

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

REV. E. McLEOD.

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."

Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

LECTURE ROOM TALK.

The following from a Lecture Room Talk by Mr. Beecher contains much that is valuable, and worth knowing and remembering:—

There is a class of men that we often meet, who might be called, not so much religious talkers as religious chatterers. I have myself suffered from their inflictions. Men, they are, who, when they talk, go off like a watchman's rattle, and with a sound as dry and sharp. I have been in revivals of religion where the whole instruction seemed to be in hunting up sinners and running them down with talk. Not that it was not a duty to talk; but all other things were left out of view, and there was not sufficient breadth and qualification given to the teaching.

Now, in the first place, I do not think it to be everybody's duty to talk. I think that God's gifts in creation are as manifest as God's gifts in the pentecostal day, when some had the gift of language, others the gift of interpretation, others the gift of teaching, and others the gift of exhortation.

There are many persons, I suppose, who, in going to speak to other persons on the subject of religion, go directly across the grain of their nature. And yet, they have eminent gifts of usefulness in other directions. I do not say that persons should not overcome their repugnance to conversing with others on this subject; but they should not do that to the neglect of those instruments that are strongest in them. There are other persons who are preeminently ordained in their nature and birth for conversation. I remember some men who were almost never without conversation; and I almost never remember to have heard them talk unprofitably.

Our attention is called in Scripture to religious exercises that are for religious education; and he who finds that he has power to build a man up by his talking, has a usefulness that is neither to be neglected nor put in a napkin. Some men have not that uplifting power of conversation. Other men have it preeminently. They have such an insight into people, they have such a reason of times and seasons, they have such a power of putting the truth in an available form, that men can take it without hesitation, and digest it as it were. There are unordained men that are ordained of God from their birth to be teachers in this way.

Now, many persons say, "If I had the gift of eloquence, and could stand up and speak, I think I would give everything in the world." I would have all such persons understand that while if they are able to speak to edification they should do it, yet that is not the only way in which a man can be useful. Because a man cannot talk or pray to edification publicly, it does not follow that he cannot make his contribution to the cause of God. There are ways in which alone he can give effectual aid, and example is most influential. Those are not the only useful men who have gifts of speaking. There are various ways in which men may be useful without prejudice to the gift of speaking, and without undervaluing our duty in regard to it. But I want you to understand that you have a duty of conversation. And I add to that, if you have no remarkable power in that direction, it does not necessarily take away from you the privilege of usefulness. There are other ways of doing good. Silence; example; a spirit of Christ, that hardly knows how to vocalize itself, and yet that pervades the features, and makes itself felt in all that the man does who is possessed by it—you will find in the judgment day that these were sowing seed all the time. So, however, that, if you cannot speak, you should not think that you cannot work in the Master's vineyard.

Now, a few words more on this subject. I think that an ingenious and modest young person, that speaks to another person on the subject of religion, often takes up a heavier cross, and practices a greater self-denial, than many others would in making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. I know it, because I have gone through it. You would not think it from the facility and ease with which I speak now, from long practice, but so it was. I recollect when I first tried to do my Christian duty. I remember when I was first asked to lead in prayer. If all the air between heaven and me had been put under the piston of a condenser, and crowded right down on my head, I should not have felt more so than I did. I was suffocating. I have felt more so, though I said, "No, sir." I felt awfully. I was perfectly paralyzed. And then, when a teacher of mine was asked next to pray, with a sort of gentle submission he said, "I will try," and knelt down and made a prayer. That was worse than all to me; for I had known his history. He had been a poor hostler's boy in Canada. Prof. Davies found him a bootblack and hostler, and in making change he showed such an aptitude for arithmetic, and in reply to questions gave tokens of such an arithmetical gift, that the Professor became interested in him, and hired him for a servant. He subsequently had him appointed at West Point, where he remained until he was afterwards my teacher. I owe much to him. He is still living. I said to myself, "Here is a minister's son, who has all his life long been under Christian instruction, and he is asked to pray, and he won't; and here is a poor boy that never had any Christian instruction in his early days, that never had any father or mother that he knew anything about, and he is asked to make a prayer, and he turns around and makes it!" It almost killed me. I look back without reproach upon it. I do not think I did wrong. It was all perfectly natural.

But the next time I went having my nerves strained up, and saying, "If I had to choose between being whipped with thirty-nine lashes and making a prayer, I think I should have said, 'Give me the thirty-nine lashes.' If it had been a choice between being put upon bread and water in close confinement for a week and making that prayer, I should have said, 'Give me close confinement and bread and water.' I suffered greatly in spirit. I was acutely sensitive to conscience, to praise and blame, to shame, to pride, and all of them were running wild in my mind, like so many colts in an open pasture-land. I recollect, afterwards, undertaking to talk to a

man on the subject of religion. He was a regular engineer, and it would not have been half so much for him to have stormed Fort Fisher as it was for me to confront him. I felt as though I was not half as big as he was, and that if he turned on me suddenly, I should be annihilated! I crept up to him cautiously, trembling, and in a way that I am sure excited his compassion, and he treated me with compassion, yes with pity, evidently. And yet I felt that I had done my duty. It is very hard for a person to take up his cross and do what he thinks to be his duty.

How useful conversation is depends on what it is, or what it means. For instance, if you know a person to have been proved and tried in life all the way through, one simple sentence from him is very powerful. One sentence from Dr. Cornelius carried great weight with it. But suppose it were not he, but a man of a narrow sphere, an inferior mind, and no character, how much weight would it have? Dr. Cornelius's whole life was a trip-hammer that drove home what he said.

If there comes to you a man whom you think to be a little whisperer, and he talks about the awful responsibilities of this life, you do not mind what he says, nor care for it. You have no respect for him. His life has not given him a right to talk about such matters. That which makes conversation effectual, is generally either the known life and disposition of the person which give extrinsic weight to it, or else it is a moral wisdom and gravity in the thing said, which impresses it on the judgment according to the natural laws of the judgment.

While, then, it is your duty to talk, it is still more your duty to live so that you can talk. While it is your duty to converse with others on the subject of their souls' salvation, it is still more your duty to live so that you will have something to say. And these truths that are bandied about everywhere do not amount to talking. And as we are to watch unto prayer, so we are to watch unto edifying conversation. I am speaking of cases where conversation is in some sense ministerial.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A CITY PASTOR.

THE FORGIVER.

One pleasant afternoon, I accepted the invitation of a friend to ride with him in the Central Park. That beautiful resort of the pent-up denizens of the great city, as usual, was alive with the varied phases of social life. There the rich and the poor met together. Carriages rolling along the blue drives; equestrians riding through the bridle-paths; multitudes lounging leisurely along the walks, reclining in the shade, floating dreamily in canopied boats over the lake—calling back the days of childhood and life in the country by a trip through the Rimbles—roosting on the Mall, or lingering under the Arbor above the music-stand, listening to the inspiring strains of the band, Pale, and faces, to which the fresh air and a sight of the green fields brought back for a little while the cheerfulness of youth, childhood was all gleed with its idyllic life. Splendid establishments, flashing with gold and beauty, along the avenues, containing not an atom of true joy or contentment. To outside others, to be admired and envied—their end and reward. Some of these, could their owners and occupants have had their deserts, would have been in the penitentiary; and their creditors, or victims, in justice might have filled their places. A great blessing is that park worth more millions than it has cost. But if in its loveliness it seems a paradise, intruding upon its fair beauties also Satan comes. Many carriages of brilliant appearance—men with their families, husbands and wives, fathers with their children—those who evidently came to enjoy the recreation, without caring so much who after people thought, or said of them. Now and then an establishment of old and old-fashioned, with occupants so queer, as to provoke a remark or a smile. What did they care?

We rode slowly along, looking more at the people than the place, and ascended the Lookout lying off from the old Reservoir. As we came to the top, a stylish equipage, which had been resting there for a view of the scene, turned and dashed past us. There was a span of superb bays, richly caparisoned, a light but costly buggy for two, with a gentleman and lady fashionably dressed, with every appearance of wealth and position. Of course there was no liveried driver; no outriders, or footmen. The gentleman was perhaps thirty, or a little more, the lady was an old. She was richly attired, and possessed of a certain style of beauty, which in a crowd, or on the thoroughfare, could attract the attention of an observer. But it had a touch of boldness, rather than of modesty—was of that sort which reminds one more of the theatre and the ball room, than of the quiet scenes of domestic life.

"I presume you do not know that gentleman who just drove by," observed my friend, as we drew up to take a look from our position, over the Park and the city. I replied that I did not, and asked who it was.

"One of the twenty thousand or more fast men of this city," was his answer. "I have had occasion to know something of his movements, but not much. Three years ago he was worth nothing, but a clerk's salary; and that not large. I found him afterwards by honest means he can get much more than that now. But he supports the style of a rich man. He lives in a fine house, elegantly furnished, and keeps, I am told, not less than six horses—you saw those he drives today—and three carriages of different styles; has his own stables, grooms, and coachmen. How he does it, I cannot tell; it isn't my business to know. In a great city, you are men only on the outside. Their outward life is hard to know."

His wife, I suggested, seemed to enjoy their style, and in her dress and manners gave evidence that she was fond of display, and meant to be admired. "Wife enough!" said my friend looking me in the face, with an incredulous smile. "You think that is his wife, do you? Not at all. If you should go down to Thirty-Second street, to his elegantly-furnished house, you might find a modest, quiet, pale-looking woman, with her three little children about her, attending to her household duties, really supposing that her husband is at his business. That bold woman whom you saw live in rich style, and with costly luxuries, is his wife, with an incredulous smile. You think that is his wife, do you? Not at all. If you should go down to Thirty-Second street, to his elegantly-furnished house, you might find a modest, quiet, pale-looking woman, with her three little children about her, attending to her household duties, really supposing that her husband is at his business. 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