

## THE BRAKEMAN GOES TO CHURCH.

Beneath the somewhat humorous garb of the following article, from the *Burlington Hawkeye*, will be found some forcible illustrations of the salient characteristics of different religious denominations. We give it principally for the true light in which it sets forth the Free-thinking fraternity. For that, if for nothing more, the article is worthy of perusal and preservation:

"On the road once more, with Lebanon fading away in the distance, the fat passenger drumming idly on the window pane, the cross passenger sound asleep, and the tall, thin passenger reading 'General Grant's Tour around the World,' and wondering why 'Green's August Flower' should be printed above the doors of 'A Buddhist Temple at Banars.' To me comes the brakeman, and seating himself on the arm of the seat, says:

"I went to church yesterday."

"Yes?" I said, with that interested inflection that asks for more. "And what church did you attend?"

"Which do you guess?" he asked.

"Some union mission church?" I hazarded.

"Naw," he said, "I don't like to run on these branch roads very much. I don't often go to church, and when I do, I want to run on the main line, where your run is regular, and you go on schedule time, and don't have to wait on connections. I don't like to run on a branch. Good enough, but I don't like it."

"Episcopal?" I guessed.

"Limited express," he said, "all palace cars and two dollars extra for seat; fast time, and only stop at the big stations. Nice line, but too exhaustive for a brakeman. All train men in uniform, conductor's punch and lantern silver-plated, and train boys allowed. Then the passengers are allowed to talk back at the conductor, and it makes them too free and easy. No, I couldn't stand the palace cars. Rich road, though. Don't often hear of a receiver being appointed for that line. Some mighty nice people travel on it too."

"Universalist?" I suggested.

"Broad gauge," said the brakeman; "does too much complimentary business. Everybody travels on a pass. Conductor doesn't get a fare once in fifty miles. Stops at all flag stations, and won't run into anything but a union depot. No smoking car on the train. Train orders are rather vague though, and the train men don't get along well with the passengers. No, I didn't go to the Universalist, though I know some awfully good men who run on that road."

"Presbyterian?" I asked.

"Narrow gauge, eh?" said the brakeman, "pretty track, straight as a rule; tunnel right through a mountain rather than go round it; spirit-level grade; passengers have to show their tickets before they get on the train. Mighty strict road, but the cars are a little narrow; have to sit one in a seat, and no room in the aisle to dance. Then there's no stop-over tickets allowed; got to go straight through to the station you're ticketed for, or you can't get on at all. When the car's full, no extra coaches; cars built at the shops to hold just so many, and nobody else allowed on. But you don't often hear of an accident on that road. It's run right up to the rules."

"Maybe you joined the Free-thinkers?" I said.

"Scrub road," said the brakeman, "dirt roadbed, and no ballast; no time card and no train dispatcher. All trains run wild, and every engineer makes his own time, just as he pleases. Smoke if you want to; kind of go-as-you-please road. Too many side tracks, and every switch wide open all the time, with the switchman sound asleep, and the target lamp dead out. Get on as you please, and get off when you want to. Don't have to show your tickets, and the conductor isn't expected to do anything but amuse the passengers. No, sir, I was offered a pass, but I don't like the line. I don't like to travel on a road that has no terminus."

"Do you know, sir, I asked a division superintendent where that road runs to, and he replied with an emphatic negative. I asked him if the general superintendent could tell me, and he said he didn't believe they had a general superintendent, but if they had, he didn't know anything more about the road than the passengers. I asked him who he reported to, and he said, 'Nobody.' I asked a conductor who he got his order from, and he said he didn't take orders from any living man or dead ghost. And when I asked the engineer who he got his orders from, he said he'd like to see anybody give him orders, he'd run that train to suit himself or he'd run it into the ditch. Now, you see, sir, I'm a railroad man, and I don't care to run on a road that has no time, make no connections, runs nowhere, and has no superintendent. It may be all right,

but I've railroaded too long to understand it."

"Did you try the Methodist?" I said.

"Now you're shouting," he said, with some enthusiasm. "Nice road, eh! Engines carry a power of steam, and don't you forget it; steam gauge shows a hundred and enough all the time. Lively road; when the conductor shouts 'all aboard,' you can hear him to the next station. Every train lamp shines like a headlight. Stop-over checks given on all through tickets; passenger can drop off the train as often as he likes, do the station two or three days, and hop on the next revival train that comes thundering along. Good, whole-souled, companionable conductors; ain't a road in the country where the passengers feel more at home. No passes; every passenger pays full traffic rates for his ticket. Wesleyanhouse air brakes on all trains, too; pretty safe road, but I didn't ride over it yesterday."

"Maybe you went to the Congregational Church?" I said.

"Popular road," said the brakeman, "an old road, too; one of the very oldest in this country. Good roadbed and comfortable cars. Well-managed road, too; directors don't interfere with division superintendents and train orders. Road's mighty popular, but it's pretty independent, too. See, didn't one of the division superintendents down east discontinue one of the oldest stations on this line two or three years ago? But it is a mighty pleasant road to travel on. Always has such a splendid class of passengers."

"Perhaps you tried the Baptist?" I suggested once more.

"Ah, ha!" said the brakeman, "she's a daisy, isn't she? River road; beautiful curves; sweep around anything to keep close to the river, but it's all steel and rock ballast, single track all the way, and not a side track from the roundhouse to the terminus. Takes a heap of water to run it though; double tanks at every station, and there isn't an engine in the shops that can raise a pound or run a mile without two gauges. But it runs through a lovely country, these river roads always do; river on one side and hills on the other, and it's a steady climb up the grade all the way till the run ends where the fountain-head of the river begins. Yes, sir, I'll take the river road every time for a lovely trip, sure connections, and good time, and no prairie dust blowing in at the window. And yesterday, when the conductor came around with a little basket punch, I didn't ask him to pass me, but I paid my fare like a little man—twenty-five cents for an hour's ride and a little concert by the passengers thrown in. I tell you, pilgrim, you take the river road when you want."

"But just here the long whistle from the engine announced a station, and the brakeman hurried to the door, shouting:

"Zionville! This train makes no stop between here and Indianapolis."

## PULL THE CORD.

BY REV. S. BERING GOULD.

When I was taught to swim, a cord was tied round me, and I was made to jump into the water, whilst my father stood on the shore holding the cord. He kept me up so that I did not sink, and when I felt that I was going under the water I drew at the cord and pulled myself up. After a while I learnt to do without the cord. If at first I had not had the cord to sustain me I should have gone below the surface, and might even have been drowned.

Much as a boy swimming in the sea, sustained by a cord which his father holds, so are we in this world, and the cord by which we hold to God, our Heavenly Father, is prayer. There is this difference, however: in time we learn to swim without the cord, but we can never meet the waves of this troublesome world and keep up without the cord of prayer.

Have you ever seen a diver go down to the bottom of the sea? Some divers go after pearls. Others go after wrecks. They wear iron and glass helmets over their heads, connected with an apparatus in a boat, which pumps air down a pipe to them, so that they can breathe under water. But that is not all. They also carry down with them a cord, and they communicate with those in the boat by means of the cord. When they give one little tug at the cord it means "move more to the right;" two little tugs mean "move to the left," and three tugs mean "wind up a little," and four tugs mean "pull me up altogether," and so on; they tell those in the boat what they want by means of the cord.

Well, so are we in the world searching among the wrecks that strew it for what we can find, or wandering about after pearls and other treasures, and we communicate with God above by means of prayer. That is the cord by which we tell him our necessities and ask his help. And as those in the boat

pull down fresh air to the divers below, and as without this, divers below would be unable to live under water, so does God send down to us his grace to keep our spirits alive. As the diver cannot do without getting his supply of air and telling those above what he needs, so it is with us. We must tell God our necessities and get his grace to help us. We tell him by the cord of prayer.

I have heard of a diver who was so much engaged on some things he found about a wreck that he did not notice how his cord got entangled and looped about some of the pieces of the wreck. All at once he saw a shark coming at him. Then he tried to pull at the rope, but it was out of order, and before he could get it right the shark snapped at him and bit him in half.

We must never forget our dependence on God; never forget that we owe all we have to him, our creation and our preservation. He sent us down here into the world, and he keeps us alive in body and soul whilst we are here. This let us never forget; let us always live in the recollection of our dependence on God—this is the very first thing necessary for prayer. As the diver must never forget that he is not on dry land, and that he can only get air to breathe and help to shore from those in the boat, and as, if he forgets this and gets his cord knotted or the tube twisted that conveys air to him, he falls into great danger, so it is with us; we must always remember that our safety depends on God above, and that we are bidden to tell him our needs by means of prayer. Saint Paul told the Corinthians, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That is, keep up your communication with God in everything on which you are engaged. To the Colossians he wrote much the same advice: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

David says: "I have set God always before me."

Remember, also, that not only must we pray, but that when we pray, we must be in earnest. Dionysius, Tyrant of Sicily, reigned at Syracuse, which he fortified with strong walls. He built a large fleet of ships and put an army on board, and went with the fleet on an expedition to Locri, in Lower Italy. Now there was a man called Dion, who was a cousin of the Tyrant, whom Dionysius had banished from Syracuse. Dion gathered together a force, and ships, and determined to attack Syracuse, and dethrone the King. He waited his time till he knew that the army and fleet were at Locri; then he made ready to fall on Syracuse. As soon as the Syracusans saw the fleet of Dion, and knew that they were about to be attacked, they sent a letter to Locri by a messenger to inform the king of the danger. The man put the letter in his leather pouch along with some fried fish for his dinner. The day was hot, and he lay down in the sun, and as his pouch inconvenienced him, he took it off, and threw it down on the ground beside him, and then went to sleep. Whilst he slept, up came a hungry wolf, and the beast snuffed the fried fish, and made a bite at the leather bag, and ran away with it, and the fish and the letter; so Dionysius did not get the news in time, and lost his city and his kingdom. Do you see that the king lost the crown and throne because the messenger was indolent, and wanting in eagerness to bring him the news? If he had been alive to the danger, and anxious to bear the news, he would have gone as hard as he could travel, and not rested till he reached the king; but he was indifferent and lazy, and so the city was lost.

If we will have our prayers heard, we must be in earnest, we must show God that we really desire those things for which we ask; and then he will hear us, and grant us our petitions.—From "Our Parish Church." Published by E. & J. B. Young & Co.

## "WEARIED WITH HIS JOURNEY."

How wonderfully significant these few simple words. This man, clad in the garb of a Galilean peasant, his face bronzed by the sun of Syria, dusty and travel-stained, sits perhaps upon one of the great stones which had been built up about the mouth of the well as a rude curb perhaps to prevent the unwary traveller or the eager thirsting cattle from falling into the well. He is wearied with the long day's journey, over the hills of Palestine, beneath the noon-day sun, wearied perhaps no less with the labor of trying to teach indolent, narrow-minded, self-seeking, jealously-ambitious peasants who attended him, wearied with trying to lift up the eyes of men above the level of their sordid lives, and to persuade them to look away beyond the confined horizon of race and ritual. He was wearied with that loneliness which (as the experience of not a few can testify) oppresses the soul, and takes away its

elasticity and vitality, far more than the most heavy loads of labor.

One might wish that there were a picture of this scene, of this man sitting in weariness beside the well of Jacob. But the wish is idle. Art might indeed represent his dress, his stature, the surrounding scenery. But to paint adequately and justly that face, the image of the soul, that countenance in which moral elevation blended with lowliness, in which the consciousness of divine power sat beside the expression of dependence, where all was love and all was justice and all was holiness, where the remembrance of the glory that had been from the beginning and the looking forward to the glory that should be, mingled with the most profound sensitiveness to the sorrow that made his soul heavy even under death—to portray all these would demand, we believe, a divine inspiration no less real than was needed in writing a gospel. And every attempt that we have ever seen has seemed to us to present a most humiliating failure.

But as we meditate on this one word, "wearied," we find our minds opening to a wonderful series of truths, which widen as we gaze.

He was wearied. He was limited in strength, in endurance. He had all the limitations which belong to man, except the disabilities and infirmities induced by sin. He was perfectly a man. What is painful to us was painful to him; what oppresses us oppressed him; hunger, thirst, heat, sorrow, loneliness, ingratitude, the agony of crucifixion, the dying pang which forced from him the expiring cry, all these were to him just what they would be to us.

We are assured of his sympathy. When the man in robust health says to the suffering wasted patient, "We must be patient; no doubt, here is a wise purpose in all this;" when the millionaire says to the homeless pauper, "We must all be contented with the lot in which it has pleased divine Providence to place us," the expression of sympathy is received for what it is worth. But when He says "we," it means something. When we are wearied, poor, careworn, depressed, lonely, suffering, we know that he has pressed with his feet every step of the way in which we walk. Our lot becomes lighter by just the sum that he bears himself.

And all that he bore was not forced upon him; it was all a willing sacrifice, a free self-denial. He saw it all before; and he took it all for us.

And all the time he was God's own beloved Son. God loved him as God might love his only begotten Son. And yet to this being, so infinitely beloved, God allotted above all other beings, suffering, sorrow, immeasurable in intensity and extent. The two things which the First-born had above all the rest of creation were pain and usefulness. Perhaps these are what God gives now to his beloved. Perhaps these are not the least precious of His gifts.—National Baptist.

## KEEP THE ROADS CLEAR.

After every heavy rain, the soil, or the stones, are apt to slip down from the hillside upon the mountain roads around Mentone; and therefore the cantonniers, or road-menders, are watchful and active at such times. A carriage might soon be upset, or the traffic be long delayed, if the busy workers did not clear the way. As it is, they are kept very busy, hurrying from point to point to keep the road passable. The ministers of our God have much the same work to do. The King's highway to glory is being constantly injured by the arch-enemy, and by a thousand evil influences. Fresh heresies fall on the road, like rocks tumbling from the hillside; false theories block the passage, like trees lying across the way; and doubts, and fears, and dependencies pour over the road, like eruptions of mud which choke the thoroughfare. The servants of the Lord must not delay, but with the tools of the promises, and the energy of sympathy, they must remove the stones, and trees, and mire, that the ransomed of the Lord may not be hindered. This must be their constant service, but especially in days like these, when peculiar agencies are striving to block the way of truth that men may not enter into the kingdom of heaven. We can each do a little of this work, and so obey the Scriptural injunction, "Gather out the stones."—C. H. S.

## RANDOM READINGS.

Happy is he who walks attended by that strong-siding champion, Conscience.—*Milton*.

To live according to justice is like the pole-star, which stands firm while the whole heaven moves around it.—*Confucius*.

Accept the place the divine Providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events.—*R. W. Emerson*.

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