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Poetry.

THE PREACHER'S PRAYER.

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"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"—*Isaiah lx. 8.*
"My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them."—*Ezekiel xxiv. 6.*

The preacher from his pulpit came one day,
Spent by vain labor, with a clouded brow,
And in the small dark room he sought to pray,
Groaned deep and cried—although he did not bow,
But paced like some caged lion in his den—
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"I see both Hell and Heaven—all the earth
Lives onward towards their gates which
open here;
Both move my soul, as if the loss or worth,
To shun, to seek, wrought equal hope and
fear,
But both are hidden from these others; then,
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"I have lain on my bed at night, and dreamed
Of birds, that flocking to my window came
On eager wings that through the shadows
gleamed,
Their bright eyes lit with hope as by a flame;
They would have entered had it open been—
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"On knees of prayer I have shut up mine
eyes
Only to see more clearly wandering flocks
Of kids and lambs, unshepherded, unwise,
Scattered through miry vales and on the
rocks,
Where every where-wolf waited in his den—
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"And when I rose from prayer, or when I
waked,
The lambs and kids have come with hum in
sight
In their deep eyes; and all my soul has quaked
To find what birds they were that sought the
light
Which drew them to God's window, closed
e'en then:
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"O Father, I have thought what souls they
are;
How long to live, how very long to die;
To what a future, so divinely fair,
Thy love has called them—now, to where
they lie,
As if they never would rise up again!
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"And I have toiled among them, in and out,
Sharing the wondrous trouble of their ways;
And I have felt their darkness and their doubt
Cloud o'er me, wintering thy golden days,
As mist will hide thy sunshine from a fen:
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"Each day my heart throbs urging to speak
And solve earth's mystery for these waiting
ears,
And aches to feel that it must vainly seek
To make them harken, 'mid these deafening
years,
And all my soul is voiceless. Humbly, then,
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"Oh, that I might call in these lambs and kids
From off the rocks, and up from all the
vales,
And from me tear this something that f rhids—
It is not Thee—this silence that assails,
And I would have the voice and power of ten,
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"This window where I hold the heavenly light
Which thou hast given to shine out on
Earth's Hell,
Oh, let me open wide; and all the night
Shall cloud with wings, if I but call them
well,
These birds immortal. Let me open, then!
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"Oh, let me speak! Upon my lips the word
Which I would utter burns me like a coal
From off thy altar. Surely, if they heard
From thy permission, every listening soul
Would shun his hell and seek thy heaven.
Then,
I pray thee, Father, let me speak to men!"

Religious.

SHINING CHRISTIANS.

Christ's injunction is: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Undoubtedly there is some measure of light in every true child of God. In every one who is a true believer in

Jesus, there is light in proportion to his faith. The spark may be very feeble—just on the point of extinction, perhaps; it is hidden under a pile of worldliness, or narrowness, or spiritual indolence; but it still glimmers. Rake open the coals, remove the ashes, and you can find that feeble spark. But this certainly is not the kind of Christian character that Christ had in view in uttering this injunction. Men will not take pains to see whether you are a Christian or not. They will not search for the feeble spark, to see whether it burns or has gone out. And, in a measure, they are right. Christ says to his followers, "Let your light so shine that men may see your good works." You must fan the flame of your faith, and love, and devotion, till it blazes up so brightly that men cannot fail to see that your religion is worth something; that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

There are several ways in which this light, while it does exist, may be so obscured that men cannot see it.

1. *A lack of christian courtesy* sometimes obscures the light. In dealing with men, our manners are by no means unimportant. Indeed, they have a very great effect oftentimes. Religion ought to sweeten and soften the whole man. A Christian ought to be a polite man; not necessarily with the airs and graces of mere fashionable society, but certainly with genuine heart-politeness. And yet it is to be feared that sometimes the light of Christian love is hidden under the bushel of a stern, forbidding, harsh exterior; and so men are not attracted to religion, but rather repelled from it.

2. *Worldliness* hides very completely this Christian light. So many of those who profess themselves Christ's seem so absorbed in the things of this earth, in its "buying, and selling, and getting gain," that men in general cannot always tell the difference between a Christian and one who makes no claims to the name. Many who profess to have this light shining within them seem to be just as much occupied with earthly concerns, earth's ambitions, cares, jealousies, joys, sorrows, achievements, as any one else; and so their light does not shine out for men to see their good works. Only by careful scrutiny can it be determined that the light does shine.

3. *Parsimony* obscures the light. I have reference here to this failing as it concerns Christian beneficence. Men reason in this way: "Here is one who professes to be a child of God, 'bought with a price,' a servant of God, a steward administering those things with which he has been put in trust; and yet see how slow he is to recognize the claims of a perishing world upon him; see how little he gives to the support and diffusion of the Gospel." This is a right method of reasoning; this is sound logic. There are far too many who call it forth; and they most certainly are obscuring the light.

4. *Indolence* is another way in which Christian light is obscured; and it is far too common. Many a man is known as a Christian simply because his name is on the church-roll, and he is seen from time to time at the communion-table. He is not known as a Christian because of any work he does. He is not seen in the prayer-meeting or the Sabbath-school. His principle seems to be to get all he can, but to do correspondingly little in the line of religious activity. He woefully obscures the light of Christian example. Men certainly see no "good works" of his performing, and hence are not led to glorify the Father in Heaven.

5. Another thing that obscures Christian light—and it is a fundamental thing—is a *low tone of piety*. You may have a strong, bright flame, but so shut in that it cannot beam forth. Remove the obstructions and the light shines. But when you have only a feeble flame, you cannot have much radiance. Just here is the trouble in the case of most Christians—the flame of piety is not strong enough, and so, of course, there is not much shining.

We look at such a life as that of Henry Martyn, and see that it was its devotion, its deep spirituality, that made it so effective. The light burned with such intensity that the candle soon sank into the socket, entirely consumed. But what a glorious radiance beamed from it! Its shining is not done yet. Just in the proportion that a high tone of piety makes the light shine, just in that proportion does a low tone obscure it. Hence the need of complete consecration, of entire devotion, that the light may shine brilliantly, and men "may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven."

Would that there were more, not simply of Christians, such as shall be saved, "yet so as by fire," but of SHINING CHRISTIANS! Shall you and I let our light shine?—*American Messenger.*

DEAN ALFORD IN THE PULPIT.

Henry Alford's greatest power was in the pulpit. We quote with gratification the following sentence from a local contemporary, which well expresses what we feel upon this point:—"His great power as a preacher was in treating most reverently the most sacred subjects, and yet in bringing them down to the comprehension of the most simple minds; the peculiar charm which brought to his ministry not only Church people of every phase of opinion and shade of thought, but earnest minded Nonconformists." And his greatest sermons were unwritten, too—we do not mean his greatest sermons in a literary point of view, but we mean those sermons which grasped the feelings of his hearers—which set them thinking, which warned without appalling, which arrested disbelief in wavering minds, and helped to "turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." So far from preparing his sermons we know that there were times when some sudden outward circumstance prompted the train of thought and led to a most powerful address—as for instance upon one occasion at afternoon service a large proportion of the congregation in the upper part of the choir and the Presbytery was formed of soldiers; a regiment had lately come into the town, and we believe a portion of another (a Scotch regiment) was on its march from Dover to Chatham, and had been billeted in the city on the Saturday night. The Dean changed his intended text as he ascended the pulpit, and in a most impressive sermon he drew the comparison of the soldiers on the march bivouacking for their physical refreshment, and the soldiers of Christ who renewed their fainting energies by recourse to prayer, and hoped that some of them had this in mind when they came there that day to join in the service of their God, and others who had attended more from the desire of seeing the grand old Cathedral would have recollections of what they had been told of higher things when their reminiscences of the noble edifice came to them.

As a Churchman—as a Church Dignitary—we shall borrow the clever summary of the *Spectator* of last Saturday, and adopt as an epitome of our sentiments, italicizing that which expresses what few men having the thought have also the power of so concisely expressing:—"Dean Alford was a man of great common-sense, of wide and liberal mind, of a good deal of practical energy, hard-working, genial, earnest, and one of the foremost men in the party of comprehension. Dean Alford was a great popularizer, and very few indeed of our dignitaries thought so much of the people, and worked so hard to teach them. He was one of that class—too few in the English Church who really understand that unless the Church can get a thorough hold of the common people, it has no right to the name of a National Church. He was not the traditional English Dean at all; but if the English Church ever becomes a really popular institution, there will be a good

many Deans of the type of Dean Alford."

We wonder if the writer of this knew of the late Dean being the re-institutor of the Sunday afternoon sermons at the cathedral. For thirty years the statutes were preserved in the performance of "Even-song" in the choir of our cathedral.—"But why not sermons?" asked Dean Alford, as soon as he had "felt his way" with the Chapter. "The congregations only care for the musical service and the anthems," was the answer. "Let us see if they will care for something more. I will preach whenever I am here." And he did; and soon the vacant seats became filled; more seats were wanted, even the transepts at the side of the Presbytery were tenanted; and when his other duties or necessary relaxation entailed his absence from Canterbury, the force of his example and the success of the reform combined to prompt other good and learned men, wanting before in courage or earnestness, to take their share in the good work.—*Kentville Herald.*

It may not be inappropriate to add the following extract from the *Kentish Gazette* showing how ardent was Dean Alford's love for music:—

"In the musical history of Canterbury, Dean Alford will be best remembered as the Founder, the President, and the diligent and effective Chorusing of the Canterbury Harmonic Union. In the latter part of the year 1864, by the Dean's request, Mr. Loughurst collected a party of ladies and gentlemen to practice, with a view to a public performance of Haydn's oratorio, 'The Creation.' The oratorio having been successfully performed, this party became the nucleus of a more permanent organization, which, under the name of the Canterbury Harmonic Union, was formally constituted, with the Dean as its President, at a meeting held at the Deanery, on January 20th, 1865. The Society during the six years of its existence has had severe struggles to maintain its financial equilibrium; but in these it has always had the warm support and generous assistance of its President. His example too as a regular attendant at the practices was of the highest value."

GOOD DEEDS AND THE SABBATH.

Not long since, says a Breslau paper, an elderly man, with bare head, stood in an eating house, surrounded by a crowd of people. The landlord held the man's hat and cane, and an impudent waiter stood between the guest and the door. The confusion of the old man was indescribable. He seemed to be for the first time in his life in such a scrape—said nothing, looked down on the ground, and with difficulty restrained his tears, while all around mocked and jeered at him. Just then a poorly dressed Israelite, with a long white beard, entered, and inquired what it meant, with an expression of almost feminine curiosity. He was told that the man had eaten and drunk, and now that he must pay, he had searched his pockets in vain for money. "Well," exclaimed the Israelite, "I see the old man for the first time, but I'll be bound that he did not come here to cheat. And, landlord, suppose he had no money to 'forget, couldn't you for once give a poor man something to eat, for God's sake? How much does he owe, anyhow?"

The debt was eight silver groschen, and the Israelite, paying this, took the poor old man by the hand and led him to the door. Those present did not seem to enjoy the reproof which their brutality had received, and one insolent fellow cried out,—

"Hey, Jew, what have you done? This is the Sabbath, and you have touched money!" (This is forbidden to the Israelites.)
"Just now I forgot that I was a Jew, just as you forgot you were a Christian. But you may rest easy on my account; I understand my commandment which

says 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' Just get some school-master to explain it to you, and if he is a reasonable man, he will agree with me, 'Good deeds have no Sabbath.' And with these words the good man left the room.—*Methodist Recorder.*

INDIRECT INFLUENCE.

Preachers sometimes seem to feel that the presentation of any subject is incomplete unless it ends with a direct and specific "appeal to the unconverted." The power of such appeals it is very natural for an earnest man to overrate. Such an one often supposes that the most direct road to his purpose is necessarily the most effectual. Wishing above all things that his hearers should accept the Gospel, he cannot refrain from saying over and again, in so many words, "Will you accept it?" We suspect that in point of fact persons who have all their lives heard religious teaching seldom yield to these direct attacks. They have been heard too often to be effective. Under them the mind falls naturally into its old familiar posture of indifference or passive resistance. It is far more sensitive to truth so presented as not to challenge a direct response; to thoughts which enter the mind quietly, to his ripening and working there. For example: a minister preaches eloquently on the character of Christ, and draws a glowing and powerful picture of His loveliness. Let him stop at the natural end of his subject, and the complete and single idea he has given may enter into his hearers' hearts, and attract them all the more powerfully because unconsciously toward an acceptance of this Christ. But if, instead of this, he turns with, "My unconverted friends! will you not," etc.—to a five minutes' direct appeal; probably those he addresses, having heard a thousand similar exhortations, hear this too without much minding it; and the effect of what had gone before is all blunted by the ineffectual conclusion. The preacher, more than any other man, needs to study the art of indirect influence.—*Christian Union.*

"OPEN COMMUNION RUN MAD."

The *United Presbyterian* has an article upon "Open Communion Run Mad." It seems that the recently imported Chinese in North Adams, Mass., are regular church goers, and very attentive to the services. On this ground their Christianity was so far assumed that the officers of a church there, on a communion occasion, offered them the sacramental elements. To the credit of the Chinese, it is said, they declined the offer. The *Presbyterian* very properly remarks that this "shows how far latitudinarianism, when let loose, may go. It shows, too, that even pagans have a better sense of propriety in this matter of communion, than some persons who call themselves Christians; and further shows the danger of making the ordinance of the Lord's supper, or the right to it, a matter of individual responsibility. The church has a responsibility here which she cannot throw off. It is for her, through her proper officers, to decide who are fit members, or who on any occasion are entitled to her most sacred and precious privileges. And it is only by a just sense of this responsibility, and a faithful discharge of it, she fulfils her commission."

Although the *Presbyterian* reprobates this offer of the emblems of our Lord's death to these "regular church goers," yet, the doing so could scarcely be regarded as inconsistent with the practice of open communion, or of admitting unconscious infants to the initiatory ordinance of the church. Many professing christians who are not "regular church goers" and not "very attentive to the services" but who, in the days of their unconscious infancy, had a formal introduction to the christian church, regard themselves