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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

Female Prayer Meetings.

We believe it is the general experience of pastors, that the female prayer meeting is sustained with more difficulty than any other meeting of the church. The female members generally have a superior share of ability: they have also a preponderance of religious feeling, but it does not find expression in social devotion. A few conscientious ones are always seen at the post of duty, but what are they among so many? In churches of two or three hundred female members, it often happens that not a dozen are found at the weekly gathering for prayer. A few others are present, occasionally, in seasons of special interest, but in ordinary times they fall away.

It is pleasant to know that a better spirit prevails among heathen converts. They do not shrink from duty. They love the place of prayer. They meet with one consent for social devotion. Lifted from the degradation to which heathenism sinks woman, they joyfully offer their best service to the Lord. Mrs. Knowlton gives in the *Missionary Magazine* for October, an encouraging account of the interest felt by Christian women in the female prayer meeting. She says, "Progress has been made since I left, and when I knelt in prayer with thirty or forty women—about three times the number that used to compose our little female prayer meeting.—I was quite overcome with joy and thankfulness. This has been sustained, and its numbers increased and its interest augmented, chiefly by the sincere and earnest endeavors of an intelligent and devoted native woman. She is the first woman in our church converted from heathenism who learned to read."

Is there any church in Christian America which gathers forty women at its female prayer meeting? Would it not be well for some of our sisters to visit China, and catch the spirit that prevails among the converts from a Pagan faith?—W. & E.

Wayland and Channing.

He is, perhaps, best portrayed by comparing him with his fellow independent, and for years his neighbor, Channing. How different in look and character, yet how true to their great mission as champions of liberty and humanity! Wayland, tall, massive, severe, with quite as much the look of a great captain as a great divine, with eye piercing, his shaggy brows like an eagle from his eye. Channing, small, delicate, mild, and almost feminine in refinement, and with an eye dove-like in its aspiration and love, yet with an interior dignity that fully matched him with his peer, and gave a majesty that no man dared trifle with. Both were kingly in their way, and one would never think of laying a familiar hand upon either of them. Wayland looked more to facts and working principles; Channing more to ideas and their intellectual bearings; the one went more for truth for the sake of duty; the other more for truth for its own sake, quite sure that duty would follow in its train. As moralists and theologians they labored alike for the elevation of men, but in widely different paths. Wayland distrusted men, yet went among them and coerced them and led them; Channing trusted and praised them, yet was much of a recluse, and did not affect the busy street or the stirring crowd. Wayland preached total depravity in theory, yet was earnest to bring God's grace down to men as their greatest need; Channing preached the excellence of human nature, but was never content to leave it to itself, and sought to lift it into communion with God. The one had the more logic; the other more eloquence; while both on great occasions reasoned with logical cogency and spoke with electric fire. They differed in their antecedents and associations. Wayland lived among the Baptists, and his opinion was of the theoretic school, and legitimated itself by God's Spirit in direct action upon the converted soul. Channing lived among the liberal humanists of Boston, and their Unitarian independence perhaps rested somewhat too emphatically upon their high culture and exalted humanity. Both were lovers and preachers of Christ as human and Divine, and were

guiltless of the new folly that presumes to have outgrown Christ in its high illuminism.—*Dr. Osgood's [Unitarian] Discourse on Dr. Wayland.*

The wonders of the Cross.

Mr. Spurgeon, in a sermon on the seven wonders of the cross, closes by saying: "And now, is there not another wonder connected with the cross of Christ that is not recorded here? I think there is, and the wonder is that when we hear of the cross of Christ our hearts do not break, and that our dead souls do not rise. Is it not a wonder that no darkness of penitence comes over us and that the veil of our ignorance is not rent? You know it has been so with hundreds of you. You have heard about it scores of times, and you still hear about it; and this is an awful wonder, because it looks very much like the fulfilment of that passage, 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.' Christ Jesus is made unto you a savor of death unto death, instead of life unto life. O, it is no wonder if we weep our hearts out of our eyes; it is no wonder if our souls be dissolved in grief for sin at the sight of His dear cross. There is no wonder in that; but it is a strange and infamous wonder that we will not believe in Him, that we will still turn away from Him. O, may the Lord to-night put the wonder away by the greater wonder that He can forgive such an offence as this; that He can put this also away, and can receive even those who have despised Him, to His heart forever."

How to reach the port.

"You make too much of the doctrines," said Mr. Ford, as he found himself unable to answer the arguments adduced by Mr. Hall to show the importance of correct views of doctrine. "Doctrines won't save us. Religion don't consist in believing doctrines; it consists in leading a religious life. If a man is honest and sincere, and does as well as he knows how, I think he will get to heaven. He won't be lost because he don't believe everything which theologians tell him. But we had better agree to differ on this subject, and talk about something else."

Mr. Hall was silent for a moment, as if unwilling to drop the subject; then, changing his attitude, he remarked, "Young Bartlett, I hear, has got command of a ship."

"Indeed! He has got ahead pretty fast," said Mr. Ford, gladly entering, as he supposed, upon a new topic of conversation.

"Yes; he has made but three voyages, one as a common sailor; and two as mate, and now he is captain of a fine ship."

"He had no knowledge of the science of navigation when he left home; perhaps he found time to study it at sea."

"Perhaps he don't know anything about it."

"What sort of a captain will he make, if he is ignorant of navigation? How could he find his way across the ocean?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. You think a knowledge of navigation is necessary in order to direct the course of the ship?"

"Of course."

"The sailor must know where his ship is going, and how to direct her so as to get there?"

"Certainly."

"Suppose he is ignorant of navigation, but is honest and sincere in his desire to reach the port, and does as well as he knows how—won't he reach his port?"

"He won't be very likely to; it will be by accident, if he does."

"If he sincerely thinks he is steering his ship in the right direction, won't that be sufficient?"

"You can't be in earnest in asking such a question? The points of the compass don't depend upon a man's thinking. If his port lies to the north, he must steer north in order to reach the port."

"That seems to me plain. But just now you said, in regard to the voyage of life, that it made no difference what course a man took, provided he believed it to be the right one—he would get to heaven."

"I didn't say that; I said that if a man was honest and sincere, and did as well as he knew how, he would be saved."

"You admit that a man must do something in order to be saved, and that the Bible tells him what to do to be saved, just as navigation tells a man what to do in order to cross the ocean. Now, it seems to me that if a man don't do what the Bible directs him to do, he will fail of salvation, just as, if a man does not do what navigation directs him to do, he will not reach the desired haven. In either case, thinking his course to be right won't make it right."

"The cases are not similar."

"Will you show me where the analogy fails?"

"Spiritual and temporal things differ; you can't reason from the one to the other; but we have got back to the old subject, and I believe I will go home; good evening."

Spiritual things do differ from temporal things, but that does not prevent a principle that is true in regard to the one from being true in regard to the other. In all cases, thinking a thing to be true does not make it true. Intending to obey a rule is not obeying it.

The sailor must follow the direction given by navigation—must act in accordance with the truth. He who would reach heaven must follow the direction of the Bible—must act in accordance with truth. In neither case will sincerity in error supply the place of truth.

The principles of navigation furnish rules to the sailor. The principles or doctrines of revelation furnish rules to the Christian. In all cases, accurate principles are necessary to accurate rules. Hence, the knowledge of doctrines is as important to the Christian as the knowledge of navigation to the sailor.

Sunday School Concerts.

"At a meeting of the Brooklyn Sunday School Union, which I recently attended, the subject for consideration was 'The influence and management of Sunday School Concerts'; and inasmuch as there are many brethren in 'the city of churches' who enjoy a wide reputation for 'tact' in the management of Sunday Schools, I was not a little disappointed that ideas of no more practical importance should have been advanced for the guidance of those who, by attending these monthly meetings, and listening to veterans in this department of Christian labor, endeavour in some measure to supply their own want of experience."

Several plans for conducting these Sunday School meetings were presented, and each was declared by the person offering it, to have "worked admirably" in the school which he represented. One recommended singing as a "main feature," while another, by calling upon the children to recite Scripture proofs, kept up a "deep interest" in his meetings. Again, it was recommended "to have three speakers, each confined to fifteen minutes"; and yet again it was thought that one "good address" was preferable. One superintendent would have the speaker "tell no stories"; another would have a short "sermon" by the pastor. One of the city pastors spoke of having been in a Western village, and while there, having often heard the people speak of the deep interest manifested in their Sunday School concerts, was led to attend one of these meetings. He described it as having been quite a success, as far as numbers were concerned, and the exercises, which partook largely of the nature of an "exhibition," were listened to with deep attention; but, to his mind, there was a want of "adaption" in the use of such means to the accomplishment of the great object toward which all Sunday School labor should be directed; namely, "the early conversion of the children to Christ."

Now, a Sunday School Concert should not be stereotyped. The superintendent who would be successful as a conductor of these meetings will endeavour so to vary the exercises that the interest of the children will continue unabated to the end; while, at the same time, he will be careful to have these exercises of such a character, as to deeply impress their minds with the reality and importance of religion. The recitation of Scripture proofs by the children will answer well for an occasional exercise, provided a large number can be induced to participate in it. At some meetings there may be three speakers, at others one; and again at others, nearly all the time may be spent in singing and prayer. Occasionally a solo, a duett, or a quartett, sung by some of the smaller children, with a chorus by the entire school, may be introduced; or if there be a Sunday School choir, let the choir and school sing responsively. If the pastor can interest the children, and if he can preach "short sermons," then he ought to do so as frequently as possible; otherwise the less frequent the better. A speaker should not be hampered with instructions relative to the character and style of his address, but should be left entirely to his own judgment, and where this cannot be trusted, the person is wholly unqualified as a public instructor of children. Some meetings will be solemn, others more cheerful, but if properly conducted, both will be profitable. I would not labor either for solemnity or its opposite; but would have my exercises of such a character as would be calculated not only to interest, but to instruct and profit.

I know that it is a complaint common with superintendents, that they cannot succeed in bringing out the children to their concerts, and I have no doubt, that if the brethren whose plans have been recited, and who spoke of them as having succeeded admirably in their own schools, would observe more closely the character of their audiences, they would find that they were made up largely of adults, and that not more than from one-quarter to one-half of the school was in the habit of attending. I would always like to see a large number of the parents and friends of the children present at these meetings, but unless they are attended by the children, they not only fail of being a success, but lose their distinctive features, and might better not be held. In closing, I would say that the Sunday School Concert will generally be interesting and profitable just in proportion to the time and labor spent upon it; and that the superintendent who "deviseth liberal things" will establish himself in the hearts and affections of the children, and be permitted to see the good work, to which he has given himself, prosper in his hands.—*Ex.*

Gentle reproof.

At one of the railway stations an aged man took a seat in the carriage in which I was riding. He soon showed that he had been drinking. He was very talkative and awfully profane. His language seemed too bad to be heard; but what could be done? He would probably resent any reproof or good counsel that could be given; "trample it under his feet, and turn again and read us." A gentleman sitting a short distance from him sought to catch his eye and restrain him by a steady reproving look. That not availing, he went to the sweeper, and said, in a kindly tone, "I believe, sir, you and I are the oldest persons here; are we not?"

"Yes," he replied, with a pompous air, "I think we are: and I believe I have the majority."

"Well then," said the gentleman, "shall we not set a good example for these younger people, and use no words for them to imitate?"

"That may be your doctrine," said he, "but it is not mine."

The gentleman returned to his seat, and said no more; but the sweeper's voice fell and his oaths ceased. He was tamed by a gentle reproof.

A FRIEND called on Michael Angelo, who was finishing a statue. Some time afterwards he called again; the sculptor was still at his work. His friend, looking at the figure, exclaimed, "Have you been idle since I saw you last?" "By no means," replied the sculptor; "I have retouched this part, and polished that; I have softened this feature and brought out this muscle; I have given more expression to this lip, and more energy to this limb." "Well, well," said his friend, "all these are trifles!" "It may be so," replied Angelo; "but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle."—*Colton.*

Let us be always cheerful; if life is a burden, let it be the burden of a song. The goodness of to-day will not blot out the sin of yesterday.