

The Pulpit.

The Pulpit as an Educator of the Popular Mind.

BY E. B. MELLARD, NEW ORLEANS, LA.

The importance of the pulpit, as an educator of the popular mind, although but feebly recognized, can scarcely be overstated.

Without staying to inquire into the cause, it is abundantly evident that there are widely prevalent among us in this practical age, opinions in regard to the nature and ends of education in general, plainly erroneous and extremely pernicious. The great fallacy of these views is the belief that man's chief end is the creation of material values of something exterior to himself, which shall add to his individual convenience and comfort, and to the general wealth. Accordingly, that, and that only, is esteemed a right education, which develops, exercises, and thus perfects some particular faculty or set of faculties, and fits them to be set to work in the field indicated. Hence, it is frequently asked, "Why should our youth spend so much time in mastering the classics? The lawyer may need a smattering of Latin to enable him to comprehend his legal phrases; the clergyman, some acquaintance with the Greek; but for the rest, let our boys concentrate their energies upon living tongues, and upon such practical studies as arithmetic, book keeping, surveying, civil engineering, etc. Then the scholar will pass with credit to himself from the school to the counting room, and the student emerge from the college hall at once equipped and fully prepared to commence production; and to add to the general capital by measuring land, building mill-dams, erecting factories, constructing railways, and developing the mineral resources of the country."

Now, that one end of education is to perfect the mind as an instrument with which he may work upon the material world, and convert and subitize its resources to the manifold uses of life, none will attempt to deny. But this is surely not the only, and, as Sir William Hamilton has conclusively shown, not the main end of education. Its chief design should be the full and symmetrical development of all the faculties and powers of the mind itself, and for its own improvement and enlargement.

Those who adhere to the theory of education upon which we have adverted, will be slow to discover any particular value in the pulpit as an educator of the popular mind. It has no direct influence in training a hearer for any specific employment; it touches none of the principles or rules of any art; it imparts no instruction in any of the applied sciences. But as since the more dignified theory of education to be correct, and the value of the pulpit as an educator of mind becomes immediately apparent.

It educates by the truth which it projects into the mind of the hearer. Truth is the nutriment of the intellect, the food upon which it thrives and grows. No one who has not reflected deeply, has any adequate conception of the immense body of truth that the Book of books contains, and which it is the duty of the pulpit to expound.

The pulpit—we of course speak throughout of the educated and Christian pulpit—educates in purity of thought and expression; and this for the reason that the preacher's ideas and words must take shape and be largely colored by that Book which the most eloquent men have studied for the improvement of their oratory.

The pulpit educates, that is, calls forth and trains, all the mental faculties and powers by the diversity of the subjects of which it treats. Now the scenes depicted call to exercise the imagination, now its sharp delineations of truth and falsehood, of sin and righteousness, develop and strengthen the discriminating faculty, the judgment, etc.

The very topics, too, in which the pulpit deals, are of such transcendent importance, that they take strong hold upon the intellect, rouse it from its lethargy, and withhold are of such a breadth and length and awful sublimity that, in the very effort to grasp them, the mind is consciously enlarged and invigorated.

The pulpit educates the mind to think and reason by the force of example. The weekly spectacle of an intellectual gymnast, bringing into visible play every mental and moral muscle, teaches those who look on, in a measure, the art displayed. It is natural for children to talk, yet they acquire the art by mimicking their elders. So it is natural for all men to reason, yet the ratiocinative powers are stimulated and developed by example. It is impossible to estimate the influence which an educated ministry has had in exciting the mind to think and reason for itself. Intellectuals that have shone resplendently at the bar and in the halls of legislation, have taken their first lessons in argumentation and oratory from the Christian pulpit. Lord Chatham studied Barrow's sermons until he could repeat many of them by heart. It is said that Patrick Henry caught the fire of his impassioned oratory from the lips of that eminent servant of God and eloquent preacher of righteousness, Samuel Davies.

Once more, the pulpit educates the mind, by the demand which every properly constructed sermon makes upon a concentrated and sustained attention. Every such discourse has a beginning, a middle, and an end; there is a constant progress in the thought from first to last, and a culmination of the ideas in the production of some practical result—the conviction of the understanding, the moving of the affections, or persuasion of the will, or all these combined. Sermons proceeding from educated intellect have a tendency to assume this form. Now, when the hearer's attention is arrested at the outset, and he is held to the subject during the entire progress of the discourse, his powers of abstraction are necessarily strengthened, and his mind disciplined to that habit of patient or continued thought in which Sir Isaac Newton could find the only difference (if difference there was,) between his own intellect and that of ordinary men. A practical proof of the correctness of these views may be found in the general intelligence of those communities whose principal means of intellectual culture has been the pulpit. An instance occurs to the mind of the writer of one who, in her earlier life, enjoyed the most limited educational advantages; yet this deficiency was scarcely apparent in her speech, and in the workings of a mind of more than usual vigor and sprightliness. Her life-long teachers had been an educated ministry living and dead. The writings of the one she perused with avidity; the living voices of the other ever found in her an attentive and interested listener.

Selections.

A Sketch of the Northern Bishops of the M. E. Church.

The venerable senior bishop, Morris, occupies the centre of the picture before us. He is a benign and portly old gentleman, of truly episcopal proportions. He holds his cane in his right hand, and sits in a genial old age waiting the Master's call. Not at all an orator, he is yet a speaker and writer of great clearness and consistency. He is eminently Western in his make-up, genial in sympathy, earnest in piety, and possessed of a humor so abundant and a wit so quaint and keen that he is socially fascinating.

Of quite a different character is Bishop James. With a small frame, originally slight, but tending of late to embonpoint, a nose rather aquiline, and a voice shrill and piping; James, if not the greatest man on the Methodist bench, is, perhaps, the greatest bishop. He is always a forcible speaker, often eloquent. Aquiline in feature and mind, he pounces upon his ideas with an exultant, eagle-like swoop. His financial ability is of the highest order.

Bishop Scott is a genial, gentlemanly, saintly man of the bench. Devout, without a particle of asceticism, he overflows with Christian and human sympathy. Pretending neither to oratory nor greatness, he is yet an excellent preacher and a man of great practical sense. His life and spirit are full of piety of the old, earnest, Methodist type.

The large frame, full chest, prominent brows, and somewhat massive lower face proclaim Simpson a very prince of pulpit orator. Bishop Simpson is not pre-eminent as an administrator, scholar or writer. His sermons have many fine things, but they do not satisfy expectation when read. It is the majestic presence, the noble voice, the grand, earnest, triumphant face, all surcharged with the electricity of an enthusiastic soul, that makes Dr. Simpson the orator he is. Not that he is without noble mental gifts, but that it is the addition of his wonderful physical magnetism that gives him his royal position as an orator.

Bishop Baker is, like Bishop James, a New-Englander. He is a refined and polished scholar, bearing yet the stamp of his years of service in the chair of a professor. His diction is always apparent, though it never causes a loss of aplomb. Thoroughly versed in parliamentary usage, always ready and self-possessed, he has few equals as a presiding officer, and his work on the Discipline is the standard of Methodist law.

Bishop Ames, though of Puritan ancestry, is yet a Western man by birth and by every characteristic of mind and body. Like Bishop James, he is eminent for executive ability. With a will fully equal to that of James, he is less careful in using it, and is sometimes thought arbitrary. His mind is like his frame, massive, and his sympathies deep and tender. The one word which characterizes him is statesmanship. As a preacher his movement is smooth, his discourse singularly clear, with passages of genuine sublimity, and a pathos that stirs his hearers to the depths of their natures.

With a fine physical presence, a face full of dignity, somewhat forehead-bald Bishop Clark looks, as he is, the refined scholar, carrying with him still the impress of his life in a literary institution. He is a smooth and polished writer, an accurate and pleasing speaker, stating his propositions clearly and advocating them forcibly. He was for years editor of the Ladies' Repository, at Cincinnati.

With a rich humor and a sarcasm that knew how to take advantage of the absurd position of his opponents, who were anti-slavery in politics while they were conservative in the Church, Dr. Kingsley used his official position as editor of the Western Christian Advocate, of Cincinnati, to urge the adoption of a more stringent and unequivocal rule against slave-holding. His political articles were also bold and trenchant and when the progressive party came to elect bishops, it was almost a foregone conclusion that Dr. Kingsley would be among them. Like several of his colleagues, he has been a professor; but no one would suspect it from his manner. Without being eloquent, he is forcible, manly, and strong in all that he says.

Last upon the list, and in some respects, we think, greatest on the list, is Bishop Edward Thomson. Petite in stature, absent-minded in bearing, and hearing a little impaired, and modest almost to excess, he is not, perhaps, just the man for an office so executive in its character as that of the Methodist Episcopacy. But as a writer he has qualities of the rarest sort. None of our eminent American writers excel him in purity of diction, or in the "art of putting things." As a speaker his voice is defective, and his manner generally somewhat deficient in animation. He often confines himself closely to his manuscript; but we have known an audience to be carried into rapturous applause by the triumphant eloquence of his thoughts. His books of essays and travels are the classics of American Methodist literature.

Such are the nine Methodist Bishops—who, on the whole, are nine as able men as any Christian denomination can boast.—Independent.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE IN GERMANY.—The English Independent says that Hamburg, with its 200,000 inhabitants, sends no more than 5,000 to church on Sundays; Stettin with 60,000 no more than 2,000; Berlin, with 630,000 no more than about 20,000. Personally, too, the clergy have little or no influence in any direction, save as far as their official positions gives them power

A Touching Incident.

A young man and his wife were preparing to attend a Christmas party at the house of a friend some miles distant. "My dear husband, don't drink too much at the party to-day; you will promise me, won't you?" said she putting her hand upon his brow, and raising her eyes to his face with a pleading smile. "No, My Love, I will not, you may trust me," and she wrapped her infant in a soft blanket, and they descended. The horses were soon prancing over the turf, and a pleasant conversation beguiled the way. "Now don't forget your promise," whispered the young wife, as they passed up the steps. Poor thing, she was the wife of a man who loved to look upon the wine when red. The party passed pleasantly; the time for departure drew near; the wife descended from the upper chamber to join her husband. A pang shot through her beating heart as she met him for he was intoxicated; he had broken his promise. Silently they rode homeward, save when the drunken man broke into snatches of a song, or unmeaning laughter. But the wife rode on, her babe pressed closely to her grief-stricken heart. "Give me the baby, Millie; I can't trust you with him," he said as they approached a dark and swollen stream. After some hesitation she resigned her first born—her darling babe, closely wrapped in a great blanket—to his arms. Over the dark waters the noble steed safely bore them; and when they reached the bank, the mother asked for the child. With much care and tenderness he placed the bundle in her arms; but when she clasped it to her heart no babe was there; it had slipped from the blanket, and the drunken father knew it not. A wild shriek from the mother aroused him, and he turned round just in time to see the little rosy face rise one moment on the waters, then sink forever and that by his own intemperance! The anguish of the mother and remorse of the father are better imagined than described.—Glasgow News.

NUMBER OF MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.

The number of missionary societies throughout the world are 48. These societies embrace 8,600 laborers, and 319,000 members, once heathens.—What an army converted to Christianity from heathenism! Such success in converting men to Christ in heathen lands is truly wonderful. The annual expenditures of these societies is about four and a half millions; it should amount to ten millions, at least, for 1868.

GLORIOUS TRIUMPH OF TRUTH.—One hundred thousand of the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands have been supplied with the Holy Scriptures, and are instructed in the Word of God. There are 17,000 church members, and 1,000 native catechists, and 35 native missionaries, ordained, or on trial preparatory to ordination; 40,000 pupils are regularly instructed in the schools of the mission. When a supply of Bibles, in the language of Fiji, recently arrived at these islands, the native Christians were greatly delighted in being permitted to handle the book.—One of them exclaimed, "Now let thy servant, O Lord, depart in peace, since my eyes have seen thy words complete in the language of Fiji."

There is still a great work to be done in some portions of these islands. Baker and his associates had gone to these savage tribes, and fell in their attempts to save them. Others will go, and the time will not be far distant when Christianity will triumph here, as in those parts above referred to. The mission here is under the direction of the English Missionary Society.

JAPAN.—The way is opening here for the spread of Christianity, though serious difficulties must be met and overcome. Dr. Hepburn, Presbyterian Missionary, has compiled a Japanese Dictionary, and is now engaged in translating the Scriptures into that language. He proposes to do for Japan what Dr. Morrison did for China. The Jesuits are active here, and are aided by the French Government in their work. The Protestant mission here should be largely reinforced, and that at once. The Missionary Society of the M. E. Church should have a strong mission here.

INDIA.—There are twenty-five Protestant missionary societies here, embracing about 600 missionaries, and their success in saving the he then is wonderful. Think of it! Only 600 missionaries in that vast population! Is this all the church can do to save these millions, passing so rapidly to the tomb and to the judgment?

A Touching Reply.

In a Christian family, near Amoy, China, a little boy, the youngest of three children, on asking his father to allow him to be baptized, was told that he was too young; that he might fall back if he made a profession when he was only a little boy. To this he made the touching reply: "Jesus has promised to carry the lambs in his arms. As I am only a little boy, it will be easier for Jesus to carry me." This logic of the heart was too much for the father. He took him with him, and the dear one was ere long baptized. The whole family, of which this child is the youngest member—the father, mother, and three sons—are all members of the Mission church at Amoy.—Miss Inst.

The Methodist Temperance men of England have just started a new magazine devoted to the cause of total abstinence. There is also a Church of England Monthly Temperance Magazine. The Methodist Recorder says of the former:

A new Methodist monthly has just appeared, devoted to the advocacy of total abstinence from alcoholic drinks. The Methodist Temperance Magazine is well got up, is presented at the price of one penny, and bears on its cover the names of three responsible editors the Revs. George Maunder, Charles Garrett, and T. Bowman Stephenson. These gentlemen all belong to "the old body," but they disclaim for themselves or their magazine any representative character. There are 250 Wesleyan ministers who are practical abstainers, and a yet larger proportion in the branch churches of the Methodist family, with a corresponding proportion of the laity. The editors explain that total abstinence is a primary article in their social creed, and also a part of their religion, on the ground of Christian expediency. The names of the editors are a sufficient guarantee, both for the ability with which the publication will be conducted, and for the spirit of temperance and patience toward conflicting opinions which we are assured will distinguish each successive issue. They believe that they have something to say, and that now is the time to say it; and were any advocacy of ours necessary, it should be forthcoming, to bespeak for them a kind and candid reception from that great church to which they more especially address themselves.

Unprofitable Waiting.

Do not wait for a change of outward circumstances; but take your circumstances as they are and make the best of them. Luther moved the world, not by waiting for a favorable opportunity, but by doing his daily work, by doing God's will day by day, without thinking of looking beyond. We ought not to linger in inaction until Blucher comes up, but the moment we catch sight of him in the distance to rise and charge. Hercules must go to Atlas, and take his load off his shoulders per force.

A Fountain Sealed is about to be opened by the Wesleyan Publishing House. It has long been known that a very large number of Charles Wesley's poems have never been published. Those that have been printed are not collected in a single edition. Over thirty different volumes, large and small, were published by him in his lifetime. A much larger number are still unprinted. Many efforts have been made to bring all these treasures to the light. They are soon to appear. The Wesleyan Book Concern will publish all his poems in twelve crown octavo volumes at the very low price to subscribers of two guineas or \$10 in gold. It has been said that his best hymns have been published; but we cannot doubt that not a few rare gems are yet unseen and unsung. We hope arrangements will be made by our Book Concern for subscriptions, so that his hosts of American admirers may obtain them at London prices.

FAITH AND WORKS.—They are but indeed Christians whose faith and works are at war against each other. Faith which is right, can no more forbear from good works, than can the sun to shed abroad its glorious beams, or a body of perfumes to dispense a grateful odor.—Feltham.

Scraps.

Better go about than to fall into the ditch.

One third of the sugar consumed in the world is made from beets.

What is eternity? A day without yesterday or to-morrow; a day without end.

A confirmed Christian is one that taketh self-denial for the one leaf of his religion.—Baker.

Mortification is the soul's vigorous opposition to self, wherein sincerity is most evident.—Owen.

Sincerity is—speaking as we think; believing as we pretend; acting as we profess; performing as we promise;—and really being as we pretend to be.

WHAT TIME TAKES AND GIVES.—The passing years drink a portion of the light from our cheeks, as birds that drink at lakes leave their footprints on the margin.

Some one has beautifully said; "Truth is immortal; the sword cannot pierce it, fire cannot consume it, prisons cannot incarcerate it, famine cannot starve it."

He who sedulously attends, pointedly asks, calmly speaks, coolly answers, and ceases when he has no more to say, is in possession of some of the best requisites of man.

When I see the most enchanting beauty that earth can show me, I yet think there is something far more glorious; methinks I see a kind of higher perfection peeping through the frailty of a face.—Owen Feltham.

A minister travelling through the provinces some years ago, asked the old lady on whom he called, what she thought of the doctrine of total depravity? "Oh! I think it a good doctrine, if people would live up to it."

In matters of great concern, and which must be done, there is no surer argument of a weak mind than irresolution—to be undetermined where the case is so plain, and the necessity so urgent; to be always intending to lead a new life, but never to find time to get about it.

Every hour, life's sands are sliding from beneath incautious feet, the trifler goes to his doom. The requiem of each departure is an echo of the Savior's question: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Galileo, the most profound philosopher of his age, when interrogated by the Inquisition as to his belief of a Supreme Being, replied, pointing to a straw on the floor of his dungeon, that from the structure of that object alone he would infer with certainty the existence of an intelligent Creator.

One morning I found him quite alone. He bade me remark this. "Formerly, he said, 'when I was young, scarcely any one passed my door, men or women, without calling to see me. Today, from that window, I observe them all go by, as formerly, but they enter no more.'"—Quint on Lord Holbaud.

RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS.
Just wealth enough to keep away
Of want the dreful scene;
Just health enough to sild the day,
And make life's course serene;
Virtue enough to act that part
Which is devoid of sin;
Courage enough to ask the heart,
"Art thou secure within?"

We recollect hearing of two New York ladies, one of whom was an attendant at the aristocratic Grace church, and the other at the humbler St. Paul's that the former one, one Sunday morning, sent a request to the latter that she would go to church with her; to which her friend replied that she would be happy to do so, only she was dressed for St. Paul's!—Christian Era.

A society called the Christadelphians headed by a Mr. Fish, has been formed in Chicago, for the purpose of spreading the belief that "all men to dust return," and are completely annihilated, no principle of immortality remaining, and that the ashes of the good during this life are at length revived, while the wicked are blotted out. There is no such a thing as immortality of soul. In this respect there is no difference between a man and an ox." Mr. Fish has positively demonstrated, at the start, that there is no difference between himself and an ass.

THE COLORED PREACHERS SOUTH.—The General Assembly South have rescinded the resolution which excluded colored preachers from the Presbytery. The reason assigned in the Assembly for this action was that the Freedmen were heathen and needed the gospel, and that the Assembly were as ready to ordain one color as another if the party could meet the requirements of the Book of Laws.

Foreign emigrants, to the number of 241,649, arrived at the port of New-York during the year 1867.