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"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

Nearer Home.

One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er;
I'm nearer home to-day
Than I've ever been before.

Nearer my Father's house,
Where many mansions be;
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the jasper sea.

Nearer the bound of life
When we lay our burdens down,
Nearer leaving the cross,
Nearer gaining the crown.

But lying darkly between,
Winding down through the night,
Lies the dim and unknown stream
That leads at last to the light.

Father, perfect my trust,
Strengthen the might of my faith,
Let me feel as I would when I stand
On the rock of the shore of death.

Feel as I would when my feet
Are slipping o'er the brink,
For it may be I'm nearer home—
Nearer than now I think.

Ecclesiastical.

Tractarianism in the Church of England.

The recent discussion of the practice of auricular confession in the English Church does not appear to deter the parties accused from making full display of their sentiments, by imposing ceremonies. They seem almost to vie with the Roman Catholic body, and are but one removed from them. The inconsistency is in their continuing to eat Protestant bread, and calling themselves Protestants.

The *Weekly Register*, (Roman Catholic organ,) indicates that it is under the consideration of the Court of Rome, whether it should not issue an authoritative assertion of the nullity of Anglican orders, it being reported that a number of the advanced Tractarian clergy are prepared to leave the Church of England on such an assertion being published. It will be seen that this is considered by the Romish Church as a mere question of prudence.

One of the London papers contains the following account of the service at Mr. Gresley's church, the first Sunday after the publication of the "West" case:—

"Yesterday morning there was a large congregation and full choral service at Boyne Hill Church, which has been rendered so familiar to the public during the last few days, in consequence of the published correspondence in reference to the Confessional practised there. The altar in this church is as high, if not higher, than the pulpit. The table was yesterday covered with a richly ornamented velvet, bearing crosses and other devices. It was surmounted by a long cross, about four feet in height, and had upon it two large golden candlesticks. Over the chancel was a large picture of the Saviour with angels ministering to him. There are no pews in the church, all the seats are open and free, and all of them provided with hassocks. Thus the rich and the poor are upon the same footing, and those who enter the church first are entitled to, if they choose to take them, the best seats. At half-past ten o'clock yesterday morning, twelve choristers and four priests entered in procession and took their seats in the chancel. There was a full choral service which completely eclipsed anything which St. Barnabas' church ever produced in its palmiest days. The Rev. Mr. West, the curate whose proceedings have given rise to so much indignant comment, intoned the prayers from the chancel, and Mr. Vignolles read the first and second lessons from an eagle's back at the bottom of the altar stairs. The Rev. Mr. Shipley took up his position at the eastern end of the middle aisle, and chanted the Litany with his back to the congrega-

tion. Mr. Gresley ascended the altar steps for the purpose of reading the communion service. He knelt on the steps on the front of the cross, having a priest on each side, and in this attitude they remained two or three minutes. From a large book of a bright red colour, he read this portion of the service, and was most emphatic when he arrived at the commandment which says—'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' Mr. Shipley stood half-way down the steps of the altar and read the epistle, and then handed the book to Mr. West, who, from the same position, read the Gospel; Mr. Gresley standing meanwhile with his face to the wall, and his back to the congregation."

The *Guardian* gives the following account of the burial of a lady near Lincoln:

"The body was placed in a coffin covered with violet cloth, there being on the lead a long Latin cross of brass, enriched with a fillet of trefoils which ran round the members. These, at the intersection, were encircled with a band bearing in old letter the words, 'Requiescat in pace.' At the foot of the cross was a small brass plate, bearing the name, age, date of departure, and the words, 'Mercy Jesu.' At the appointed hour the body was placed on an oaken bier, covered with a silken pall of violet and white. A procession was formed in the following order:—The undertaker and tradesmen employed; the architect, vested in surplice and square cap, bearing a large wooden cross, coloured violet and gold; a choir of sixteen, in surplices and black scarfs; a priest, in his vestments; the body, borne by the churchwardens, sacristan, and three other communicants; the pall being supported by six vested priests; the Rector in his vestments, as chief mourner; the friends and members of the family, male and female; the principal farmers of the parish and their wives; the domestics—all two and two. As the procession slowly moved along, the choir chanted *De Profundis* to the Gregorian tone. The bier was placed at the foot of the steps leading to the chancel and surrounded by several burning tapers; at the head stood the cross-bearer. On the altar were burning the two lights, and it was vested in violet and white; so were the pulpit, lectern, &c. The church was decked with flowers of violet, white, and crimson, and branches of yew-tree and bay, and was crowded with worshippers. The Office being ended, the procession returned to the rectory singing the 118th Psalm (*Confite-mini Domino*) to the 8th Tone, second ending, the rector leading the way, and joining in the strain of the jubilant thanksgiving."

Meeting of the Kirchentag.

The meeting of the Kirchentag at Hamburg was looked forward to with considerable anxiety. Few cities in Germany are more characterized by religious indifference. It was felt at the time of the appointment of Hamburg that a risk was incurred. When the Senate refused this summer the use of a number of the churches for evening worship, and a sharp discussion took place also in the newspapers, it seemed as if the worst fears were about to be realized. The Kirchentag itself, which for some years had been losing its first fervour, might have been almost endangered as to the future, by the failure of a year. Such fears were, however, more than disappointed. A large number of strangers poured into the city, and the opening service was filled to overflowing. The celebrated Rauhe Haus, (Rough House,) of Dr. Wichern, in the neighbourhood, was also a great object of attraction. The celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of this well-known establishment was held before the meeting of the Kirchentag, and many from great distances were present to join in the festival. The several houses were decorated with flags of all colours and dimensions, while the Hamburg and Prussian banners were displayed in front of the dwelling-house of the President. Several hymns were sung, and Dr. Wichern spoke with gratitude to God of the blessings which He had allowed to attend the establishment during the quarter of a century

since its foundation. A number of the most celebrated German divines, as Dr. Hoffmann and Mr. Nitzsch, took part in the proceedings.

The tenth German Evangelical Kirchentag met at Hamburg on the 14th September, and the proceedings were opened by a sermon preached by General-Superintendent Hoffmann, of Berlin. He chose for his text, Romans xii. 1-3.

After the sermon, the meeting was constituted with prayer. A fraternal epistle, written by Prelate Kapff, had been sent to the Protestants in Austria, and 3,800 copies had been distributed among the Protestant congregations of that empire. The second work was the preparation for the present meeting. The position of the Kirchentag being far removed from a compulsory and formal system, as well as from a forced pietism that flees all contact with the world, the subjects of discussion have been chosen with reference to the renewing and perfecting of the whole man in the image of God.

The first subject for discussion was "The rights of the congregation to special pastoral care."

Dr. Nitzsch said, that every pastor has not the gift of visiting his people profitably; to be able to pray with the sick, to advise the young and inexperienced, to deal with hardened and with tender consciences with success, is a gift of God, and is often possessed in a far higher degree by laymen, than by the pastor. Let the lay members of the church then venture to use their gifts, by visiting the sick, the careless, the hardened, and try to draw the soul nearer to Christ. That is the great object of pastoral care, and in such a sense every living Christian man may be a pastor. The minister must have courage to speak to the people in private as plainly as he does from the pulpit. When he visits, he ought to bear in mind that many souls, even in careless families, expect the pastor, when he calls, not to speak on indifferent subjects, but to deal with the soul. Then, how sweet is a word of comfort to a poor struggling awakened soul, that has not yet had courage to speak of the new light that has burst on him, while he is obliged to live in close contact with those that love the world. Let the pastor, in meeting casually with his people, sow the word liberally beside all waters.

General-Superintendent Dr. Hoffmann recommended *The Reformed Pastor*, by Richard Baxter, as a book calculated to guide an earnest servant of God in pastoral visitation. He himself had tried many a plan to come regularly into the houses of all his people, but alas! on calling, he found one family not at home, another so busy, that he felt himself an intruder, in a third house, his own soul was so dead, that he could say but little. He had almost given up in despair, when Baxter's work fell into his hand, recommending special prayer as the remedy where the minister cannot reach his people. If he cannot speak to them about God, he may at all times speak to God about them. The man who has prayed in earnest, will soon wish to see whether his prayers have been of any use. Like the London chimney-sweep, who wanted to visit a missionary meeting, and who was refused admission in his work-day dress, but who cried, "I must get in; I gave a penny to the mission last year, and I want to hear what good it has done;" so would the praying minister like to see what his prayers have done. Preaching without visitation, is like a carpenter driving nails with his eyes blindfolded. He hears the sound of the hammer thundering on the board; sometimes he hits a nail, but as often he drives it crooked. His preaching may be doing harm from not knowing the wants of the people. The pastor's work is not accomplished till he has made every house a temple, and every father of a family a priest in his own household.

Pastor Taube of Barmen, remarked, that the Scriptures demand pastoral visitation not only by direct commands, as Isaiah xl., Luke xv., James v., Colossians i., but also by the example of Christ and his apostles. The very nature of the Protestant Church demands it.

Drs. Krummacher and Mallet, Pastors Ball and Treviranus, took part in the discussion, awakening attention to the peculiar forms of abuse in different parts of Germany.

On the second day of meeting a paper was read by Professor Herrmann of Göttingen on the connexion between Church and State, or the union of civil and ecclesiastical offices. He spoke of the origin, the gradual change, and the present state of this union. He remarked, that to keep up this union is to preserve in the Protestant Church the Roman Catholic ideas of the middle ages, respecting the nature and design of a church. He showed how the State by its interference injures the Church, and closed by proposing a resolution of the necessity of church office-bearers being separate independent persons, capable of acting independently of the State.

Dr. Mallet of Bremen said that, the civil authorities like to have the control of Church matters in their hands, and many ecclesiastics would like to have the control of civil matters. Few are born with a crown on their head, but many with a crown in—that is, a love to sway despotic power. If civil authority be bad, a hierarchy, where the rights of church members are not guaranteed, would be far worse. Professor Dr. Baumgarten thought it was full time to come to the Scriptures, and to inquire what form of church government was there prescribed, and to return as soon as possible to that form.

On discussing the question of the relation of the Christian to temporal property, Dr. Carus, referring to the late commercial crisis, spoke disparagingly of the American revivals, which called up from Dr. Krummacher of Potsdam a most eloquent defence of the work of God in that land. Other lands, he said, were praying for a similar development of the grace and power of God; in Germany we either remain silent, or speak disparagingly of the greatest manifestation of the power of the grace of God which modern times has witnessed. He gave statistics of the great awakening, and expressed the earnest wish that the Most High might condescend to favour us with similar developments of His goodness and grace. Dr. Carus explained, that he only meant to complain of the form which the awakenings had assumed, especially of the publicity given to individual cases of conversion.

The last subject was "Popular Superstitions," as a hindrance to vital godliness, introduced by Professor Dr. Wutke of Berlin. The immense church was crowded, and the idolatry and atheism of daily life was most unsparingly exposed.

Previous to the meeting of the Kirchentag, a powerful opposition had been made by the local press. It was for a time feared that very few would open their houses to receive guests during the time of meeting, as has always been the case. Hamburg has seven Lutheran churches for a population of nearly 200,000 people, of whom seven-eighths are Lutherans; but only one of these churches could be had for the purpose. The others were refused. At last, however, two other Lutheran churches were obtained for the evening services. Fears were entertained of a riot, so great seemed to be the hatred of the people against the meeting, but these and all other fears were happily disappointed. The lists showed 839 strangers, and 1187 Hamburgers, making in all 2026 persons who took part in the meetings as members, besides many hundreds who occupied the galleries as spectators.

On the Monday morning preceeding the meetings of the Kirchentag, a Prayer-meeting was held to supplicate the Divine blessing on the proceedings of the week.

On each occasion the churches were crowded to excess, thus putting to shame the fears of the friends, and confounding the enemies of the Kirchentag, who had confidently predicted neglect on the part of the Hamburg citizens. May the God of grace grant that the effect of this meeting may long be felt in Hamburg, and by all who took part in the proceedings of this week.—*News of the Churches.*