

ain to the end of their days, and died in the harness. It is said of the first of the three, that after a field night in the House of Commons, he would be seen at daylight walking home at a pace which a young man could hardly equal. Thom is Carlyle, over seventy, abates nothing of his intellectual vigor; while Lord John Russell, though creeping towards eighty, still attends the Upper House of Parliament. Our own country, too, furnishes striking instances of hearty old age. Stewart, Drew, and Vanderbilt, the money-kings of this city, are old men, as the years are counted, but still hold firmly in their grasp the great interests which they control. Bryant, editor and poet at seventy four, translates Homer, and judging by his numerous public addresses, must be as busy as ever. The grass has just closed over Dr. Skinner, who nearly half a century ago was famous as a preacher, and of whom it may be said, that to the last "his eye waxed not dim, nor did his strength abate."

Physiologists tell us that with a greater prevalence of a knowledge of the laws of health, the world may expect an increase of the average duration of human life. Are we already reaping the fruit of this better knowledge, in the prolongation of the vigor of the human species? The cases we have given are not of old age enfeebled, retired, and barely tolerated, but of age still bearing the armor, militant, triumphant. One could almost persuade himself that the golden era is near, and that these splendid examples are the first tokens of its approach.—N. Y. Methodist.

For the Christian Messenger.

PRAISE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

Praise is an act of Christian worship. It forms a part of the public worship of God. Is there not just ground to fear that some Baptist ministers and churches are too unmindful of this fact?

I have frequently heard ministers, on rising to read a hymn, say: "Let us commence this exercise," or "We will introduce this service," or "We will begin this meeting, by singing the — hymn." Sometimes the minister says baldly, "292," or "1121," and it has flashed through my mind that he was about to test the congregation in arithmetic. Less often I have heard, "Let us sing in the — hymn."

I think that these ministers are good men, and mean well, but why should they use circumlocution or ellipsis in the matter at all? Why should they thus call off the attention of the congregation from the true character of the act they are asked to engage in, instead of plainly reindicating them of it? It certainly would be better to say, "Let us unite in praising God," or "Let us join in worshipping God, by singing to His praise the — hymn." The subject is too exalted for any to reply, "These are mere trifles." Ministers ought not only in set discourse, but also in their ministrations, to keep before the church and the world correct views of this as of all other parts of worship. Faulty and careless expression beclouds the truth. I am not sure that there are not some members of Baptist churches who, in the bottom of their hearts, have doubts about God's praise being the object of singing. I shall give you and your readers an opportunity of reflecting on this statement, remarking before I do so that the absolute or partial suppression of the truth in this matter by ministers, whether through carelessness or want of moral courage, is an evil whose inevitable tendency is to rob the worship of God of its spiritual character.

Brethren A, B, C, D, and E, two of them being ministers, were engaged the other day in discussing the plan for a new chapel. Two of the number had come from a distance to obtain all the information they could on the matter for the church of which they are members. The location of "the choir" came up. All the brethren professed to agree in believing that Christians should all join in singing God's praise—that it was plainly their duty to qualify themselves to do so as far as possible, and that the arrangements of the chapel and modes of worship should be adapted to exemplify and promote these Scriptural views. I give below as faithful a report as I can of the conversation on this point. For the sake of convenience, I shall put into the mouths of A and B, in the form of a continuous narrative, the substance of what was said at different times and by the different brethren.

A. Is it not a good plan to locate the

choir in a recess behind the minister, and in front of the congregation?

B. Why would you do that?

A. Well, it is rather new, and looks well.

B. But novelty and appearance are not the object in view. What you wish to secure is the most effective arrangement promotive of the worship of God in praise, by the whole church.

A. True, but such an arrangement will not prevent the people from joining in the singing.

B. I think such will be its effect in a very short time; and you must not forget that you are not only bound to adopt such an arrangement as shall not prevent the whole church from singing, but that one which is best adapted to encourage and foster this united expression of devout emotion to the Head of the Church.

A. What reason have you for thinking that such a location of the choir will result in stifling congregational singing?

B. Because it will completely isolate the choir from the people; the prominence of the position will tempt the choir to musical display; the praises of admiring friends will suggest to the choir the election of at least one tune at each service, which they are sure the people cannot sing; and in less than a year almost every member of the congregation, instead of being stimulated to join in the sweet service of praise to God, will come to wait with breathless impatience for the choir's "musical performance," as at any ordinary concert.

A. Well, will not the same thing happen if the choir occupy the gallery in rear of the congregation?

B. Not in so marked a degree, since the choir is not so prominently obtruded upon the church as if they were a distinct order set apart for the office of praise. A part of the congregation occupies the gallery with the choir. The subordination of the choir implied in this plan tends to moderate instead of increase the demands of the congregation on the choir, and furnishes less temptation to the latter to turn worship into performance.

A. But some people will turn round in their seats to see the choir. That is very awkward.

B. The proper remedy for that is not to be sought by changing the locality of the choir, but in the practice of the precepts of good breeding. Besides, the congregation should stand while engaged in praise, and then if there is any necessity for seeing the choir, the people might all be requested to turn around. There is, however, no such necessity, and the practice of turning round to see the choir does not assist worship, but quite the reverse.

A. See here now: there is the North Baptist Church in Halifax, the Clarendon St. Church in Boston, and other Churches in the States, of other denominations as well as Baptist, who have located their choirs on the platform in rear of the minister.

B. Very true; but that does not affect the case at all. I have heard of a Baptist Church paying a quartette choir for doing their singing on Sundays, when they knew that these singers performed on week days in the theatres. I have known a Baptist Church in Boston to employ a drunkard as an organist. Go ask the churches you have named if their arrangement for the choir has resulted in all or most of the members of the church uniting their voices in singing the praises of God in the great assembly. You will find, I think, that such has not been the result.

A. You would then place the choir in the gallery, would you?

B. I do not think that any church which believe that singing is part of the worship of God, in which every Christian should be encouraged and stimulated to join, can be asked to stultify their convictions beyond the point implied by that arrangement.

A. Where else would you place the choir than in the gallery, since they must not occupy the platform?

B. Why, wherever they can best assist the whole church in giving united harmonious vocal expression to their emotions in praise to God. Is not that the beginning and end of the whole thing? You are distressed to find a place for the choir. Suppose you bring your anxiety to bear on the real question instead. Let the choir go for the present. There are possibilities in music which appeal to the subtlest appreciations of the intellect. The soul does not voice itself in such harmony when it worships God with his people. You may let that class of music go altogether. Worship is prompted by emotion. The service, the precious

influence, of music is one of the heart, and not of the head. When christian voices blend in God's praise their hearts will not be kept asunder. The great heart-service of music must not be subordinated, under the guise of worship, to imagination and vanity.

Let us begin at the beginning. How can the church best promote the worship of God in praise? It is the duty and privilege of every member thus to worship Him, according to his gifts. The church will arrange the matter, if New York and Boston let them alone, very simply and Scripturally. They will select one of their number, whose qualifications fit him for the duty, to lead them in this part of public worship, and assist the church generally in cultivating the gift of song. As an intelligent Christian, he will devise suitable means for accomplishing the important work entrusted to him. One of his first steps will be to gather about him a number of brethren and sisters who have some musical culture, and ask their special assistance. He will wish these to sit beside him in the house of God, in order that there may be a sufficient volume of correct sound to guide and sustain the voices of the whole church. To do this the more effectually, he will find it desirable: that he and his special assistants, or "the choir," should occupy such a position that a wall of the house shall be within eight or ten feet of their backs, and that when they and the people are standing, the heads of the former shall be a few feet above those of the rest of the congregation in the body of the chapel. Such a position will favor the diffusion of the sound over all the people with such an effect of nearness and oneness with themselves as to stimulate, assist, and lead the worship of the whole church. This position will not be the same in all houses, because the plans of the houses are different. In one house it will be found at the side, in another at the end. In most chapels the space between the doors in the wall directly opposite the pulpit will be found the best for the purpose. The organ, if one is used, could be well placed in or against this wall. If the floor of the chapel is an inclined plane, sloping to the pulpit, no additional elevation will be needed. If the floor is level, an elevation of a few feet can easily be provided for the leader and his special assistants. The leader would be careful to select simple tunes, and such as were well known by the church. Encouraged by the church, he would, if necessary, divide them into sections for regular practice by turns, upon the tunes known, and upon any new tunes previous to their being used in public worship. A limited selection of chaste and simple tunes would, in a short time, be approved by the church for general use, and a number of copies would be placed in every pew. The pastor of the church, in his pulpit and social ministrations, would enforce upon all the members the obligation of qualifying themselves by practice for joining heartily in singing God's praise in the courts of His house. You agreed with me in saying that all Christians ought to unite their voices in the public praise of God, that it was their duty to qualify themselves to do so as far as possible, and that the arrangements and modes of worship in the house of God should be adapted to promote this object. I think my suggestions are in harmony with these views. I think yours are not.

B. I don't know but you have the right view of the matter, but it is more fashionable to have the choir on the platform with the minister, and our church might just as well be in the fashion as not.

B. "Fashion" is one thing, the praise of God is quite another. But I doubt that the "fashion" is prevailing. It certainly is not among Christians in Great Britain, but altogether the reverse; and in Boston Mr. Tourjee has been telling the churches that American congregations seem to German Christians like "the valley of dry bones." But if your delusion were not a delusion, it would be only a fresh movement of that irreligious spirit abroad which seeks to pervert the worship of God by turning it into formalism and display. Every evangelical minister and church ought jealously to defend and promote the simplicity and spirituality of christian worship.

A. That is quite true, but it will make very little difference how our church in— manage their worship. It would be different if we were in a city in the midst of Roman Catholic and ritualistic churches.

B. The New Testament circulates in the country as well as in the city,

and the Head of the Church is present in both.

A. There is nothing in the New Testament about the place which the choir shall occupy in the house of God.

B. Nor is there anything about a "choir" at all. The saints which were at Ephesus, the whole church observe, were exhorted by the Apostle to be "filled with the Spirit, * * * singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." The duty of praise, as worship, is most clearly enjoined in the New Testament upon all Christians. Anything which has a tendency to hinder the whole church from joining in the public praise of God is forbidden by the injunction, and everything that promotes it is as certainly commanded.

"Let the people praise thee, O God, Let all the people praise thee."

April 1st, 1871. H.

For the Christian Messenger.

Dear Brother,—

It was not the design of my communication, which appeared in your paper of the 22nd inst., to provoke a discussion on the subject of Freemasonry, but simply to prove that the fundamental principles of that "ancient and honorable" institution are not antagonistic to those of any Christian Church, and consequently that membership of the one is not inconsistent with that of the other.

I am, however, taken to task, rather severely I think, by "A Baptist" in your number of the 29th inst., for asserting that Freemasonry includes Saints John the Evangelist and the Baptist among its Patrons, and I am asked for my Authority, and to make proof in support of my statements.

I regret, for a Baptist's sake, that the rules of our Society forbid the imparting of such information through the columns of a newspaper, and that the only channel through which he may, legitimately, receive such "light" is by submitting to the "solemn ordeal" of initiation into the order; if he will consent to do this, I will not only guarantee him safe conduct through the ceremony, and immunity from the much dreaded, but highly abused "Goat" and "Gridiron," but I will, at the same time, afford him evidence, the most conclusive, of the fact, that Freemasonry justly and proudly claims, not only those celebrated Divines, as amongst her Patrons, but also some of the most learned and exalted in all ages, whose names need only to be mentioned as proof of their eminence.

By becoming a Freemason, "A Baptist" will be convinced that his strictures on my article are as unwarranted, as, to me at least, they appear ungenerous; He will discover that such opinions as, he says, were expressed by his friend the "aged minister," can only be allowed as coming from the uninitiated, and he will no doubt agree with me, that no prudent father, being himself a member, would forbid his son from joining a Freemason's Lodge. He will further ascertain that there are also "many, very many, others who have joined Freemason Lodges, after having been received into church fellowship.

"A Baptist," by affiliating with our Institution, will not only discover the reasons why "no female is eligible to unite with the fraternity" and that he is wrong in stating that our Society "ignores woman and her influence," but that the upholding and promoting of the moral and social interests of the gentler sex, is one of the highest objects of Freemasonry, which institution has become proverbial for the substantial relief and comfort afforded to the Widow and the Orphan.

Your correspondent's reflections on my use of the term, "Holy Saints" might, perhaps, as well have been spared, seeing that the term, whether it be right or wrong, does not materially affect my position in this matter; "a Baptist" may possibly himself have taken a "double-first" at Oxford or Acadia, which may account for this parade of the fact, but I make no pretensions to such distinction.

I find however, that I am now infringing on one of our "ancient Masonic Charges" which prohibits the members of the Craft from "allowing their zeal for the institution to lead them into argument with those who, through ignorance, may ridicule it," and will therefore now conclude by cordially and fraternally inviting brother "Baptist" to become a brother Mason also, and I think I may safely predict that, in due course, he will be duly qualified to take a "double-first"

in that sublime institution also; and thus have all his doubts in reference to this subject completely dispelled.

Promising that I will not again trouble you in this connection,

I remain, fraternally yours, BOAZ.

March 30th, 1871.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., April 5th., 1871.

What is the matter with the *Abstainer*? The editorial leader of its last issue expresses dissatisfaction with the whole newspaper press of the province, and, as if appointed to be the Censor-general, belabors all hands—secular and religious, for their imperfections and wrong doings. It may be that all hands deserve it, and more of it. Doubtless their delinquencies are abundant. Portions of the secular press occasionally indulge in what is unseemly, and in the effort to damage their opponents are not very particular either in the language they make use of or the statements they put forth. Our contemporary seems to forget that the use of defamatory language damages the parties who use it far more than it does those whom they seek to defame. Our contemporary thinks that the practice of the papers on one side seeking to defame the men belonging to the other, arises from the form of government under which we live. He says:—

"This is one evil resulting from responsible party government in a small country, where individual advancement may become the almost immediate result of defaming another. It may be that this is a lesser evil than the dictatorial power exercised in former times by a Governor and Council;—but in those days the public press was not subsidized by party; and editors regarded the men of the most ability and honesty, as the ones who should be entrusted by the people with management of their affairs."

It is doubtful if remaining under the Old Council would have secured the press from corruption, or made the men of which it might be formed more honest.

It may be that men "who value their peace and reputation" are, by the virulence of party spirit, led to "turn with disgust from every proposal to serve their country in positions where they are qualified to be eminently useful;" and perhaps we cannot too severely censure the wrong done to society by such a course; but when our Temperance neighbour comes to speak of the religious press, we think he takes a position to which he is not entitled, and which many of his own readers will regard as a little impertinent. Hear what he says:—

"The religious papers are not supposed to assist in correcting public abuses. Their mission is to give information concerning the bodies they represent; to advance their views; and some of their Editors and Correspondents keep up a tirade against those who differ from the supporters of the paper, whom they have been brought up to believe cannot have in them any regard for truth, or any moral and religious beauty; and these endeavour to persuade their readers to think as they do.

In these ways the Press is made to serve an evil purpose. What should be a great blessing is made of very questionable worth; while readers are perplexed, not knowing what to believe, and many are filled with error. Some religious papers give long and fulsome obituary notices; and if their sects contain only the average amount of piety and goodness that is usually found among associated devotees, all their righteous ones must be rapidly passing away. When the volume of Truth gives particulars of a man at the close of his life, his good actions are mentioned, and there is appended a notice of his shortcomings or sins. Sunson we are informed went after the Delilah—and of most of the good kings we have the testimony given that "the high places remained;" but modern sects have none but perfect people among them, and of course we cannot get even the smallest hint of their members having been smugglers, untruthful, or tricky."

Which of our contemporaries will plead guilty to the charge in this indictment? Will the *Presbyterian Witness*, the *Provincial Wesleyan* and the *Church Chronicle* acknowledge that they "are not supposed to assist in correcting public abuses?" We think not. If this is not a part of "their mission," if the "seculars" so lamentably fail in bringing forth anything that is good, where shall we look for aid and comfort in the reformation of morals? Is the *Abstainer* left all alone to battle for what is right and true? In the work of Temperance it may be doing some good service; but in educational affairs, and a host of other matters which belong to moral and religious improvement we do not

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