

Our Contributors.

SOME THINGS THAT WEAKEN THE POWER OF THE PULPIT.

BY REV. ROBERT H. WILLIAMS, D.D.

Any incorrect statement by the minister has its effect upon the hearer. This statement may be an exaggeration for the purpose of giving intensity to the words spoken, or it may be a misstatement through ignorance of the history of some event, or through lack of an appreciation of the details of an event. Accuracy is demanded by the public in these times, and is excused more readily in the speaker at the bar or on the rostrum rather than in the minister. Hence, sensational preaching has had its day and will never again meet with success in an intelligent community. The intelligence of the people will not allow the exaggerations of a past generation.

The preaching that does not awaken thought will not win the people. The preacher may be gifted with a fine voice, a good presence, a splendid diction, yet if he does not awaken his hearers to think, he may find his audience diminishing.

However much the pulpit may be depreciated in some localities, its utterances are to be the most prominent features in the worship of the future. We know that forms and ceremonies have been very prominent in the past, and that they seem to be very prominent in the present, but as intelligence increases, we know that the work of the pulpit increases. A revived religion will give greater prominence to the pulpit than it has had for some time.

Another thing that weakens the power of the pulpit is the use of such language as may not be understood by the people. Ecclesiastical history tells us that when Loyola went to the Turks, he fancied that God would work a miracle so that they could understand him preaching in his native tongue—the Spanish; and that when Xavier went to India, he thought that he did not need to learn the language of the people to whom he spoke for the same reason. But we all find sooner or later that God does not work miracles to make up for the deficiencies of those who would teach the people. When miracles are wrought in preaching, especially in modern times, it is not upon the ears or tongues, but upon the hearts of the people. Whatever hinders the preacher from being understood by the people, whether the language of the schools, or a style, intricate and involved, weakens the power of the pulpit.

A good rule for the preacher is a rule that Daniel Webster adopted, namely, neither to write or utter anything which a person of good intellect could not understand. The preacher cannot always know whether the people understand him or not, for they will not tell him. Hence the importance of being plain in all his preaching. The preacher need not be afraid that he may be taken for

an unlearned man because he uses language easily understood, for a very wise man has said: "It takes all our learning to make things plain."

Another thing that weakens the power of the pulpit is the omission of many of the great truths of God's word as subjects for the pulpit. When we hear an able minister declaring that many ministers in his own denomination do not believe in the deity of Christ, and shun the subjects, sin, the new birth, etc., we feel that they leave out some of the grandest subjects in the Bible. The pulpit, we fear, has gotten further away from many important truths than some of us are willing to admit, and now has a great work to do in creating an interest in them.

Albert Barnes, the commentator, had great revivals in his church, and they frequently came after a course of doctrinal sermons. Nettleton, the great evangelist, was mighty beyond many of his day, and his subjects were doctrinal. Mr. Moody did not avoid these great subjects to please the people, and he had great numbers to listen to him. Campbell Morgan preaches on such themes, and he had great audiences whenever he is announced to preach. Spurgeon, Talmage, Hoge and others called the attention of the people to doctrine, to the great truths of our holy religion, and their words came with power.

To omit any great truth of God's word is to weaken the power of the pulpit. To doubt it, is to check its utterance, and to make it as though God had never given it to be proclaimed.

PREACHERS AND POLITICS.

It is generally understood that preachers and politics are not to keep company. The cry of the age is that politics corrupt the preachers, therefore preachers of the gospel of Christ should button up their cloth around their holy function and devote their time wholly to things pertaining to future life and let the devil, the demagogues and the ward heeled run things to their own liking. Their calling has reference to the heavenly country, and, therefore, they ought not to be concerned about matters pertaining to this world. This is a false idea. The kingdom of Christ means this world more than the next. If politics means the science of good government, righteous laws, and the enforcement of such laws, then preachers have business with politics. I do not mean that a preacher should stand for democratic or republican or any other party politics as such in his public ministry, but I do mean that he should stand for good government, wholesome laws and the enforcement of all laws for the protection of the people. He should stand ready at all times to lend a helping hand to whatever is right and for the best interest of the people in any and all parties, and to raise his warning voice against that which is wrong, corrupting or

dangerous in any party. We do not advocate the blending of church and state in the sense of having the state enact laws for the support of the church, but there should be, and is, a mutual dependence between the church and the state so that each should be united in enacting and upholding the best form of a just government for all its subjects. It is the duty of the Christian ministers as well as all Christians to denounce sin and fraud, both in public and in private, and to raise a warning voice against those institutions and practices which are degrading or dangerous to character and demoralizing to society. If parties pass hurtful or unjust laws, let the pulpit denounce them. If courts or officials fail to execute the law or to punish crime, let the voice of the pulpit be raised in unmistakable tones against such officials. If all the pulpits in our land would have the courage to stand for a clean and honest government and a strict enforcement of the laws against crime, we would soon see the dawning of the millennial day. The pulpit and pew may not have lost its power, but has it not lost its voice? The day as never before needs the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the church to enable it to denounce sin in high places.—A. G. Hall in *Free Baptist*.

—Some knowledge of the great work the American Tract Society, organized seventy-eight years ago, is doing, can be obtained from the report given at its annual meeting. The number of tracts and periodicals printed by the Society during the year in one hundred and fifty-five languages or dialects, and distributed, aggregates 1,750,000 and reaches 800,000,000 readers, not including the millions of tracts and volumes issued at missionary stations in foreign lands. One important part of the Society's work is carried on through competent colporteurs. One colporteur in a year visits about twelve thousand souls and leaves in their homes about two thousand volumes. The results of colportage for sixty-two years show 15,166,743 family visits, 16,436,477 volumes distributed and 8,866,698 cases where prayer was offered or a word of exhortation given. Seven hundred and thirty-nine thousand immigrants arrived in the United States in 1902, and the Tract Society is furnishing colporteurs to labor among them in their homes and places of employment, distributing Christian literature in the language or dialect which they speak. The evangelization of these people is a work of national importance.

MORE SALARY.—The teachers of the province are agitating for a general increase of salaries. They are very poorly paid, and should have an increase.

INDIGESTION
CONQUERED BY **K.D.C.**
IT RESTORES THE STOMACH
TO HEALTHY ACTION AND TONES WHOLE SYSTEM.

We have just received a large Shipment of Children's Carriages

And are now showing one of
the largest Assortments we
have ever exhibited . . .

CHILDREN'S CARRIAGES, CHILDREN'S GO-CARTS

Upholstered in Great Variety.

PARASOLS

Of Every Description.

PRICES TO SUIT ALL.

—AT—

Lemont & Sons,
House Furnishers

IF YOU'RE GOING
TO BUY

A PIANO

Would it not be the part of wisdom to consult your home dealer before you make a purchase! We sell only reliable makes of pianos and are right here to stand back or every bargain we make. We have established a reputation and purpose to maintain it. Special inducements to piano buyers for ten days.

McMURRAY & CO.,
Booksellers and Music Dealers,
FREDERICTON, N. B.

Harvay's Studio

Our new Holiday Styles of

Photographs

Make the best

CHRISTMAS GIFTS.