The Way of educating the Ministry.—Not educated to be Preachers.—A lifeless Ministry.—Tendencies of a permanent Ministry.—Two Parishes contrasted.—A living Ministry the great Need of the Church.

ARE there not causes which impede the usefulness of the ministry? The apostles preached the Gospel all over the Roman empire, and turned the world upside down. In a few generations after the ascension of our Lord, our Christianity went up to the throne, and put on the purple of the Cæsars. The age of the Reformers was like unto that of the apostles; the Gospel overthrew popery as rapidly as it had done paganism. And with the truth of Paul and of Peter, of Luther and Calvin, in our hands—with a ministry as pious and learned as any which the Church has ever seen, and far more numerous—with appliances to aid the ministry in its efforts to disciple the nations, why is not the ministry more successful in the prosecution of its great work? Why does darkness yet cover so large a portion of the earth? Why are nominally Christian states, as Great Britain, France, Germany, the United States, to such a degree as they are, unchristian? Why are parishes in which the Gospel has been preached for a hundred and more

Training the ministry.

Too scholastic.

years, so little pervaded by its leaven—so little instinct with its spirit? Why is the Christian Church so little awake to the great work given it to do? When an army fails to conquer a rebel country, or is very slow in its subjugation, questions arise as to the skill of its officers; as to their energy and unity, and as to the patriotism of the rank and file. And, in view of the slow conquest of the world to the sceptre of Christ, may we not be permitted to inquire as to the causes which impede the usefulness of the ministry?

One of these causes we find in the manner of the education of the ministry among our leading denominations. Is it not less ministerial than scholastic—more adapted to make scholars than preachers? The great work of the ministry is the preaching of the Gospel—to explain and enforce Gospel principles before promiscuous audiences, and to persuade men to accept them from the heart. Of course, the more popular the preacher, other things being equal, the greater will be his success. Whitefield was not a learned theologian, but in point of usefulness he was the man of his day. Is not the training of *preachers* too much neglected in our theological schools? Is not mere scholasticism in these schools the first, second, and third thing, and a persuasive oratory left very much to grow up of itself? Is this right, especially in a country like ours, where, perhaps more than in any other, the public mind is swayed by popular addresses, and where it is so difficult to arrest

Persuasive oratory.

Spurgeon.

Old foggy.

public attention by religious considerations because of the multiplicity of subjects that occupy it? However learned and pious a man may be, if he is a proser, the plausible and popular will carry away the people from him. A man may be a Porson in learning, a Locke in mental philosophy, a Calvin in theological acumen, but, unless he has a persuasive oratory—unless he can write well, and impressively pronounce what he writes, his usefulness as a preacher will be limited. How many ministers there are who can read, in the original, the Old and New Testaments with fluency—who can scan Virgil and Homer with all ease, and yet who can not read a chapter of the Bible or a hymn in public so as to bring out their sense or meaning. Spurgeon has already secured a world-wide fame simply by his attractive oratory; and yet we have seen a minister who has forgotten more than Spurgeon ever knew, and whose analytic power as a theologian is universally acknowledged, put an audience to sleep by a most profound and evangelical sermon. “Who is that old foggy you had this morning, domine?” said a New York merchant to his pastor, after hearing a most learned sermon. “Oh,” said the pastor, “that is the great Doctor——!” The pleasant reply of the merchant was, “He may be a great man, but he is no great preacher; do not soon afflict us again with him, domine.”

Our theological schools are a great blessing to the Church, but in them the education of preachers is most sadly neglected. True, a man must be born an

Education can do much.

Foster.

Lifeless ministry.

orator, as a poet or painter, as no education can impart the gift where God has withheld it; yet education can do much to give emphasis, taste, and impressiveness to public services. The number of people is increasing who desire to see a man of taste in the pulpit; and, unless their taste is gratified, they will stay away from the house of God. For the mere want of a good and impressive manner, there are many able ministers who exert but very little influence. John Foster was one of the men of his age; his *Essays* will ever live; but in the pulpit he had little power. He was admired as a writer, while he was shunned as a preacher. There should be a model preacher connected with all our theological seminaries who would excite in their students a desire to be preachers, strong as that which other professors excite to be profound scholars or theologians.

Another of these causes we find in a lifeless ministry; that is, in a ministry lacking spirit and enterprise. We have often balanced the advantages and disadvantages of a changing ministry, like that of the Methodists, with those of a permanent pastorate. There are reasons for each, but those for the latter we regard as much the strongest. There is a pastoral power, which is a real power in the Church of God, which a changing ministry can never possess or exercise. A new doctor every two years would not augur well for the health or continued life of the patient, nor for the sense of the family. A change may be made occasionally for the better; but the physician

Permanent ministry.	Its tendency.	Some questions.
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who best understands the constitutions and tendencies of a family is the best able to prescribe for them. So we reason as to the Church. Other things being equal, a permanent ministry is the best for all the interests of the Church of God.

Yet is there a tendency in a permanent ministry to lifelessness. They preach from year to year to the same people. There is but little new to stimulate. They go round and round the same beaten track. Duties are performed in a perfunctory way; and soon "like priest, like people." All things are kept alive, but nothing flourishes. They are dead while they live. Are there no well-educated ministers, and pious, whose Sabbath services are sensible, but cold—whose Sabbath-schools are without interest—whose lectures and prayer-meetings are but thinly attended—who have neither weekly lecture nor prayer-meeting—who have no monthly concert—whose people do little or nothing for the conversion of the world? Are there no ministers who discourage collections for objects of benevolence, fearing that they might interfere with the payment of their own salary? Where such a ministry exists, how can it be extensively useful? As well might we expect vigorous vegetation under a snowbank which the suns of summer could not thaw out. A living ministry is to all the high interests of a parish what the sun, the rain, the air, the dew, are to the earth, causing it to bring forth, and to bud, and to bear fruit; a lifeless ministry is like a mountain of ice, which freezes the earth and the air,

A contrast.

God's best blessing.

The world's response.

and permits only a sickly existence to all within the reach of its chilling influence. In illustration of this, two parishes now rise up before us: the one is large, rich, with a rich pastor, who is able, pious, but narrow in his views, and no way prodigal of his property. He was educated in the past age, to which his sympathies cling. The other is small, comparatively poor, with a pastor alive to every interest of his people and of the world. And the difference between the two is like that between two farms in July—the one suffering from protracted drought, the other blessed with the former and latter rain in their season. The fleece of the one is constantly wet; of the other, as constantly dry. The greatest blessing of God to a church—to *the* Church, is a living ministry; and because it is not more alive unto God, it is that its usefulness is so circumscribed. And in this day of action and enterprise, when the walls which have shut out the Gospel from heathen nations have fallen flat as those of Jericho before the men of Joshua, it is truly lamentable to look over the Church, and to see the degree to which so many congregations are under the care of a lifeless ministry. As a rule, just in the proportion that ministers are alive to their duty, are their people alive unto God. We must do the world justice; it has ever responded to the call of a truly great and consecrated minister of Christ. It did so to that of Paul, of Luther, Calvin, Knox—to that of Whitefield and Wesley—and recently to that of Chalmers, whose single voice shook Scotland from the Tweed to the

The world's great need.

Orkneys, and aroused the entire Protestant Church to higher efforts and sacrifices for the conversion of the world. A *living* ministry is now the world's great need.

Ministers but men.

Jealousies.

Have ever existed.

CHAPTER XI.

Jealousies in the Ministry impede its Influence.—Worse than the Oppositions of Romanism and Infidelity.—Bad Temper of Ministers.—Examples.

THE best of men are men at best; nor are ministers free from any thing common to humanity. The heavenly treasure is committed to earthen vessels; and that the Church lives, notwithstanding the imperfections of its ministers and members, is a proof that it is divinely instituted. Jealousies and envyings exist in families—among men of business—among politicians, lawyers, physicians; among men of science: there is no mystic Eden on earth from which they are excluded. As the serpent entered Paradise, so these find access to all classes and communities, and may be discovered every where by their slimy trail; and, although most out of place among the ministers of Christ, yet are they there also. They led to the first murder. They infused wormwood into the cup of some of the patriarchs. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam were divided by them. They turned the swords of the tribes of Israel against one another. They often caused the holy mountain, crowned with the magnificent and holy temple, to flow down with blood. Priests and Levites they converted into deadly enemies. They crept into the little family of Jesus.

 Their effects.

Yet existing.

 Altar against altar.

They divided Paul and Barnabas. They distracted the churches founded by the apostles. After the fires of persecution were extinguished by the blood of the martyrs, and outward attacks on our Christianity had ceased, they converted the Church into a great battle-field; and, in comparison with the war of heresies, sects, and leaders that ensued, the persecution of the apostate Julian was almost a rest. It was then that good men turned, with a joyous heart, from the quarrels of sects and heresies to mountain solitudes and nocturnal devotions. They separated reformers from one another, and divided the Protestant hosts, when they should have stood shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy. Indeed, they seem to have been the chief passions upon which Satan has played through all the ages for the purpose of separating those who should be chief friends, and of turning the arms of those who should be united in the destruction of his empire to the destruction of one another. And, notwithstanding the warning history of the past, and the inspired injunction, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another," yet do these jealousies exist among ministers, greatly to their own discomfort as men, and to the circumscribing of their influence.

How often is altar set up against altar in the same town; and do ministers set themselves to work to pull each other down! How often do they look upon each other's success, not with joy, but with jealousy! And this not merely among ministers of

Jealousies to be abated.

Worse than infidelity.

different names, but often among ministers of the same Church, and preaching the same doctrines! Taken all in all, I believe that the ministers of the Gospel, as a class, are the best men on earth; but, with less envy and jealousy of one another, they would be vastly improved, and their usefulness vastly extended. How Satan rejoices when he sees ministers abusing one another in public assemblies, or seeking to fasten charges of falsehood, or duplicity, or of bad motives upon one another through the press! We are not forbidden to manifest a due zeal for our own church or for our peculiar opinions; there are a great many good men who may not be men to our taste, and for whom we can not indulge the love of complacency; but yet envyings and jealousies should be far from us; and we should rejoice in the success of all who win souls to Christ, although not to our fold. I believe that the envyings and jealousies of ministers form a greater obstacle to their usefulness, and to the rapid extension of the Church of God, than all the attacks of infidelity, than all the oppositions of popery, than all the gainsayings of those that oppose themselves combined. If the Psalmist could say, "Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," may we not say, how evil and unpleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in discord? Much has been done within the last few months to smooth down the asperities of sects, and to bring ministers into co-operation, but much yet remains to be done before it can be said of

Bad tempers.

Differently made.

John and Peter.

the ministers in all our cities, and towns, and villages, "Behold how these brethren love one another!"

Another of these causes may be found in the bad tempers often manifested. We must expect the difference of temperament among ministers that exists among other men; as grace, while it controls and directs, does not eradicate the natural dispositions. Men after conversion are what they were before, save that love to God has become the governing principle of the entire conduct. John was naturally gentle, and Peter naturally impulsive; and these were their characteristics when apostles of the Lord. And John, with half the grace of Peter, would appear far more pious. One is made for the days of peace, another for those of war; one is raised up to storm and subdue the strongholds of error, another to collect and instruct the conquered. Luther was among the papists as was Samson among the Philistines, but it required a Melancthon and a Calvin to succeed him; his power was in pulling down, theirs in building up. And while men are no more made to feel alike than to look alike, still should the minister be "of good behavior," "no striker," "not a brawler," "he must have a good report of them who are without," "he must not strive, but be gentle toward all men," "patient," "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." There are times when they must, without flinching, contend for the faith, when they must call "damnable delusions" by their right names; but they must speak the truth in love, in order to show

A contrast.

Bitterness and mildness.

Drunk with passion.

that they are influenced by the spirit of Christ in all that they do.

In the early days of our religious life we knew two venerable ministers: the one was mild as a summer's morning, and as attractive; the other was as boisterous as a stormy winter's day, and as repellent and chilling. And they were equally good men. In the days of heated controversy, now happily past, and, as we hope, never to return, there were two excellent pastors, who were always on opposite sides wherever they met in church courts. The one was logical and powerful, and, in the main, right as to principle, but bitter as gall; when convinced by his arguments, it was difficult to vote with him, lest you should be considered as approving his spirit. The other was mild, clear, persuasive, but sophistical and cunning, and usually on the wrong side; and, when convinced of the lameness of his arguments, it was difficult to vote against him, lest you should be considered as disapproving his spirit. Indeed, by many, the truth of the one was rejected as error, and the error of the other was received as truth. Nor will a century of years erase the impressions made by those two men. The evils resulting will remain long after they have gone to their rest, long after their divisions have been healed by one touch of that Hand which was pierced for them both.

A bad temper is a bad thing any where, but it is especially out of place in the ministry. A minister that gets drunk with passion does often more evil

Minister of the letter.

Example.

Persequor.

than one that gets drunk on wine. A man of commanding talents, with high passions, and a malignant temper, is no blessing to any people. He may be pious, in a modified sense, so as to be saved by fire; but, if a minister, he is a minister, not of the spirit, but of the letter of our religion. The Rev. Dr. —, now dead, was a man of fine talents, very excitable, very ambitious, very sensitive to opposition from any quarter, very ready in debate, very sarcastic, and possessing wonderful power of abuse. He had many friends, but many more enemies; he construed opposition to his plans into opposition to himself. His dislikes grew into hatred, and his hatred became settled and malignant. He gave rise to divisions which will not soon be healed, and to alienations which can not be cured; he brought over his Church suspicions from without, which, like a mist from the ocean, have enveloped it, and has absolutely circumscribed the influence of all adopting his principles, although entirely disapproving his spirit.

The Rev. Mr. Persequor was a man of good talents, of ardent temper, of self-esteem, lacking in judgment, who rarely stepped backward, capable of excitement to any degree, and who knew neither friend nor foe in carrying out his views. He was as frequently wrong as right, but, in his own eyes, he was rarely in the wrong; he annoyed his brethren, he annoyed his people; he split his Church; he was a comfort to nobody. His friends mourned over him; his opponents bitterly hated him; and no wonder, for he

The result.

Example.

Common sense.

could drop upon them words that burned; and when at the very noon of his strength and powers, he was in conflict with his brethren instead of preaching Christ, and with a reputation for bad temper and unfairness which made the smallest congregations fear to employ him. With the ordinary temper of man he might have been an extensively useful minister to the close of his life. Very many of the difficulties of ministers with which I have been acquainted, which have embittered their life, and sent them out wandering as shepherds without sheep, have arisen from a bad temper, often excited by causes which might be removed had the passions been kept under control. A young minister was called to the charge of a parish with but one vote against him. Shortly after being inducted into his new charge, he received a call from this voter in the negative. After some formal preliminaries, this negative voter commenced, like an honest man, giving his reasons for voting against him. He finally summed up all in one brief sentence, "I do not like your preaching, sir." "Well," said the pastor, "there you and I agree; I think no better of my preaching than you do; I pray and hope it may be much better." The man was disarmed; he knew not what to reply. He soon retired, considerably cooled, if not mortified. The preaching of the young minister improved astonishingly in his estimation, and for years afterward that man and his family were his ardent admirers. In dealing with unreasonable people, a little common sense is a most efficient thing.

Prudence.

What it is.

The serpent and dove.

CHAPTER XII.

Prudence.—Not fostered by our Plans of Study.—The Lack of it, how shown.—Examples showing the Effects of Prudence and of the Want of it.—Prudence not a shining but a very useful Grace.

THERE is a low cunning and a Jesuitical spirit of management which are sometimes called prudence, against which we would most emphatically protest. They are neither manly nor Christian. They are based on feebleness of will and intense selfishness. The character for prudence which they obtain is but temporary; the cunning manager soon manages to alienate from him general confidence. The man of expediencies is not trusted in emergencies. The prudence which we would inculcate, and the lack of which is so detrimental to ministerial influence, is as consistent with the most open frankness as it is opposed to cunning and management. It enables so wisely to manage the concerns of a church as to give to all persons and things their place—to have every thing done decently and in order—and so to obtain a good report of them who are without, as to leave those of the contrary part no evil thing to say against us. The prudence we would inculcate is that peculiar characteristic made up of the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove.

Unless a gift of nature, as it often is, our secluded

Not learned.

Imprudence.

Its evils.

course of preparation for the ministry is not strongly calculated to foster prudence. Nor can it be learned as an art, or taught as a science. Some show the lack of it in their habits of conversation. They talk about persons and things as if words had no weight. They reprove as if sharpness was an evidence of sincerity. They talk to sinners as if fire, not love, melted the heart. To prove their independence, they must have extreme opinions on all subjects, and have a tilt with every wind-mill that turns. They step aside from their own sphere to study and settle all difficulties; they begin as peace-makers, and end as partisans. They take some side of every theory that is broached, and must have something to say about every bubble thrown up to the surface of the great fermenting vat of society. Unless so, they are not faithful watchmen, nor up to the spirit of the times! Feeling that human responsibility has no limits, and that they are responsible for all the evils under the sun, they must expose and oppose all forms of evil, wherever existing, with the same zeal as if it were working ruin within the bounds of their own parish. Taking up opinions without reason, they lay them down without care. Opposition to their views they interpret into opposition to themselves. If any thing is said against them, the person must be disciplined. And thus, in a hundred ways, the finest talents, the richest acquisitions of knowledge, and the most unquestioned piety, are often neutralized for the want of a little prudence. Prudence is to a minister what the helm is to a ship;

Rev. A. B.

Lacked prudence.

The result.

without it, however richly laden, the high wind may dash it upon the rocks, or swamp it in the quicksands. "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence." The want of it throws a thick cloud over the brightest and highest acquisitions; the possession of it causes the weakest gifts to shine with the steady lustre of a fixed star.

The Rev. A. B. was a man of genius. He attracted admiring crowds. His mind was stored with knowledge which was not well arranged or connected. But things old and new were there, and were placed sometimes in fantastic relations. His heart was warm and his piety most sincere. He had all the elements needful to greatness but one. He lacked prudence. He thought he knew more than he did, and that he was able to do more than he could. In theology he became erratic. His hands were upon every reformatory plow, caring not enough as to where it made its furrows. The wildest schemes of reform found him in their front ranks. He was on all platforms on all occasions. If he could not instruct, he could amuse; if he could not convince you he was right, he could make you laugh. But his opinions had no root; they were ever changing. And for the same reason they had no weight. He went from church to church—from place to place—from this thing to that. And at sixty years, when other men of equal talent are a part and parcel of the history of the Church, and are pillars in the city or town of their residence, he was without charge, without property, most kindly regarded by all that ever knew him, but unfit for any position

Rev. C. D.

His prudence.

Its effects.

of trust or influence, and simply for the want of prudence, a virtue which he often stigmatized as beneath his regard.

The Rev. C. D. was a contemporary of his, and a minister in the same city. He was heavily moulded in mind and body. He was sensible but slow. In the pulpit he was instructive, but dull and drawling. He formed his opinions slowly, but truly and strongly, and always before he uttered them, and not afterward. He kept at his work, and always at it. When others were gazing on A. B. as a comet, he was left to shine alone as a fixed star, without many to look upon him. He absorbed confidence steadily. The church and the city sought his advice. He was sought for places of trust. His word was law among his people. He was loved by the aged, he was revered by the young. What Homer said of Ulysses might be said of him: he was

“For prudent counsel like the gods renown'd.”

And when his sun set, it was amid the lamentations of the city from which its light was withdrawn. But, although it has set, long will its rays brighten the horizon, and gild the high places of Zion. And yet he only excelled A. B. in prudence. In all the higher qualities of mind and heart he was decidedly and confessedly his inferior.

How many of the difficulties with which ministers have to contend, and which hinder their influence, arise from the want of prudence. A minister once undertook to discipline a spinster who took a dislike

Beaten by a spinster.

Cases of imprudence.

to him, and said some bitter things against him, which, if unnoticed, would be placed to the account of her peculiar situation. He failed in his effort, as must every man who contends with a single woman, and divided the Church, and had to retire ingloriously from the contest with a damaged character, and feeling that he was beaten by a spinster.

Two officers in a church quarreled as to some accounts. Instead of leaving the quarrel to be settled by law, or by reference to business men, the minister interfered. He was confident and headstrong, and where others doubted, he was certain. He soon became a heated partisan, and on the wrong side. He split the Church, and subjected himself to the censures of his brethren, and secured a character which made other churches timid as to seeking his services.

A young minister, who thought quite enough of himself, rebuked before the congregation an old elder who was nodding under a summer evening lecture. His eldership left him; the impertinent rebuke was the key-note to his character—a character which it was impossible to improve or to love.

A minister of fine parts was settled, against the violent opposition of several leading families, over a large congregation. He entered quietly on his work. He was especially polite to those who opposed him. He soon disarmed all opposition. His opponents became his warmest friends; he rose to the first place in their affections; he became eminent and successful as a pastor, and one of the brightest ornaments of the American pulpit.

A useful gift.

Profitable to direct.

Prudence is not a very shining, but it is a very attractive ministerial gift, and a very useful one. It can reprove kindly; it says the right thing at the right time; it leads to judicious courses; it improves what is admitted, so as to remove objections to what is questioned; it vindicates the right without assailing the wrong; it expels the evil by introducing the good. By filling the bushel with wheat, it leaves no room for the chaff. This is not the sacrifice of principle, but the right use of it. It is not the cowardice, but the meekness of wisdom—the wisdom which is justified of her children. Without it a minister is far more repellent than attractive, and as a fisherman he will do far more to drive away than to catch the fishes; or, changing the figure, like the clumsy sportsman, he will do far more to scatter than to bag the birds.

For the want of ordinary prudence, many a gifted and pious minister has greatly obstructed his influence and interrupted the harmony of the churches.

Sects every where.Ground for it.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sectarianism.—Ground for Diversity of Opinion.—Has its Limits.—Its great Evils when excessive.—Examples.—Ministers of a Sect not Ministers of Christ.—There should be no Ministers of narrow Views.

WE have no sympathy whatever with the cry raised against sectarianism, and by none louder than those who are the most exclusive of sectarists. There were sects among the Jews—sects soon appeared among the early Christians; they are to be found in ardent conflict in “the bosom of Unity;” they exist among Protestants; they are to be found among philosophers, statesmen, politicians; they are to be found where the mind is free to think, and man is free to act. There are counter currents in the air—the ocean. There are antagonistic muscles crowding the human system. And in the heart, the mind, the tastes of man, there is a foundation laid for diversity of opinions; and so there is in the Bible itself. The Bible is our only infallible rule of faith and practice; but what man, or body of men, has Heaven authorized to interpret the Bible for all others of the race? None pretend to such authority but impostors, madmen, or idiots. We might as well cry out against the counter currents of the air and ocean as against the variety of opinions on religious topics; and those who cry loud-

 Has its limits.

The rebuke.

Liberality.

est are those who are very deeply affected because all the world can not believe with them.

But sectarianism has its limits, within which it may be very useful, and beyond which it may be very injurious to all the high interests of the Church of God. In the days of the Circumcision there were many sects, but they were all Jews; they all worshiped God, and believed in Moses, and bowed together in the same temple on Moriah. Why should it be different in the days of Christ? It is not different, save where sectarianism has passed beyond its proper limits. And where it does so, how admirable the rebuke we have for it from the lips of the Savior himself. On a certain occasion John said to him: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followed not with us." And Jesus said unto him, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us." If this divine liberality and charity received more attention, how different from its present would be the state of the Church! There would be none to confine the flock of God to the few sheep in their fold, nor the Church of God to those called by their name, nor the grace of God to ordinances administered by their authority; nor would we be inclined to "forbid" those who do not labor to do good in the most approved way, nor yet in the most scriptural way. We would rejoice when good is done in any way by any body. When Christ is preached and souls are saved, we should be thankful. It is of importance that all things should

be done decently and in order; that there should be a regular induction into the ministry; but we should be very careful lest, in our efforts to maintain factitious rules, we should prevent the spread of the Gospel and the salvation of souls.

The evils of a too ardent sectarianism are very great, and may be seen in nearly every community of five thousand inhabitants in this land, and are mostly traceable to ministers themselves. One man believes in "apostolical succession," and in the need of episcopal ordination to a regular ministry. Let him so believe, and let him make his belief the law of his life. But why seek to interfere with others whose credulity is not as large as his, when doing the work of the Lord? One believes in government by bishops, another by presbytery, another by the Church. To their common master they have each to account, and why seek to devour one another? They are each fully persuaded in their own minds, and why not exercise mutual charity? One believes in baptism by immersion, and only of adult believers; another believes in infant baptism, and by the application of water. Both believe in the thing signified—the need of spiritual cleansing by the Holy Spirit. Each fully believes he is right, and why not exercise mutual charity? If, as we have already argued, the ministry which is authorized by one branch of the Church should be received in every branch of the Church, so we think the member who is received to one branch of the Church should be received to every branch of the

 All should receive whom Christ received.

Examples.

Church. The person received by Christ, however baptized, is good enough for a seat at any communion table. "He that believeth on the Son shall see life;" and to exclude one from the communion table in the possession of a title, through grace, to eternal life, because not conforming to our particular views, is far less Christian than it is fanatical. And these views we hold as to the too ardent spirit of sectarianism, in whatever way it demonstrates itself. But we will illustrate what we mean.

In the town of — there are two Presbyterian churches—Old School and New. They are only separated in name and by ecclesiastical lines, and yet they are hostile and jealous, and hold to the law of non-intercourse. There came into the town of —, in the midst of a revival of religion, a Baptist minister, fluent, and full of zeal. He distributed, thick as autumn leaves, tracts on immersion, and preached about it, and from house to house. Attention was drawn from the salvation of the soul to a mere rite of the Church, and the work ceased with comparatively few ingatherings. In the town of — there was but one Methodist family. The minister of the old and only church in the town was able, pious, and greatly blessed in his ministry; and the surrounding country was canvassed to raise money to erect another church there; and when erected, all possible means were used to draw away people from the old church, a vine which the Lord had abundantly blessed. A man is not the richer by taking money from one pocket and putting

 The Puseyite

Bigotry.

Its effects.

it in another. The Church is not extended by draining one to fill another. This is simply robbing Peter to pay Paul.

An Episcopal minister of the Pusey school went to the town of ——. He soon quarreled with his Low-Church brother. He treated with disdain all non-Episcopal people. He publicly attacked the character of all other ministers; he gave over to uncovenanted mercies all other people, and sought, in all possible ways, to decoy from other churches. Finding his success not equal to his zeal, he discovered a flaw in his commission, and toppled over into Romanism. He ended where he ought to have begun. He was never any thing but a sectarian of the Pusey stamp. Nor do we see how bigotry can consist with true piety—with love to God and man. It is the spirit of persecution. As a rule, the more bigotry the less piety. As the one rises the other declines. When bigotry is at blood-heat, piety is at zero; and the contrary is equally true. We once knew a minister who gave all but his own people, in the most generous manner, over to uncovenanted mercies. None could be more exact in his ritual observances, nor more laudatory of them. And yet he would go from a debauch to the pulpit, and from the communion table to a debauch. Bigotry and true Christian love never lodge together.

Now these are specimens of what we consider a too ardent spirit of sectarianism. Every man has not only a right to love his own Church better than any other,

Consistency.

Men of a creed.

Enlarged minds.

but he is bound to do so by the law of consistency. But when a minister of Christ sinks himself into the minister of a sect—when his peculiarities rise to higher importance than the great common principles of our holy religion—when he aims more at the demolition of a rival Church than of the bulwarks of Satan—when, like the soldier at the battle of Preston Pans, he “goes for Hamilton regiment, right or wrong,” then is he far less of a Christian than of a sectarian, and more the preacher of a creed than of Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. It is a pity that men of narrow views and sympathies should ever enter the ministry; that ever any man should be found there who could not open heaven, and his heart, and his pulpit, and his communion table to all who loved Christ. It is a pity that all papists were not Paschals—that all Episcopalians were not Newtons, and Scotts, and Milnors—that all Baptists were not Halls—that all Presbyterians were not Chalmers, and Alexanders, and Davies—that all Methodists were not Summerfields. These were all men whose religion was not that of a sect—whose love for Christ submerged all other loves. If such men were always in the ministry, the hammers of sects would never be heard ringing on each other’s gates; they would be all ringing on the gates of the common enemy; and the vast, vast evils of an over-ardent sectarianism which now covers the land, to the shame of the ministry, and to the injury of the Church, would never have existed. The pow-

Co-operation.

er of the Church in the world would be increased a thousand-fold if ministers and churches, without surrendering a single great principle, would love and co-operate as brethren. And why should they not?

E

Preaching.

Has always been.

Its effects.

CHAPTER XIV.

Preaching an Institution of Religion.—What it has done.—Preaching the great Duty of the Ministry.—Not to be put aside by Praying.—Itinerant Preaching.—Matter and Manner of Preaching.—Methods of Exposition.—Erskine.—Barrow.—Blair.—Examples. Davies.—Quaint Subjects.—Dr. Baker.—Summerfield.

PREACHING has ever been an institution of the religion of God. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied. Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Moses, Aaron, and Joshua often preached to the assembled Israelites. Ezra preached to a vast multitude, and with great effect. Preaching and exhortation were parts of the worship of the synagogue. John the Baptist preached with great power, as did Christ and his apostles. And preaching is the great institution of Christianity. It was by preaching that the early ministers of Christianity turned the world upside down, and dispersed the assembled deities of Olympus; that the Reformers shook to its foundations the throne of the Man of Sin, and gave the Gospel anew to the world; and it is by preaching, more than by all other causes combined, that civilization and Christianity are now so rapidly extending over the world. And as Christ preached, sometimes from the deck of a ship, sometimes from the side of a mountain, sometimes in a private house, sometimes in

Preaching every where.

Itinerant preaching.

a synagogue, sometimes by a well's side, sometimes in the Temple, so must his ministers embrace every opportunity to teach men, if they would preach the Gospel to every creature. In the papal Church "the mass" is the important service; in some Protestant churches the pulpit is put aside to give prominence to the altar, and "prayers" form the prominent service; but how rarely is prayer joined with preaching in the New Testament. Prayer, and singing, and reading the Word have their place in regularly settled churches, but the preaching of the Gospel is the great duty of the ministry. And so heavily did this duty lie on the heart of the early Church, that even laics, as they were called, were found proclaiming salvation through Christ. Origen thus preached. It is a great innovation upon the teaching and conduct of Christ and his apostles to elevate praying above preaching in the duties of the sanctuary. It is to preaching we owe the origin, the continuance, the spread of Christianity; and it is to *itinerant* preaching, much as it may be contemned by those who worship in cathedrals, that we owe the conversion of the Roman world from paganism, and the rescue of our Christianity from a chilling formalism in these latter days.

But what is preaching? As to its *matter*, it is the true exposition of the Word of God in public, and its application to the hearers of it; and as to the *manner*, it is the so presenting the Word of God as that it shall be understood and felt by those to whom it is addressed. These topics, upon which essays and vol-

 What is preaching?

 Various methods.

umes have been written, we must dismiss with a few remarks.

As to the exposition of the Word of God, every variety of manner has obtained. The expository method has prevailed in Scotland, and among the Presbyterian family of churches. The didactic and essay form has been most in favor in England. The hortatory has most obtained among the French churches. The sermons of some were nearly all heads. I have just opened a volume of Erskine's, and the first sermon upon which my eye fell has sixty-seven heads marked with figures. The next sermon, a much shorter one, has fifty. Amid such a forest of heads an ordinary hearer would lose his way. The sermons of others are mere scholastic essays, like those of Barrow and Tillotson. Those of others are rhetorical disquisitions, like those of Blair; correct, but cold—like a clear, wintry night, sparkling, but freezing. Those of others are elaborately doctrinal, and bear the same relation to the Gospel that the human skeleton does to a living man; while others are as elaborately metaphysical, and as incomprehensible, by an ordinary hearer, as is Johnson's definition of "net-work." And these are but the types of preachers of our own times. Years ago we sat in a cold church when the thermometer was below zero, and when to heat the house, save by a foot-stove, would be as bad as heterodoxy, and had to listen for two hours to a sermon on the text, "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." We can hardly

Metaphysical preaching.

Blending.

think of the sermon now without a cold chill. A doctor of divinity, of world-wide fame, now in heaven, once preached in our pulpit. His sermon was very able, but very metaphysical. The first installment he gave in the morning, occupying an hour and a half, and promised the remainder in the afternoon. Scarcely a third of the congregation returned to hear him. And yet a more able discussion we never heard in the pulpit; but it was metaphysico-doctrinal to the highest degree. We then felt, and still feel, that such sermons before popular audiences are like self-righteousness—the more, the worse. They are based on an utter misapprehension of the preaching of the Gospel. Mr. G. was a truly pious man, warm, cordial, large-hearted, ready in utterance, lively in imagination, with little reading, less logic, and any amount of anecdote. He was great in exhortation, and never rose above it. No matter as to the text, it was always and only a pretext to a warm, disjointed exhortation. And a few of them sufficed for the same people. * It is when the expository, the didactic, and the hortatory are sweetly blended in the same sermon, that the great ends of preaching are attained, and that the preacher, from year to year, can edify the same people. Such a preacher as was Samuel Davies is always fresh as an open fountain. Of preaching such as his a people never grow weary. The meaning of the text is brought out in exposition; the importance of the principle asserted is made apparent in the didactic; and the application to the hearer is fervently made in

Davies.

Alexander.

Clap-traps.

the exhortatory. And we need only refer for illustration to his sermon on "The Compassion of Christ to Weak Believers," from the text, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." Another such preacher was the late Dr. Alexander; and we refer for illustration to his sermon on "The Way in which God leads his People." That sermon was preached on a communion Sabbath in a church in New Jersey, when there was a large addition of communicants, forty-two years ago, and there are those who talk about it to the present time.

To make men *see* and *feel* the truth is the great object of preaching; the Spirit of God alone can make them receive the truth in the love of it. Mere abstract preaching can not accomplish these ends; nor can mere rhetorical preaching, where the idea is lost in the words; nor can mere hortatory preaching, which is the mere firing of a musket with enough of powder, but no ball; nor can preaching on quaint subjects, like "the Marriage of Adam," "the Funeral Sermon of Adam," "the Unfailing Shoes," the word "And," "the Eagle stirring up her Nest," "Not so," "the Druids," "Heaven a Country," "the Strong and the Weak," "the Young Folks at Home," "Spiritual Humbugs," "Traffic in Slaves," "But." These, and all such, are pulpit clap-traps, which may attract the vulgar, but which repel the intelligent, and which will soon place those who resort to them in the same category with the vendors of quack medicines. The higher a man seeks to rise on waxen wings like these,

Dr. Baker.

Summerfield.

Impressions.

the greater will be his fall. The simple truth, simply presented, will do what no clap-trap ever has or can. We heard the late Rev. Dr. Daniel Baker once preach a sermon on the text, "And the door was shut." There was not a thought in it beyond the comprehension of a child. We can never forget it. We heard Summerfield make one of his first addresses, if not the first he ever made in this country. He represented the Bible as the vine of Joseph which ran over the wall; and he traced the vine running over sectarian, tribe, and national walls—over mountains, rivers, lakes, and oceans—over all the barriers which separated men and nations from one another, until it bore fruit on all sides of all walls for the healing of the nations. Nearly forty years have since passed away, and the figure of Summerfield is yet before us, in the beauty of meekness, and with the simplicity of eloquence, tracing the vine of Joseph as it spread over the walls. We even now see his long white finger marking its undulating line.

The impressions made by the truth are abiding; all others, like the early cloud, soon pass away. Hence, the great object of preaching, as to the matter of it, is to make men to see the truth, and in its application to themselves.

CHAPTER XV.

Manner in the Pulpit.—The Character of the Preacher.—His Sympathy with his Subject.—The Eloquence of Art and of the Heart.—An Example.—Mr. Willard.—Eloquence of Manner.—Dr. Mason.—Dr. Griffin.—Preaching in Avignon, at Rome.—Earnestness a high Talent.—Should be cultivated.

THE *character* of the preacher has very much to do with the effect of the truth he proclaims. If his moral habits are bad, or even questioned, his preaching, even if he spoke with the tongue of men and of angels, would be useless—yes, far worse than useless. There have been ministers in the Church whose bad influence survives the lapse of a hundred years; and there are now living ministers, of learning and eloquence, whose preaching, even of the truth, is less efficient on the side of Christianity than of infidelity. People will make allowance for a dull man if they feel he is sincere, but no eloquence will open their hearts to the reception of the truth from the lips of a man whose character they believe to be bad. Bad men, whose character may not be known, may do good, but when their character is revealed, and placed under a thick cloud, their usefulness is at an end. Bad as men are, they care not going to hear Satan reproving sin.

And so the sympathy which a preacher manifests in his subject, has much to do with the impression it

Eloquence of art and heart.

makes. It is feeling that gives words and thoughts their power. You may lay a hammer on a plate of glass without impressing it; but strike it with the hammer, wielded with all the power of your right hand, and you shatter it into fragments. So truth simply laid on the minds and consciences of men scarcely impresses; it is when uttered with all the zeal of a heart feeling its power and importance that it becomes "like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." An unconverted man, or one with a lukewarm manner, may preach very eloquent and elaborate sermons on orthodox and evangelical doctrines, but they are to the sermons of men thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christ as "are the coruscations of the Aurora Borealis to the warm and vivifying rays of the sun." Ministers should never forget that the fountain of eloquence is the heart. The eloquence of art is to the eloquence of the heart as is the cold marble statue of Webster to Webster himself. Blair and Walker were colleague pastors of the High-Church, Edinburgh, and to this day the people of that city have not ceased contrasting the cold correctness of the one with the fervent evangelism of the other. Thirty years ago there were two ministers in New York, the one of whom was cold, but scholarly and logical; the other was eloquent, and pointed, and fervent. We took with us a friend, then skeptical, and since known to the world of letters, to hear them on the same day. On talking over the sermons in the evening, he made this remark, which we have never

Manner.A sad fall.

forgotten: "The preacher in the morning sought to *lay the truth on me*; the preacher this afternoon strove to *drive it into me*. I like him a great deal the best."

The effectiveness of preaching is far more dependent on the manner than is generally admitted. The Rev. — was a man of good education—of good sense—of sincere piety—but he was made of lead. He was always late in the pulpit, and then waited for the people to collect. He always read, and if he made any mistake, he would go back and correct it. He was never known to perpetrate a figure of speech or a gesture. He could preach on Christ's death for sinners with as little emotion as on the being of God. No matter what was the theme, his feelings never rose above the freezing point. He was known at the funeral of a child partly to read a sermon from the top of a pile of hats built up for the occasion; in the midst of the reading the pile fell, and the sermon fell with them, and the service was brought suddenly to a close. In a few years most of his people withdrew to another congregation, and were pleased with the ministry of a man, ten of whose sermons would not contain as much sense as that sermon which fell with the pile of hats, and from whose fall the good man never recovered.

We find the following incident going the round of the papers in reference to the Rev. Samuel Willard, one of the early ministers of Boston. It is so much to our present purpose that we quote it as we find it:

"Mr. Willard possessed an agreeable delivery and

Mr. Willard and his son-in-law.

harmonious voice, and, as a natural consequence, was generally admired. His son-in-law, the minister of Eastham, occasionally preached for him, whose sermons were excellent, but much injured by the badness of manner. Having on one occasion preached one of his best discourses to the congregation of his father-in-law, in his usual unhappy manner, it excited great dissatisfaction. Several persons waited on Mr. Willard, and begged the gentleman might not be invited into the pulpit again. To this request Mr. Willard made no reply; but he desired his son-in-law to lend him the discourse, which being left with him, he delivered it, without any alteration, to his people a few weeks after. The hearers were delighted, and requested a copy for the press. See the difference, said they, between yourself and son-in-law. You have preached a sermon on the same text which he did, but his was intolerable, and yours was excellent."

While the preaching of our educated ministry in this country, in point of matter, is equal, if not superior, to that of any other country, yet it will be readily confessed, by those capable of forming a comparison, that the manner of the evangelical ministry in Europe is far more lively and impressive than is that of ours. How soon you exhaust the list of those famous in the American pulpit for eloquence of manner—that is, for intense earnestness—among the educated and prominent clergy. Dr. Romeyn was very earnest, so occasionally was Dr. Mason. Dr. Griffin

Dr. Griffin.

Few such.

Monks.

was greatly so on great occasions. We remember some of his sermons; and whether he was in the body or out of the body when delivering them, it seemed difficult to tell. Even now he rises up before us in the pulpit, his huge frame moving, his ruddy countenance flaming with emotion, as he thus concluded his sermon on Noah's Ark: "Oh, sinner, if you believe God in season, now is your time to avoid the terrors of that day. Seize the ark, and make sure of Ararat. By all the solemnities of that coming scene, I entreat, I beseech you to hasten into the ark. Come, for the floods are rising, or the next hour may be too late." And as his voice, pitched to the highest key of earnestness, died into silence, and as he slowly dropped his hands upon the Bible, as he was wont, it would seem as if every soul would plunge through the rising waters for the ark! But how few such, in comparison with the many who tamely read or speak important truths, leaving it, with less faith than carelessness, to the Spirit to apply it!

But this fashionable didactic manner—this tame, unimpressive solemnity, exists not to the same extent in other lands. The monks and priests of Rome, when they preach at all, do so with intense earnestness, and often with a crucifix or some other relic in their hands, the more to excite the feelings of the people. We heard a priest preach in the cathedral at Avignon, hard by the old palace of the Popes, to a company of market-women in the early morning, and he pounded the pulpit with the earnestness of a

Preaching in San Carlo.

Tameness.

blacksmith welding two pieces of hot iron. So we heard a monk preach in the San Carlo in Rome on a Sabbath evening to a crowd of children; and he shouted like a tempest, and tossed his arms about with extreme earnestness. He riveted the attention of all, although he was only filling up the time spent in waiting for a fat cardinal to intone the service! When the person who heralded the puffing cardinal appeared, the monk stopped in a moment, and, apparently, in the middle of a sentence. In those countries the mass is the rule, preaching is the exception; but never did we hear a priest preach without intense earnestness. Indeed, nothing less would suit the genius of the people, as they are hot in their temperaments, rapid in their conceptions, and of vigorous imaginations, and a cold, sensible address of some of our tame doctors, though profound, would have no more effect upon them than an icicle upon gunpowder. Nor has it much effect any where. Tameness in the pulpit is submitted to, not as a matter of choice, but of necessity. Earnestness is itself a high talent, and is attractive in every department of life. In the pulpit it is a means of grace. It reached the heart of even the cold, calculating Franklin, and wrung from the lips of Agrippa, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The great power of the late Dr. John Brackenridge was the power of public impression, in which he has not been excelled in our age. We once sat by the side of a most logical and didactic New England minister while Dr. B. was making an

Dr. John Brackenridge.

address in the old Chatham Theatre in New York, and when he sat down, our friend, turning to us, said, "I would give a thousand dollars to be fifteen minutes in his shoes." He swayed every mind there at his will, and made impressions yet vivid, at the distance of a quarter of a century, on the minds of those that heard him.

The Irish assembly.A stirring address.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Irish General Assembly.—An Address there.—Dr. Chalmers' great Address.—Whitefield.—Wesley.—Their Power.—The Age in which they rose.—Their Influence.—They were in earnest.

I WAS present in the General Assembly of Ireland in the year 1851, and when the deputation from Scotland, headed by Dr. Duff, addressed that venerable body. I sat by the side of a member of the deputation when one of his brethren made an address in a manner the most excited. He was a very large man; and when he let out his voice to its full pitch, and suited the action to the word by a heavy stamp with his foot upon the platform, it would seem as if the building and audience trembled together. When, dripping with perspiration, he concluded, I asked my neighbor whether that was a fair specimen of the manner of their Scottish ministers. He replied that Dr. Chalmers went often as far beyond that as that went beyond ordinary tameness; and then gave me an account of a speech delivered by him in the General Assembly of Scotland during the heated controversies which led to the disruption. It is, doubtless, the same speech to which his eloquent son-in-law and biographer, Dr. Hannah, alludes in the 114th page of the 4th volume of his life. The decisions of the courts of law were pronounced against the party headed by Chal-

Great speech of Chalmers.

mers, and the ablest men of the Moderate party were there to sustain them. Scotland, from the Tweed to the Orkneys, was excited. All eyes were turned toward the coming Assembly. It met, and the day for the great discussion was fixed. It arrived, and the big heart of Scotland was beating its strongest pulsations. The debate opened at 12 at noon, in a house densely packed. The Moderates, clerical and lay, presented their case logically and powerfully. When they concluded, who was to reply? Every eye turned to Chalmers. As if in prayer for divine aid, he bowed for a few moments in his seat, during which the vast audience was breathless. He rose, and the cheering which greeted him was as the sound of many waters; and the magnificent oration in which he met the courts of law, and questioned their decisions—in which he met his opponents, and gave their arguments to the winds—in which he maintained the independence of the Church and the doctrine of non-intrusion—in which he asserted, if there is a queen in the state, there is a king in the Church, occupied three hours in delivery. The crisis was a great one, and he nobly met it. Never was Demosthenes more eloquent—Paul more fearless—never was Whitefield more successful. Under his all but inspired periods the vast assembly swayed like a field of grain before the winds of summer. When he concluded, he was wrapped up in cloaks and shawls, and taken to an adjoining house, so exhausted as to render the attention of friends necessary for several hours. The vote was

A great mind roused.

Whitefield and Wesley.

taken; and Chalmers, without being there to vote, carried with him the Assembly; and the Free Church sprang into being, and Scotland felt that a new and powerful impulse was given to our Christianity, which will be felt for a thousand ages. Oh, when the mind of a great man fully bathed in the light of heaven, and the heart of a great man filled with the love of Christ, are thoroughly roused, they can almost turn the world upside down; and any ordinary man, fully in earnest in his work, may accomplish wonders.

Since my mind has been able to form a true estimate of the character of Whitefield and Wesley, they have commanded my highest admiration. Were I a hero worshiper, they would be of those before whose altars I would bow down with profound homage, and upon which I would offer my costly incense. Were I a pope, I would canonize them, as they have done more for the world than all the monkish and Jesuit saints crowded into the Calendar by that veracious compiler of lying legends, Alban Butler. Intellectually, they were not the greatest men of their day; but as simple preachers of the Gospel they had no superiors in any age of the Church since the days of Paul. With great powers of mind—with large hearts—with the most expansive benevolence—with the highest estimate of the value of the soul and the eternal importance of its salvation through Jesus Christ, they sought to preach the Gospel to every creature. This was their own object. There were no efforts to catch applause—none to be popular with the fashionable.

Their preaching.

Their incessant labor.

and frivolous; there was no flowery diction nor gaudy metaphor mixed up with fanciful descriptions and pretty pictures; there was no taking of a text for a pretext, and then running away from it among the things actual and possible for material to fill up a discourse. They were not of the class of preachers who tell men that they must be saved "on general principles"—who talk wisely of "volition" when they mean "will"—who expand "duty" into "moral obligation," and "thinking and doing" into "intellectual processes and moral powers"—in whose hands "heat" becomes "caloric," and "plants and animals" "organized substances," and a "certain man of the Pharisees" "a gentleman of the Pharisees," and "the ten virgins" "ten young ladies." Oh no. The law of their life was to preach Christ and him crucified. And to do this, they sacrificed all domestic enjoyment and personal ease; they crossed the ocean many times; they endured, joyfully, all manner of persecution, from those who sat in Moses' seat down to the lowest of the rabble; they rose from the bed of sickness to address multitudes when it was feared they might exchange the pulpit for the bier; "they wore out life in labors so incessant that it looked as if they were in haste to bring it to a close." And if not possessing the classic purity of Hall, nor the deep thoughtfulness of Edwards, nor the grand sublimity of Howe, nor the silvery light of Bates, nor the vast knowledge of Owen, nor the wonderful imagination of Taylor, they combined some of the noblest characteristics of

 Their enduring name.

 The need of them.

these with others peculiarly their own. Like John the Baptist, they were burning and shining lights; and wherever they went, however opposed by formalists, the heart of the Church opened for their reception; cities and communities were moved by their presence; and they have filled the nations with the fame and the fruit of their evangelic labors. They have written their names upon the rock forever. Their fair fame, as well as the fruits of their great labors, belong to the entire Church of God; and while we would not, in mere intellectual power, place them among "the three first," we would, as noble preachers of the Gospel, place them in the very first rank of the ministers of Christ of any age. Their names will live with those of Luther, and Calvin, and Knox, as long as the sun or moon endure.

And yet their great leading characteristic, and which elevated them heaven-high above other men, was their intense earnestness. They rose at a time when the Church of England had sadly backslidden from the faith—when infidelity had obtained among the higher classes—when bishops and rectors lost all authority as religious teachers—when spirituality in religion had been supplanted by the most heartless formality. The picture drawn of the moral state of the English Church at that time by the elegant pen of Dr. Stevens, the learned author of the "History of Methodism," is truly affecting, and shows how little a mere Liturgy, however truthful, can do to keep alive the spirit of the Gospel. In this state of things White-

The results of their efforts.

field and Wesley appear together. The effect was like the rising of the sun of summer in mid-winter, when the earth, the streams are all frozen—when the trees and forests are leafless. Such preaching the people then living never had heard. The common people heard them gladly. The palaces of bishops—the rectories of fox-hunting priests—soon felt their influence. It went up to the court of the sovereign. It pervaded Britain—it crossed to the American colonies. It is, at this hour, felt at the ends of the earth. It will never die out. And all, under God, because they were earnest preachers of the Gospel. And if they had left no other legacy to the Church than that of their example as earnest, fervid preachers of the Gospel, for that even would Christendom owe them a vast debt of gratitude.

CHAPTER XVII.

Dr. Duff as a Preacher.—At Exeter Hall.—Always earnest.—Earnestness a great Power.—Should be cultivated.—An Example.—The want of Earnestness destructive to Congregations.—A Revival of earnest Men needed.

WITH the name of Dr. Duff we had been familiar for years, and had often been intensely excited by the reading of his missionary speeches, and by his letters from India. But we saw him for the first time on the platform at Exeter Hall, at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Lord Ashley was in the chair, and on his right and left were earls, marquises, lords, knights, bishops, and ministers of all branches of the Protestant Church. In the midst of the services a tall, thin man, with black hair combed back from his forehead, with small head, and a penetrating eye, was quietly introduced to the platform, and took a seat near us. The earnest expression of his countenance arrested our attention. When the name of Dr. Duff, from Calcutta, was announced as the next speaker, not with the slow, measured motion of the artistic declaimer, but with the spirit of a race-horse champing its bit and eager for the course, this man took the speaker's stand, and was received with prolonged greetings. Only then did we know that he was Dr. Duff. His emotions were intense when he

His intense earnestness.

The impression.

commenced. Are they ever otherwise? Gracefully bowing to the president, he then turned to the people, and for a length of time that would not be endured in any other man, he poured forth "thoughts that breathed and words that burned." Even now we seem to hear him say, with all the excitement of a Roman sibyl, "I look upon this Society, at the present moment, as lifting up in the face of the whole world the united protest of the British people against the abounding errors and delusions of every kind that are contrary to God's word. It is the embodied protest of the British people against all the heartless deisms, and revolting socialisms, and blaspheming pantheisms, and withering skepticisms of all kinds. It is the uplifted testimony of the British people to this great fact, that the Bible alone contains infallible truth." For more than an hour did he pour forth his full soul upon that immense audience, and with gestures, contortions, and a vehemence of action such as I had never previously witnessed. And the effect was electric upon earls, marquises, lords, knights, presbyters, and people. When he concluded, dripping with perspiration as if his "head were waters," he rushed from the stage amid a "Kentish fire," such as an Exeter Hall audience knows how to give to such a man. It was a great success, and made an impression which none present can ever forget. The good sense, the well-put general truths of Ashley, of Cholmondeley, of Sir Robert Inglis, of Harrowby, of Chichester, of the Bishops of Cashel and Bombay,

No temporary excitement.

Earnestness a power.

were all carried away before the eloquent torrent of the great Scottish missionary. Yet the very same speech might be made by good Bishop Jeffries, a Christian minister of the most lovely spirit, without exciting more than a ripple upon the feelings of that vast assembly.

Nor was this a temporary earnestness excited by the occasion, and by the presence of such an audience, composed to such a degree of the great and the titled in the state and in the Church. We heard him often subsequently in public and in private—in the pulpit, the platform, the parlor—and he was always the same earnest man. Things unto which he could not put his whole soul he left to others; and the influence of his late visit to Britain and America will never be lost.

The power of an earnest, even if not a graceful manner, in the pulpit, is felt by all; but when combined with gracefulness, it influences alike the learned and the ignorant. The power of earnestness is not sufficiently realized by teachers or preachers. Indeed it is depreciated by many as out of place in the pulpit, who admit its power every where else! Manner is to matter what neat garments are to the human body—what a flexible, melodious voice is to singing—what a pleasant exterior is to a well-cultivated mind and heart. It is admitted that some of the necessary qualifications to a good orator must be natural—as a good voice, and ready articulation, and an easy manner, and a pleasing countenance; but where nature

To be cultivated.

An example.

has been sparing as to these, there has been great pulpit power. The history of Demosthenes teaches how much effort may do to surmount the defects of nature; and if a Demosthenes and a Cicero could so diligently cultivate the powers of oratory, and carry the art of public speaking to such perfection, in order to counteract the designs of a Philip and a Catiline, why should not preachers of the Gospel do the same in order to save souls, and to extend the empire of the Gospel, and to defend our most holy religion against the assaults of infidelity and error? If an eloquent manner is beyond the reach of the preacher, an earnest manner is not; and true earnestness is a virtue which covers a multitude of defects. I well remember a young licentiate from the Seminary who preached for me an evening lecture. He drew his trial sermon from his pocket, and commenced reading it with not very good light. And such reading! He stammered on to the end; and when going out from the service, the question was oft repeated, "Pray, who is this man?" He was sent out to be a missionary in a country where a man was nothing unless he could "lift up axes upon the thick trees." We told him plainly that unless he at once changed his manner of preaching he had better return home. He asked what he could do to change it. We told him to repair daily to a certain pine wood, away from human habitation, upon whose tall trees the crows had built their nests, and there to shout until he drove them from their eyry. And he did so. He became a most earn-

A regret.

Suffering congregations.

A case.

est, useful preacher, although painfully awkward in manner; and is not unknown as a defender of the faith through the press.

It is deeply to be regretted that this thing of earnestness is not more cultivated by the ministry of our country, and especially by the educated portion of it, which has to such a degree the moulding of public opinion in its control. There are multitudes of congregations suffering simply for the want of an earnest ministry. The pastor whiles away his time in the early part of the week; defers all preparations to its close; enters the pulpit conscious of his unpreparedness to feed the people; metes out a written homily or an undigested exhortation, of no credit to himself, of no use to the people. From frequency of repetition this becomes a habit, until minister and people become listless together. We heard a pastor once preach a sermon to a crowded audience, on a special occasion, to his own people. He was interrupted in the midst of his discourse by the fainting of one of his hearers. When order was restored, he thus resumed his discourse: "Well, I forgot what I was saying, but I will proceed." And with his hand in his bosom he did proceed to the end of a tedious, disjointed talk, utterly beneath him and the occasion. And yet he was a man of rare powers and piety, and needed nothing but industry to make him one of the brightest ornaments of the American pulpit.

Preaching is only an easy work to those who make it such; and those who make it such are loafers, and

Idle Mondays.

Summerfield.

The want of the age.

not laborers, in the Lord's vineyard. Idle Mondays have much to do with light food on Sundays. Careful preparation, and a soul all alive to the truth in the delivery, is the great want of the pulpit in our day. We sat once in the gallery of the Methodist church in John Street, New York, while Summerfield preached. Every thing about him was simple, but neat. His pale face was the picture of innocence. His devotional service was simple, but intensely earnest. It was subdued earnestness. There was no vehemence—no splendid imagery—no magnificent description—no effort to preach a great sermon. It was the simple truth he preached; but he preached with an emphasis and a solemnity which fixed attention—which raised every hearer, for a time at least, above earthly things, and made them feel the powers of the world to come.

Earnestness is the great want of the pulpit in this age. A true revival of earnestness there would introduce a new epoch into the religious history of the world. Nowhere is tameness so much out of place as there, and nowhere is it more common. Tameness in the pulpit begets inattention among the people; and the conviction obtains that the minister scarcely believes the solemn truths which he preaches with so little feeling. "Give me liberty, or give me death," was the fervent exclamation of a noble and eloquent patriot; and the minister who does not ascend the pulpit with the prayerful resolve, if it be the will of God, savingly to impress some soul, had better stay out of it.

A question not to be settled.

Purely extempore.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Extempore Preaching.—What it is.—Various Ways of preparing Sermons.—Preaching without Reading.—Advantages of Writing.—Let Men preach in the Way best for them.—Examples.—Dr. M'Neil.—Dr. Candlish.—Dr. Alexander.—Advice to a young Minister.

THE question as to the effectiveness of extempore preaching over written sermons has been frequently and ably discussed, and as there is very much, and very reasonably, to be said on both sides, it is one of those questions which can never be settled. Extreme opinions on either side betray a great lack of thoughtfulness, if not ignorance, on the whole subject.

Preaching which is purely extempore must be, in the main, very light food. In the midst of excitement, and under strongly propelling causes, a minister may surpass himself in the power and fluency of an address; but the preacher who entirely depends upon the suggestions of the moment both for text and matter must soon become a driveler, if he ever was any thing else. And nothing but this is *purely* extempore. We once knew a man who excited much attention as a preacher for a short time, who gave out that he could expound and preach on any text that any of his hearers might suggest better than any "college-larned minister" could do by study. Some queer

A queer sample.Charlatans.

texts were given him, of which he gave very queer expositions. On a certain occasion when no text was suggested, he rose, and, taking off his coat, hung it on a chair behind him. "This action," said he, "my brethren, suggests a text: 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on;,' a text on which no man that I know of has ever preached." At the close of an unmeaning harangue, a man rose and said, "I have heard you preach that sermon before, sir, when you put off your coat as now." The man put on his coat, and went to parts unknown. Such charlatans are very common in our new and distant settlements; and it is wonderful the power they gain, for a time, over some honest minds. They claim a semi-inspiration on the ground of their unstudied and profuse nonsense; nor are those wanting who admit the validity of the proof! But the more a donkey brays the more proof he gives of his nature, and the more offensive becomes his shouting. All such preachers live but a few weeks.

There are others who select their text and arrange the heads of discussion, and leave all else to the hour of preaching. They commit their heads, but write nothing. This is called extempore preaching; but it is not purely so. Such is the manner of preparation of very many excellent men; and it has its advantages. There are others who write their sermons carefully, and commit them, and then deliver them without notes. This has been the manner of very many popular preachers, and it has its advantages over almost all other ways of preaching. But it requires time that

Artistic preaching.

Study without writing.

Not reading.

might be better spent and a retentive memory, and often converts the preacher into a recitative actor. There is one such that I occasionally hear, who prepares for the pulpit as do actors for the stage, and whose preaching is so artistic as to be offensive. You can tell when the eloquent, or the pathetic, or the sublime are coming by their foreshadowings in voice, in gesture, in swell, in the movements of the body and countenance. The "simplicity and godly sincerity," if there, pass into eclipse. But when well and truly done, it secures well-arranged thought, and gives a freedom of utterance and confidence, and leaves the eye at liberty to address the audience. There are yet others who study closely their subject—who arrange all their ideas—who write out, as it were, their finest thoughts on their memories, and who, in preaching, keep as exactly to their plan as if it were all written. One such, at least, we know, who never writes, and who yet delivers in the pulpit, with almost verbal exactness, the sermon thus prepared in his study. We will not here discuss how far these preparations may be said to be extempore; they are, at best, but efforts to get rid of the labor of writing, and of the inconvenience of notes.

There are many things to be said in favor of preaching, after a careful preparation, without reading. There is, in the public mind, a prejudice in its favor. It is the best adapted to interest the common mind. We can hear a person speak longer, with interest, than we can hear him read; hence Cecil advised young

Cecil's advice.

Fluency.

Left his prayer-book.

preachers to preach only thirty minutes if they read their sermons, and not to exceed forty if they did not. And we see constantly how persons of ready utterance, with but little sense or information, sway the opinions of the masses, when men of high endowments fall into the shade, because unable to speak without previous preparation. Fluency of utterance passes with the multitude for talent, and never to be at a loss for something to say, is mistaken for the possession of exhaustless resources. Ease and fluency of address may be cultivated; and, seeing the value that is placed upon them by the public, no minister, however learned, should consider them as beneath his attention. They are means of usefulness, and, as such, should be highly valued. Small change is needful to make the journey of life pleasantly, and is not overlooked by the millionaire. There should be a readiness to meet all emergencies; and the want of it is a great defect in the character of a minister, however excellent in other respects. A minister once called upon a bereaved mother, who, after a brief conversation, asked him to pray with her. "Indeed," said he, after feeling his pockets, "I have left my prayer-book behind me. I will go and get it, and will return in a few minutes." He went for his prayer-book, and when he returned the lady declined seeing him, no doubt feeling that the man who could not pray without a book, for grace to sustain her, could not pray very acceptably with one.

So, also, there are many things to be said in favor of

Aphorism.

Benefits of writing.

Its security.

written sermons, well prepared, and well read from the pulpit. "Reading," says my Lord Verulam, "makes a full man; speaking a ready man; writing a correct man." And the perfection of a minister consists in the union of all three—fullness, readiness, correctness. And as the preacher is, or should be, a teacher of divine truth, he should be a correct teacher. Nor is this to be obtained, as a rule, without much more careful writing. Religion has to do with the mind equally with the affections: and it is only when the affections are excited and directed by the truth that their excitement continues or its progress is useful. Mere knowledge, without enlisting the affections, makes formalists; mere excitement, without knowledge, makes fanatics. Writing secures elegance of style and of diction. It secures order in arrangement, and secures against an unconnected, rambling manner of discourse. It secures against the same sermon from all texts; from a limited round of topics; and from the endless repetitions of the same figures, phrases, and anecdotes. It is a bar in the way of that temptation to indolence to which the ready and the extemporaneous are exposed. It secures against those sad failures, often witnessed, of men who preach well when in tune and excited, and when they understand their subject, but who miserably fail when out of tune and dull. I once heard a famous doctor, on principle opposed to writing sermons, preach like an angel; I heard him again, and he acted like a man frightened when swimming, who throws about his hands and

Study thyself.

Adaptation.

Theory and history.

feet in every direction to save himself from drowning.

Every man entering the ministry should study the way in which he himself can best preach, and in the way of his selection he should seek to preach in the best manner. If a man writes well his own style, he is a good writer; and if a man preaches well in his own way, he is a good preacher; and the preacher should adapt himself to the people to whom he preaches. One of Bishop Butler's sermons preached to a rural congregation would be Greek to them, and a plain, disjointed, rhapsodical exhortation to a cultivated congregation would be foolishness to them. We once heard a student of Dr. Mason's preach a sermon to a colored congregation in Anthony Street, New York, on a Sabbath evening in August, when the mercury was at 90°, and he kept them for an hour and a half under the infliction of a carefully-written and badly-read sermon, in which quotations were made from Cudworth, Dugald Stewart, Locke, Bacon. And when the services were ended, no doubt they all felt as did the mathematician who, on finishing *Paradise Lost*, threw it indignantly down, saying, "It proves nothing." One at least resolved not to be caught by him again in like circumstances!

While the theory of preaching would seem decidedly to lean against reading sermons from the pulpit, the history of preachers would seem as decidedly to lean to the reading of them. The great men of the American pulpit, with but few exceptions, were close

Able men readers.

M'Neil.

Candlish.

Alexander.

readers. The most eminent living divines are readers, whose influence is felt all over Christendom. The men who have maintained their position among intelligent people for thirty or forty years are, almost to a man, readers. Save one—and he was an eminent exception—we know not one, of all who commenced the ministry with us, who has risen to any high degree of eminence and usefulness, who did not read. We heard Dr. M'Neil, of Liverpool, preach a fine sermon, obviously studied, but without note; and shortly afterward we heard Dr. Candlish read a fine sermon in Edinburgh. They were both masterly of their kind. And this is all we can ask. Let a minister study himself, his people, his circumstances and surroundings, and then let him decide what plan of preaching to adopt. And when he adopts his plan, let him work it well. "After all," says Secker, "every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, another after that. Let each cultivate his own, and no one censure or despise the other."

Dr. Alexander wrote his sermons carefully, and then, as thoughts struck him, he would throw up his spectacles, and extemporize with great power. And thus we have heard him read and extemporize. And if "vehement simplicity" is eloquence, then was he one of the most eloquent men we ever knew. On the whole, we lean strongly to the opinion that to write sermons carefully, to deliver them well, with energy and unction, freely to use the thoughts which may suggest themselves in the delivery, is the best way of

Writing the way that wears.

preaching to the same congregation for a lifetime. Missionaries, itinerants, evangelists, or those who change their place of labor every two or three years, may succeed better on another plan ; but for settled pastors, careful writing is the way that wears.

The following lines, addressed to a young minister, have sense in them :

“ Your sermons write
From end to end ; and every thought invest
With full expression, such as best may suit
Its nature and its use ; and then pronounce
As much as your remembrance can retain.
Rather read every sentence, word for word,
Than wander in a desultory strain—
A chaos, dark, iregular and wild—
Where the same thought and language oft revolves,
And re-revolves, to tire sagacious minds.
But never to your notes be so enslaved
As to suppress some instantaneous thought,
That may like lightning dart upon the soul,
And blaze in strength and majesty divine.”

Destitution.

Its centres.

Increasing.

CHAPTER XIX.

Our Destitution.—Increasing.—Our Modes of educating our Ministry.—Waiting a Call.—How the State reaches all.—The Papal System.—Every Minister should have a Place.—The lay Talent should be employed.

IN view of our deplorable destitution of the means of grace—of our rapidly-increasing population—of the villages and cities springing up in every part of the land, from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, and thence to the shores of the Pacific, almost with the rapidity of the gourd of Jonah, it is a serious question whether the Church is doing all it can, and all it should, in order to give the Gospel to all our people. The greatest centres of our population, like New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, where are our most gorgeous churches, and our most able and eloquent ministers, are the most destitute of the means of grace, taking the population as the rule; and, save a few of the older and smaller, there is not a state of the Confederacy in which Church provisions are made for one half the people. And with all our activity to increase the number of our ministers and churches, the proportion between the destitution and the supply is daily on the increase. And even in our boasted “cities of churches,” where there is a church for every thousand people, there are multitudes who

 Multitudes not reached.

A question.

Long training.

are unreached by our means of evangelization. A worse than heathen morality is on the increase under the shadow of our most gorgeous churches.

And can the wants of our increasing moral destitution be ever overtaken in the way in which our churches are now raising up a ministry? Never. Among the Presbyterian family of churches the rule is to send a candidate to college, and thence to a theological school, for three years before he is authorized to preach. From seven to nine years are thus taken out of the centre of a young man's life in preparation for the ministry, and when prepared he is often more scholastic than scriptural, and far better fitted to interest the intelligent than to instruct the ignorant. And many of them, instead of going forth every where to preach the word, spend months watching for the removal, by death or otherwise, of some pastors of good churches, that, if Providence would so order, they may step into their place. Their fit emblem is that of a hawk upon a tall tree, watching for an opportunity to make a profitable descent. And these, often, when Providence does not meet their desires by removing the Rev. Dr. A. or the Rev. Mr. B., and by inducing their vacant congregations to call them, proclaim that there is too great a supply of ministers; that the profession is full to an overflow! These reverend idlers—these diligent waiters for "calls," are far too numerous; and the longer these wait for good settlements, the less the probability that they will secure them. But if every man educated for the min-

 The state plan.

The papal plan.

Rome.

Naples.

istry was as zealous in his work as Nettleton, and as successful as Whitefield, we could not yet overtake the growing destitutions of the country, nor answer the calls that are made upon us from foreign lands. What, then, is to be done? In the language of Job, "I will answer also my part; I also will show mine opinion."

The state, by a system of education, reaches all the children within its limits. It also, by the multiplication of civil officers, from constables and tax-gatherers up to chief-justices, and chancellors, and governors, brings its laws to bear on all its citizens, both for their protection, and for their punishment when they do wrong. All teachers and magistrates are not intelligent to the degree desirable; but poor teachers go by their text-books, and poor magistrates by the laws. Poor teachers and magistrates are better than none, and their errors may be corrected.

In papal countries the agents of the papacy are multiplied so as to come down to all the people. There are cardinals and archbishops for the princes and highest classes, and bishops and parish priests for the middle classes, and monks and nuns, without number or end, for the poorest classes and the beggars. In Paris, Lyons, Rome, Naples, the beggars are given up to the monks and nuns, while the higher classes are amused and flattered by the higher ecclesiastics. In Naples you will see the monks sitting among the Lazzaroni that crowd the wall which protects the city from the waves of the bay, teaching

The question of the age.

A field for every man.

them to pray to the saints, and narrating to them lying legends, while cardinals are going through the pantomime of the mass, in splendid vestments, in the cathedrals. And wonderful is the effect of this monkish oral instruction, as their beggar pupils are the most superstitious and ferocious papists in existence. And in Rome there is a priest, or teacher of some kind, to every thirty persons! Now what can be done thus to bring the Gospel down to all our people? This is one of the questions of the age. It may be partly answered as follows:

1. Every minister able to labor in the vineyard should be provided with a field of labor. A man may fail as a preacher who would make a fine teacher. He should be provided with a school. A man may fail as a stated preacher who would make a useful missionary. He should be so employed. If a church is not strong enough to sustain a minister, he might perform half service, and employ a part of his time in teaching. This would be far preferable to leaving the church vacant, and himself without employment. And thus have done some of the most pious and able ministers with which God has blessed the American Church. There is no employment so nearly allied to the ministry as that of teaching; and in this way many of the fathers of the Presbyterian Church have done more good than by preaching. Thus they multiplied themselves many fold by the preparation of young men and their introduction to the ministry. But in some way or other every man

 Laborers sustained.

Papists.

Methodists.

in the ministry able to work should be set to work. The harvest is great, and every minister should be a reaper. Fields should be selected, and laborers should be sent to them, and *sustained* by the Church. If this plan were carried out, there are hundreds of ministers now doing nothing, or very little, that might be very usefully employed. There is not a minister able to preach who should not be preaching weekly somewhere—in church or school-house—on the hill-side—on the wayside—on the sea-side—in season and out of season. We know not that there is any authority any where, out of the papal and Methodist churches, that can effect this. These churches find employment for all their ministers, and can supply their most feeble congregations. And their systems of supporting ministers are arranged so as to secure this end. Hence, you never see a papal priest or a Methodist minister looking for a place! A place is always supplied them, and they are supported in it. In this they are certainly worthy of imitation. And if other churches would adopt this plan, they would be adding largely to the laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. It is precisely here that the Presbyterian family of churches need most to reform their systems. They leave the churches too much to themselves; and they prefer to remain vacant unless they can secure a man to their taste. They prefer to have their taste gratified to the enjoyment of ordinances. The church courts should supply them when they do not themselves.

2. The careful education and preparation of young men for the ministry, as now pursued, we would not relax; the better they are educated, other things being equal, the better for the Church. But we would wisely and judiciously arrange a limited plan of education for young men of fine talents and piety, whose age or circumstances forbid a full course. In the case of some persons of known character and tried principles, I would require but little previous study to authorize them to preach. Paul preached in the synagogue that Jesus was the Christ a few days after his conversion; and all that received the Pentecostal baptism went out from that "upper room" into the streets of Jerusalem, speaking of Christ to all with whom they met. We have not a doubt but that Peter and the other apostles, the private members, both men and women, on whom the cloven tongues rested, testified on that occasion to Jesus and the resurrection. And if in the apostolic Church there were, besides apostles and prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues, we see not why the Church in our day should not multiply its agencies from its active, and devoted, and trustworthy members, so as to carry the Gospel down to all our people. There are many elders, Sabbath-school teachers, and private members of our churches who can tell the simple Gospel story to sinners equally well as many who have gone through a full course of training, and far better than many ordained ministers! And why should not the

Every talent to be used.

Lay preachers useful.

talent of those be employed in holding forth the word of life? If God has fitted them for usefulness, why should not the Church authorize them to use their gifts? Or is it better, like Molière's doctors, to kill by rule than to cure by innovation?

It was by the means of such men that Whitefield and Wesley wrought such wonders in England. Their "lay preachers," such as John Nelson and Howell Harris, did more for England than did scores of the clergy by whom they were scorned and persecuted. And if useful then, why not now? The fact is that none should be regarded as converted unless they are so converted as to be useful in the conversion of others. And one of the great errors of our day is to use so little the sanctified talent of the Church in extending the kingdom of the Redeemer.

What objection could there be to the sending forth as preachers of the Gospel, lawyers, physicians, or merchants, converted after twenty-one years of age, after they have given satisfactory evidence of gifts and piety? What minister has not found his most successful school of study to be amid the active duties of his parish? We need educated men who can pour forth light like the sun; and we need men who can only give light as a candle. The masses of the people are not cultivated so as to be instructed by the careful preparations of educated men; they prefer the milk of the word to its strong meat. And when the simple Gospel is preached to them by ordinary men, of good sense and sincere piety, they understand it

 The proof.

Lay talent.

Brownlow North.

better, and the more readily receive it. The proof of this statement we have in the existing state of things all over the land. The poor and uneducated, who form the masses of the people, are reached, not by our educated, but by our uneducated ministry. We would not relax the efforts of the Church to raise up an educated ministry, but we would so relax the rules as to qualifications as to permit those to be licensed to preach who have gifts for the work; and we would employ the lay talent of the Church, so as to reach, as far as possible, our entire people. There are pious laymen in all our cities, who should be occupied, on each recurring Sabbath, in their lanes and neglected avenues, teaching the poor and the wandering the way to heaven, and compelling them to come in. Until we imitate the Pentecostal Church in the holy zeal of *all* its members, the Gospel will not, can not be preached to all people. The Free Church of Scotland has taken an important step in the right direction in the case of Brownlow North.

An open question.

Revivals have always been.

CHAPTER XX.

Revivals.—Have always blessed the Church.—Best promoted by Pastors. — Revival Preachers. — Their Character and Influence. — Preaching the Truth.—Proper Training of Children.

VERY much has been written upon the subject of revivals of religion, and as to the labors of evangelists, or “revival preachers;” but yet, What are the best means to secure the true spiritual interests of the Churches? is an open question. And so, because of the different stand-points from which good men view things, and of their differing prejudices and feelings, it is likely long to remain. And as it is answered will be the course of ministers in the churches—conservative, fanatical, or changing the old measures of to-day for the new ones of to-morrow, which in their turn become old, and are laid aside. In the light of the past, a few things may be stated, which, when combined, may contribute somewhat to the settling of the question.

1. Revivals of religion have blessed the Church of God through all its history. They were frequently enjoyed under the Mosaic economy. The foundations of the Christian Church were laid during an extraordinary descent of the Spirit. The Reformation was simply a revival of religion consequent on the restoration of the Bible, its doctrines and sacraments,

 Since the Reformation.

1858.

Pastors.

to their true position in the Church. And from the days of the Reformation to the present, every branch of the Protestant Church has been blessed with times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which have been greatly instrumental in imbuing the entire Church with the spirit and power which it is now manifesting. On this point there is no need of argument or illustration, as one of these times of refreshing has just passed over our churches, and as some of the fragments of the cloud of mercy are yet lingering in our horizon. THE REVIVAL OF 1858 will form an epoch in the history of our American Zion. It was one, not of men, such as Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, or Nettleton—it was not of measures, old, or new, or questionable; it was of God. And so obviously was it of God, that even the scoffing infidel was awed into silence. We know of none called Protestants who questioned its divinity save some of the Oxford school, who can demonstrate with mathematical certainty that Heaven can bestow no spiritual blessings upon men save through their very narrow tube.

2. Revivals of religion have been best promoted by pastors. The cases of Wesley and Whitefield are only exceptions to the general rule. Baxter was a pastor; and so were Edwards, and the Tennants, and Simeon, and M'Cheyne, and Payson, and Griffin, and Richards, and Rice, and Proudfit. Livingstone, when he preached at Shotts, was the chaplain of the Countess of Wigton; and, were it proper so to do, the names

Pastoral revivals.

Revival preachers.

of living pastors might be given to any amount, under whose labors the most extensive revivals of the last half century have occurred. And why should it not be so? The farmer is the best cultivator of his own fields; and if he breaks up and prepares the fallow ground, and sows it with good seed, he may expect a corresponding crop in due time. The shepherd knows best the wants of his own flock. The most stable, strong, and efficient churches of this land, and of every other land, are those which have grown up under the labors of successive able and devoted pastors, and who looked from the fields of grace, as from those of nature, for an annual increase. We know a church whose history for now nearly two hundred years is interspersed with delightful narratives of blessed revivals; and, as far as our knowledge extends, it has never sought the aid of revival preachers or traveling evangelists.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to say a word which might revive a controversy, now almost forgotten, in reference to evangelists and "revival preachers." In many places, a few years since, these were in the ascendant; and to oppose them, or to speak lightly of their measures, when they seemed to be doing so much good, was regarded by many as opposing the Holy Ghost. Many a good minister was unsettled because they did not admit them; and many more, because they did. And what has become of these "revival preachers?" An accurate history of the most conspicuous of them would have its warning lessons for the future. One

 Their history.

 Their trade.

of them, at least, was sent to state prison. Another was deposed from the ministry, and, under an *alias*, went to the West, where he died. Another was deposed from the Church, and died in a poor-house. And where there was piety at bottom, which prevented shipwreck of faith, they became imperious, defamers of their brethren, and, with scarcely an exception, have swerved from the faith, and become the teachers of error. They have unsettled pastors, divided churches, degraded, oftentimes, the pulpit by their vulgar phrases and illustrations, sown broadcast the seeds of error, and have given rise to a religion of excitement which is to the steady influence of Christian principle as is the scarlet flush of fever to the uniform glow of health. It is to be hoped that these wandering stars have set to rise no more!

And the results have been the logical sequences of the men and their measures. Some of them devoted their winters to getting up revivals, and the other seasons of the year to some worldly pursuit. And they made more money in the winter than through the remainder of the year. One was an evangelist through the winter, and spent the remainder of his time in cultivating a farm; another in selling a receipt for making a compost. The greater the excitement they could create, the greater the demand for their services; and it was said of one that he would labor for so much a head for all he would convert! One was offered by a small church seventy-five dollars for a month's service. He replied that he could not convert sinners at

Ruinous revivals.

Preaching the truth.

so cheap a rate as that. One came into a little church, and, putting the pastor aside, said he could plow, sow, and reap that field in three weeks. He did so, and added nearly one hundred to its communicants. It has never recovered from the blow. And an able pastor of a large congregation, in which there was a large revival under one of these persons, said that "another such operation would ruin them beyond recovery." Men who exhaust their sensation sermons, and anecdotes, and measures, and metaphors, in two or three weeks, and collect persons by scores into the Church, and pass on, leave the seeds of permanent difficulties behind them. Devoted pastors are the best promoters of true revivals of religion; and, when exhausted by labor, it is far better for them to call in the aid of their surrounding brethren than to send to Ekron for "professional" help. If men desire to be evangelists, and feel that they have a call in that line, let them go where they are needed.

3. Spiritual religion is best promoted by the preaching of the truth. It was by the preaching of the truth that the apostles uprooted the deep prejudices of the Jews, and dispersed the assembled deities of Olympus, and gave the mythologies of Greece and Rome to the winds of heaven. So it was by the preaching of the truth that the Reformers turned Europe upside down, and unbound the angel which ever since has been flying through the midst of heaven to give the Gospel to every creature. And in whatever country or community the Church has left its first love, and fallen

The pastors most blessed.

A contrast.

into a formal state, it has been revived by the preaching of the truth. It was so in England, in the days of Whitefield—in Scotland in the days of Chalmers—in America in the days of Edwards. And we find the same true as to communities. The towns in Britain and America noted for churches alive to their responsibilities, and possessing the spirit of Christ, are those that have been favored with a succession of ministers who faithfully preached the distinguishing truths of the Gospel. And it may be laid down as a general rule that the pastors most blessed in their labors in the American churches were those most clear and discriminating in their presentation of truth, and most strict in their adherence to the order of the Gospel. And so it is now. The flashy Maffits and vulgar rhapsodists are but for a day; but such men as M'Cheyne and Nevin, like the rivers quietly rising from perennial springs, flow on forever. The Rev. Mr. — has preached fifty years to the same people; not with high eloquence or profound learning, but with great simplicity, and truthfulness, and unction. Large additions have been made to his church; many ministers have been raised up in it; and it is now flourishing, active, useful, and greatly united, loving its faithful shepherd as a father. The Rev. Mr. — became pastor of a not far-distant church in the same state. He commenced on a high-pressure system, and on one occasion received one hundred communicants. He committed indiscretions—was summoned before the courts—was dismissed in disgrace; and the church so

Proper training of children.

The old ways.

wonderfully revived was rent to pieces. The preaching of the truth, simply, affectionately, earnestly, is the best means of the spiritual improvement of a people. "He that goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed, will return again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him."

4. The proper training of children is another efficient means of promoting the spiritual interests of the Church. The old-fashioned way of doing this among the Presbyterian family of churches was to send them to a school where the reading of the Bible and the learning of the Shorter Catechism were things of course; to collect them morning and evening around the family altar; to take them to church on the Sabbath; on Sunday evening to have them recite a part of the Catechism; to talk over the sermons preached through the day; to read, and sing, and pray together. Religion was the rule and the law of the household. It was from the bosoms of such families as these that the Henrys, the Watts, the Dwights, the Leightons—most of the living ministry of the Church—most of the men of probity and principle in business, in politics, in all the professions, have come forth. Is it too much to say that home-training is not now what it once was? Has it not been surrendered for other and less efficient ways of bringing up our children for God? Do Sabbath-schools and occasional revivals do for our children, and for the Church, what faithful training and faithful pastoral catechising once did? Sabbath-schools are a blessing to the Church and to

An example.

The churches most flourishing.

the world. They are a noble development of Church life. But, if Christians trained their children as did the Jews of old, there would be less need for them.

I know a church from which a revival narrative never went forth; into which a revival preacher was never permitted to enter, and for years together, under the faithful ministrations of a plain man, and the faithful home-training of children by parents, there was an average addition of one hundred to its communion. And the churches all over this land now the most prosperous, united, and sound in the faith of the Gospel, are those which have clung to the good old ways of the fathers; in which faithful men have preached the simple truth, and pious parents have brought up their children to fear God and to keep his commandments. This has been God's plan from the beginning; it should never be surrendered.

CHAPTER XXI.

Change as to the Permanency of the pastoral Relation.—Long Pastorates.—The Williams Family.—Many ex-Pastors.—Causes.—The Example of the Methodist Church.—Reformatory Measures.—Deacon Smith.—The Ministry itself.—Examples.—The fewer Changes the better for Ministers and Churches.

WITHIN the last thirty years a great change has passed over the Church as to the permanency of the pastoral relation. Like that of marriage, it used to be regarded as a relation for life. It was constituted with great and prayerful deliberation. In New England "a settlement" was given by the parish to the pastor something like the marriage dowry given by parents to a daughter on her wedding, and parties took each other for better, for worse, until death did them separate. We learn from the great work of Dr. Sprague—"Annals of the American Pulpit"—that Dr. Perkins preached in West Hartford for sixty-six years; Dr. Lyman, in Hatfield, fifty-six years; Dr. Strong, in Hartford, forty-three years; Dr. Spring, in Newburyport, forty-two years; Dr. Chapin, in Wethersfield, sixty years; Dr. Codman, in Dorchester, thirty-nine years; Jonathan Dickinson, in Elizabethtown, forty years; Tennent, in Freehold, forty-four years; Dr. Buel, in East Hampton, fifty-two years; Dr. Johnson, in Newburgh, forty-seven years; and Jacob

Norwich church.

The Williams family.

Green, at Hanover, forty-four years. Dr. Benjamin Lørd was pastor at Norwich sixty-seven years. A few years previous to his death, Dr. Joseph Strong became his colleague, and was pastor of the church for fifty-six years; and thus, for one hundred and seventeen years, the church of Norwich had but two ministers, and was not one day without a pastor!!

The following statement is probably without a parallel in the whole history of the Church: The Rev. William Williams was for fifty-six years pastor in Hatfield; his son, Solomon, was fifty-four years pastor in Lebanon; Eliphalet, the son of Solomon, was for more than fifty years pastor in East Hartford; and Solomon, the son of Eliphalet, preached in Northampton for upward of fifty years! Here are father, son, grandson, and great-grandson, each pastor for upward of fifty years of their respective churches!

But what a change has passed over the churches in these respects! True, the cases are many of the long and happy continuance of the pastoral relation. There is at least one church in the land, and among the oldest, which never dismissed a pastor, and whose present minister, with eye undimmed and natural force unabated, must be treading hard upon the fiftieth year of his ministry over it. May that apostolic chain never be broken! I look around me, and yet see many laboring with great success in churches where they commenced their labors fifty, forty, thirty years ago! Within the last year the papers tell us of very many "quarter century sermons" preached

Rare cases.

Example of the Methodist church.

in Presbyterian, Congregational, Episcopal, and other churches, which in some cases have been celebrated as silver weddings. But how rare are such cases! Of the churches that spontaneously present themselves as illustrations, some of them have had five, some four, many three, and very many two pastors in twenty years. I have known one church with eight ex-pastors; I know of many now with five, four, and three; and those of two are beyond computation. There is one church of a few years of age which has had more pastors already than another near it has had in a century! In some parts of the country a man is regarded as a wonder who has been in the same church twenty years; and, while a permanent pastorate is the law of the Presbyterian Church, its ministry is nearly as changeable as is that of the Methodist, whose fundamental law requires a change every two years. But, while we hope this thing is working its own cure, it may be well to inquire as to the causes which have produced this change as to the permanency of the pastoral relation.

1. There can be no doubt but that the rule of the Methodist Church, and the success which has resulted from it, has contributed to the making of it. An uneducated ministry needs often to change. The pond is small, and it must soon run dry. People will endure set praying a long time, but they will not long endure set preaching. Hence the need of change. But, as the character of the preaching among our Methodist brethren is rising, the demand for a change

Reformatory measures.

Lecturers.

in the tenure of the ministry is becoming emphatic. They are beginning to see the need of pastoral influence in their churches, and they will have it. They will have a permanent pastorate. The question about it is simply one of time. It will be worth more to them than all the excitement of a new pastorate every two years, and all their camp-meetings put together.

2. Another cause we find in the reformatory men and measures of the last thirty years. Perhaps we have said enough as to "evangelists" and "revival preachers." If pastors opposed them, they often induced the people to oppose the pastor, and "to drive him away." If pastors admitted them, their sensation preaching gave the people a distaste for the sincere milk of the word; and when there was a return to it, it was loathed as light food. It lacked the pepper, black and red, the mustard, the high spices, which made the other so palatable; and because the pastor could not, or would not supply these, he must go! And these are like rum—the more they are used the more they are required, until the demand exceeds the supply.

And so as to abolition lecturers and preachers. If a minister was not an abolitionist, he was worse than a slaveholder. He was a dumb dog—a hireling; and unless he could keep pace with the most fanatical, he was behind the spirit of the age. Unless he could say "Amen" to the ravings of him who said "that if he could believe that the Bible tolerated slavery, he

A restless spirit.

Too many Deacon Smiths.

would deny its inspiration, and cast it into the fire," he was denounced as a Pharisee. Outside the Church all this would be comparatively harmless; but inside it, and among its ministry and membership, it could only work ruin. It was all the same as to the minister, whichever side he took. If he sided with fiery reformers, that would unsettle him; if not, that would unsettle him. Either way, he was unsettled. And thus the churches became pervaded with a restless spirit, which tended greatly to render true pastors uncomfortable. "Are you going to accept our call?" said a shrewd man of the world to a young minister who was just about to be ordained over the congregation of which he was a member. "I am," was the modest reply. "Then," said he, "be ordained with one foot in the stirrup; for Deacon Smith will be down on you unless you can go new measures and abolition up to boiling heat. He has driven away two ministers in two years, and you can not stand the deacon." He was ordained; and he had to take the saddle and ride away, because of Deacon Smith, in less than a year. There are too many Deacon Smiths—men of big feelings and little judgment—who are ever running after the *lo* here and the *low* there, and who are to God's ministers what the thorn in the flesh was to Paul the aged. They are great nuisances.

3. Another cause we find in the ministry itself. The idea of permanence does not sufficiently enter into the consideration of accepting a pastoral charge. A settlement is needed, and the one that first offers is

Ministers themselves.Reasons for change.

accepted with the hope of securing a better ere long. I know of many pastors, with a field wide enough to occupy all their talents, whose minds are in this state. And when a church even of very moderate ability becomes vacant, it is wonderful how many inquiries are made in referencé to it by pastors who are very comfortably and usefully settled! And it is often sad to hear the reasons they assign for seeking a change. One desires a larger field, when he does not half cultivate the one he has. The best way of enlarging a congregation is to take good care of a small one. Another desires a more intelligent people, without seeking to make his flock so. Another feels that he is not useful, and thinks that he might be more so in a new field. One says, my wife is not satisfied; another, I want better advantages for my children; another, I want to be nearer my friends; another, there are a few uneasy people in my parish; another, I can use my old preparations in a new field! A true minister will be useful any where; he will endure privations and oppositions as a good soldier; discomforts are a condition of his being; and his character is formed and made known by the manner in which he bears his crosses. It is sufficient for the servant that he be as his master.

The proverb is old and homely, but true, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." Dr. A. was the useful pastor of a fine congregation. He was called to a distant city, and went. He was called again, and went. And he became unsettled in his feelings, and fond of

A lesson.The fewer changes the better.

change. He was able, and eloquent, and truly pious. He changed six or more times; and before he died he was without charge for years: the churches could not depend upon him. And the warning lesson of his life to his surviving brethren is to beware of changing the pastoral relation without an all-sufficient cause.

Dr. B. was a man of good sense, of excellent piety, of fair abilities, of industrious habits as pastor and student; he resisted many inducements to change. He began and ended his ministry in the parish where Dr. A. could not think of spending a month. And he died leaving a name behind him whose fragrance is as ointment poured forth, and which will be ever embalmed in the history of the Church.

The history of ministers and churches, if it proves any thing, clearly demonstrates that, other things being equal, the fewer the changes made by pastors the better for them, and for all the interests with which they are connected; and the less frequent the change of pastors, the better for the churches. The ablest pastors and preachers of this country have been those who have never changed their pastoral relation, or but once. And of the churches of this land which have a history, the very strongest and most efficient are those which have had the fewest pastors. I regard with admiration verging upon worship the pastors who have sustained themselves among the same people for half a century of years in succession! They are to me among their brethren as are old cedars of

Venerable patriarchs.

The snow-ball.

Lebanon, the venerable patriarchs of a hundred generations, to the smaller trees growing up around them! In the ministry, no less than in the world of nature, is permanence necessary to growth. It is only the snow-ball that increases by rolling; and, however large it may grow, it disappears before the first breath of Spring.

Prayer.

A mistake.

Prayer in the synagogue.

CHAPTER XXII.

Prayer, its Importance.—Prayer in the Synagogue: in the early Church.—How Prayers became long and formal.—No Forms of Prayer in the early Church.—Liturgies, their Rise.—The Book of Common Prayer.—Forms of Prayer not wrong.—Long Prayers.—Object of Prayer.—Manner of Prayer.—Dr. Green.—Dr. Milledoler.—The Gift of Prayer.

THE *proper performance of public prayer* is a subject that must not be omitted in a series of essays on “preachers and preaching.” Many excellent preachers are defective in the gift of prayer; and many are poor preachers, who in prayer can converse with God as with a friend. Might not these be equally good in preaching and in praying, if they cultivated equally the intellectual and the devotional? It is a great mistake in a minister to cultivate either to the neglect of the other. Preaching is in vain, as to the salvation of men, without the Spirit; and the Spirit is promised in answer to prayer. Hence the importance of a right understanding of the nature of prayer, in order to its right performance. And a brief statement as to the history of *public prayer* is necessary, in order to give emphasis to what we have to say on the subject.

Prayer was an important part of synagogue worship among the Jews. At first they were quite brief; but they were increased from time to time, until they became protracted, repetitious, and burdensome. In

Prayer in the early Church.

Set forms.

the time of the Savior they became an ostentatious and hypocritical formality, which, with withering words, he reproved.

In the early Church the prayers were so brief and so informal as scarcely to be noticed in the accounts transmitted to us of public worship. The season of prayer was *after* sermon. Standing and kneeling in prayer were both practiced, but standing was the more common mode. Praying with the face to the east was a custom that crept in from the heathen, who worshiped the rising sun.

As formality supplanted spirituality in the Jewish Church, their prayers became long and formal, and they hoped to be heard for their much speaking. So it was in the Christian Church. Nothing can exceed the simplicity with which the Savior taught his disciples to pray. But, as the simplicity of the Gospel passed away, forms were substituted for the power. Clerical ambition, aiming at the debasement of the people, discouraged the reading of the Scriptures in private, and caused the reading of them in public to cease. Preaching was finally made to give way to the Mass, and thus for many dreary centuries the grand duty of preaching the Gospel was given up. And it is yet thus given up in the Latin and Greek Churches, save where priests are compelled to a different course by the influence of Protestantism.

There is no evidence of set forms of prayer in the primitive days of the Jewish Church; nor can it be alleged, with any plausibility, that set forms were

 The Lord's Prayer.

Liturgies.

Common prayer.

sanctioned by Christ or his apostles. If the Lord's Prayer was designed as a set form, why is it so variant in Luke from what it is in Matthew? Why do we use any other form? Why did not the Savior always use it? Why is it the apostles never used it? Why are we commanded to pray with all prayer? If forms were used by the apostles, why is it that not a fragment of them remains?

The truth in the case is, that liturgies were unknown in the Church for three hundred years. During the Arian and Pelagian controversies it was deemed necessary to confine prayers to a form, which each minister might write for himself; soon the forms used were required to be submitted to orthodox brethren; soon they were required to be approved by a synod. Different synods approved different forms; and when superstition supplanted Christianity in the ninth century, as Bishop Burnet says, "there were so many missals, breviaries, rituals, pontificals, graduals, antiphonals, psalteries, and a great many more, that the understanding how to officiate became a hard piece of a trade."

When the Reformation occurred in England these missals and breviaries existed in great numbers in every diocese. The clergy were too ignorant to pray or preach in a becoming manner. "The Book of Common Prayer" was compiled from the different missals so that they might pray to edification; and the "Homilies" were prepared to be read by the clergy who could not write a sermon themselves. At

History of the Prayer-book.

Things indifferent.

first the Prayer-book contained many popish errors and superstitions; but these were omitted from time to time, until it took its present shape in 1660, since which time it has remained without change in England. This statement is made simply as a matter of history, and by no means in a spirit of controversy.

But, while forms of prayer are without divine sanction—have come into the Church with a spirit of declension, and are based simply on ecclesiastical law, we are not, therefore, to conclude that it is wrong to use them. Some can not preach without notes, while to others they would be a great impediment. Some need spectacles to read, others do not. There are things on which God has not legislated—which are indifferent in themselves, and which persons may do in any of many ways, to suit their weakness, or convenience, or taste. The manner of prayer is one of these; and while we prefer extempore to written forms of prayer, yet are we far from condemning forms in public or in private, by those who feel the need of them. The rule holds as good here as to other things: “Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind.” The great prerequisite to render prayer acceptable is to offer it from a pure heart, and fervently. To forbid forms to those who need them; to render them imperative upon those who do not need them, are equally wrong. But of all prayer, the use of forms is the least devotional and interesting, unless offered with a truly devout spirit. And when such a spirit is possessed, the form as a rule is needless.

Public prayer.

Long prayers.

Object of prayer.

By those who reject forms there is not sufficient attention paid to the character of public prayer. There is but too little said on this matter in our Theological Seminaries, and but too little attention paid to it by the great majority of ministers. And yet they pray many times where they preach once, and give hours to sermons, where, it may be, they give minutes to the matter of prayer.

Some pray very long in public. While ten minutes are far better than twenty, yet have we frequently heard prayer half an hour long, and in a few cases an hour! Many ministers need to be told that they are not heard "for their much speaking." What is called "the long prayer" very often interferes with the devotion of a congregation instead of promoting it. Newton says it is much better for a people to wish that the prayer had been longer than to spend half the time in wishing it were over. How often have we been prayed into a good frame, and then prayed out of it!

And this is owing to the fact that the object of prayer is forgotten. It is not to teach theology, nor to recite it; it is not to lay before God our supplications for, or on behalf of *all* things; it is not to tell God all about his attributes and works; it is "to offer up our desires to God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confessions for our sins and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." Long prayers and sermons were a part of our inheritance from the churches of Great Britain; and the pastor

Rev. Dr. —.

Manner of prayer.

Dr. Green.

who can not succeed in reducing the Sabbath services to, at most, an hour and a half, will succeed in reducing his congregation. The Rev. Dr. — is a man of great excellence of character. His prayers are long, and his sermons longer. He regards it as a sign of the degeneracy of the age that his congregation does not relish them; and he feels himself as much bound to continue his long-metre services as he does to preach the doctrine of justification by faith. If he lives long enough, his congregation will be as large as was that of Dean Swift when he thus commenced the service: "Dearly beloved Roger."

In preaching, the minister speaks for God to men; in praying, he speaks for men to God. Hence, in the one case as in the other, he should order his thoughts aright. He should study simplicity and directness; he should avoid circumlocution, expletives, and repetitions. Preaching in prayer—figures, unless drawn from Scripture—rhetoric, are utterly out of place. It was far more than a doubtful compliment paid by a secular paper to a minister that "he made the most eloquent prayer ever offered to a Boston audience." Undue familiarity—quoting poetry—any, the most distant approach to vulgarity, should be most carefully avoided. The words, manner, matter, tones of voice, attitude, should be in keeping with the service we are rendering to God. One of the most appropriate men in prayer we ever heard was the late Dr. Green. Short, terse, always to the point, putting the right word in the right place, never wandering from the ob-

Dr. Milledoler.The gift of prayer.

ject to be presented, and with attitude, voice, aspect, in strict keeping with the service, he impressed all with the idea that he was indeed a man of God. For many years, like Dr. Watts and other eminent ministers, he wrote a prayer to follow every sermon he wrote. And one of the most fervent in prayer we ever heard was the late Dr. Milledoler. None could hear him pray without having his devotional feelings all excited. And if ministers attended more to the matter and character of prayer, they would pray with far more freedom and unction, and with far greater benefit to their people. It is only to be regretted that so little attention is paid to this matter in our Theological Schools!

After all, as Newton well says, "it is impossible to learn to pray by rule so as to pray acceptably." The gift of prayer is acquired in private communings with God. As you can distinguish a child from a stranger by the way they enter the parlor, so can you distinguish the mere formalist from the child of God by the manner of their prayer. "He that is much in prayer," says Leighton, "shall grow rich in grace. He shall thrive and increase most that is busiest in this, which is our very traffic with heaven, and fetches the most precious commodities. He that sets oftenest out these ships of desire, that makes the most voyages to that land of spice and pearls, shall be sure to improve his stock most, and to have most of heaven upon earth."

Prayer in private is the duty of all men. Prayer

Prayer the duty of all.

Bad signs.

in the family is the duty of all heads of families. Public prayer, in which the minister leads the people in the worship of the sanctuary, is a most important part of our Sabbath services. It should be simple, scriptural, fervent, and short. One of its leading objects should be to seek preparation for the hearing of the Word preached. It should not interfere with the sermon, but prepare for it. It is popery that puts the pulpit in a corner, while it makes the altar prominent. It is popery that multiplies prayers, while it sets aside preaching. And in the proportion that the altar is embellished—that prayers at canonical hours are multiplied—that the pulpit is put aside, are the clouds of error and the curtains of evening falling around the Church.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Church a "Flock."—Children the "Lambs."—Church visible and spiritual.—The Covenant includes Children.—General Care for Children.—Catiline.—Voltaire.—The Reformers.—Knox.—What the Pastor should do.—Baxter.—Doddridge.—Richmond.—Chalmers.—Dr. Green.—The successful Minister.

How frequently and beautifully is the Church of God represented in the Scriptures by figures drawn from pastoral life, so common in the East. The Church itself is a "flock." The children of the Church are the "lambs" of the flock. Pastors are shepherds. Christ is the "Chief Shepherd." And the chief care of a good shepherd is for the lambs. He exercises care and vigilance over the entire flock, as they are all prone to stray; but as the lambs are feeble, and soon grow weary, and need to be often fed and protected, he gathers the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom. And the connection of lambs with the flock would seem to be a scriptural illustration of the true relation of children to the visible Church. And the true minister will attend to the youth of his charge, as the good shepherd attends to the lambs of the flock.

The visible Church is composed of true believers and their children; the spiritual, of all who are truly born again, whether in heaven or in earth. The cov-

 The covenant.

Analogies.

 A universal impression.

enant formed with Abraham was inclusive of his children, and the children were a component part of the Jewish Church, and were introduced into it by the rite of circumcision. The rite has been changed; but there is not an intimation that any change has been made as to the subjects of the covenant; that the children of believers are to be excluded from that visible Church. The children of the state belong to the state, and are cared for by its magistracy and laws. The lambs of the flock belong to the flock, and are cared for by the shepherd. Who ever saw a flock without lambs? So the children of the Church belong to the Church, and should be cared for by the Church. It was prophesied of Christ on his advent that he would gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom. When on earth he showed great regard for little children. He took them in his arms and blessed them. His command to Peter was "Feed my lambs." So that every thing in the analogies of nature, and in the history of the Church of God, and in the stipulations of the covenant of grace, would lead pastors to ceaseless care over the young of their charge.

There is obviously on the mind of the race a universal impression as to the future accountability in some world outside of our own, and there is a corresponding desire to bring up children with a view of that accountability. The Hindoo mother has trained her child to worship her gods before it can walk alone. The Turkish child has learned that there is but one

Turkish and papal children.

A pastor's concern.

God, and that Mohammed is his prophet, in its mother's arms; and, whatever is omitted, it is taught to read the Koran, and to pray to Allah at canonical hours. And so the lazzaroni mother of Naples, and the beggar mother of Rome, may be seen at early morn, in their rags, placing their children before pictures and statues, and thus early imbuing their minds with a superstition which, without enlightening or reforming them, ever holds them in its iron grasp. And, with all our boasted intelligence—with all our Sabbath-school efforts, and evangelical ministrations, these vicious, erring, and abandoned parents more strongly attach their children to their ancestral mythology than do enlightened Christian parents their children to the religion of the Gospel! While, as to this, much may be attributed to the depravity which rejects the true and receives the false, much more may be credited to the fact that they begin with infancy, and make their superstitions and ceremonies a part of the warp and woof of the minds and affections of their children. And why should the most assiduous teachers of error, or the most untiring propagators of fanaticism be permitted to exceed in zeal the followers of Christ in bringing up their children in the fear and nurture of the Lord?

Seeing all around him the influence of early training, and how rapidly children rush forward to maturity, and remembering the extent of his commission, the good pastor will devote much of his time to the training of the young. When Catiline would over-

Beginning with youth.

Pastoral attention.

throw the liberties of Rome, he began with the young. When Voltaire would eradicate religion from France, he began with the schools and with the young. When the Reformers would place a true Christianity on an enduring basis, they prepared formularies of faith to be taught to the young. When John Knox would make Scotland a model Protestant country, he planted a school-house by the side of every kirk, and would have every child of the nation taught its duty to God with the letters of the alphabet. Every permanent reformation must commence with the young; and our religion and civilization must be continued by the proper training of the young. And, as every succeeding generation is formed by the preceding one, every minister should seek a peculiar baptism for the youth of his charge. Parents and Sabbath-schools may do very much for the young, but they can not do the peculiar work of a minister. He places upon them the seal of the covenant; he introduces them within the circle of the covenant. He should interest himself in all that pertains to their secular and religious education. To nothing should he be indifferent that enters into the formation of their character. By kindness and gentleness he should seek to attach them to himself, and in order that he may the sooner and the more strongly attach them to Christ. Nor is there a more certain way of removing the prejudices of irreligious parents against religion, or of softening their asperities, than by proper attention to their children. Multitudes of such parents are yearly brought

Baxter.

Doddridge.

Legh Richmond.

to the house of God, and into the Church of God, by the efforts of pastors and Sabbath-school teachers for the spiritual welfare of their children.

All very successful pastors have devoted much of their time to the training of the young. Thus did Baxter, whose success among the young was very great, and who records that their "friends, fathers, and grandfathers fell into a liking of piety by the great change wrought in them." Thus did Doddridge, whose constant prayer was that he might be enabled to speak to children so as savingly to impress them. "This," he says, "is perhaps the most delightful of all the minister's labors. He has, indeed, ignorance to contend with; but ignorance is more easily overcome than that worse knowledge of 'the counsels of the ungodly' which commonly belongs to more advanced years." All reason, all experience, all Scripture concur in this: '*In the morning sow thy seed.*' Thus did the lovely Legh Richmond; he held a third service on Sabbath for the young; and his biographer says "that no part of his labors were followed with more striking effects. It is remarkable that both at Turvey and at Brading the first memorials of his usefulness occurred in the instance of children." Thus also did Chalmers. He worked his "parochial system" mainly in reference to the children. He aimed to provide the way and the means of education for every child in his parish. One of his teachers thus speaks of him; "His visits to my school were almost daily, and of the most friendly description. In all

Chalmers.

Dr. Green.

His method.

states of weather, and in every frame of mind, he was there; depositing himself in the usual chair, his countenance relaxing into its wonted smile as he recognized the children of the working classes. Again and again, looking round upon them from his seat, his eye beaming with peculiar tenderness, he has exclaimed, 'I can not tell you how my heart warms to these barefooted children.'

But few pastors have equaled the late Dr. Green in his attention to the youth of his charge during his ministry in Philadelphia. In his preface to his admirable "Lectures on the Shorter Catechism," he says: "While memory remains, the interesting scenes will never be obliterated from my mind in which I had before me the children of the congregation, from the age of three or four years to that of ten or twelve. They were counseled, and admonished, and prayed with in language the most simple and tender that could be devised; and never did I find the difficulty so great in addressing any other audience, or in leading any other devotions, as in performing these duties for the lambs of my flock. They were all taught some little forms of devotion suited to their several ages. Some of the youngest learned the Mother's Catechism, but eventually they all committed to memory that on which these lectures are founded." And those who had committed the entire Catechism were formed into a Bible-class which met weekly in his study. The Church has had more eloquent preachers, but it has had but few more instructive, laborious, or successful pastors than Dr. Green. When upward of eighty

Living ministers.

An illustration.

Baxter.

years of age, he was yet weekly engaged in preparing the teachers of Sabbath-schools for their duties on the Sabbath; and for clear, simple expositions of the Scriptures, without any pedantry of learning, he had no superior.

And the living pastors most successful in their ministry are those who labor most for the training of the youth of the flock in the way in which they should go. The aged are but few in any congregation; those in midlife are more numerous; but the youth are the most numerous of any class. And if the most numerous and most hopeful, why should they not receive most pastoral attention? The Rev. — is a most pleasant, social, and ready man. His piety is deep and joyous. He is a good, but not profound preacher. He knows every child in his parish; he calls them by name in the street; he is constant in his efforts to interest them; he is loved by them all. Many of them become hopefully pious from year to year. His congregation is crowded, and by many who simply bear with him as a preacher, while they almost worship him because of his blessed influence over their children. And in this day, when the great strife seems to be as to who shall educate the rising race, the minister is hardly fitted to take the pastoral care of a congregation who resolves not, as did Baxter, "I will often make it my humble prayer that God would teach me to speak to children in such a manner as may make early impressions of religion upon their hearts."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Who shall educate the Children?—Duty of the Church.—Sabbath-schools. — Shorter Catechism. — Catechetical Instruction. — Its good Effects.—The Men of the Church.—Early Admission to the Lord's Supper.—Want of Faith.—The Jewish Custom.—Early Christian Custom. — The right Rule. — Nonconformists. — Communion in Scotland.—Instances of early Piety.—Cases of youthful Conversions, and of their joyful Death-beds.

WE have something more to say concerning the duties of ministers as to the young—the lambs of the flock.

As already intimated, the great strife of our day between sects and parties is as to who shall educate the children. If the state does it, it must ignore all sects, and only admit that on which they all agree. The papist objects to the Bible, and insists upon its expulsion from the state schools. And so does the infidel. And, save where there is an established religion, it seems impossible to introduce into our public schools any religious instruction above the mere elements and first principles. Hence, if the youth of the nation are left to be educated in our state schools, they must grow up in ignorance of the religion of the Gospel. There is no help for it.

And what the state is seeking to do as to secular education, the Church should seek to do as to religious. Parents should be more diligent in the home-

Sabbath-schools.

Definiteness.

Its need.

training of their children. Sabbath-schools should be so conducted as to supply the great defect in the common schools. The great doctrines of our Christianity should be taught in them with an emphasis and directness which would preclude mistake. "Union Sunday-schools," which, like the "Family Testament of the American Tract Society," come as near teaching nothing definite as possible, are only to be endured because of a present necessity. Instruction is weak in its influence in the proportion it is general; it is abiding in the proportion it is definite. As a definite, truthful, logical formulary, the "Shorter Catechism" is without a rival; and we would have it driven into the minds of all our youth like a nail in a sure place. The child taught that "the chief end of man" is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, and that is trained accordingly, will grow up a man. And all we would ask of those branches of the Church which reject the Shorter Catechism on doctrinal or sacramental grounds, is to form one for themselves equally scriptural, logical, and definite. And then the pastor in each parish, like Dr. Chalmers in Glasgow, like Dr. Green in Philadelphia, should seek, by his own efforts, and as far as possible, by his own hands, to mete out to the lambs the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby. A system of youthful training like this, faithfully carried out by all the churches of this land, in two generations, by the blessing of God, would make it the dwelling-place of righteousness.

Too much emphasis can not be laid upon the *cat-*

Catechetical instruction.

The Creed.

The best time.

echetical instruction of the young. Superficial objections have been made to this by errorists and latitudinarians, but they are sophistical and empty. It existed, and yet exists, among the Jews. In the primitive Church there was an order of men called Catechists, to instruct the candidates for Church communion in the great principles of religion. It was for the use of these the "Creed" was formed, called the "Apostles' Creed," though not formed by them. Papal and Protestant churches have their creeds and forms of doctrine, which are good as far as they are scriptural, and which are useful in defining the opinions held by the churches which adopt them.

The time to fill the mind with truth is when it is unoccupied with error, and not when you have first to expel the error in order to make room for the truth. Newton's aphorism was, "If we fill the bushel with wheat there will be no room for the chaff." And if we would have a decidedly strong religious character we must begin with childhood. Individuals are very often converted amid the activities of life whose early religious training was neglected; but there is always a something wanting in them. The truth does not dwell in them richly. They are often more impulsive than regular; more propelled by excitement than by principle; they fail in that judgment according to truth which gives solidity to character, and which makes persons reliable. They but rarely grow up to be pillars in the Church. They often wander from church to church—from one denomination to another.

Flying artillery.

The men of the Church.

Some of these we have known who belonged to four different denominations, and who have gone the round of the churches. Some we now know who in a few years have been in three churches and as many different denominations. They are not rooted and grounded in the truth; and their only fit emblem is the weather-cock, which veers with every wind; or that peculiar sea-weed often seen growing under water on the shore of the ocean, whose only use seems to be to indicate the direction of the tide. These form "the flying artillery" of the Church militant, save that they have no cannon, no ammunition, and always fly from the enemy.

The men of the Church, as a rule, have been those who, like Timothy, have known the Scriptures from their youth. And so they are at the present day. Our ministers, and missionaries, and elders, and active church members are those who were taught to pray in their lisping infancy, and who, in the way of question and answer, have been taught the truth from their youth up. Persons thus instructed, when converted, are usually consistent and reliable. They are not usually wandering stars in the Church. They are neither bigots, formalists, nor fanatics. They know the difference between Christianity and Churchianity; and, while they love all who love Christ, their principles are to them the rule and the law of their life. Perhaps catechising as a means of grace is carried out more fully among the Presbyterians of Scotland and Ireland, than among any other people; and

Presbyterians.

Admission to the Church.

Differing views.

we know of no people more firm in their adherence to their principles, more willing to make sacrifice to maintain them, or more truly catholic toward other evangelical Christians. As a means of grace, we assign a very high place to the pastoral instruction of the young by catechising.

A practical question often arises, which not unfrequently embarrasses pastors and church sessions, as to the age at which young persons should be admitted to the Lord's Supper. This question will be variously answered according to the views which are embraced as to the Lord's Supper. Those who believe it to be a saving ordinance would administer it to baptized children. Those who believe it to be a converting ordinance would administer it to moral people of any age after they are able to understand its meaning; while those who regard it as only designed for the converted are often in great uncertainty as to young persons. Many are faithless as to youthful conversions; many think that young persons, after their hopeful conversion, should be debarred from the Lord's table for months, if not years, in order to prove their conversion genuine. And there are not a few pastors who deem the accession of youth to the communion of the Church of much less importance than those in mid-life and in declining years. And yet carefully prepared statistics would prove that the most consistent and useful members of our churches are those who were properly trained in their youth, and who were early introduced to the Lord's table

The Jews.	Error.	True rule.	Instances.
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under the ordinary means of grace. The Jews introduced their children to the Passover at fourteen, and thenceforward they were solemnly bound to keep all the commandments, and to obey all the instructions of the law. In the early Church the children were prepared by catechumens for the Lord's Supper. As the Church became corrupt, and as sacraments were multiplied, the Lord's Supper, from a sacrament, became a charm, a mystery, an absurd superstition; and the wafer was given to all who performed aright their penances. In the Protestant Church the sacrament is regarded, not as giving life, but food to support life; as food for the living, and not as quickening the dead. Christ—not the sacrament—is life. And when persons give a satisfactory evidence that they love Christ, they have a right and title to his table. Here is the general principle which applies alike to all ages. If a child at seven or eight years of age gives evidence of love to God, that child has as good a right to a seat at the table of its heavenly as of its earthly father.

Instances of very early piety are very frequent in the Scriptures; so are they along the entire history of the Church. Among the Nonconformists of England and the Presbyterians of Scotland they have abounded, and do now. A communion season in Edinburgh, in the church of the late venerable Dr. Henry Gray, will never be forgotten by us. The aged came first to the tables, then the middle aged, and then the young. The aged were soon numbered, but the

young filled table after table, one company coming after another, like the waves of the sea. The scene was deeply impressive and instructive. And it is so in many of our American churches. The late revival has brought multitudes of the lambs of the flock into the Church; and in one instance within our knowledge, on the same Sabbath, forty from one Sunday-school! And why should it not be so? Jeremiah, John Baptist, became pious in youth. So did Josiah, Daniel, and Timothy. And so did Polycarp, and the Henrys, and Baxter, and Doddridge, and Neff, and Elliot, and Bishop Heber, and Pliny Fisk, and Moses Hogue, and Samuel J. Mills. We know two excellent and beloved ministers, one of whom became a communicant at seven, and the other at nine years; and we know very many admitted to the table of the Lord from nine to twelve years of age. We received to the communion on the same day a youth of eleven years and an aged person of ninety with as much confidence in the piety of the youth as in that of the aged. If commanded to pray for the salvation of children, why should we be faithless as to their conversion? And if giving hopeful evidence, why should we debar them from the table of the Lord?

There was a time when children were hardly expected to become pious, and when they could not confess it without suspicion. That time is happily passing away. Most of the persons that now become communicants of our churches are from fourteen to twenty years of age; and we fondly hope the time is com-

Death-beds of youth.The true rule.

ing when they will profess Christ at a much earlier period. Some of the happiest death-beds we have ever witnessed were those of young persons; and we have recently heard an experienced and excellent minister say that a child of his died at the age of four years, of whose true conversion to God he could not have a doubt. And we would ask those who are faithless on this subject the meaning of the text, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength," and especially as it is quoted and applied by the Savior.

The rule should be to begin early with the children; to recommend Christ to their first love; to seek to lead them to Christ by all the means of his appointment; and, when they give evidence of love to Christ, to admit them to the Lord's table. The command is no more imperative, "Feed my sheep," than is the other command, "Feed my lambs."

CHAPTER XXV.

Object of the Ministry.—The Preacher and Pastor combined.—Emblems.—Shepherd, Parent.—Pastoral Visitation.—How performed.—The Manner of it.—A model Pastor.—Visitation going out of Fashion.—Baxter.—Matthew Henry.—Dr. Miller.—Excuses.—A Portrait.

THE grand object of the Christian ministry is, through Christ, to induce men to be reconciled to God. To secure this result, ministers are bound by their vows of office to use their ability to the utmost; to be diligent in their calling, and fervent in spirit; to preach the Gospel publicly, and “from house to house;” to be as faithful as pastors as they are as preachers of the Word. It is in this way only they can prove themselves worthy of double honor.

There are some ministers who are excellent preachers—orthodox, learned, logical, impressive, but they are no pastors—that is, they never, or but rarely, visit the families of their charge, and know but little about them save in the general. There are others, again, who are excellent pastors but poor preachers. The first class give an undue proportion of time to study; the second, to visitation. As they are both very important parts of a minister’s work, the aim of a minister should be rightly to divide his time between them, and so as to perform both duties well. As a

 Pastor and preacher.

Two emblems.

Shepherd and parent.

preacher, he instructs the congregation; as a pastor, the individuals who compose it. As a preacher, he announces the truth; as a pastor, he inquires how it is received. As a preacher, he instructs those who come to hear him; as a pastor, he seeks out those who do not come, and seeks to draw them to ordinances by the cords of love. As a preacher, he has to do mainly with great general principles; as a pastor, he inquires into the cases of the members of the flock, so as to advise, reprove, instruct, correct, as may be needed.

The true emblems of a good minister are, a shepherd at the head of his flock, and a parent at the head of his family. The shepherd has an equal regard for *all* the flock, for the lambs as for the sheep; he seeks the wandering, he applies remedies to the diseased; he gathers the lambs with his arms; he collects them into the fold at night, and counts them as they enter, so that none may be left without; and he leads them forth in the morning into the green pastures and beside the still waters. His care and watchfulness descend to all the flock. And so the father of a family exercises special care over every member of it, and seeks, with equal care and diligence, the best good of them all. He exercises a general care over all, and a special care of each. So that a good minister should care for his people as a shepherd cares for his sheep—as a father cares for his family—as God promises to care for Israel when he says, “I will feed my flock; I will cause them to lie down. I will seek that which

Pastoral visitation.

Its benefits.

was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." And if the Great Shepherd condescends to such duties, upon what ground can under-shepherds excuse themselves from them?

The duty of pastoral visitation is a most important one to pastor and people, and should be diligently and conscientiously performed. How, otherwise, can a people know their minister so as to love him? As a preacher they may respect him, but he must be a pastor to be loved of them. And he must be loved to be extensively useful. How, save by pastoral visitation, can he know the opinions, feelings, spiritual wants, or the peculiar circumstances of his people? How, otherwise, can he discover the roots of bitterness that trouble; the besetting sins, that eat away character as a moth doth a garment; the lukewarmness that paralyzes; the contentions that separate brethren? How, otherwise, can he awake the sleeping, or warn the self-dependent, or temper the overzealous, or comfort the mourning, or raise up the bowed down, or direct the inquiring, or visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction? The preparation of sermons and the preaching of them is about one half the work of a minister, if so much; the other half is to be performed among the people, going, as did the apostle, "from house to house."

This bringing down of pastoral care to the families of a congregation, and to the individuals of each fam-

How best done.

Much depends on the manner.

ily, is laborious or otherwise, as a pastor may make it. When pursued as a regular weekly duty, it becomes easy, and a thing of course; when pursued occasionally, and in a hurried way, it becomes wearisome, and a task, and of course useless. It may as well be left undone when it is done as a task. When the pastor is weary of the work, the people get weary of the visit. But when a pastor, with a heart full of love to his people, goes from house to house in a pleasant, cheerful, familiar way, to speak to them of the things which concern salvation, then it is he can most effectually apply to individuals the great and practical truths he proclaims from the pulpit. And thus it is he can best so acquaint himself with the wants of his people as to be able to render to each a portion in due season.

As to the usefulness of pastoral visitation, very much depends on the way and manner of it. Mr. A. is a good minister, and wishes to be a good pastor; but he is impressed with the idea that dignity must be always maintained; and, before he goes out to make his calls, he buttons himself to the chin, and puts on his gloves, and, taking his dignified cane, with a solemn step goes forth to his work. The children hear of his coming, and fear it, and often run away. The parents, ill at ease in the presence of a pastor so starched, are glad when the visit is ended. The questions are formal, the answers constrained. The visit is ended; all rejoice; but no good is done. These reverend Buckrams do little good any where.

 Pastor and elder.

Too formal.

 A model.

The Rev. Mr. B. gives notice from his pulpit that, with an elder, he will visit certain families on a certain day. Some rejoice, and some do not, on hearing the announcement. On that day the house is put in order for their reception. The visit is formal; the presence of the elder is a constraint. Persons do not like to speak of their religious feelings before others, while they would open their hearts to their pastor alone. This used to be a common way. It was the way of Calvin in Geneva. But it is too formal to be useful to the extent desirable. We have tried it sufficiently to pronounce it too formal, and as promising far more than it yields.

The Rev. Mr. C. is an excellent preacher and a most beloved pastor. He visits his families alone. He gives two afternoons in each week to the work, when he can conveniently. His visits are long or short, according to the circumstances of each family. He prays with them or not, as may be proper. He is social, familiar, perfectly accessible, and can make religious conversation as easy and as familiar as talk about the weather. He knows the name of all the children, and, taking the younger one on his knee, he examines the others in the Catechism. His visits are looked forward to with pleasure, and are hailed with joy. He is the most welcomed of visitors. And, while he is useful in the pulpit, he is doubly useful by his pastoral visits. Here he is a model.

Is not this very essential part of ministerial duty going out of fashion? It was an essential part of the

Not fashionable.

Mather.

Baxter.

Henry.

primitive ministry, as it is now of our missionaries at home and abroad. Of some of the early fathers it is said that they knew every person in their flock. Baxter, himself eminent as a pastor, says, "Ministers should know all belonging to their charge." Cotton Mather set great value on this part of his work. Alleine thought himself more useful as a pastor than as a preacher. "I now resolve," says Baxter, "(1) to take more particular account of the souls committed to my care; (2) to visit the whole congregation, and to learn particularly the circumstances of the children and servants; (3) will make as exact a list as I can of those that I have reason to believe are unconverted, awakened, fit for communion, or already in it; (4) when I hear any thing particularly concerning the religious state of my people, I will visit them and talk with them; (5) I will especially be careful to visit the sick. Lord, thou knowest I am desirous of proving myself a faithful servant of thee and of souls. Oh, watch over me, that I may watch over them, and then all will be well." "Acquaint yourselves," says Matthew Henry, "with the state of your pupils' souls, and then you will know the better how to preach to them." And Dr. Miller said that "the minister who desires to be useful, without being much among his people, will surely be disappointed." And this is quite reasonable. How can a physician prescribe for patients without examining each case? And how can a minister give to each their portion in due season, but as he understands their state of mind? And

Three books.

Neglected.

Icebergs.

how can he know this, save by a constant intercourse with his people? "The three great books for a minister to study," said an old Puritan, "are the Bible, himself, and his people." And the pastor who studies his people most is the one who usually preaches to them best. He knows their mental cultivation—their weaknesses—their spiritual trials, and he will adapt his preaching accordingly. However excellent a sermon may be, but little of it is retained by the mass of hearers; and a pastor may do a troubled sinner or Christian more good in a private interview of twenty minutes than by all his sermons in a year.

That pastoral visitation is falling into neglect is painfully obvious. The complaints of the people are many and serious on this point. We have been told by families of high respectability that their pastor had not been in their house for years, and never but when sent for. The Rev. R. is pastor of a large congregation, and never even visits the sick but when formally invited! And he is esteemed accordingly! The Rev. — became pastor of a large and fashionable congregation, which worshiped in an elegant church, finely located. He is a good man and preacher; and that congregation has dwindled away, simply for the want of pastoral care and sympathy. Many have gone into other churches and denominations; and the young, chilled by his stately formality, have wandered away from the church of their fathers. Such ministers are icebergs in the garden of the Lord, chilling every thing within the reach of their influ-

Excuses for neglect.	The minister.	Oberlin.	Neff.
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ence. There are already too many of them; and they are multiplying.

From this important department of ministerial duty many excuse themselves, and for various reasons. Some say they have no taste for pastoral duties. But what has taste to do with duty? Others say that they have no time for them. This at once reduces them to things of little or no importance, that may be put aside at pleasure—that may be attended to when we have little else to do. Yet others say that their visits are not acceptable. This may be so in some exceptional cases; but, as a rule, the visits of a pleasant, pious, simple pastor are received with pleasure, and in multitudes of cases we have known them to be the means of converting bitter opponents into attached and reliable friends.

Were we to paint in words a Christian minister, we would take as our model a kind, intelligent father, instructing, guiding, and governing his children, and so as to maintain his authority, and to secure their reverence and love. His people are his children; he encourages the desponding—he warns the rebellious—he directs the straying—he instructs the ignorant—he comforts the aged—he gathers the lambs with his arms; he mourns with the mourning, and weeps with the weeping. Their joys and sorrows are in a measure his. Such a man, like Oberlin—like Felix Neff—like M'Cheyne—like Chalmers, will triumph over all opposition, and will enthrone himself in the hearts of his people. Our ministers of high position, and at-

*Chalmers as pastor.**A minister when great.*

tainments, and character, of whom we rejoice there are very many, should remember that the most remarkable pastor of modern days was Dr. Chalmers, who, when preaching those sermons which have attracted the attention of the world, was not neglectful of the poor, of the barefooted children of the street, nor of the servants of his parish. Never is a minister so great as when he ministers to and mingles with the poor. And never is a minister so little as when, in the pride of his place or character, he looks down upon the poor as beneath his notice. To the poor the Gospel was preached by Christ, and should be by all his ministers. The church that overlooks the poor has fallen from its first love. The minister that overlooks them is sadly destitute of the Spirit of the Savior whom he preaches.

Singing.

Source of trouble.

Of divine appointment.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Singing.—A Source of Controversies.—Of divine Appointment.—Singing among the Jews and early Christians.—Corrupted in Papal and Protestant Churches.—Choristers and Organists.—The Mistake.—Artistic Singing.—Organs.—The Psalms to be sung.—Congregational Singing.—Sitting.—All should sing.

IT may seem singular to some to introduce the topic of singing into a series of essays on Preachers and Preaching. But they must be ignorant of the difficulties with which ministers have to contend on this subject—of how much singing has to do with the discord or harmony of a congregation. We know not of a church which has not been excited, nor of a minister who has not been disturbed, in some way or other, by controversies on Church music. We have a few things to say on this subject, addressed to the common sense of the ministers and members of the Church of God.

1. It is a divinely appointed part of public worship. In it we praise God, express our joy in him, and our gratitude for his mercies. It has been equally a part of natural and revealed religion, in all ages and periods of time. It was a part of the worship of the heathen; it was practiced by the people of God before the giving of the law. We need but refer to the song of Moses at the sea, to which Miriam and the

Among the Jews.

Among early Christians.

maidens of Israel so beautifully responded. After the giving of the law, God was praised in the song on all great occasions. We need but refer to the songs of Deborah, of Hannah, Hezekiah, Habakkuk, Mary, Zachariah, Simeon. When the tabernacle was set up in Jerusalem, the Psalms of David were written to be sung in its worship. When the Temple was erected, the most elaborate arrangements were made for that part of its worship which consisted in singing, and which was continued until its destruction—until the dispensation of Moses was brought to its close.

Nor did the praise of God in the song cease with the shadowy dispensation of the law. Angels expressed their joy in a song of praise on the birth of Christ. A hymn was sung by the Savior and his disciples at the close of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Singing is especially enjoined by Paul, Col. iii., 16, and Ephesians, v., 19. And Paul and Silas made the prison of Philippi echo with their songs of praise at midnight, "and the prisoners heard them." And we have the testimony of Ignatius, of Caius, Clemens, Pliny, Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, that singing was a constituent portion of the public worship of God from the days of the apostles onward to the fifth century; so that singing in the public worship of God is a divinely instituted part of public worship. This has never been very extensively or plausibly questioned, and for the reason that our very nature would protest against it. Why was the facul-

Natural singing.

Corrupted.

In Rome.

ty of singing given us by God, unless to be employed? And why was our deep sympathy with musical harmony given us unless to be gratified? God has made nothing in vain.

2. Singing, as a part of public worship, has been greatly corrupted. In this respect it has shared very much the same fate as public prayer. As the Church became corrupt, prayer and praise, from acts of solemn worship, dwindled down into ritual performances. It was so in the Jewish Church. It is now so in the Romish Church, where the pantomime of the Mass has supplanted the preaching of the Gospel, and where music as a science has entirely supplanted devotional singing. The "great masters" of painting, of the chisel, of music, have done more for Romanism than all the fathers, all the popes, all the fabulous martyrs of Alban Butler put together. Take away the paintings, statuary, and music from the churches of Rome, and there is nothing left.

Nor are Protestant churches sinless on this subject. This part of the public worship of God has been very much surrendered to organists, professional singers, and choirs, whose aim it is to make it scientific and not devotional, pleasing to the educated ear, and not elevating to the affections of the devout worshiper. Indeed, it is mainly transferred from the people to a committee in the organ-loft, which feels that it has a right exclusively to control it, and which will not brook the singing of the people lest it should make discord! And thus, often, the precious right of a

Choirs.

Assumptions.

Impertinences.

Christian congregation is sacrificed to the fastidious taste of a few persons, not one of whom may be a professing Christian, and whose only object may be to display their fine and well-trained voices! We scarcely have words to characterize this desecration of a divinely instituted part of God's worship! It can not be long endured, save where public worship has become a mere ritual service.

And the arrogance which leaders and choirs often assume is noteworthy. In one case they stipulate to sing one tune in which the people may join, if they will refrain from singing save that tune! This is quite liberal, when it is known in many other cases the people are told that they have no more to do with singing than with preaching! Sometimes the organist or chorister selects the hymns for the pulpit, and sends them to the pastor! A pastor requested the organ to be stopped when, in a voluntary, it was continued five minutes beyond the time to begin public worship. The organist locked up the organ and walked out of the church, saying he would not suffer such impertinence! A minister requested his chorister to select simple tunes; he was told to take care of his own end of the church, and not to interfere with what did not belong to him! A pastor, not able to stand it any longer, rebuked the levity in the choir. They rose in a body and left the house! A minister once preached kindly on the singing proper for the house of God, in which he flattered the choir up to their deserts; he was told by an excellent elder, who

Pastors annoyed.

Artistic singing.

Operatic.

was a member of it, that, if he preached another sermon like that, he would have no choir at all! And thus, in every variety of way, some of the best pastors in the land are annoyed by organists, choristers, and choirs, while the people of God are deprived of one of their dearest rights, and the praise of God is reduced to a musical performance! This—all this—is a grievous desecration of a divine ordinance, against which the entire Church of God should protest. Why should singing, more than preaching or praying, be given over to mere performers?

3. The great mistake as to the singing in public worship is a desire to make it artistic. In Rome and Paris people rush to the churches to hear the singing; they care nothing for the other parts of the mass. Such is the case in many Protestant churches, where devotional singing has given way to the operatic. We have heard of a church in New York where the preaching is voted a bore, but where fashionable people resort to hear sacred songs sung by professional singers from the Opera—where the singing costs more than the preaching! How much better is it to go to such churches, where the praying and the preaching are mere accompaniments to the singing, than going to the Opera? Are not such churches Sabbath-day Opera-houses? The truth is that we sacrifice the devotional in the proportion we cultivate the artistic beyond a given line. People that know not a note in music can sing the praises of God so as to excite their devotional feelings, if the tune is a familiar one. And

 Devotional singing.

Martial.

 Instrumental.

these form the great majority of ordinary congregations; and it is in reference to these, and not for the few cultivated ears, that the singing of congregations should be conducted. We heard the choir of the Sistine Chapel, and of St. Peter's, and of St. Paul's; but, as far as devotion is concerned, their singing bore no comparison to that we have heard in Scotch churches, led by a precentor from under the pulpit, or in a Methodist church when the brethren had a good time. The singing in which most of the people can unite may not be the most tasteful and classical, but it is the best for the people; it is the most devotional. It may grate upon the ears of young misses from boarding-schools, and of young gentlemen of operatic tastes; but, because it elevates the religious feelings of the people, it is harmony in the ear of heaven. When even soldiers are led to the deadly breach, it is always under the inspiring influence of words and tunes in which battalions may unite. If the "Marseillaise," as Lamartine says, was to Frenchmen as "a recovered echo from Thermopylæ," why should not our Christian psalms and hymns be so sung as to be recovered echoes from Calvary? As singing is the part of public worship designed to unite all the people in concert, it is a desecration of it to surrender it to a committee of artisans in the gallery.

We have nothing to say on the controversy as to the use of instrumental music in public worship, only that we as highly approve of the organ as did David when used as an aid to the vocal. It seems absurd

The Psalmody.

A Judaizing yoke.

Congregational.

to admit nothing to be sung but the Psalms of David, and yet to forbid praising him "with the stringed instruments and organs." We have but a word to say as to the controversy about the psalms and hymns that are to be sung. Prayer is as much a constituent part of public worship as is praise; if we have liberty in prayer, why should we be restricted in praise? When we sing the truth, why should we not be as accepted as when we pray the truth? Where is it taught that we must only sing the one hundred and fifty psalms of David in public or in private? While the angels—the sun, moon, and stars—the earth—the sea—fire, hail, snow, and vapor—mountains and hills—fruitful trees and all cedars—beasts and all cattle—creeping things and flying fowl, are commanded, each in their way, to praise the Lord, it does seem preposterous to confine "the praises of all his saints," all over the globe, to the one hundred and fifty psalms of David! Let those sing them in Rouse's version that can do it; but to require all the people of God to do it is a Judaizing yoke. It is a narrow prejudice, and not a Christian principle. It should not be permitted, for an hour, to disturb the peace or the unity of the Church of God.

4. The singing should be congregational. This can not be secured by singing-schools, whose teachers, like other traveling artists, are but little worth. They neglect the old tunes, and introduce new ones; and when they retire their scholars can sing neither. Nor can it be secured by choirs. As the choir rises

How to be secured.

Sitting.

All should sing.

in artistic skill, the singing sinks as to its devotional character. It dwindles into a performance. All persons should be taught in our schools to sing, as in Germany. Singing should be a branch of public instruction. The hymn, and the tune to which it is sung, should be printed on opposite pages; and, without deviation, the hymn should be sung to the same tune. Thus, soon, the one would suggest the other to all minds. Who invented sitting in singing and praying, we know not; but we hesitate not to pronounce it irreverent as a posture, and unsuited to the service. A precentor rises when he sings. So does a choir. And why should not the congregation? While the posture is but little when compared with the spirituality, yet is it something. When we sit we are little else than spectators; when we rise, we take part in the service, and sing the better if we sing at all.

As we would have all pray in the house of God, so would we have all sing. Nothing is so adapted to excite devotional feelings. There never has been a revival of religion which has not been attended by a great fondness for singing. Luther and the Wesleys knew the power of singing, and made great use of it. It is the most social part of public worship. In praying and preaching, one speaks; the rest silently unite; but here all concur, and stimulate each other. Singing will be the employment of heaven. When faith is lost in fruition, and hope in the possession of the things hoped for, then will our harps and tongues be vocal with the praises of God. Hence

All sing in heaven.

all that hope to sing the praises of God in heaven should sing his praises upon earth, "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord."

 The command.

It is comprehensive.

The minister.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The comprehensive Command.—The Position of the Minister.—His Advantages for doing Good.—Dickenson.—Chalmers.—The Contrast.—Dr. Duncan.—The indirect Good of the Ministry.—Unworthy Conduct.—Illustrations.—The Kind of Ministers we need.

THE command of our Savior to his disciples, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," is a very comprehensive one. It means not merely to preach the Gospel, but also to *disciple*, to *train*, to *instruct* the nations. It is inclusive of the civilization of the nations, and hence true religion has always led a true civilization in its train. The one flows from the other as does the light of day from the glorious sun. And as our Christianity takes the whole of human life and all human interests under its control for the purpose of purifying and elevating them, its ministers ought to be its true representatives. They should seek, in all proper ways, to promote the general interests of society.

The academic education usually pursued in preparation for the ministry places the minister on a level with the best-educated men in the land. When to this is added a regular course of theological training, his mind is quickened to the perception of truth and of moral distinctions beyond that of other educated men; and he has no object to seek beyond the per-

Teacher of truth.

His influence.

Umpires.

ception of the truth and its extension. Truth is of God; lies are of the father of lies; and the minister stands among his fellow-men as a disciple and teacher of the truth, and as a faithful follower of it, wherever it leads him. His daily studies are the most comprehensive and the most humanizing of any other, as they embrace every thing which has any influence on the present or future well-being of the race; and, hence, of all the men in a community, the properly educated minister is the best prepared to exert a happy influence on all the great interests of society. And he should seek to exert it to the full. He should be as devoted to the promotion of all moral institutions as to the preaching of the Gospel. It is only in this way he yields a full obedience to the command of Christ, to *disciple*, to *instruct* the nations; and it is greatly to be lamented that there are so many pastors of the finest education whose influence is never felt out of the pulpit, nor beyond the lines of their own parishes.

We do not mean that ministers should be politicians, but they should be patriots, which mere politicians are not. They should seek true views on all political subjects; but when they become party politicians they should surrender the ministry. They can best infuse a right spirit into politics by keeping out of them. In these things they should be umpires, and not partisans.

They can best promote the general good indirectly, and while in the vigorous and legitimate pursuit

 The way to get influence.

Dickenson.

His usefulness.

of their one great work. They should be Christian ministers; it is as such they grow into the influence which enables them to promote all good interests around them. If they fail in gaining an influence as ministers of Christ, they are but rarely successful in any other department of doing good. A minister like Witherspoon, or Chalmers, or Payson, who impresses the community with a sense of his sincerity as a minister of Christ, absorbs the confidence of all, strikes his roots deep in the affections of all, and exerts a benign influence over all the great interests of society.

Perhaps no minister of his day was more highly honored or beloved than was Jonathan Dickenson. His printed works have taken a place among our theological classics. Although upward of fivescore years have passed away since his death, his name, in the Church which he served, and in the Church at large, is as an ointment poured forth. He was not only an eloquent preacher, a faithful pastor, a laborious student; he was, besides, an able controvertist, a skillful physician, and a most successful teacher and farmer! He lived in a day when there were but few to meet the standing wants of society, and he sought in a way incidental to his great work, and promotive of it, to meet them all! Every thing was subordinate to his work as a minister.

Perhaps there is not a point connected with the pulpit, preachers, or preaching, which may not be illustrated from the life of Dr. Chalmers. His ministry was a glorious one to the Church and to the world;

Chalmers.

His busy life.

Contrast.

and while it was by his pulpit ministrations he made the deep impression upon his race which survives him, and which will survive the lapse of ages, yet to what a remarkable degree did he devote himself to the promotion of the great interests of society. We find him at one time writing on Political Economy, to encourage Britain when dispirited by the Berlin decrees of Bonaparte; at another, seeking to enlighten the world on the best way of improving the temporal condition of the poor; at another, forming a penny-a-week society to aid in circulating the Bible; at another, thundering in the General Assembly against "Pluralities;" at another, following the poor to their wretched abodes in the most narrow wynds of Glasgow; at another, multiplying schools to meet the wants of his people; at another, organizing and directing Sunday-schools; at another, traveling through England in search of poor-law statistics; at another, defending the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church; and, when the Free Church went forth from the Established, descending with a minuteness of detail to every thing which entered into its stability and rightful position, as if his whole previous life had been spent among details! He permitted nothing to escape his notice, and he thought nothing beneath him that could in any degree promote the general interests of society. Oh, what a contrast does this great man present to many a minister who would think it undignified to go into the streets without his gloves, cane, and other regimentals, and who perhaps has

Dr. Duncan.

Savings Banks.

Other institutions.

never spent a week in his life in seeking out the neglected poor who are perishing for lack of the Gospel beneath the shadow of his steeple! Never did uninspired man preach Christ more fervently; never did man labor more to promote the general interests of society.

Another such instance we have in the Rev. Dr. Henry Duncan, the author of the "Philosophy of the Seasons." Of vigorous mind—of the most simple and earnest piety—of fine literary attainments—he devoted himself to the promotion of the general interests of society. He labored to elevate and educate the poor; he was the founder of Savings Banks for the benefit of the poor—institutions which now exist co-extensive with our civilization, and every where a blessing, when rightly managed, to those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. And the time would fail us to tell of the ministers of Christ who, without diminishing their services in the pulpit, have labored through the press in founding colleges, academies, and schools—in establishing hospitals, infirmaries, and houses of refuge—and who, in founding Bible, Missionary, and other institutions for the evangelization of the world, have written their names on the rock forever. And if all the ministers of the Gospel have done for the religious, moral, social, and political benefit of society were removed, what would be left? If all they have done, aside from their direct work in preaching Christ, were removed at once, it would be, in effect, like the pouring

 The great civilizers.

An unworthy life.

 Example.

out of the seventh vial into the air. Indeed they are, at this hour, the great educators of the race, the great civilizers, as well as evangelizers of the world.

He is a minister unworthy of his calling, and of the day in which he lives, who lives only for his parish or for his sect; whose eye and whose affections but rarely wander beyond his own narrow sphere. And yet how many such there are! The Rev. Dr. A. is a good, sensible, and pious man. He is so esteemed by all. With proper zeal and expanded views, he might be greatly useful; but he is satisfied with the performance of the usual Sabbath services and of the pressing parochial duties. His parish is his farm; and even that is not well cultivated; and every thing around him is just like him, only a little more so. His salary is not paid. There is no monthly concert. The Sabbath-school languishes. The church is sadly out of repair. The people are irregular in every thing. There are no good schools. The young are wandering to other folds, and no wonder. And if Dr. A. gave the time to the general interests of the people that he gives to smoking cigars and to listless lounging, his parish might be in a flourishing state, instead of being, as it is, rapidly on the decline. And such ministers are far too numerous.

The Rev. Mr. B. is a younger man, with zeal and sympathies, but with narrow views, far more Jewish than Christian. His zeal has only one direction—his own sect; his sympathies are withheld from every effort that tends not to its increase. He co-operates

Minister of a sect.

Intolerable.

The men needed.

in nothing which has only in view the general interests of society. He is like a wen upon the body, which would draw every thing to itself at the expense of the entire system. He is simply the minister of a sect, and is alike unworthy of his calling and of the age in which he lives. The most intolerable men of this age are these ministers of sect, who regard none as ministers of Christ but themselves—who regard no good as done save done in their way, and who would rather see the world remain in darkness than that it should be illumined by others. These are spots in our feast of charity—clouds without rain, whose only object seems to be to obscure the bright shining of the Gospel sun, that their feeble gas-jets may be seen.

The Rev. Mr. D. was an excellent parish minister—was ardently attached to his own church; but he was also a minister of Christ, and, with a quenchless zeal, sought to do good to all men as he had opportunity. The cause of education, of missions, of temperance—asylums for the blind—homes for the friendless—houses for delinquents—Sunday-schools, and schools for the children of the poor, found in him a zealous and constant friend. On all fit occasions his voice was raised in their advocacy. His object was to elevate the race by enlightening them, and by leading them to a true faith in Christ; and he could rejoice in the good done and doing, regardless of the agency employed, if men only were benefited and God was glorified. And such are the ministers the Church now needs; men in whose hearts the love of souls

The zeal required.

A triumph for the ministry.

rises far higher than the love of sect; men who feel that for them there is no rest until the Gospel is preached to every creature.

In a day when education is raising the masses into higher degrees of culture—when new powers are at work—when incredible facilities are multiplied for the increase of knowledge—when infidelity is assuming the garb of philanthropy and religion—when the world is opening to our civilization and the Gospel—when a humanitarianism is every where seeking to thrust itself forward as the great Reformer of the world, it becomes ministers of the Gospel to adjust themselves to the circumstances in which they are placed. They should not permit any missionaries of error to exceed them in zealous efforts to do good to the masses, or to go beyond them in seeking out objects of charity. There is not a want of the race that they should not seek to supply, nor an evil of the race which they should not seek to remove, nor a way of doing good in which their feet should not be found. The minister merely of his pulpit, of his parish, of his sect, is a very small man in our day of social misrule, and of religious error, and wasting fanaticism. It would be a glorious triumph for our ministry to see them gathering around them the stormy elements of our social atmosphere—to see them quietly conducting to earth the lightnings with which its darkest clouds are charged, and thus proving to the people they have benefited that the preaching of the Gospel is yet “the power of God.” They should not preach

Ministers should promote the general interests.

the Gospel less, but they should more devote themselves to the promotion of the general interests of society. In every right way of benefiting men they should do all they can.

Various duties.	Helps.	Moses.	Deacons.
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CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ministers' Duties various.—Helps in the Jewish and Christian Church.—To be used.—Chalmer's Experience.—Parents.—Sunday-schools a noble Field.—Districting Parishes.—The Eldership.—Deacons.—Plans and Agencies.—Examples.

THE duties of the ministry are very numerous and very various. There is not a religious, moral, or educational interest of the community with which he should not have to do. What the sun, the rain, the dew are to the products of the earth, the ministry should be to all instrumentalities and agencies which promote the great interests of society. But as God makes use of agencies in carrying on his government—as civil rulers employ agencies to carry on the government of the state—as shepherds employ persons to take care of the sheep—as a father of a family employs many agencies in the training of his children, so may the minister employ “helps” to assist him in the performance of his many duties. Moses was assisted in his work by seventy elders, to relieve him from his many burdens. There were many servitors in the Temple to assist the priests. Deacons were appointed to relieve the Apostles from many duties connected with the founding of the Church, that they might give themselves the more “to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.” And God has set in the Church

Gospel helps.

The minister's work to preach.

not only apostles, prophets, and teachers, but also "helps, governments, and diversities of tongues." Nor can there be any doubt that the persons named by Paul in the 16th of Romans, and to whom he sends his greetings, and also those named in the 4th of Philippians, were lay believers, men and women, set apart to important services, "to labor with him in the Gospel"—that is, to aid and assist him in the performance of his duties. And if Paul needed and used "helps," why may not all ministers of the Gospel?

It was never intended that ministers should bear the whole weight of the duties of a congregation, no more than that the generals of an army should do all the fighting. The pastor is the parochial head of a parish, even as the head is the chief member of the body; and as in a healthful body all the members act in unison with the head, so, in a church, should all the members act in unison with the pastor, and in subordination to him. This is the way to secure the best good of any congregation, and the moral culture of the whole territory which it occupies. The great duty of the minister is *to preach the Gospel*. To do this with acceptance and freshness from year to year, he must be a diligent student; and much study and much pastoral labor must indeed be a weariness to the flesh. So Chalmers, a man of great muscular frame, found it. "I know not," he says, "a more effectual method of making one's existence more painfully harassing and uncomfortable than by associating an excess of pastoral with an excess of mental la-

Chalmers' experience.

Lay agency.

Parents.

bor—than by combining in one person a jaded body with an exhausted spirit. One species of fatigue may be endured; but both together are insufferable; and when both kinds of service are attempted in too high a degree, the quality of both will be most essentially deteriorated.” And hence his plan of “lay agency,” so wisely devised, so effectually carried out, and so eloquently expounded and defended in his “Christian and Civic Economy,” a production worthy the study of all pastors.

Among the first and most important helps of a minister are parents. These should be instructed from the pulpit as to their duties, and should evermore be exhorted to their faithful performance. Parents who faithfully do their duty to their children are a great blessing to the Church and to the state, and greatly aid their pastor. They have the advantage of constant access to their children, and occupy the place of authority and influence over them. And when they bring up their children in the knowledge and fear of God, they are the most important “helps” to a pastor. And such “helps” the minister should seek to make of all the heads of families in his congregation. The neglect of their children by even pious parents is one of the crying sins of the Church in this day.

Sunday-schools, rightly conducted, are also a great auxiliary to the minister. The superintendent should be intelligent, active, ready, kind, and truly pious; old enough to secure respect, and yet young enough

 Sunday-schools.

Their teachers.

 To be multiplied.

to be sprightly, sympathizing, and elastic. And, as far as possible, the teachers should be like him. These make a school attractive, and a rich means of grace to a church. They make the spiritual instruction of the children their great object, and their conversion to God their great end. As ministers are fully occupied on the Sabbath, they can give but little time to these schools; but they form a noble field in which to exercise the lay talent of the Church. And the reflex influence upon teachers is usually as great as the direct influence upon the children. They who water are themselves watered. Usually the best members of the Church—the most reliable and liberal, are the pious, devoted Sabbath-school teachers. Their assistance in taking care of the lambs of the flock is great beyond calculation to a pastor. And Sabbath-schools should be so multiplied as to place their advantages within the reach of all the children of a parish. The parish of St. John's, in Glasgow, contained about ten thousand souls when Dr. Chalmers became its pastor; according to his own account, many of them were very much neglected. And he succeeded, by parochial and Sabbath schools, in a few years, in reaching every family in the parish, and in bringing their children under the influence of moral and religious instruction. And this he did by a wise, and systematic, and energetic use of the lay talent of his congregation. Other things being equal, the larger a congregation within given limits, the better, if it is so organized as to bring out into active service all its

A strong church.

Dividing a parish.

Elders.

talent and ability for usefulness. One strong congregation is better than two or more feeble ones, struggling for life, and often in conflict with one another.

The old plan of dividing a parish into as many parts as there were ruling elders, and placing each part under the care of an elder, is one that should not be permitted to go into disuse. There are cases of difficulty constantly arising that may be thus adjusted privately. There are cases of seriousness that may thus be discovered and directed. Backsliders may thus be reclaimed. The frequent visits of a pious elder to families whose confidence he has secured, are to them and to him a great blessing, and tend greatly to secure their orderly walk, and to preserve them from the influence of temptations and error. A competent, earnest eldership, feeling their responsibility, and seeking grace to meet it, is a great help to a minister, while a sluggish, incompetent, ignorant, narrow-minded, fault-finding eldership is very much the opposite. A minister surrounded by twelve elders, pious, intelligent, active, and open-hearted, acting in concert with him, form a body of great moral power. It is often better to have no elders than poor ones; but when there is material enough out of which to make good ones, they should be multiplied so as to meet the wants of a congregation without overburdening any. They form a most important help in the matter of family visitation, which every pastor should seek to employ to the full.

The same may be said as to deacons, whose special

Deacons.	Their character.	Plans to do good.
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work it is to take care of the poor, and thus to relieve the ministry from that duty. The poor we have always with us. To the poor the Gospel is preached. As in the days of the Savior, so now, the majority of believers are from among the poor. These have need of spiritual instruction and of temporal aid, which the Church is bound to supply; and as "it is not reasonable that ministers should leave the Word of God and serve tables," this duty, by apostolical authority, is devolved upon deacons. And these should be multiplied to the extent needed by the Church. As might be reasonably expected, the poor are often the most exacting and complaining members, and the most difficult to be satisfied. It is impossible for a minister to care for them up to the point of their real need; this must be done by such men as were Stephen, and Philip, and Prochorus, men full of faith, and having a special baptism for the poor. And of the services of such persons the pastor should avail himself to the full. And, as a rule, they should be intelligent, active, prayerful, liberal, and selected from those in midlife, or under rather than beyond it.

A good minister will be fruitful in plans of doing good, in ways to meet the wants of all the people among whom he lives. To carry out such plans he will need suitable agents; and he should seek so to instruct his people as to make them suitable and willing agents for the performance of every duty to which they may be called. Every member of the Church, male and female, should be taught that there is some

Living members.

The people to be taught.

Examples.

work for them to do in building up the walls of Zion, and then the wall will be soon joined together unto the half thereof when the people have a mind to the work.

In vain are members added to our churches unless they are living branches of the living vine. In vain are churches multiplied unless they are churches alive unto God. Every addition to the Church should be an addition to the host of God's elect, who are seeking the regeneration of the world; and every Christian should be so instructed. Ministers are the primary, but not the exclusive workmen. They are the directors, but not the sole agents. And to seek to do *all*, to the exclusion of the active agency of the members of the Church, is a real injury to both.

The Rev. Mr. A. was a fervent, laborious, and truly excellent man. His sympathies were large, and his efforts to do good untiring. He was ever abroad among his people, and was a daily visitor to the habitations of suffering and sorrow, doing a work which many of the females of his congregation might do as well. As a consequence, he failed in the pulpit as a preacher; he became an exhorter, and not a teacher. He failed in health, and his sun went down at noon. He did but little, because he undertook too much.

The Rev. Dr. B. is an able and excellent man. He is, on principle, opposed to the employment of his members as helps, because, as he thinks, it renders them forward and conceited: and he does very little

Lay effort discouraged.

Encouraged.

out of the pulpit himself. As a consequence, he is formal and stately, his people are cold, and unattractive, and uncemented, and his congregation rapidly on the decline. For his people to meet for mutual exhortation and prayer would be on a par with the sin of those of old who offered strange fire before the Lord. Too many such there are whose only influence is to scatter their people and enfeeble their congregations.

The Rev. Dr. C. is of a different mind. He is a close student. He knows that he can not do every thing, and he seeks to do some things well. He preaches nobly. His Sunday-schools are flourishing. He sets many wheels in motion, but employs hands to guide them. He is the centre of a hundred hands and minds moving around him. The entire machinery of his congregation is of his contrivance; but he only retains the oversight of it. Feeling that active devotedness is the best stimulant to personal religion—that it calls graces into exercise which otherwise would remain dormant, he seeks to employ all the talent of his people in efforts to do good to others. He seeks work for all, and fervently exhorts them to its performance. He circumscribes his own work, and does it like a man. He uses the power of his people to its full extent, and his congregation is as a garden which the Lord has blessed. They all work, and keep always at work, and his and their influence is felt at the ends of the earth.

Much of the wisdom and discretion of ministers is

Ministerial discretion.

made apparent by the manner in which they use the agency of their people to assist them in the discharge of their manifold duties.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Christian Union.—Yet an open Question.—Too many Church Organizations.—Those of the same Doctrine and Order should be united.—Evils of separate Organizations magnified.—By whom.—Platform Liberality.—Ground for Variety of Opinions.—External Unity Utopian.—Unity in Christ.—Unity with Diversity.—The Unity attainable.—A Day-dream.

THE subject of Christian Union—a more fraternal intercourse and co-operation of evangelical ministers and churches—has been a fruitful theme of very fervent discussion for many years past. Many and very excellent volumes have been written on the subject. It has called forth in its discussion some of the ablest minds in the Protestant world. A volume of very able and eloquent “Essays on Christian Union” now lies before us, from the pens of Chalmers, Balmer, Candlish, King, Wardlaw, James, Symington—names known, and revered in all the earth. From year to year, the “Evangelical Alliance,” under the lead of Sir Culling Eardley, has given us eloquent debates and elaborate essays on the subject; and yet the great questions involved are, practically, in the same dim twilight in which they were a quarter of a century ago. Many platforms have been erected, but who have ascended them? Many plans have been formed, but who have adopted them? And while the tone of controversy is milder, and the sectarian spirit

An open question.

Subdivisions needless.

is less bitter, and co-operation in plans and works of benevolence is more extensive than formerly, yet who can say that the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, are now less attached to their peculiarities than formerly. And the question as to Christian union among ministers is one which we have daily to meet, as if a speech were never made, nor a volume ever written on the subject. Indeed, the way in which it has been often discussed has tended rather to repel than to attract—to widen rather than to diminish the space which separates us. Instead of going into a discussion upon this subject, we have only to suggest a few practical thoughts in reference to it.

1. There are many more Church organizations than there ought to be. When they agree, in the main, in doctrine and order, why should there be six or eight Presbyterian bodies, and as many Methodist and Baptist? Whatever excuse might be made for these subdivisions in Europe, there is no reason why they should be transmitted here. Prejudice, and passion, and attachment to party shibboleths have had much more to do with these subdivisions than principle. There should be a coming together of those bodies between which there is a substantial agreement in doctrine and in order. Questions as to psalm-singing, or as to the civil magistrate, or as to the metaphysics of theology, should not keep them apart. Nor should the names of Dutch, Irish, Scotch, or German. These names should be all absorbed in the name American,

Absorption.

Evils magnified.

Platform liberality.

as are the rivers by the sea, which receives and salts them all.

2. The evils of many separate Church organizations are greatly magnified. And this is done by two classes of people; first, by those who, like the Papists and Puseyites, have a Procrustes bed by which to shorten or stretch every body to the canonical dimensions; and, secondly, by *platform orators*, who, for personal ends, declaim against party spirit, and laud a catholic Christianity. The man who goes into the pulpit or who ascends the platform bristling with his peculiarities, is justly regarded as a bigot, and is treated as such; and to shun the imputation, these platform orators magnify the evils of sectarianism, and laud catholic Christianity. And yet some of these will go from the platform to the pulpit, and will exclude all from the ministry save those set apart to that work as themselves; and will go to the communion-table, and exclude from it all save those baptized with their baptism; and will go out among the members of other churches, and ply them with arguments in order to convert them to their Church! Indeed, one of the most thorough partisans of this land is one that has never let slip an opportunity to talk of his catholic views, and who has run up and down the scale of Church opinions so often as to lose the confidence both of the bigoted and the consistently liberal. We never hear *truly* liberal men vaunting their liberality, and those who make it their trade follow it for the profit. For myself, I would be ashamed to be heard claim-

Duplicity.

Diversity.

Separation not schism.

ing credit for my catholicity by declaiming on anniversary platforms as to my readiness to admit that other Christians have as good a title to be considered a fellow-citizen with the saints as I have—a sentiment which every old woman in the land who has tasted that the Lord is gracious holds as a first principle. And yet this is the only claim which many popular declaimers have to Christian liberality. Never is bigotry so detestable as when it looks out from beneath the veil of an angel.

After all, what are the evils resulting to the world from the existence of the Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist, Congregational churches? Who can prove that the world would be better if we were all acting under one organization? or that it would be better for us to live together in discord, than to live separately in peace? There is a foundation in human nature for diversity of opinions. We are no more made to believe alike than to look alike; and when there is such diversity of views as to prevent persons dwelling together in unity, separation becomes a duty. Separation is not schism. And there was no more sin in the Free Church of Scotland going out from the Establishment when the people could no longer agree, than there was in the separation of Abraham and Lot. If the twelve tribes were all the tribes of Israel—if the varied battalions ranged under their separate banners make but one army, why may not the different evangelical churches be all component parts of the Church of Christ?

 The mourners.

Where is union ?

The oneness of Christ.

3. Those who mourn most over the evils resulting from the want of external unity are those who mourn that all persons do not think with them! If all believed in apostolical succession, or in the supremacy of the Pope, or in baptism by immersion, what a happy and successful life might the Church lead! And some branches of the Church are gravely invited to drop their own peculiarities and to accept of those of others for the sake of external union! If we would all only submit to immersion, and become Baptists! If we would all only receive ordination from bishops, and believe in bishops, priests, and deacons! The external union of the Church is to be secured only in union with these! But are all those who believe in immersion united? If so, in what, save that rite? Are they even as to the efficacy of the rite? Are all who believe in Prelacy united? If so, in what? In nothing, from the wearing of a surplice, up to the great doctrine of justification by faith. Nor does any schism now more afflict the Church of God than that which divides the Episcopal Church into high and low. There is an external unity, but a real and very angry schism. Indeed, the oneness of which the Savior speaks never has been and never can be obtained by a mere external unity. All minds can not be made to think in the same line; all conscientious convictions can not be made to run in the same channel. No ecclesiastical laws—no fires of persecution, have been able to accomplish this. The object is Utopian, and none should waste their energies in seeking to attain it.

Union and diversity.

Schismatics.

Real union.

4. There is a unity in Christ, consistent with diversity of opinion on non-essentials to salvation, which all should seek. The tree is one tree, however many may be its separate branches. It is the union of the branches in the root, and not the union of the branches among themselves, that make it one tree. Who ever saw a tree with only one branch? As the vine is one, however numerous may be its branches, so the Church of Christ is one, however numerous may be its branches; and the real schismatics of our world are those who deny a church-standing to those who believe in Christ because they do not belong to them. They exalt a mere sacrament or church law above faith in Jesus Christ, and are guilty of the folly of the Bishop of Rome, who excommunicated the Eastern churches because they would not keep Easter at the right time—a feast as to which not a word is said in all the New Testament!

Unity with diversity is the law of God in the moral as in the physical world. We are but one race, although differing in many respects; and the truly converted all belong to the Church of Christ, although they may differ in many minor matters. One is a Calvinist, another an Arminian; both may be true Christians, and should so love one another. One is a Presbyterian, another an Episcopalian; both may be true Christians, and should so love one another. One believes only in baptism of believers by immersion; another believes in infant baptism, and regards the application of water as sufficient; they may be both

 The union attainable.

The way to it.

 Utopian.

Christians, and should so treat one another. These all are united in Christ, but differ as to minor matters. And there is a much wider field for the exercise of Christian principles toward those from whom we differ than toward those with whom we agree.

On the whole, the Christian unity which is sensible and attainable is a cordial love to those who love Christ, however, in the lesser matters of the law, they may differ from it; and a free Christian communion with them. Nothing is gained by declamation and high profession when the sectarian walls are never taken down nor crossed. One Episcopal minister who would freely interchange pulpits with other Christian ministers—one immersion Baptist minister who would freely exchange services at the communion-table with other Christian ministers, would do more for the promotion of true Christian unity than all the speeches that have yet been made, than all the essays yet written on the subject. There is no reason why Robert Hall, Thomas Scott, Thomas Chalmers, James Milnor, Archibald Alexander, John M. Mason, John Summerfield, should not exchange pulpits, and intercommune, without either giving up their peculiarities. And this is the Christian communion which, in the present state of man, is either attainable or desirable. We may be different as the branches, but one as the tree; different as the waves, but one as the sea; different as members of the body, but one in Christ the head. Short of this is sectarian bigotry; to seek more than this is Utopian. The external

*Seeds of persecution.**Day-dream.*

union of all Christians is a dream ; to be one in Christ is the fervent desire of all true hearts. For myself, I could not belong to a Church which, for any reason, would forbid my exchanging pulpits with any evangelical minister, or my communing with any Christian people, and for the reason that I would be giving my sanction to a principle false and intolerant, and which has folded up in it the seeds of persecution. But the union of Christian people in one body ecclesiastic is a visionary day-dream.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FAITHFUL MINISTER.

To be not a learned, or eloquent, or popular, but "a faithful minister," is the very highest distinction to which a preacher of the Gospel can attain. It is a comprehensive phrase, including many particulars, and instead of discussing it ourselves, we present the following analysis of it by Thomas Fuller, who died in 1660. Though quaint, it is rich.

"He endeavors to get the general love and good-will of his parish. This he doth, not so much to make a benefit of them as a benefit for them, that his ministry may be more effectual; otherwise he may preach his own heart out before he preach any thing into theirs. The good opinion of a physician is half a cure, and his practice will scarce be happy where his person is hated. Yet he humors them not in his doctrine to get their love, for such a spaniel is worse than a dumb dog. He shall sooner get their good-will by walking uprightly than by crouching and creeping. If pious living and painful laboring in his calling will not win their affections, he counts it gain to lose them. As for those who causelessly hate him, he pities and prays for them; and such there will be. I should suspect his preaching had no salt in it if no galled horse did wince.

His conversation.

Courteous.

Catechises.

“*He is strict in ordering his conversation.* It was said of one who preached very well and lived very ill, ‘That when he was out of the pulpit it was a pity he should ever go into it, and when he was in the pulpit it was a pity he should ever come out of it.’ But our minister lives sermons. And yet I deny not but dissolute men, like unskillful horsemen, who open a gate on the wrong side, may, by virtue of their office, open heaven for others and shut themselves out.

“*His behavior toward his people is grave and courteous.* Not too austere and retired, which is laid to the charge of good Mr. Hooper, the martyr, that his rigidity frightened people from consulting him. ‘Let your light,’ saith Christ, ‘shine before men;’ whereas over-reservedness makes the brightest virtue burn dim. Especially he detesteth affected gravity (which is rather *on* men than *in* them), whereby some belie their register-book, antedate their age to seem far older than they are, and plait and set their brows in an affected sadness. Whereas St. Anthony, the monk, might have been known among hundreds of his order by his cheerful face, he having ever (though a most mortified man) a merry countenance.

“*He carefully catechises his people in the elements of religion.* Even Luther did not scorn to profess himself a scholar of the Catechism. By this catechising the Gospel got ground of Popery; and let not our religion, now grown rich, be ashamed of that which first gave it credit and set it up, lest the Jesuits beat us at our own weapon. Through the want of this

He studies.

Preaches from the heart.

Reproves sin.

catechising, many who are well skilled in some dark out-corners of divinity have lost themselves in the beaten road thereof.

“He will not offer to God that which costs him nothing, but takes pains beforehand for his sermons. Demosthenes never made any oration on the sudden; yea, being called upon, he never rose up to speak except he had well studied the matter; and he was wont to say that he showed how he honored and revered the people of Athens, because he was careful what he spake unto them. Indeed, if our minister be surprised with a sudden occasion, he counts himself rather to be excused than commended, if, premeditating only the bones of his sermon, he clothe it with flesh extempore. As for those whose long custom hath made preaching their nature, that they can discourse sermons without study, he accounts their examples rather to be admired than imitated.

“Having brought his sermon into his head, he labors to bring it into his heart before he preaches it to his people. Surely that preaching which comes from the soul most works on the soul.

“He chiefly reproves the reigning sins of the time and place he lives in. We may observe that our Savior never inveighed against idolatry, usury, Sabbath-breaking, among the Jews; not that these were not sins, but that they were not practiced so much in that age, wherein wickedness was spun with a finer thread; and therefore Christ principally bent the drift of his preaching against spiritual pride, hypoc-

How he does it.

How he quotes Scripture.

risky, and traditions, then predominant among the people. Also our minister confuteth no old heresies which time hath confuted, nor troubles his auditory with such strange, hideous cases of conscience that it is more hard to find the case than the resolution. In public reprovng of sin, he ever whips the vice, but spares the person.

“He doth not only move the bread of life, and toss it up and down in generalities, but also breaks it into particular directions, drawing it down to cases of conscience, that a man may be warranted in his particular actions, whether they be lawful or not. And he teacheth people their lawful liberty, as well as their restraints and prohibitions; for among men it is as ill taken to turn back favors as to disobey commands.

“The places of Scripture he quotes are pregnant and pertinent. As for heaping up of many quotations, it smacks of a vain ostentation of memory. Besides, it is as impossible that the hearer should retain them all as that the preacher hath seriously perused them all; yea, while the auditors stop their attention, and stoop down to gather an impertinent quotation, the sermon runs on, and they lose more substantial matter.

“His similes and illustrations are always familiar, never contemptible. Indeed, reasons are the pillars of the fabric of a sermon, but similitudes are the windows which give the best lights. He avoids such stories whose mention may suggest bad thoughts to the auditors, and will not use a light comparison to

Food provided.	Length of sermons.	Success.
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make thereof a grave application, for fear lest this poison go farther than his antidote.

“He provideth not only wholesome, but plentiful food for his people. Almost incredible was the painfulness of Baronius, the compiler of the voluminous Annals of the Church, who, for thirty years together, preached three or four times a week to the people. As for our minister, he preferreth rather to entertain his people with wholesome cold meat, which was on the table before, than with that which is hot from the spit, raw, and half roasted. Yet, in repetition of the same sermon, every edition hath a new addition, if not of new matter, of new affections. ‘Of whom,’ saith St. Paul, ‘we have told you often, and now we tell you weeping.’

“He makes not that wearisome which should ever be welcome. Wherefore his sermons are of an ordinary length, except on extraordinary occasions. What a gift had John Halsebach, professor at Vienna, in tediousness! who, being to expound the prophet Isaiah to his auditors, read twenty-one years on the first chapter, and yet finished it not.

“He counts the success of his ministry the greatest preferment. Yet herein God hath humbled many painful pastors, in making them to be clouds to rain, not over Arabia the Happy, but over the Stony or Desert; yet such pastors may comfort themselves that great is their reward with God in heaven, who measures it not by their success, but endeavors. Besides, though they see not, their people may feel benefited by their

Care of the sick.

His opinions.

Social.

ministry. Yea, the preaching of the Word in some places is like the planting of woods, where, though no profit is secured for twenty years together, it comes afterward. And grant that God honors thee not to build his temple in thy parish, yet thou mayest, with David, provide metals and materials for Solomon thy successor to build it with.

“ To sick folks he comes sometimes before he is sent for, as counting his vocation a sufficient calling. None of his flock shall want the extreme unction of prayer and counsel.

“ He is moderate in his tenets and opinions. Not that he gilds over lukewarmness in matters of moment with the title of discretion, but withal he is careful not to entitle violence in indifferent and inconcerning matters to be zeal. Indeed, men of extraordinary tallness (though otherwise little deserving) are made porters to lords, and those of unusual littleness are made ladies' dwarfs, while men of moderate stature may want masters. Thus many notorious for extremities may find favorers to prefer them, while moderate men in the middle truth may want any to advance them. But what saith the apostle? ‘If in this life only we had hope, we are of all men the most miserable.’

“ He is sociable, and willing to do any courtesy for his neighbor ministers. He willingly communicates his knowledge unto them. Surely the gifts and graces of Christians lay in common till base envy made the first inclosure. He neither slighteth his inferiors, nor

His family.

His death-bed legacy.

repineth at those who in parts and credit are above him. He loveth the company of his neighbor ministers. Sure as ambergris is nothing so sweet in itself as when it is compounded with other things, so both godly and learned men are gainers by communicating themselves to their neighbors.

“He is careful in the discreet ordering of his own family. A good minister and a good father may well agree together. When a certain Frenchman came to visit Melancthon, he found him in his study, with one hand dandling his child, and in the other holding a book and reading it. Our minister, also, is as hospitable as his estate will permit, and makes every alms two by his cheerful giving it.

“Lying on his death-bed, he bequeaths to each of his parishioners his precepts and example for a legacy, and they, in requital, erect every one a monument for him in their hearts. He is so far from that base jealousy that his memory should be outshined by a brighter successor, and from that wicked desire that his people may find his worth by the worthlessness of him that succeeds, that he doth heartily pray to God to provide them a better pastor after his decease. As for outward estate, he commonly lives in too bare pasture to die fat. It is well if he hath gathered any flesh, being more in blessing than in bulk.”

With ministers answering this description may every branch of the Church of God be blessed.

This a propitious day.

The battle won.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ADDRESS TO THE YOUTHFUL MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

My dear Brethren,—With the present topic we conclude all we have now to say on preachers and preaching, and we desire to close the series by a kind and affectionate address to you, who are pressing forward, more rapidly than you are aware, to the front rank of the ministry, and who are soon to take the place of the fathers who are so rapidly laying aside the weapons of their warfare on the brink of the grave.

You enter on the labors of the ministry at a most propitious time. The great battles with infidelity have been fought and won. The ablest minds that God has created have discussed the various topics of doctrine and order which have divided the Christian Church; nor is it assuming too much to say that they have all been settled in favor of what is technically known as the "Evangelical System." If error, and formalism, and fanaticism yet live, and oppose themselves to the truth, they live not as baleful trees overshadowing the garden of the Lord, but as roots of bitterness, like unto remaining depravity in the heart; and they oppose the truth, not with the bold, cheerful heart which anticipates victory, but with the craven,

 The world open.

The Church awake.

 Advantages.

cowardly aspect produced by repeated defeat. Beyond any previous age, the Gospel has a clear and wide space on which to carry on its glorious mission.

And the field, which is the world, is open to its heavenly influence. Turkey, India, China, Japan, Africa, the Islands of the Sea, closed or undiscovered sixty years ago, are now open and white unto the harvest, and already has the Gospel been preached to their swarming millions. And the Church, which, at the opening of this century, was folding its hands to sleep—was drawing the curtains of its couch around it, preparing for long repose—is now instinct with the spirit of life, and is seeking to give the Gospel to every creature. Samuel J. Mills, and Hall, and Carey, and Martyn, and Scudder have lived and died; others of like spirit have been raised up to take their place; and now, instead of hearing the hammers of the different branches of the Evangelical Church ringing upon each other's gates, we see them all taxing their resources, with ever-increasing liberality, to give the Gospel to every creature! It is amid advantages like these that you enter upon the duties of your ministry in the Church of God. True, Romanism is yet what it has ever been, the foe of a simple Gospel and of human liberty; and Islamism is what it has ever been, fanatical in its opposition to our Christianity; and heathenism is what it has ever been, carnal, sensual, devilish; but the walls behind which they have intrenched themselves have fallen flat as those of Jericho, and their darkness is fast dis-

A right heart.

Love to Christ.

Diligence in study.

appearing as the sun of righteousness is ascending the sky. And with a ministry up to the spirit of our times, and with a firm purpose to use all its advantages to the full, very soon will the Gospel be preached to every creature. And to induce you to be able ministers of the New Testament in a day such as is ours, is our object in this article.

1. See to it that your heart is right in the sight of God. By this we mean, not that you should be satisfied that you are a Christian, but that you are a Christian up to the point of consecration requisite to be a minister. It is required in a minister that he endure hardness as a good soldier—that he fight the good fight of faith. Nothing less than a love for Christ stronger than all other loves will enable you to do this. Love to Christ will enable you to rejoice when suffering for his name's sake. It will make your feet as hind's feet in every path of duty. Love makes every burden easy and every yoke light. One of our martyred missionaries in India was heard to say, when all hope of escape from the Sepoys was surrendered, that she could only rejoice that she was permitted to go to that land to tell the people about Jesus.

2. Be a diligent student. This you especially need to be if your education was limited, and this you are able to be if thoroughly educated. Let your first money be spent in getting a good biblical apparatus, and then use it constantly. Wesley thus admonishes one of his lazy preachers: "Your talent in preach-

 Wesley's admonition.

Industry.

 Advice of an old minister.

ing does not increase; it is the same as it was seven years ago; it is lively, but not deep; there is no variety, and no compass of thought. Whether you like it or not, study daily; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a petty, superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul. Give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer." There is vast need of this exhortation now. In this day of intelligence and action, when many mechanics know more than did the doctors of the Sorbonne two centuries ago, a pastor without severe study is but little worth. Pious commonplace and driveling, even when warm, and earnest, and honest, is sinking to its true value.

3. Be industrious. Look around you. Nobody succeeds in any calling save by industry, whether lawyer, physician, farmer, merchant, or mechanic. You can tell the house and the farm of the sluggard, and so you can the church and the people of an indolent minister. The vineyard of the Lord needs laborers, not idlers. And God looks upon an idle minister as a farmer looks upon an idle laborer, or as a master looks upon an idle servant. An old minister thus writes to a young one: "There is a fashion among us to speak of our employment in the service of Christ as *labor*, which I fear tends to make young men overrate their actual exertions. I would not make disparaging comparisons; but why should not a minister be ready to work as much every day as the physician and the lawyer? They write, read,

Work as do others.

Advice of Evans.

Idleness.

study, converse, as we do. Their lungs are no stronger; their frames are no more robust. With as much excitement in our duties, we shall be likely to have as much vigor in performing them. Dismiss the notion that you must be tired every service. Do not believe that Monday is to be sacrificed to rest. Begin on that day fresh from the pleasures of the Sabbath, and you can do more than on any other day, and you will have no crowding on Saturday—perhaps trespassing on the holy day itself, with what ought to be entirely off your hands before it dawns.” There is much sense and force in all this. Bad habits do more in breaking down ministers than hard work.

The pious Christmas Evans, when he was about putting off his harness, thus wrote to a young minister: “I am old, my dear boy, and you are just entering the ministry. Let me now, and here, tell you one thing, and commend it to your attention and memory. All the ministers that I have ever known who have fallen into disgrace or into uselessness *have been idle men*. An idle man is in the way of every temptation. Temptation has not to seek him; he is at the corner of the street ready and waiting for it. In the case of a minister of the Gospel, this peril is multiplied by his position, his neglected duties, the temptations peculiar to his condition, and his superior susceptibility. *Remember this—stick to your book*. I am never much afraid of a young minister when I know that he can, and does, fairly sit down to his book. There is Mr.

Industry gives leisure.

Examples.

Write sermons.

———, of such unhappy temper, and who has such a love to meddle with every thing: he would long ago have been utterly wrecked, but his habits of industry saved him." Let no merchant in the town—no lawyer or physician of your acquaintance—no farmer of your parish, be more industrious than you in their calling. Give not a day of your life but for its worth. Industry will keep you always busy and always at leisure. It will give you time for every thing, and enable you to do every thing in its time, and to perfect every thing you undertake. It will aid you in writing short sermons. It will bless you and your people, and the Church, in a thousand ways. And examples for your imitation you will find in Luther, Calvin, Baxter, Wesley—in every man, in every department of life, who has risen to high position among his fellows. Shepherd, himself a great preacher, used to say, "God will curse that man's labors who goes idly up and down all the week, and then goes into his study on Saturday." When his friends sought to persuade Newton, when upward of eighty years, to preach no more, he replied, "I can not stop: what! shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can speak!"

4. Write your sermons, and write them with all care. You may or may not read them from the pulpit, but be sure to write them. There are those who would advise to the contrary, but many of them are the best possible refutation of their own theory. The very worst model of a preacher with whom I am acquainted is the one who inveighs most loudly against

The pastor and elder.

A sermon a week.

A comparison.

“reading the Gospel,” and who could not write if he had the desire. Not long since we were in conversation with a pastor who was lauding extempore preaching, and telling of his success in that direction. In a few hours afterward we met an elder of his church, of fine culture, who thus addressed us: “I saw you in conversation with our pastor; could you not induce him to write his sermons? He is feeding us on the wind since he left off writing.” There are those of peculiar mental habits who can preach best without writing, but they are the exceptions. Unless you wish to join the “flying artillery” of the host of God’s elect, write carefully a sermon a week, at least. I would not advise you to write more. Do this as long as God spares you, and yours will be a green and useful old age. Look around you. Compare the men of seventy who have written their sermons carefully, with those of the same age who have written carelessly, or not at all—and *be wise*. We would say to every young minister, write a sermon a week; write it carefully; make it as perfect, plain, powerful as possible, if you wish to be a workman—if you wish to be permanently useful—if you wish to feed the flock of God—if you wish to be useful down to old age. The preacher of truth should set it forth in what Solomon calls “acceptable words.” Genteel drapery detracts nothing from it. If he would not decorate it with lace and embroidery, he should not permit it to go forth in the shabby garb of an old gentlewoman fallen to decay. By so doing he degrades it and himself.

Ardent manner.

Hot hearts.

How secured.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ADDRESS TO THE YOUTHFUL MINISTRY OF THE
CHURCH—*Continued.*

WE have a few more things yet to say to the youthful ministry of the Church.

5. Cultivate an ardent manner in the pulpit. "We want men of *hot hearts* to tell us of the love of Christ," said, once, a converted pagan. And this is a want of Christian as of unchristian lands. Many preachers are cold, very cold. They are correct and dignified, but formal and cold. The round of service is decently performed; but it has no life, and imparts none. The people will sleep unless the minister wakes them; they will be at ease in Zion unless the minister denounces a woe against their indolence. The people need heat as well as light; and the Church has quite enough of that preaching which is as cold as moonbeams.

"Hot hearts" are not secured simply by study, nor by speculations in the line of German rationalism, nor by the preparation of logical or rhetorical essays; they must be sought of God who alone can give them. However small your audience or trite your subject, always seek to interest and to make your hearers feel. Never forget that your grand

Saving a soul.

Hobbies.

Their riders.

mission is to beseech men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. Never ascend the pulpit without seeking to impress this truth on your own heart. There is a day coming when the knowledge of having been the instrument of saving one soul will yield you more real satisfaction than having attained the loftiest heights of human ambition. Be fervent in the pulpit—fervent, in opposition to a manner tame or boisterous. God was not in the whirlwind.

6. Beware of hobbies. The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth. The Gospel is God's great remedy for all the woes of our race; and, if the Gospel can not remove them, what can? As a minister of the Gospel, you are to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. This should be your only hobby. This you can always and every where ride. Men may hate your doctrines, but they will honor your fidelity; they may reject your message, but they will pronounce you a faithful ambassador. Other hobbies soon break down, and may break you down. We have known many young ministers of fine parts who, in their early ministry, have given themselves to hobbies, and, with but few exceptions, they have done but little, save to excite controversy and split churches. They have been mere firebrands, walking in the light of the sparks of their own kindling. And we have known others, of very ordinary abilities, who, by a simple continuance in preaching Christ, have written their names on the rock forever. And even when a man after a few years gets tired of his

Men at discount.

Stability.

Changelings.

hobbies, and returns to the simple work of preaching Christ, there are suspicions about him in the public mind which are not easily allayed. We know a few such, of fine talents, of earnest piety, of more than ordinary power, and yet their early life has placed them at a discount from which they may never recover. As a rule, the minister who only deserts a hobby when he has rode it to death had better die with it. He is damaged beyond recovery. And people flock to hear the successful in the race, as they flock to Niagara to see how wonderfully a French maniac can balance himself on a wire over the frightful chasm which it spans. Eloquent abuse and grand nonsense always attract, but they never give high character.

7. Be stable. Form your opinions carefully, and then abide by them. You will spoil your watch if you are ever moving its hands backward and forward to suit a variety of other watches around you; so a minister who is ever shaping his opinions to the whims, and tastes, and opinions of those around him will soon fall into contempt. Some believe with the last book read, some with the last argument they hear, some with the last prejudice excited. The truth, in some minds, never takes root. It rather floats on the surface, like the light substances that always go with the current. Mr. A. came to the seminary a New School man, then he became a rabid revivalist, then he became Old School—far older than Calvin or the Erskines—then, in three weeks, he went

An example.	Location.	Rolling stone.
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up to the highest rung in the Episcopal ladder; he was on his way to Rome when he died at the "Three Taverns," just before the arrival of the brethren with shorn pates to greet him. He forfeited the confidence of every body. And when a man in midlife makes a radical change in his opinions, however honest, it is always at the expense of his sense. And when a stone commences rolling down the hill, it is hard to stop it. I never knew a minister change his opinions for which there was not some reason other than the one avowed. And be stable as to your location. Be careful as to your first settlement; and when you consider and avow yourself "called of God" to a certain place, be careful how you leave it. No man can stand five or six settlements in twenty years, when ecclesiastical law, as among the Methodists, does not require it! Mr. G. is not yet forty years old, and already has he been connected with three denominations, and has been pastor of five churches, and is now seeking a sixth! He is almost too old to take root. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Remember the proverb about the rolling stone. Ministers are like trees, they do not bear to be often transplanted.

8. Cultivate a Christian temper toward all men. Adhere to your own principles strongly, but treat with Christian kindness and courtesy those that differ from you. Principles are very important, but they need to be adorned by the graces to render them attractive.

Christian temper.

The old leaven.

A question.

Beware of the unchurched dogmas of our day—of sacramentarianism. They are all the leaven of the old Pharisees. They are as hateful now as of old. Cultivate a true love for all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, but never permit your Christian liberality to degenerate into that licentiousness which regards all principles alike. Men who regard all principles alike have no principles themselves, and are not to be trusted. Kindly treat those that oppose themselves, unless they are malignants, then simply quit their company. Be not hasty to wipe off every aspersion that is cast on you falsely for Christ's sake. Let them alone for a while, and then, like mud on your clothes, they will rub off when dry. A calm, Christian temper, under the influence of love to God and man, is a great help to holiness; it is the very sunshine of the soul. And it is entirely consistent with an open and manly defense of the right and the true.

* But you will ask, Are all these ministerial qualifications attainable by ordinary preachers of the Gospel? We reply without hesitation, they are. We admit a great variety in the tastes, the talents, the tempers of men. Habits, too, may be early acquired, which it may be very difficult to change. But the worst mental and moral habits have been overcome, and impediments deemed insuperable have been removed. And that men may surmount manifold obstacles, and become models, as ministers, in the exhibition of all the Christian graces and virtues, our religious biogra-

Attainable.

Dr. J. W. Alexander.

His piety.

phy abundantly proves. Nor need we go, for proof or illustration that the qualifications stated are attainable, far into the past, where the vices of men fall into the shade of their virtues; nor far away, where defects become invisible by distance, as do the spots on the sun. The proof and illustration we find nearer home, in our own age, and in the midst of us.

The Church of Christ in this land is yet like a widow in her weeds, with her tears on her cheeks, because of the unexpected removal from her service of Dr. James W. Alexander. He fell in the ripeness of his years, and in the midst of his usefulness, with his armor on, and on the field of conflict. And why is it that such a universal sorrowing is heard from every branch of the Church of God, and from every part of the land? He was a noble preacher of the Gospel, but he has left equally excellent and more impressive behind him. He was a truly devout man, whose piety and motives were beyond suspicion, but the same may be said, and with equal emphasis, of many that survive him. He was a fine and accurate scholar, and a writer of exquisite taste and beauty, but the same may be said of many of his contemporaries who yet live to bless their generation. His great excellence did not consist in the grand development of any one ministerial gift or grace, but in the sweet and harmonious blending of them all.

His piety was sincere and simple, and as far removed from the sour and sanctimonious as possible. When in good frame, and among his friends, he was

A student.

His sermons.

An exception.

the most cheerful of men; full of wit, humor, and anecdote, and in these respects often recalling the image of his sainted father.

He was a student of rare industry. The evidence of this we have in the number of languages he acquired—in his published works—in the sermons he preached, each of which seemed to be a model in their way, and exhaustive of their subjects. And to meet the wants of such a congregation as was his, and the calls made upon his time, he must have been as industrious a pastor as he was a student. We have never heard of any interest of his congregation suffering for the want of attention.

While he carefully prepared his sermons, they were models of simplicity. His thoughts and language were clear as the water of the river of life. He gave, not the processes by which he reached conclusions, but the results. He often extemporized, and well, because his mind was full and his tongue fluent. And this he did with universal satisfaction, save in the case of the colored congregation at Princeton, which he served as pastor when there as professor. They thought they needed written sermons as well as the white congregations. The very simplicity which was one of his great charms every where else was there regarded as a defect, which it was thought might be remedied by writing. Nor are they the only people who esteem a man profound in the proportion of his big words and obscure sentences, and unlearned in the proportion of his simplicity and clearness.

Pulpit manner.

No hobbies.

His charity.

His manner in the pulpit was not boisterous nor declamatory. It was as far removed from the artificial—the start theatric—as possible. But it was earnest and ardent, and, at times, deeply impressive, although his voice was not the best in its intonations. He had a heart in sympathy with every truth he uttered, and never failed to impress. There are many preachers that would excel him in a few sermons, but we know of but few that would as fully and as constantly instruct or permanently attach a people.

He rode no hobbies, nor had he much sympathy for those who did. Christ and him crucified was his one, great, only theme. While his own views were ardently cherished, and his principles were fixed as the laws of nature, his modesty and gentleness forbade him to obtrude them on others. He felt, and truly, that what ministers gain in noisy conventions and in the pursuit of mere humanitarian reforms, they lose in the pulpit and as preachers of the Gospel.

And his Christian charity was as wide as the world. No man was more strongly attached to his own Church, to its principles and doctrines; none had a more heartfelt love to all who love Christ in sincerity and truth. All who loved Christ were his brethren. He would as soon attempt to confine the air of heaven, or the light of the sun, or the falling rain or dew to his denomination, as the Church of God to the same narrow boundaries. All that thing he gave over, with a smile, to church fanatics. And hence the cry of mourning and lamentation which rose

His sympathies.

His letters.

His advantages.

from the entire church of God as the sad intelligence of his death flew over the land.

His sympathies were deep and refined, and manifested themselves on all appropriate occasions. He had often drunk of the cup of affliction himself, and well knew how to comfort others with the comforts with which he himself was comforted of God. He was a son of Consolation to the mourning; he was afflicted in their affliction, and often, as it would seem, more deeply than the sorrowing themselves. Nor in this was he confined to the people of his own charge. If the many letters written to afflicted friends and acquaintances could be collected, we have no doubt they would make a volume rich in instruction to every mourning household. Hence, while loved by all his people, he was peculiarly loved by those who were called to drink of the cup of sorrow.

What, in all these respects, Dr. Alexander was, we would fervently exhort the rising ministry of the Church to seek to be. True, he had advantages of early training above many; he had the advice and the prestige of an honored father almost through life; he was endowed by nature with peculiar qualifications, all of which tended to make him the man that he was; but, after all, the grace of God and his own personal habits and industry did more for him than all other causes and advantages combined.

And we would fervently and affectionately hold up to the rising ministry of the Church of God in

A model for imitation.

this land the character of Dr. James W. Alexander as a model for their imitation. In the sweet blending of ministerial gifts and graces he has left no superior, and but few equals, behind him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PARISHES AND PEOPLE.

Wrong Views of the Ministry.

HAVING said so much about ministers, their habits, their manners, their preaching, their temper, their spirit, it is but fair to discuss with equal freedom the habits, the manners, the temper, the spirit of parishes and people toward the ministry. If ministers owe important duties to the Church, and are bound by the most sacred obligations to perform them, parishes and people owe corresponding duties to their ministers, and lie under equally solemn obligations to perform them. The obligations, like Irish reciprocity, are not all on one side.

Ministers are ambassadors for Christ; and, when true ministers, they should be received and treated in a manner worthy of their calling. Like civil ambassadors, they differ widely in ability and power; but yet they are clothed with the authority of heaven, and are set apart for a peculiar work—a work on whose successful performance the salvation of men hangs suspended. And while, as a rule, they draw around them the affections of the best and the good, yet are they often spoken of and treated in a way

Wrong views.

Talents.

Dr. Owen.

which renders their character as ambassadors for Christ subordinate to something else.

Some regard the ministry only when connected with high talent. Hence, when a church is seeking a pastor, the great inquiry is as to his talents. If these are high and commanding, other defects fall into the shade. Talents are God's gifts; it is a cause of thankfulness to see them, as in the case of Moses, Paul, Pascal, Luther, Edwards, Hall, Chalmers, consecrated to the services and duties of the ministry; but the men of the greatest genius have not been the most successful ministers. Dr. A. was a man of the very highest reputation as a scholar, orator, and logician; and plain Mr. B. was scarcely known beyond the bounds of the city; and yet the ministry of the one was barren of results, while that of the other was eminently successful. The treasure is put into earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may appear to be of God. On going to hear Dr. Calamy, Dr. Owen felt disappointed on seeing a very plain man ascending the pulpit. His simple, fervent prayer deeply interested him; his sermon delighted him, as it cleared away doubts from his mind which had long distressed him. How often are simple-hearted people led to Christ by the simple truth so presented as often to excite opposition in the minds of those who are less interested in the truth than in the garb in which it is presented! Jay tells us of a spruce young minister, of "the spread eagle" stamp, who was ridiculing a very plain but laborious and useful pastor in a pro-

A reproof.

Genius.

Inquiry for a minister.

miscuous company. A senior minister thus reproved him : " Sir, I never heard any one admire you except yourself, but I have heard many speak well of the labors of this good man ; I have never heard of any good you have done, but I have recently admitted two persons to my church who were brought to the knowledge of Christ under his ministry."

Parishes and people greatly mistake in placing too high a value upon mere talent in the ministry. It is not the best gift in any department of life unless rightly controlled and directed. The finest genius does not make the best merchant, or banker, or lawyer, or doctor, or politician. Genius, like steam, to work well, must be kept under control, otherwise it may produce disaster and ruin. The earnest, sincere, plodding minister will be of more permanent use to a people than the mere genius who occasionally roars like the thunder, and coruscates like the lightning, and then goes to rest until some new occasion, like the meeting of clouds, produces again a new and brilliant explosion. And the most feeble congregations are falling into this mistake. They all need men of talents. A plain elder called upon a pastor to inquire as to a minister for his church. " What kind of a minister do you want ?" said the pastor. " Oh," said he, " we have a very peculiar people ; we are made up of atheists, and infidels, and Universalists, and of people following all kinds of errors, and we need a man of learning to confute them all, and a man of eloquence to attract them all, and a man of

An answer.

Piety and genius.

Judiciousness.

good manners to please them all." "What about piety?" said the pastor. "Oh, we need a pious man too," was the reply, with a tone somewhat lowered. And this was an elder from a small congregation in a mountainous district of the country, to reach which was a task of no little difficulty. The pastor told him that the celebrated Dr. —, then enjoying a world-wide fame, might possibly suit them. They might call him, but it was doubtful whether he would come for their salary. The elder had wit enough to see the irony, and laughed at his and their folly as heartily as the pastor.

Genius in a minister is good, but earnest piety and industry are better. The truly godly, laborious ministers have been the pillars of the Church; men of distinguished ability, with little else, if not its corrupters and disturbers, have been little more than its ornaments. A church was divided between two candidates for the pulpit—the one had genius, and eloquence, and impressiveness of address; the other was solid, and scholarly, and laborious, and truly pious. The first carried the vote of the people; the friends of the other withdrew, and, forming a new congregation, settled him. They labored side by side for years. The man of genius went down to the bottom, the other went up to the top. And this is but an instance of cases which will occur to every mind.

When judicious men even buy a horse, they desire one that works steady in the traces; so, when they need a lawyer or physician, they employ those who

A mistake.

An illustration.

An aphorism.

have patience to examine their cases and industry to attend to them. Why should it be different with churches in calling a pastor? That it is so is very obvious. Talents are placed before piety, eloquence before solid instruction, and self-conceit is often permitted, with iron shoes, to walk over modest worth. The Rev. Mr. — is very smart. He dresses in taste. He is full of himself to an overflow. He is always ready for any exhibition of his parts—when he is to be reported. He tells a story well. He sometimes hits the nail on the head, but more frequently misses it. He can talk on any subject, whether he understands it or not. Men of sense understand him. And yet Mr. — is a very popular man; the ladies admire his fancy; some people consider him an ornament to the country. And he would please three congregations in which a man tenfold his superior in every thing but appearance and confidence would be voted a bore. It would seem as if the error of congregations and people here was beyond correction. They forget that the clock which strikes twelve the first time does not strike thirteen the next, and may strike one. And so often have we seen this mistake made, and by the same people, that we are forced to a full belief in the aphorism of good Dr. Miller, and which he was so fond of repeating, “Almost nobody has got no sense.” The parish and people that place talents and show before piety and devotedness are sure to reap their reward.

Some people are entirely wrapped up in their fa-

The favorite.

Hearers.

A moving scene.

vorite. Of course, when a people have selected a pastor from all others, they should prefer him to all others; this is both natural and allowable. But this is a different thing from feeling that nobody else is worth hearing. This latter is very sinful, and is alike injurious to minister and people. How many there are who go to church when their idol preaches, and who stay at home when he does not! How many there are who watch the pulpit to see who enters it, and who go away unless their favorite is there! These go not to worship, nor to learn, but to hear the man of pleasant voice, of a lively imagination—whose sermons are so pleasant, or so stirring, or so funny, or so full of incident. We went on a certain occasion to hear one of the popular sensation preachers. The house was crowded. Benches were in the aisles. Soon a stranger entered the pulpit, and the crowd about the door disappeared at once. The benches and some of the pews were soon emptied, and very soon we could gain a comfortable seat. And the strange preacher delivered a sermon in truthfulness and power such as we have but rarely heard, and such as the preacher who drew crowds could no more write than he could the *Novum Organum*, or *Paradise Lost*. In fact, the true worship of God is very much forgotten by multitudes who go to fashionable churches, and to hear popular preachers on the Sabbath. They go to see, or to be seen, or to be pleased, not to worship or to be instructed. And, as said a worn-out, godly, but old-fashioned minister to a young

Fastidiousness.

Its punishment.

Ministers men.

pastor who invited him to preach for him, "Oh," said he, "your people will not receive the Gospel unless it is served up to them in silver dishes with golden spoons."

Conduct like this will bring, sooner or later, its own punishment. If the minister is a good man, he may be removed. May it not be that the idolatry with which a Heber, a Spenser, a M'Cheyne, a Summerfield were regarded, was the cause of their removal? God will not give his glory to another, nor permit even his own best servants to divide it with him; and, if they are permitted to live, he may render their service unprofitable. To how many parishes may not the language of Paul to the Corinthians be now addressed: "For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor."

Ministers are men—neither perfect nor faultless. The higher their abilities, the greater, often, are their constitutional defects; and when high talents are withheld, great moral virtues are often imparted. We find the law of compensation here as every where else. They are messengers to be heeded, and

How to be treated.

not idols to be worshiped. They are not to be abused for their defects, but to be highly esteemed in love for their works' sake. They are often sinfully praised and shamefully abused without good cause for either.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DUTIES OF THE CHURCHES TO THE MINISTRY.

Duty of the Church to sustain the Ministry.

WE have already, in these pages, perhaps, sufficiently set forth the importance of the Christian ministry to all the institutions of men, civil, moral, intellectual, social, as well as religious. Other professions are important rightly to adjust and to keep agoing the great machinery of society, but the Christian ministry is indispensable. It is that power in the absence of which the entire machinery becomes deranged. It is ordained of God for the very highest purposes, and has its divine and just claims on the Church and people of God.

It is the duty of the Church to sustain its minister. There is scarcely any need of discussing this point, as it is not questioned by any who admit the ministry to be of divine appointment, or by very few such. It is the law of the Church, and of its head, that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." *To live of the Gospel* does not mean a support up to the point of merely living—the point just above that of starvation—it means a kind and liberal support, such as other men get in the service of communities or of men, and suited to their place and position. A minister should be placed above want; his

The Savior's command.

Paul's argument.

support should enable him to be honest, hospitable, charitable—to educate his children, and to make some provision for old age, so that when voice, and energy, and strength fail him, he may not go forth penniless, dependent on the cold charities of even good men. When the Savior sent forth his apostles, he told them to “provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in their purses; nor scrip; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves.” These were to be provided by others, and for the all-sufficient reason that the workman is worthy of his hire. And Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, devotes a large part of the 9th chapter of the First Epistle to an argument on this very topic. The God who has instituted a Church and a ministry, has also, from the beginning, ordained for that ministry an adequate support. And so, with few exceptions, the Church universal believes. Nor is there a church in the land, however small, which, in securing the services of a minister, does not promise something in the way of an “adequate worldly maintenance.”

Nor has a church a right to defraud their minister of what they promise, or to be careless in meeting their engagements with him, more than they have to defraud any body else, or to be careless in meeting a note in the bank. True, there is no penalty annexed to failure, but God usually punishes it in his own way. A people mean toward their minister—that screw him down to the last crust—that fail to meet his wants and their promises punctually, break down

A mean people unblessed.

A starving profession.

his spirits, and are usually as the heath in the desert. They are a mean people on whom, as on the sandy desert, all culture is bestowed in vain. Every church owes an adequate support to its minister, and they have no more right to withhold it than they have to steal, or to worship idols. "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," is a command which no people can violate without injury to all the interests involved.

And yet to what an extent are the obligations of the Church to sustain the ministry violated! As a rule, the ministry is a starving profession, especially in these United States. In those branches of the Church which require an educated ministry, a young man in the pursuit of a lucrative business is converted; he feels that he is called to preach the Gospel; he spends six or eight years in training for the great work. All the time he has been rising in thoughtfulness, in knowledge, in sensibility, in character, in fitness for any of the higher positions in life; and yet when prepared to be a pastor he is offered a stipend which a retail Broadway merchant would be ashamed to offer to a clerk, and often not a fourth or fifth of what a jobber in dry goods gives to a salesman or book-keeper! Two pious young men were clerks in the same store. One, by far the most gifted, entered the ministry; the other kept on measuring tape and calico. The minister is useful, beloved, but poor and obscure; the other is a good man, and useful in his way, and a millionaire. A young minister, at the

Cases.

Cheap preaching.

An humble ministry.

age of seventeen, gave up a salary of five hundred a year to study for the ministry. He went through a regular academic and theological course, and was then settled on four hundred a year! And his miserly congregation, that could better afford to double the sum than to starve him, think they give him too much! Of what use can a minister of the Gospel be to such a people? Their souls are not large enough to receive the truth. A massing priest would do them as well.

Many congregations go for cheap preaching; and hence, when about to settle a pastor, they ask as to his father's circumstances; whether he possesses, or expects, a patrimony; whether his wife has a fortune or expects one? If answered in the affirmative, other things being equal, he is the successful candidate. He can live on a smaller salary, and, if not paid punctually, he will not be at much inconvenience; he has a private purse!

And then some of the very pious ones who, for a pretense, make long prayers, are greatly exercised for the humility of their minister. It is necessary to that end to keep him poor! They do not so reason as to themselves, for they may be adding house to house and field to field yearly, without in the least degree interfering with their humility. They would keep the minister poor to save their pockets, and then cover up the hypocrisy under the cloak of desiring his spirituality! It is a very low and a very wicked species of Phariseism to plead for the cultivation of the spirit-

A wicked apology.

Men for all stipends.

The blame.

uality of a pastor by way of apology for cheating him.

And for this religious covetousness and pious hypocrisy ministers themselves are very much to blame. We have known some to underbid one another! It is no uncommon thing for one possessing more patrimony than ability to write, "The salary is of comparatively little consequence." To such it might be replied, Neither would be your preaching. As in every other department of life, there is every grade of talent in the ministry; nor can a stipend be fixed so low as not to be an object to somebody. Let it be only fifty dollars a year, and there will be candidates; but they will be *fifty dollar men*, who will mete out to the people as the people mete out to them. And yet there are those who will go for cheap ministers, who would not employ a cheap doctor to cure them, nor a cheap mechanic to make them a pair of shoes!

And so ministers are to blame for not teaching the people the law of Christ, that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." They have submitted to the most flagrant impositions rather than seek their redress by making them known, and they have been only rewarded with more of the same thing. It is time for them to lay aside their squeamishness, and in modest, but manly tones, to assert their rights, and thus to prevent the narrow covetousness of the Church from expelling from it a noble, high-minded, and enlightened ministry. Such a ministry to the Church is valuable beyond all computa-

A competent salary.	Illustration.	Consequences.
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tion. And it should be sustained up to the full meaning of the rule, "They who preach the Gospel *should live* of the Gospel." The people who are for cheap preaching usually have their reward.

A competent salary up to the position of the pastor and the ability of a people should be given by every congregation. Fifteen families of ordinary circumstances can better support a minister than do without one. Six families removed together to the West, and took with them a minister, with this stipulation, that he would give all his time to them, and that each family would work for him one day in the week. And they were signally prospered, and grew into a noble community. The people that compel a minister to teach school, or to cultivate a farm, or to engage in any secular business to eke out a living, when it can possibly be helped, are inflicting a lasting injury on themselves. They overwork the minister, and thus induce premature feebleness; they compel him to give to other things the time he should devote to them, and thus prevent him from due preparation; they starve their own minds and souls; and all for the sake of saving a few dollars a year! Such a congregation never prospers. It is too mean to grow. Generous people keep away from it, as they do from a merchant that is noted for giving short weight and measure—as they do from those purists in the praise of God who regard it as a sin to sing any thing in his worship but the elegant version of the Psalms by Rouse.

Cases.	Increase of salary easy.	The ravens.
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In looking over the Church, we note men of the finest character, education, and talents serving large and wealthy congregations, and on salaries miserably inadequate to their support. As judges, lawyers, physicians, merchants, they might rise to eminence and wealth, but as ministers they are subjected to obscurity and poverty. That they are willing to do so is no excuse for the wicked penuriousness of their people, but is to their shame rather. An addition to a minister's salary of five hundred dollars a year would place him above care and want; would enable him to purchase books and educate his family, and pay his bills punctually, and give all his time to his work; and this would be only five dollars each to a congregation of a hundred families. And yet with what opposition a proposition like this would meet in the great majority of congregations! The faith and devotedness of a minister do not pay his bills, nor clothe his family, nor feed his children, and yet in the proportion of the penuriousness of a people do they wish their minister to live by faith. If God would send ravens to feed him they would like it all the better; for two reasons—they would be fully satisfied that he was a man of God, and it would be quite a saving to them. We have known quite a sanctimonious member of a church to say that he could live on two hundred and fifty dollars a year, and he did not see why his minister should need a thousand. And he was quite a farmer, and starved his family, and gave not a penny but for its worth,

A mystery.

Whitefield's advice.

The sin of the Church.

and to save the cloth stinted every garment in length and breadth that he wore. If converted at all, it is one of the mysteries of Providence why the Lord converts such men, while the generous, the noble-hearted, the men whose impulses are on the grandest scale, are left in their sins. But, as an old saint now in heaven used to say, "God often ingrafts his grace upon a crab-stalk." And as Whitefield is reported to have said to a young man who asked his advice as to whether he should marry a young lady, a professor of religion with a bad temper, or another who had an excellent disposition, but was not a Christian, "Marry," said he, "the lady with a good disposition, for God can abide where you can not." So God can adopt into his family many persons of very narrow prejudices, and who make very poor parishioners, and who are only a thorn in the flesh of their ministers.

We have never known a parish suffer from the generous support of its minister, while we know of many at this hour suffering in all their interests because of their neglect of the law of heaven—"THEY WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL SHOULD LIVE OF THE GOSPEL."

A crying sin of the Church, in our day, is its stinted support of the ministry. It is a sin of far-reaching influence. It is so given to muzzle the ox that it may be left without oxen to muzzle.

Salary paid promptly.

Repudiation.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DUTY OF CHURCHES TO THE MINISTRY—*Continued.*

Salary to be paid.—Prayer for them.

NOT only should they give him a competent salary, but they should pay it when due. Materials for a chapter on this subject, as severely reflecting upon churches as any that has been ever written, might readily be collected from any presbytery, or conference, or association, or diocese in this land. The sin of muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn lies at the door of congregations connected with every branch of the Church, and often because of the want of spirit in pastors to assert their rights and claim the fulfillment of pledges sacredly made to them.

Some congregations commence *thinking* about the collection of the salary on the day it should be paid, and pay part of it a few weeks afterward. A part of the salary of each quarter is permitted to run into the next, until the parish is hundreds of dollars in debt to the pastor. What now is to be done? To sue for it would seem hard; to insist on its payment would be unpopular; to permit it to increase would be adding to the evil; to cancel it, or to dissolve the pastoral relation, is the only alternative! States can not repudiate without losing their character, but churches think nothing of it. And thus parishes will

Starvation process stopped.

A fair hit.

cheat their minister who would not think of cheating the carpenter that built their church, or the sexton that rings the bell. This, in many cases, is owing more to neglect, and inattention, and to the want of spirit in the officers of the church, than to any purpose to wrong the pastor, and may therefore be remedied. A young man settled over a church notorious for the process of starving out the minister; when the first quarter's salary was due, the treasurer came with a part of it, promising the remainder in a short time. "Have I failed in any of my duties?" said the pastor. "By no means," was the reply. "Then," said he to the treasurer, "you must not fail in yours. You have promised to pay me my salary quarterly, not a part of it; I want all of it, and will take none until paid all." The treasurer retired somewhat mortified, if not vexed by the interview. He soon returned and paid all. The salary was afterward paid, and punctually, to the comfort of the pastor and to the delight of the people. The starvation process was stopped. A pastor of a church in New England, years ago, sent for one of the professional revivalists with which the Church was more infested then than now. Before commencing his operations he learned that the church was running yearly in debt to the pastor, and was very remiss in meeting their engagements with him. His first address to the people was in substance as follows: "You have sent for me here to preach to you, and to pray that the Lord may revive his work among you. You have failed in your prom-

A lying church.

Privations.

Bees.

ises to pay your pastor's salary, and the Lord never blesses a lying people. You must confess and forsake the sin of lying to your minister before I begin my work, for I can not ask the Lord to revive his work in a lying congregation." This is one of the best things I ever heard of that class of ministers. The people paid their minister, and a great revival followed!

The privations suffered by ministers because of the neglect of their prompt payment are very great. We have known some to sell the best books from their libraries in order to meet current expenses, when the church owed them hundreds of dollars. We have known some compelled to keep their children from school because they could not pay the teacher. We have known some to borrow money, and pay interest for it, to keep themselves from starving. We have known an excellent pastor and preacher compelled to borrow from his brother minister twenty-five cents to get his letters from the post-office before the law of prepayment was enacted! Such things are a shame and a reproach to congregations bearing the name of Christian.

And so are the ways and customs that obtain in some places of "paying salary." The people pay in the produce of their fields, and cattle, and *charge the highest prices*. Or they supplement a miserable salary by an annual "bee," or "visit," for which every man, woman, and child—every saint and sinner in the parish—is solicited to give something to the *poor minis-*

Parish pauper.

Meanness.

Example.

ter. Why should not what is given in this way be at once added to the salary? Why should a people thus seek to compensate for their penuriousness? Why should a minister submit thus to be reduced to the level of a parish pauper? There is not a thing to recommend these save the bringing of the people of a parish together for acquaintance and social intercourse; all beyond is unworthy of people and preacher. Why should not a pastor stand on the same platform, as to his support, as does the doctor, or lawyer, or magistrate, or town clerk? And the meanness of some persons toward their minister is almost beyond belief. "How much is your oats a bushel?" said a pastor to one of his wealthy farmers as he was riding along by his door. "Three shillings," was the reply. It was selling for 2s. 6d. in the store. "Send me six bushels," said the minister; and, as he rode on, he noted the bargain, with pencil, in his pocket-book. The pencil-mark was faint, and the entry was overlooked. At the end of two years the collector said to him, "Mr. B. has not paid his pew-rent for now eight quarters; he says he has an account with you; that you owe him for oats." At once remembering the transaction, he rode to his house and paid him, he charging two years' interest on 18 shillings! After some more dunning he paid his back pew-rent, with some grumbling, but paid no interest on it! All such men should be expelled from the Church of God; they are too mean to be respectable sinners, much less to be Christians!

The radical error.

Importance of the Gospel.

The radical difficulty we find in the little value placed upon religious instruction and spiritual things. And yet a faithful Gospel ministry is of the last importance to a community. In its absence every vice flourishes and every virtue languishes. If one vice costs more than two children, the sins and vices which the Sabbath and a faithful ministry would prevent would cost twenty-fold more than the maintenance of the ordinances of the Gospel at the highest point of vigor and energy. A community without a Gospel! "There is nothing worth living for," says the Rev. Dr. Spring, "in such a community. It may be rich in rivers, in ore, and luxuriant in soil; it may be well watered as the plains of Sodom, and as accursed as they. I would not educate a family in such a community for all the prairies between Alleghany and the Rocky Mountains." And when we add to the temporal benefits which it confers, the eternal blessings for which it gives a preparation, we will then see that there is not a class of men upon earth more worthy of an adequate and prompt maintenance than are the faithful ministers of the Gospel. And yet there are those blessed in their own souls and in their families by their labors who would keep them so poor as to destroy their independence, and who would drive them from the care of souls to the most anxious care for their families. Just at this point the Church stands on a very slippery place. It is driving young men of intelligence and enterprise from the ministry, and is discouraging those already

A slippery place.

Prayer for ministers.

in her service. There are Levites for all altars, and missionaries for all errors, and preachers for all prices; and when the Church, by its penuriousness, has driven from her ministry all save those to whom her pittance may be more than they can elsewhere secure, it needs no prophet to predict the result. "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges?" What soldier in war is called upon to support himself? If you force him to do it, you make him a robber; and the minister driven to support himself is compelled to be a man of the world.

People should pray for their ministers. In all the range of objects of intercession there are none more needy subjects. Paul, with all his splendid gifts and rich graces, besought Christians to pray that utterance might be given him, that he might open his mouth boldly. And if Paul needed the prayers of Christians, what minister can do without them? They need all the grace of the private Christian, and, in addition, grace for the right discharge of all their high spiritual duties. And the reflex influence of prayer for a pastor upon the people is very great. One of the greenest spots upon earth was the parish of St. Peter's, Dundee, when the lonely M'Cheyne was its pastor. He thus records, in his diary, the spirit of prayer which prevailed among his people: "Many prayer-meetings were formed, some of which were strictly private, and others, conducted by persons of some Christian experience, were open to persons under concern at one another's houses. At the time of

M^cCheyne.

Stoddard.

my return from the mission to the Jews, I found *thirty-nine* such meetings held *weekly*, in connection with the congregation." Oh, that this beautiful instance of co-operation with a minister by the people prevailed in all our churches! When shall this pattern be imitated? This is the earnestness of religion. Ministers will never labor in vain among such a people. With such a people to pray for them, holy M^cCheyne's might be greatly multiplied all over the Church. Will not professing Christians ponder this?

It is narrated of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard that, soon after his settlement in Northampton, his people became convinced that he gave no evidence of serious piety. They loved him much, and greatly admired his talents, and did not wish to part with him. Their recourse was to prayer. A day was set apart by the people to pray for his conversion. Seeing the people going to the church, he asked a plain man on his way there, "What is going on to-day?" The reply was, "The people, sir, are going to meet to pray for your conversion." Smitten to the heart, he said, "Then it is time I prayed for myself." He went to his closet, and the people to the church. They both met at the throne of grace for the same object; and, while they were speaking, they were heard and answered. There was no question as to his conversion afterward. He labored among them for half a century, deservedly ranked among the most able and useful ministers of his age. This was in the olden time! When people pray more for their ministers,

Fault-finders.

Cured by prayer.

there will be better preachers and far better hearers. The captious, fault-finding, complaining members of churches, who are never satisfied—who, if they have nothing else to fret them, will complain of the color of the minister's hair, or of the tie of his cravat, or of the way he pronounces Beelzebub or Canaan, are but rarely seen in the place where prayer is wont to be made. We have known a venerable, learned, eloquent, and pious senator melted under a sermon in which a little bit of a Yankee schoolmaster, who looked like a note of interrogation, and whose thoughts never rose higher than syntax, could see nothing but what was worthy of censure. The more people pray for their minister, the more they will be edified by his services; and the more intelligent they are, the more will they overlook the defects of an earnest ministry.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DUTY OF CHURCHES TO THE MINISTRY—*Continued.*

Should protect its Reputation.

CHURCHES should guard well the character and reputation of the ministry. As a faithful minister sets himself in opposition to all error and sin, and is the open advocate of all truth and virtue, he is liable to assault from the wicked, the erring, and even from those professing a formal belief in the truth; and, as a man's worst foes are often those of his own household, so the worst enemies of ministers are often professing Christians and the persons they have most sought to benefit. Christ came to his own, and his own received him not. He was crucified by the people he came to save; and if not one of his apostles died a natural death, how can their faithful successors expect exemption from all opposition? The ministry is a "good fight;" and to fight it well exposes to persecution, and reproach, and to all the fiery darts which fill the quivers of the wicked; and often, the more faithful, the more assailed; and the more faithless and time-serving, the more they are saluted with hosannas. There are instances evermore recurring when the populace crucify Jesus, and set Barabbas at liberty. But the duty of a people is plain to guard

Ways of attack various.

Loving pre-eminence.

well the reputation of their minister when unjustly assailed.

And the ways in which the peace of congregations is broken and pastors are maligned are very various.

One man, notorious for passion, and truthlessness, and kindred vices, objected to his pastor because he was not pious enough for him. This is often the bush from which graceless and prayerless church members shoot their arrows. This is, as a rule, only a pious cloak to cover a malignant heart and tongue.

Another man, self-willed to a proverb, and as Scythian-faced as the "pretenders" rebuked by the Savior (Matt., vi., 16), would disturb a congregation and turn away a minister because they would use a wicked Melodeon in the praise of the sanctuary! Such devotees to prejudice are too numerous; they reject all who will not burn incense to "their drag;" and when rejected in turn, they are envious of the reputation of martyrs to principle.

Another man, because he was not elected an elder, blamed the minister for his defeat, turned against him, and sought in all ways to impede his usefulness. He finally made a party against him, which, by dint of effort, he rolled up to an importance which induced the pastor, revered for his piety and fidelity, to remove. There are too many that, like Diotrophes, love the pre-eminence, and who seek it at whatever expense—whose motto is "Rule or ruin." These are in the Church and in the state, and are a nuisance

A politician.

A talking, fickle elder.

every where. And it is in the Church as in the state: those who earnestly seek place are those unfitted for it, and who, when they obtain it, make the worst use of it.

Another man, a hot politician, heard his pastor preach a sermon which he supposed bore hard on his favorite candidate for the chief magistracy. The offense was unpardonable, as, although a high professor, he never forgave. Forgiveness was not in his creed. And, alas! how many there are like him, who yet pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." That is, they pray God never to forgive them! He persecuted, and prosecuted his minister before the courts ecclesiastic, and finally succeeded in driving him away.

Another man, an elder, was a man of many projects. He was a follower of every "Lo! here," and "Lo! there." Now it was one thing, now another. The novelty of yesterday was laid aside for the novelty of to-day. He could turn round as fast and as facile as the vane on the steeple. Now it was anti-slavery—now it was ultra temperance, now it was new measures—now it was the second coming of Christ. He needed excitement as the drunkard needs rum, and his pastor could not or would not supply it, nor could many turn around as rapidly as he. He set himself against a minister known and loved for his sense and consistency, and succeeded in removing him. A weak, unstable, talking elder, with more zeal than sense, given more to fuss and show than to

A complaint.

Makes a case.

Sin of parents.

quiet working in his place, is a great injury to a church, and is no comfort to a minister, save to one tuned like himself. Very many of the difficulties we have known in congregations have arisen from such men; and the irecensoriousness is always in the proportion of their flaming zeal.

“Our minister is no benefit to my children; not satisfied with his preaching, they are going to other churches,” said an elder of a church one day to a neighboring pastor. On inquiry, it was found that this elder had been a subject of discipline for alleged dishonesty in some business transactions, and that, because his minister could not fully sustain him, he turned against him. He neglected his duties, staid away from the communion, and so poisoned the minds of his children that, with his free consent, and perhaps advice, they went to other churches in order to make a strong case against the pastor. And then the state of things which he himself produced he used as an argument against the continuance of the minister! He was frankly told that he himself, and not his faithful and excellent pastor, was the guilty cause of the evils of which he complained. And how many parents effectually erase the impressions made by the truth from the minds of their children by their censorious manner of talking about the preacher, by their flippant manner of talking about his sermons and performances! Many children, from under the ministry of the most faithful men, are evermore going to ruin and to death, whose blood will be found in the skirts

Advice to church members.

A quack.

of parents, and for the above cause. Are you members of the Church? Then shut your ears against all disparaging remarks on the character and performance of your minister, especially when made by the habitually censorious, of whom there are too many in every community, and in connection with every church. Are you parents? Let every word you utter about your pastor be such as to increase the respect and love of your children for him. What father and mother say comes to them with the force of law and authority, and one unguarded remark may injure them forever. They are, by nature, sufficiently adverse to pastoral instruction without being stimulated by parental influences.

A physician—a quack, and miserable even at that—was attached to a church. His piety and prescriptions were about on a par, the difference being rather in favor of the latter. He drove away one minister because he would not employ him, and he was foremost in the getting of another on whose support he calculated. The new minister employed another doctor on his first need of one; at once the affections of the quack fell from summer heat to zero. Now he was understood, and his opposition to the minister was his ruin. His flagrant selfishness caused every body to canvass his skill and character, and there was no more call for his calomel.

Mr. John Stillwell was a distiller and brewer. By the making of whisky and beer he became the wealthiest man in the parish. He was tall and portly, and,

John Stillwell.

Hard case.

Why a difference.

as was apparent from his face, a free liver. He was, in addition, liberal in the use of his money. He was popular with the masses, and rose in civil and military life to the rank of alderman and colonel. He was the largest supporter of the congregation, and the warmest friend of the minister, up to the time of the preaching of a sermon on the manufacture, the sale, and the use of strong drink. That sermon cooled the affection of Mr. Stillwell, and caused him to withdraw his support. He never could hear that minister again—he could not conscientiously. Even Mr. Stillwell made pretense to a conscience on the subject. The congregation could not do without the support of Mr. Stillwell, and the faithful pastor had to quit.

And all these are but specimens of the ways in which ministers are annoyed and impeded in their work from within the Church and from without it. Why should a pastor be held to account more than any other virtuous citizen as to the physician he should employ; as to the private opinions on politics he may adopt; as to the mechanic he may employ; as to the store in which he keeps his accounts; as to the wife he may marry; as to the school he may select for his children; as to the persons he may choose to be his bosom friends? And why should he not be most generously and promptly protected from those never-satisfied, jealous, envious, tattling persons, who track a minister, as did the Scribes and Pharisees the Savior, in order to find fault in him; and who, if they find no cause for blame, can readily manufacture them?

Cowardice.

Base sinners.

Duty of the Church.

A minister is prevented by his profession, save in the most flagrant cases, from instituting process for slander; he must not return evil for evil; he must seek to instruct those that oppose themselves. He is in the condition of the Christian man who is insulted by a heartless duelist, knowing that he can do a thing so cowardly with impunity, and that no challenge will be sent him. We have known too many such instances of persons circulating the most baseless falsehoods against their own pastors, and, when proved to be utterly baseless, yet repeating them. We know of no sinners more base than these—none more worthy to be cast aside as Paul did the viper. By tarnishing the fair name of God's ministers and obstructing their usefulness, they serve the devil far more effectually than do infidels, drunkards, the profane, the abominable; and the church, in all such cases, should make the case of the pastor their own, and should interpose its shield to catch all the fiery darts aimed at his character. And not only so; they should make all such persons feel that the command, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," has some force and meaning, and that its gross violation is worthy of severe discipline. We wish not to be misunderstood. We have no cloaks for the sins of false prophets, apostles, or ministers—no excuses for indolence, worldliness, intemperance, or neglect of duty in the ministry; but we would have a true ministry guarded on every hand from assaults on its character, whether made by the ungodly or by those pro-

Equals in sin.

Inconsistency.

fessing godliness; and to do this is a duty which the Church owes to itself. We would send a Judas to his own place, and we would send the malignant persecutors of God's minister after him. They are alike graceless and guilty.

We would not be understood as asserting that the want of care for the character of the ministry is the rule of the Church. Far otherwise. The instances in which churches have nobly defended their pastors from the most wicked persecutions are numerous, and there is a natural tendency, even when they do wrong, to excuse them. The cases are many in which churches have clung to their pastors when deposed from the ministry for serious moral delinquencies and errors, and have gone out with them into other denominations or independency; but yet the exceptions to the rule are also many, in which churches, as such, fail in guarding the character of their minister, and in which they look on and see a few disaffected persons disturbing his peace, fretting away his character as a moth doth a garment, and limiting his usefulness. Indeed, instances often occur in which a people do all they decently can for the removal of a pastor, and then pass the most eulogistic resolutions in his favor when they send him afloat, in the decline of his life, to secure a living where he can.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

DUTY OF CHURCHES TO THE MINISTRY—*Continued.*

On hearing the Gospel.

THE general effects of the Gospel may be, and often are, very powerful for good, where the Gospel itself, save by the few, may be but little understood. There are communities where all the institutions of our religion are honored and obeyed with marked strictness, where the foundations of those institutions and the reasons for them are but little understood. They are received as are traditions by papists, and are believed because generally believed. In this respect people receive the Gospel very much as they do the law of the land. They know there is a law. They believe its provisions to be wise and just. They mean to obey it; but as to its special enactments and provisions they know but little, and but rarely inquire, save when they are called before legal tribunals; and even then they leave the matter very much in the hands of judges, attorneys, and juries.

There is no book in the world so widely circulated and read as is the Bible, and, considering all things, beyond a certain line, there is none so little understood. While there are grounds for various interpretations of its pages and of some of its doctrines, yet the main causes of this are the state of the natural

Ignorance of Christianity.

Causes why.

heart, the prejudices with which it is read, and the way and manner in which it is read. So there is no system of religion or morals so universally expounded as is our Christianity. Throughout Christendom, one day in seven is given to this; and, as a class, the expounders are the best and the best-educated men of the world, and wield a strong influence over the people they address; and yet the real principles and spirit of Christianity are but little understood by the masses before whom it is expounded, or by multitudes who profess it before men. There are many intelligent hearers and supporters of the Gospel who, when convicted of sin, can not tell what they must do to be saved; and there are very many communicants who can not give a reason for the hope that is in them; and the extent to which this is so is only known to those who have made inquisition in reference to it; and this is owing to the way and manner in which the Gospel is heard. Much, we allow, may be charged to the account of the way and manner in which the Gospel is expounded; to vapid, disjointed, formal, fanatical, cold, erroneous preaching; to sensational instead of sensible preaching; but much more may be charged to the manner in which it is heard.

That a right hearing of the Gospel and the salvation of the soul hold a very intimate relation to one another we are taught both by Scripture and common-sense. The Gospel is the word of truth. "Thy word is truth." Christ is "the truth." We are made free, we are sanctified, through the truth. We can

Hearing.

Right hearing.

The fashionable church.

only know the truth by hearing or reading it. It was by the hearing of the Gospel that the multitudes were saved at Pentecost, and it is by the hearing of it that the triumphs of the Gospel are now mainly extended. To hear in order to understand; to understand so as to be affected by the truth; so to be affected by it as to manifest it in our actions, and so to act as to continue in a fruitful obedience, is the only true hearing of the Gospel. Unless we thus hear, it is all the same as if we heard not, save that our condemnation may be the deeper. Unless we thus hear, we might as well be mumbling masses as hearing the Gospel. Not the hearers, but the doers are commended. And how do people hear? •

Go into some of our fashionable churches and see. How richly attired, and with what a stately tread, the worshipers enter the house of God! How genteelly they take their seats in their elegantly-furnished pews! How rarely they open the Bible when it is read, or join in the praise of the sanctuary! How listlessly they sit under the sermon! How politely they recognize friends when the services are ended! How elegant the coach which meets them at the door! How sumptuously prepared is the Sunday dinner! How utterly forgotten in the evening are the lessons of the morning. To such people—and, alas! how many such people!—the church is simply what the parade-ground is to the militia company—a place in which to display their dress. To such the church is simply a place of social gathering on Sunday morn-

Weekly programme.Tasteful hearer.

ing, and the choir and the preacher are for their entertainment. While there are preachers that suit themselves to such hearers, yet such hearers are unbenefited by any preaching. The Church, equally with the theatre and the Opera, is on the programme of their weekly amusement. In fifty years they learn not to repeat or to obey the fourth commandment.

A degree or two above these is another class of hearers, who hear simply to gratify their taste or prejudices. They go here or there as they expect to be pleased. Solid instruction is not their object. As saith the Prayer-book, they never continue in one stay. Like the bee on a summer day, that wanders from flower to flower, now lighting upon the rose, now upon the violet, now upon the scentless sunflower, which turns always its brazen face to the sun, these wander from church to church, but, unlike the bee, they collect no honey. These are not composed of the young alone: parents and church officers are often of their number. These are not instructed by any sermons they hear. Unstable as water, they can not excel. One of the most substantial men we ever knew was one who said that, in thirty years, he never entered a church but his own when it was open. "And," said he, "when my own church is open, I would not go to hear a Chalmers if he preached in the next street;" and he was as far from bigotry as is the Gospel from popery or Puseyism.

A few degrees yet above these are persons who hear without any fixed resolution or purpose as to

 The listless hearer.

The forgetful.

A sample.

obedience. They are good people; that is, people hopefully converted. They are not violators of the commandments, but they are no doers of them. They learn not in order to practice. They come and go to the place of the holy, but, like a door turning on its hinges, they make no advance. Instruction seems rather to be laid on them than to enter into them. They never think but when hearing, and, when hearing is ended, they think no more of it. The word preached profits them not; and for years together they sit under the most faithful and instructive preaching without making any advance in the knowledge of the truth. They are good parishioners; they are always in their place; they respect their minister; but they grow not in knowledge. "Oh! what a grand sermon we had yesterday from our pastor! I wish you had been there to hear it," said a New York merchant to a friend in the street on Monday morning. "What was his text?" asked his friend. "My memory is very poor, and I forget it," was his reply, after scratching his head in silence for a brief time. "What was his subject?" asked his friend. "Well, I forget that too, but he treated it grandly," was the reply; "and I wish you had been there to hear it." There is no filling such minds with truth any more than there is filling a sieve with water. Such minds are like the desert sands, which no rains from heaven, which no rivers of water, can fertilize.

"We had a solemn service yesterday morning," said a pastor to one of his elders as he met him in the

The cold reply.

A little too long.

Rowland Hill.

street on Monday. "Myself and wife were talking over it, and we both concluded that the sermon was a little too long; we did not feel very well," was the reply of the elder. And there are too many just such hearers among the elders and members of our churches, who think less of the truth presented than of the length of time taken to communicate it, or than the manner and style of the preacher. Perhaps these form the majority of hearers.

Rowland Hill, a few years before his death, made a visit to an old friend, who said to him, "Mr. Hill, it is just sixty-five years since I first heard you preach, and I remember your text and a part of the sermon. You told us that many people were very squeamish about hearing ministers who preached the same Gospel. You said, 'Suppose you were hearing a will read where you expected a legacy to be left you, would you employ the time of its reading in criticising the manner in which the lawyer read it? No, you would not; you would be giving all ear to hear whether any thing was left you, and how much. That is the way I would advise you to hear the Gospel.'" This was advice worth remembering three-score and five years. Because they have not learned the lesson thus taught by Rowland Hill, there are multitudes who hear the Gospel very much in vain.

The anecdote illustrating the practical hearing of the Gospel, although often repeated, is yet worth repeating a thousand times more. An old lady, who kept a little store, went to hear a sermon, in which

 I burned my bushel.

Two hearers.

A Sabbath in Scotland.

the use of dishonest weights and measures was fully set forth. She was deeply impressed. The next day the minister called on her, and took occasion to ask her what she remembered of the sermon. She complained of her bad memory, but ended by saying, "I remembered—I remembered to burn my bushel." A doer of the word will not be a forgetful hearer of it.

A people owe it to a minister to wait on his ministry with regularity and with a teachable spirit. When he is there to preach, they should be there to hear, unless prevented by a sufficient cause. The obligation is reciprocal. And they should be there in a spirit of devotion, to hear the truth, for the purpose of reducing it to practice. We remember two aged hearers of the word. The one, when he found himself a little dull, stood up in his pew, that he might wake up his faculties to a full and right hearing of the message; and, for a plain man, he had the best knowledge of the Gospel of any man we ever knew. The other seemed to pray over every sentence uttered by the preacher, and to drink in the truth as the thirsty hart drinks from the water-brook. And they were pillars in the Church in strength and position, like unto Jachin and Boaz in the temple of Solomon. They were not forgetful hearers, but doers of the word. And better men we have never known.

We remember a Sabbath in the highlands of Scotland. The church was in a vale surrounded by mountains on all sides, up whose sides paths and roads might be seen winding up to their summits

The people.

Appearance.

Worship.

and over them. As the hour for morning worship arrived, the people might be seen coming down those mountain passes in crowds, and filling the streets of the village. There were old Scots leaning on their staffs, and their aged wives, with their high caps white as the snow; and young men and maidens in great numbers, and each had their Bible with the Psalms. The church was crowded. When the minister read, every person opened their Bible and followed him. When the psalm was named, every body turned to it, and every body sung. When the text was slowly announced, every body, old and young, turned to it. The rustling of the leaves of the Holy Book filled the house for a time. When a proof-text was given, it was turned to as was the text. The preacher was not above the ordinary, but the sermon, from the beginning to the end, was heard with the deepest interest by all. They all seemed to enter into the worship of the occasion with the heart, and to feel, during the preaching of the sermon, as if God was speaking through his servant. Such hearers would make preachers any where; and because they have not such hearers, many excellent ministers labor in vain, and spend their strength for naught. If it is the duty of ministers to preach the Word, it is the duty of the people to hear it, and so to hear it that it will bring forth in them the fruit of holy living.

Philip Henry notes in his diary the saying of a pious hearer of his own which deeply affected him: "I find it easier," said the good man, "to go six miles to

Henry's hearer.

More praying.

hear a sermon than to spend one quarter of an hour in meditating and praying over it in secret, as I should when I come home."

It is very likely that in our "cities of churches" there is too much preaching for profitable hearing. One half the preaching, and twice the praying to be profited by it, would greatly multiply the fruitfulness of pastoral ministrations. In vain is the good seed sown unless it is harrowed in by prayer.

Too much importance can not be attached to a right hearing of the Gospel. It is not the number of sermons we hear, but the way we hear them, that benefits us.

Mental labor.

Little to do.

Misconceptions.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

DUTY OF CHURCHES TO THE MINISTRY—*Continued.*

The time of a pastor should not be wasted.

PEOPLE generally have no idea of mental labor. They know it takes some time to make a pair of shoes, or a hat, or a coat, or a table, or to plow a field, or to build a shed, but they have no idea of the time or labor it requires to prepare a good sermon. As it may be preached in forty or fifty minutes, they suppose it may be prepared in twice that time. When told that some sermons have taken their authors a week, and even a month, to write them, they seem amazed! They think a minister has but little to do who prepares *only* two sermons a week, and preaches them on Sunday! And they have no sympathy with the minister who says, "I am not prepared," when called to preach on a sudden emergency. They know all about physical labor, but nothing about mental. They know something about raising a heavy weight, but they know nothing about the construction of an argument, or the refutation of a popular and plausible error, or the placing of a controverted truth in a light which convinces all. In fine, the multitude have no conception of mental labor; and hence peo-

Writing sermons.

Desire for visits.

The rule.

ple are so reckless as to the squandering of the time of their minister!

There are men of peculiar mental habits who can write a sermon in a very short time, having previously well digested the matter of it. Such a one is the Rev. Dr. ———, one of the best and most popular preachers of the Church. But ordinarily to write one good sermon a week, and meet faithfully his other duties, fills up the time of a pastor; to write two, if they are worth hearing or worthy of himself, fills it to an overflow. And yet there are those who are never satisfied unless they are frequently visited, and who consider the minister as wasting his time when not abroad among his people.

No minister can satisfy the desire for family visitation. Some are satisfied with a visit once a year, but some require one weekly. There is less piety than vanity in this. They wish to be considered intimate with the minister, and to have more of his regard and confidence than others. And some ministers are seduced into these frequent visitations by the adulation with which they are greeted, as flies are attracted by the blaze of a candle. They should be esteemed highly in love for their work's sake, but regard for their work should prevent abstracting their time from it. And a minister, like a physician in large practice, should be required to visit his people only when there is a call for it.

“Why do you not come to our store and read the paper in the morning, as did our old minister?” said

The merchant answered.

Sociable.

The nervous lady.

a merchant to his newly-settled pastor. "Because that was not inserted in my call, and I have other duties in the morning," was the sensible reply. The old minister wasted his time, and wore himself out as a preacher.

"I thought you were never coming to see us again," said a pleasant lady to her minister, as he called one afternoon. "How long since I have been here?" he asked. "Why, not for a month," she replied. "And suppose," said he, "I were to visit each of my three hundred families once a month, that would make thirty-six hundred visits a year, and would you kill me by asking me to make as many?" "Oh no," she replied, "I would only have you visit *us* once a month, as you know we are special friends. Once a week or once a day would not be too often for *us*." And there are a great many such frivolous people connected with every congregation, who are never satisfied with their minister unless he is what they call "sociable," but which really means idle; and the thirst of such, like every vitiated appetite, increases with the supply.

"I thought you had entirely forgotten me," said a lady afflicted with chronic disease to her pastor as he entered her room. "How long since I have been here?" he asked. "I have been counting the days, and it is now nearly three weeks," she replied. "One of the elders, and only one of the deacons, have been here in the mean time," she continued; "I like them very much, but they are not my minister." She was

A dedication.

Nervous people.

Tables turned.

truly pious, and thought of her minister very much in the way that Dr. Lowth thought of the bishop to whom he thus dedicated his work on Daniel: "To the Most Reverend Father in God, William, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, and Metropolitan, and one of his Majesty's Honorable Privy Council," and to whom he says, "This might afford me a proper occasion to draw a parallel between his (Daniel's) and your grace's accomplishments." But that was no reason why she should tax minister, elders, and deacons to gratify her thirst for visitation. Indeed, such a thirst seems to be a part of the disease of some nervous people, who imagine that they should be the great objects of a minister's solicitude, as they are of their own, and who would squander the time of a pastor to gratify their selfish longings.

"Why, I have not seen you for a long while," said a parishioner to his pastor, as he called to see him, placing a drawling emphasis on the word "long," so as to run it into two or three years. "I have been thinking," said the pastor, "how long it is since you have called on me. I have been here ten years; how often have you been to see me?" "Indeed," said he, "I have never called, but I will soon." "When you think the time too long since you have seen me," said the pastor, "just call at my house; I will always be glad to see you, and will be always ready to show myself without charge."

Incidents like these, sometimes very amusing, and

Kept busy.

Denounced.

Loungers.

sometimes not a little annoying, are to be found in the experience of every pastor. There are many who place no more value on his time than they do on that of a chambermaid. They must visit daily the sick; they must swell the pomp of funerals—three, four, or more—at any hour of the day; they must ride miles to the cemetery; they must render respectable lectures and evening parties by their presence; they must attend school examinations, and be directors in all kinds of associations for moral and benevolent purposes. And by some they are expected to be members of clamorous conventions for all kinds of reforms; and if they decline, they are denounced by reverend agents and secretaries, who take to these reforms for a living, as other people do to peddling razor-strops or patent medicines, as dumb dogs that can not bark. Indeed, if pastors should yield to all the demands made on their time by unreasonable people, they would have no time for the great work of the ministry. Merchants, and bankers, and lawyers, and mechanics have their daily hours for business; none think of interrupting them during those hours; if any do, they are told to call again. And why should not ministers be left to their regular hours, and to the full improvement of their time? Why should parish loungers come to their study in the morning at nine o'clock, and, as they are going away at twelve, apologize for the intrusion by saying, "I hope I have not interrupted you?"

Parishes and people should place a right estimate

Important duties.	The merchant.	Time.
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upon the time of a pastor. He has to study much; to give himself to reading; to write much; to visit the sick and the afflicted; to call upon strangers; to preach three or four times a week; to direct the inquiring; to counsel in cases of difficulty; to take his part in the management of local and national institutions, all which require a kind of ubiquity in a man, who can be only in one place at a time. A man so occupied with important duties should not be asked to give an hour but for its worth. Ask him for his money, or for his books, or for his sermons, but do not ask him to squander his precious time. "I am sorry to have kept you waiting these fifteen minutes," said a merchant to a minister as he stepped into his carriage, in which he had left him; "but in those minutes I have transacted business to the amount of seventy-five thousand dollars." In the hour filched from the pastor, and for no purpose, he might have saved a soul.

It requires time to do any thing well; and if a people desire a pastor to be a workman of whom they need not to be ashamed, they must spare his time. If he does not improve it himself, they should kindly request him to do so. An idle minister can never be other than a poor pastor and preacher. Idleness in the ministry should be treated as an immorality. An idle mind is the devil's workshop, irrespective of positions, professions, and trades. For reasons already given in these pages, it is emphatically so in the ministry. But when a congregation has a pastor disposed to make the best possible use of his time, they should

A great kindness.

Mornings.

Dr. Green's way.

encourage and enable him so to do, and be as sparing of it as he himself desires to be; and when he is in want of books to make the best possible use of it, they should be promptly and generously supplied. "Send for what books you want, and have them charged to me, and make the best use of them," said a wealthy parishioner to a young minister of talents and industry on his settlement. That one act made him a benefactor of the world, as it enabled that young minister to enter on a course of study whose results are known and read of all men.

Ordinarily, the mornings of every day should be left undisturbed to the pastor. Calls, funerals, all parochial duties, should be in the afternoon. There should be a common law, admitting of necessary exceptions, on this matter. Some pastors lock themselves up in the morning; some see those who call with pen in hand or behind their ear; some hang a card on their door, with the sentence on it, "*Be short!*" for the admonition of intruders; but we like the honest plan of Dr. Green, who admitted every body that called, never asked them to sit down, asked them what they wanted, and, the moment the business was ended, gently waved his hand toward the door, saying, "I am just now occupied." This we consider an example worthy of imitation. If a people will not duly regard the time of pastors, they should take its protection into their own hands. This may not satisfy the persons that like their minister to be "social;" that is, to spend his afternoons in visiting and

Benefits.

Rural parishes.

Parish gossip.

tea-drinking; but its benefits will be apparent to all in his preparations for the pulpit, and in the masculine energy with which he performs his duties. There can not be a doubt but that the want of emphasis in the ministry of many rural parishes is owing to the way in which the people fritter away the time of their pastors for no purpose, or drive them from their studies by their penuriousness to supplement an inadequate salary by some worldly employment.

The work of the ministry is a great work, and difficult in its performance, and diligence in its prosecution should be in the proportion of its greatness and difficulty. If parishes know what is for their own interest, they would not squander the time of their pastors. They would prefer good sermons to social visits. The people that want a parish gossip should hire one for the purpose, and relieve the minister from the endless task.

 The object.

Church in Jerusalem.

Why not so now.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE ELEMENTS OF A PROSPEROUS CHURCH.

THE object of a church organization in our world is twofold: to maintain the truth and the ordinances of the Gospel, and to extend the knowledge of them among all people; and a Church is prosperous in the degree to which these ends are accomplished.

It is said of the Church in Jerusalem, immediately subsequent to its Pentecostal baptism, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." And what was the secret of its daily increase? Why are not churches now thus blessed? These are important inquiries, and upon which no considerate mind can bestow even a slight consideration without exclaiming, "Oh, that the Church had always remained on the foundation of the apostles and prophets! Oh, that the influence of its first baptism had continued from age to age!" Then there would have been no corruptions of doctrine, no conflicts of error-ists, no need of Reformations, no jealousies of sects, no weakening of its energies by internal discords! Then each successive age would only have increased the splendor of its light, and the power of its influence, and the extent of its dominion; and long ago all the kindreds and people of the earth would have

 The truth.

Its importance.

 Historic testimony.

been pervaded by its benign influence! And the most cursory analysis of its state clearly reveal what are the true elements of a prosperous Church. These are :

1. *The truth.* The reception of the Savior as the Messiah, and of the great doctrines which he taught, formed the bond that bound the early disciples together. Whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, male or female, refined Greeks or boorish Scythians, when they loved Christ they loved one another. They were all one in Christ Jesus. And when drawn together by the all-powerful magnet of faith in Christ, it was to confirm one another in the faith—to maintain it and preserve it from corruption—to teach it to their children, and to propagate it throughout the world. Here we have the great element of a prosperous Church; and, instead of being a subordinate one, it is the basis of all others—that in which all others inhere.

That the truth is an element essential to the prosperity and true glory of the Church, all history testifies. As the truth died out from the ancient Church, fancy, and credulity, and corruption had a freer play, the tokens of departing glory and of a coming night fearfully multiplied. Shade thickened after shade. Each succeeding age came wrapped in a deeper gloom, until the flood of glory which the Gospel poured upon the world was lost in the darkness of the night of the Dark Ages, which seemed to roll on as if it were never to end. The truth is to the Church

Church life.

A true ministry.

what the sun is to the earth, the source of its light, its heat, its fertility, and fruitfulness. And, as we see in the cases of those bodies which have departed from the foundation which God has laid in Zion, the Church, when it forsakes the simple truth for fables, is as an altar without a sacrifice—as the body without the spirit that animates it; and hence the duty of the Church to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. The truth is its life. It was the sword of the Spirit at Pentecost, and it must ever be so.

2. Another element of a prosperous Church is *a true ministry*. There is a divinely authorized ministry for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ. This ministry must be duly prepared and authenticated. All that is true in the dogma of apostolical succession belongs equally to all branches of the evangelical Protestant Church. Yet we mean more by a true ministry than one qualified with a current ecclesiastical warrant. Many such have been and now are wolves in sheep's clothing—the crucifiers of Christ and the liberators of Barabbas. It must possess, in addition, a quenchless desire for the salvation of men. How strong on this point the declaration of the apostle, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." Could he more strongly express the intensity of his desire to save souls? And, again, he says to the Corinthians, "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the

Paul's zeal.

Puritans.

Dr. Backus.

more. . . . I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." This is his own representation of the passion burning within him for the salvation of men, and which difficulties seemed only to inflame; and hence, in a few years, he carried the Gospel as far as the Roman eagles had sped their flight. From the hour the scales fell from his eyes he lived but for one object—to save men by the preaching of the truth. Whether reasoning with the Jews, or confounding the Grecian philosophers, or defending himself before Festus, or writing in chains to the Churches he had collected, his only aim was to save men through the truth. And such men were the Reformers, and the Scotch and English Puritans; such were Heywood, and Brainard, and Baxter, and Wesley, and Whitefield, and Chalmers, and M'Cheyne, and Payson, and Nettleton, and many others among the dead and the living, whose names are enrolled among those who have turned many to righteousness. And such is the ministry we need—learned—trained to be master workmen if it can be done—but, above all, truly pious and truly consecrated to the work of the ministry. With such a ministry, where does any Church languish? Without such a ministry, where does any Church flourish? When told he could not live an hour, Dr. Backus asked that he might be placed on his knees, so as to offer up another prayer for the Church of God before he died. His request was granted, and he died on his knees praying for the prosperity of Jerusalem. When a spirit like this per-

vades its entire ministry, then will the light of the Church fall upon the world with the brilliancy of the united light of seven suns. And education societies, colleges, and seminaries are comparatively useless only as they raise up such a ministry. Such was the ministry of Pentecost.

3. Another element of a prosperous Church is *the holiness of its members*. "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that it might be holy and without blemish." The prayer of Paul for the Thesalonians was that God might sanctify them wholly. And he entreats the Romans to present themselves to God a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. And Peter entreats all Christians to be holy in all manner of conversation. The holiness, the graces of its members form the true weapons with which the Church may successfully contend with the army of the aliens.

And all scriptural representations as to Christian character agree with this statement. Christians are witnesses for Christ, bearing testimony by word and example to his divine character, equity, sufficiency, and to the power of his grace. They are epistles of Christ, not forged, falsified, interlined, blotted; but genuine, plain, clear, that can be read of all men. They are the lights of the world, not glimmering, feeble, fitful, like a candle dying in a socket; but bright, and ever brightening, like the sun ascending from the twilight of morn to the zenith. They are the salt of the earth, not useless and worthless, having lost its savor, and cast out to be trodden under

Profession of religion.

Dober and Leopold.

foot of man ; but salutary, preservative, and corrective. The sanctity and consecration of its members form the true glory of the Church, and are a most important element in securing its prosperity.

It is a cause of lamentation in our day that, to such an extent, a profession of religion is only a profession of belief in the theory of the Gospel. With many, that profession seems as unconnected with obligation to glorify God and do good to men as is the reception of any one of the conflicting systems of philosophy. Here is the point where the Protestant Church is weakest, and where it stands most in need of a new Reformation. It is related that in 1730 a negro from St. Thomas visited the Moravian Church at Herrnhuth, and stated that he had a sister on that island greatly desirous of religious instruction, but that none could instruct her save a slave. Two of the brethren, Dober and Leopold, instantly offered to go to that island and to sell themselves as slaves, in order to point that child of Africa to the Savior. When the spirit of Dober and Leopold pervades its entire membership, then will the Church be terrible to its enemies as an army with banners, and soon will the world be subdued to the sceptre of the Savior ; and such was the spirit of the members of the Church at Pentecost.

4. Another element of a prosperous Church is *the united and zealous efforts of its members to accomplish its covenanted work*. This world is given to the Savior. It is to be reclaimed to its true allegiance by the Gos-

Zealous effort.

New channels.

Superstitious warning.

pel; nor is the Church to relax its efforts to give the Gospel to every creature until the darkness which covers the earth shall pass away, like the mists that roll up the mountain before the rising glories of a summer's morning. What a glorious work is given to the Church!

God is opening in all the earth new channels for the going forth of the waters of life, and amid all people he is clearing a wide space on which to lay the foundations of his Church. The gorgeous superstitions of India are giving way before the religion and civilization of Christian states. A change is rapidly passing over the Mohammedan world. Its fit emblem is that segment of the moon often seen in the western sky in the morning, and whose light is going out amid the brightening glories of the sun. Popery, too, is fast wearing out; and the providence of God, with trumpet tongue, is calling upon the Church to rise and possess the land. With such a work before it, and with such opportunities of doing it, why should one member of the Church of God withhold his aid? Why should Judah vex Ephraim, or Ephraim Judah? Why should the people of God permit themselves to be drawn away by controversies on the mint, anise, and cummin, from the weightier matters of the law? In a day like ours, every member of the Church should be zealous and active in seeking to do good to others; they should be laboring together for the spread of the Gospel. Thus did the members of the Church at Pentecost, and the Lord daily added to

 Presence of the Spirit.

The upper room.

The baptism.

their number. A Church whose members are united in love and fervent in spirit is at once powerful and attractive. It is arrayed in the beauty of holiness. Such was the Church of Pentecost.

5. Another element of a prosperous Church is *the presence of the Spirit*. The last command of the Savior to his disciples was, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." In obedience to this command, they returned to that famed upper room, and there for ten days they waited and prayed, and prayed and waited for the promised power; and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. It is admitted that there were some things miraculous in this wonderful event, and not now to be expected; but it is claimed that there were other things designed to be permanent, and which now, as then, form the true power of the Church; and those things are all included in the phrase, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost;" and in this, which is familiarly called "the baptism of the Spirit," consists the real power of the Church, without which none of its great objects can be attained. The disciples had the truth; they were authorized to preach; the people were perishing for lack of vision. Why delay a day? They waited the promise of the Father; and, when endued with the power from on high, they went into Jerusalem and into all the earth, and, wherever they went, they turned the world up-

The power of the Church.

Its beauty.

side down ; and here alone lies the true power of the Church. Splendid edifices, imposing ceremonies, cathedral services, eloquent ministrations, matins and vespers, form no compensation for this power from on high ; nor do organizations for the reformation of all kinds of sinners. Let the ministry of the Church, its office-bearers, and members, be only clothed with this power from on high, and then it will appear to be what it really is, "an angel of light, lifting her cherubic form and smiling countenance among the children of men ; shedding a healing influence on the wounds of society ; hushing the notes of discord ; driving before her the spirit of mischief ; bringing the graces in her train, and converting earth into a resemblance of heaven." Then, like the Pharos of the Egyptians, whose towering form by day, and whose far-shining light by night was the guide of the tempest-tossed mariner, it will be the guide of all the wandering from God to a safe anchorage under the shelter of the Rock of Ages.

THE END.

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