

The Old Pastor's Dismissal.
AN AFFECTING STORY.

"We need a young man to stir the people,
And lead them to the fold,"
The deacons said: "we ask your resignation,
Because you're growing old."

The pastor bowed his deacon out in silence,
And tenderly the gloom
Of twilight hid him and his bitter anguish
Within his lonely room.

Above the violet hills the twilight's glory
Hung like a crown of gold,
And from the great church spire the bell's
sweet anthem
Adown the stillness rolled.

Assembled were the people for their worship;
But in his study chair
The pastor sat unheeded, while the south
wind
Caresed his snow-white hair.

A smile lay on his lips. His was the
secret
Of sorrow's glad succour;
Upon his forehead shone the benediction
Of everlasting peace.

"The ways of Providence are most mysterious,"
The deacons gravely said,
As wondering-eyed and scared, the people
crowded
About their pastor—dead.

"We loved him," wrote the people on the
coffin
In words of shining gold;
And 'bove the broken heart they set a
statue
Of marble, white and cold.

Does It Pay?

BY REV THEODORE L. CULYER, D. D.

Let me offer a frank and fraternal word or two about certain things which some pastors are reluctant to undertake, or to submit to. One of these is thorough, constant house-to-house visitation. The pretext is, it costs a vast deal of time, and some disagreeable visits, and it don't pay. That depends exactly on how it is done. If undertaken as a penance, and with a secret dislike, it will "not pay;" nothing does that is not undertaken for Christ heartily. A man who does not love to preach more than he loves to eat a good dinner, has no right to preach; Christ never called him.

Pastoral work laid hold of in the right spirit and conducted in the right way, accomplishes a half dozen good results. (1) It opens the book of human nature which every minister ought to study—next to his Bible, and quite as thoroughly. He will pick up materials for his sermons in every round of visits. (2) He gets personally acquainted with his flock, and everybody likes to be recognized. Not to be so regarded by many as a personal insult. Some blundering pastors constantly miscall names, or ask a man about his wife's health six months after she is dead. (3) Personal contact makes a spiritual teacher to know the wants of those whom he is ordained to instruct and guide. He will probably find out that what they want is not metaphysics, or guesswork about prophecies, or endless "apologetics" for a Book that is its own evidence; but they are hungering for practical help as to how to combat sin, and doubt and temptation, how to live from one Sunday to another, how to stand trials, how to do good to others, and how to get ready for heaven. Our parishioners seldom say much about what we regard as our "great sermons;" they care most for the preaching which (as an illiterate friend of mine once said) "applies the topic and gets hold on't." (4) Pastoral visitation will enable you to comfort the bereaved and the suffering. (5) It will give you a grip on their hearts—for want of which many an able, pious and scholarly minister has been hoisted out of his pulpit by a very slight breeze. (6) When you visit people in their homes, you have an opportunity to converse with backsliders and the unconverted, and to direct souls to the Saviour. It is individual work that tells. Brother Moody does even more in the inquiry-room than in the pulpit. Finally, while an eloquent preacher or an eccentric preacher may gather a mass-meeting before his pulpit, none but a faithful pastor can build up a solid, compact, working, and money-giving church.

"Ah, but," some of you may say, "all this house-going eats up a prodigious amount of time." So it does; but can it be better spent in your study over books, or all over the country lecturing for money? Did the dear Master begrudge the time spent with the Samaritan woman at the well, or with Nicodemus in his room, or with the young ruler at the wayside, or with two good ladies to whom he made several pastoral visits at Bethany?

Suppose that you did not enjoy quite so many new volumes, or interesting "Reviews," or get quite so much time for your hobbies. No

man has any business to enter the ministry who is not willing to crucify self in all such directions. Depend upon it that the Devil is at the bottom of every suggestion which prompts you to shirk disagreeable duties or to dodge close encounters with souls. In the long run, the only work that does "pay" is the work that keeps self under, and which presents Christ most directly before dying souls.

"Is the pulpit losing power?" is one of the most hammered and hatched question of the day. We venture to reply that no pulpit is "losing power" which faithfully lifts up Jesus on the Sabbath and is reinforced by thorough and prayerful pastoral labor through the week. The sooner all other sorts of pulpits lose their power, the better. One thing more: Ministers are often too sensitive about "interruptions" by people who have a right to see them. Of course, those who break into a pastor's study-hours merely "to grind their own axes," ought to be disposed of very promptly (though never rudely.) But commonly "the man that wants the man that I want," or that my master wants. If it "don't pay" to be disturbed when preparing a discourse, or studying a topic, it will "pay" still less to offend one whom we ought to win, or perhaps repel an anxious soul that is seeking salvation.

A minister of God should be always accessible—even as the Master was when he kept "open house" and open heart to everybody who had a favor to ask of him. Every thing "pays," whatever it costs, which helps one immortal soul toward Heaven.—Words and Weapons.

Honest Talking.

A man who thinks what he says, and says what he thinks, will speak in a natural and sensible manner. The man who does not know or care what he says, will rave and rant, put on borrowed airs and tones, while the man who does not speak what he thinks, but rather what he has learned from some one else, and who is in reality acting a part, or exhibiting himself in a performance, is very sure to speak in some such unnatural way as will give evidence of his character. It is hard work for a hypocrite to be natural in public. There will be something about the tone of his voice, the manner of his speech and his gestures, which indicate that he is an actor, that is, a hypocrite.

We once heard a person read an essay in public, and from beginning to end there was probably not one natural tone in the voice of the reader. We have known public speakers who, when they commenced to address an assembly, pitched their voice on an unnatural key; perhaps not loud, but simply affected, and who would go through their speaking or praying in a tone of voice such as neither themselves, nor any one else, ever used in ordinary and unconstrained conversation. They have learned this of some one or they have adopted it or invented it. And so, instead of talking what is in them, they palm off these unnatural tones and empty affectations upon people.

Sometimes there is a pious whine, sometimes a hypocritical pathos, sometimes a polished precision about their speech; but all alike are empty and destitute of soul power. A few ignorant or simple people may be fooled or deluded by them, but honest and discerning men hate this insufferable cant, this hypocrisy of tone and gesture and sound.

If a man is a man, he will speak what is inside of him, and it will come from his heart and reach the hearts of others. If he is a mere echo, repeating and imitating others, then his tones and gestures will show it, and if he is a hypocrite, then, of course, his hypocrisy will appear in his voice, as well as other things.

Experience and observation both warn us to beware of the man, and especially of the preacher, who talks in an unnatural voice. The probability is there is something wrong there, and sooner or later it will be likely to show itself. Let Christian men learn lessons of sincerity and honesty of heart and life, and especially let those who undertake to speak to others, say what they have to say in a natural manner, and when they are done, stop.—The Common People.

A Miner's Persistence.

Canon Wilberforce, whose recent visit to this country was a source of good to many, was dwelling, in the course of one of his addresses, on the importance of the word "now," and related the following incident in point: A miner having heard the Gospel preached, determined that, if the promised blessing of immediate salvation were indeed true, he would not leave the presence of the minister who was declaring it, until assured of its possession by himself. He waited, consequently, after the meeting to speak with the minister, and, in his untutored way, said:

"Didn't ye say I could have the blessing now? 'Yes, my friend.' 'Then pray with me, for I'm not goin' awa' w'out it.' And they did pray, these two men, wrestling in prayer until midnight, like Jacob and Peniel, until the wrestling miner heard the silent words of comfort and cheer. 'I've got it now!' cried the miner, his face reflecting the joy within; 'I've got it now!' The next day a terrible accident occurred at the mines—one of those accidents which so frequently shock us with their horror merely in the reading of them. The same minister was called to the scene, and among the men dead and dying was the quivering, almost breathless, body of this man, who only the night before, big and brawny, came to him to know if salvation could really be had 'now' for the asking. There was but a fleeting moment of recognition between the two, ere the miner's soul took flight, but in that moment he had time to say, in response to the minister's sympathy, 'Oh, I don't mind, for I've got it—I've got it—it's mine.' Then the name of this poor man went into the list of 'killed.' There was no note made of the royal inheritance to which he had but a few hours before come into possession, through faith in Christ, and all by his believing grip of the word 'now.'

How Mongolians Pray.

Almost nine out of every ten Mongols you meet will have rosaries in their hands, and be rapidly repeating prayers, keeping count of them by passing the beads through their fingers.

They don't know the meaning of their prayers.—One of the prayers most commonly used consists of six syllables. Ask one man what these six syllables mean, and he will tell you one thing; ask another, and he will have another version of the meaning; ask a third, and he will most likely give an answer which all will agree in—namely, that it does not matter what they mean; the efficacy depends, not on the meaning, but on the repetition of the prayer. Acting on this belief, the Mongols rattle away at their prayers, hoping thereby to make merit which will, among other things, cancel their sins.

The Hand Praying-wheel.—But mouth repetition is a slow process, and, to expedite matters, a praying-wheel has been invented; into which are put a large number of printed prayers; the wheel is turned round, and by this simple act all the prayers contained in the machine are supposed to be repeated.

The Family Praying-wheel.—In some tents there is a stand on which is placed a large wheel, bearing about the same relation to the hand-wheel as a family Bible bears to a pocket Bible. A thong is fixed to a crank; the inmates take their turn in pulling it; but the aged grandmother, as having most leisure, usually spends most time over it; and the grandchildren keep a sharp lookout, and raise an outcry when, from inadvertence, a wrongly-timed pull sends the cylinder turning backward, and according to the Mongol idea, makes sin in place of merit.

The Roasting-jack Praying-wheel.—In one house I saw a wheel placed over the fire, and driven by the upward current of hot air, after the manner of a roasting-jack!

The Clock-work Praying-wheel.—Sitting in a tent once, I heard behind me a curious clicking noise, and looking round, found a praying-wheel going by machinery. The master of the house, being a mechanical genius, had bought an old clock in a Chinese town, taken out and re-arranged the spring and wheels, and made them drive a cylinder filled with prayers. When he got up in the morning, he simply took the key, wound up the clock-work, and then the thing made prayers for the whole establishment.

The Praying-flag.—He that is too poor to buy a hand-wheel gets a praying-flag—a piece of common Chinese cotton cloth printed over with Tibetan characters—fastens it to a pole, and sets it up near his tent, believing that every time it flutters in the wind all the prayers on it are repeated.

The whole thing would be laughable, were it not too serious a matter, by far, for laughter. The deluded worshippers really believe that this charm-repeating, and wheel-turning, and flag-fluttering makes merit which cancels sin. They live in this belief, and they die with this lie in their right hand. This idea, too, is the cause of much sin. Believing, as he does, that this merit cancels sin, a Mongol aims not at leaving sin and being holy, but at providing for plenty of merit to counter-balance his sin, and thinks that the more religious he is, he can afford to sin the more—just as the man who has the most money can afford to spend the most!

"When ye pray, ye shall not be as the heathen." Are we not sometimes a little like them? During prayer do not our thoughts sometimes wander so much that when the prayer is over we could, if asked

hardly tell what we had been praying for? Again, is it not sometimes the case that so-called Christians, when asked what they do for Christ, say they attend church or chapel, and all that; evidently implying that they think such service has in itself a meritorious value—an idea that comes somewhat near the Buddhist's notion of his temple services?—

Real Religion.

I clipped the following from a Baltimore paper:

"A good Baptist lady in Richmond, Va., has rented out her fine residence and gone into a cheaper house that she may be able to give \$1,000 more per annum to the cause of religion than she could have done had she not made the change."

Now this is true religion. People often economize that they may have money to hoard; or that they may have money to spend on their pleasure; or to secure position and influence; but how rare are those who economize in order that they may give to the cause of Christ. Some church members never seem to think of giving themselves, and when a treasurer or deacon, or committee ask them to contribute they are offended; some never think of giving till it is urged upon them, and then they contribute what at that moment they "feel able" to give. They would never have given anything if they had not been asked. Others feel they must give something, but that they should give only what they can spare after they have gratified all their own desires and carried out all their own schemes. Self-sacrifice, they have no idea of. Others still, thank God, recognize their obligations to God and to humanity, and plan to give as much as possible. They economize that they may give as did that noble woman in Richmond. They strive to get as much given to the cause of Christ as they possibly can. The more they give the more they wish to give. They have a taste for doing good and would prefer to do good in the world to anything else. These are the bright gems in the Redeemer's crown. These are they who make the world worth living in. May God increase their number.

All honor to the noble woman in Richmond who moved into a cheap house in order that she might add \$1,000 to her contributions to the cause of Christ. She is, I am sure, never troubled with doubts of her conversion or with clouds over her hopes. Such moral heroism is the noblest thing on earth. In the sight of God and the angels she is greater than Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Bacon, Newton or Shakespeare. Let us thank God there are such people in the world.

The Gospel for the Time.

I know it is said that the gospel is not adapted to the nineteenth century. Men are different now from what they were. Yes, they may be different externally, but essentially they are the same. What man was, man is. What man needed, he needs still. In problems of the sciences, much is gained by assuming the uniformity of the laws of nature. In problems of the soul, much will be gained by assuming the uniformity of the laws of human nature.

No, the gospel is not adapted to the nineteenth century. It wasn't adapted to any century. It wasn't intended to be. It was intended that the nineteenth century should be adapted to the gospel. Your work is not to make the truths of the Bible fit into all the crooks and crevices of the lives and beliefs of men. You are to stamp, not outlay; to coin, not gold. You are to apply the teachings of Christ with such force to the hearts and lives of men that their hearts will ever after bear the impress of the image of Jesus Christ, and their lives be conformed to his will. They are peculiarities of the times that will require special methods of delivering the truth, not special truth. You may have to leave the pulpit and stand at the door, or on the street corner, in order to preach to men. But when you preach, preach the truth.—Prof. Taylor of Crozer Seminary.

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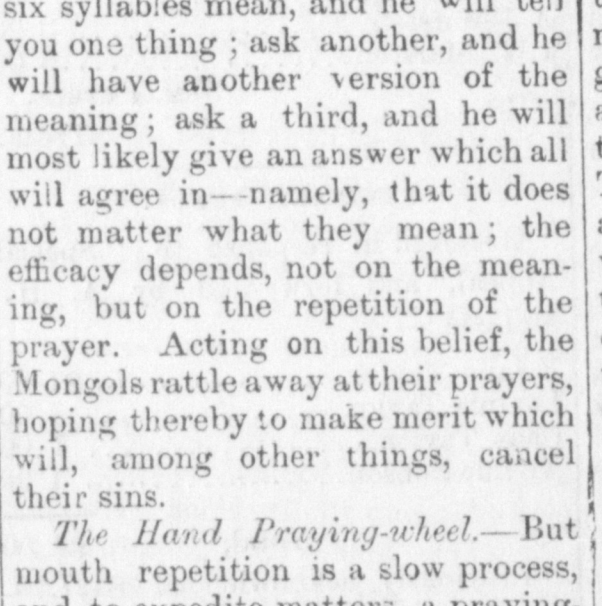
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