

THE EPISCOPAL METHODIST.

PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF METHODISM IN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

Vol. II.

RALEIGH, N. C., JULY 1, 1868.

No. 24.

Poetry.

A Pleasant Word.

A little word, sometimes has power,
If it is used aright,
To make the skies that darkly lower
Burn with a golden light.

The heart overwhelmed with distress
In its own dismal cell,
A word will rouse to joyousness,
And gloom and fear dispel.

It lifts the poor from dust, and brings
Sweet sunshine to his home,
And spreads Hope's bright, exulting
Wings,
Where peace might never come.

A pleasant word, if nothing else,
Ye all have power to give;
Make glad the heart where sorrow dwells
And bid the dying live.

Drop pleasant words, wherever you go,
In out, or crowded mart,
And light and peace and love will glow
In many a wretched heart.

The Pulpit.

A Pure Motive signifies Giving.

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor woman hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. For they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

There was goodly stir about the temple that day, and a lively scene spread itself out to any who had leisure enough to look. The contributions to the treasury were going on. Citizens of all sorts were coming and going. Rich men and persons of honor were meeting and greeting, and if human nature was the same then that it has been since, it could hardly be but that ostentation, and vain-glory, and mutual flatteries were rife. This was a kind of religion which men knew how to practice; a patriotism which was easily secured. As one dropped in his shining gold, men would say: "That's a noble contribution, worthy of the man." As another came forward and deposited his princely gift, they said: "He loves the city; he is a patriot." As another drew near, perhaps saying, "You cannot expect a poor man to do much," and at the same time handing out an unexpectedly large donation, they broke forth with exclamation of praise. And as the cheerful work went on, men with cheap flatteries would please each other. When men of moderate means gave, no one looked. It was all very well, but nothing to praise. But there was one comical scene that doubtless brought a grave smile to many a dignified face. Among all these shining robes there came shambling up a poor wrinkled old creature—a woman and a widow. In her hand she held two bits of copper money, so small that the wind might almost blow them away like dust. The two together made a farthing. She seemed to have no idea of the figure she cut, but hobbled along right behind one of the noblest men of Jerusalem. The dignity of his princely gesture in putting in the golden talents required some foil, and found it in the earnestness with which this poor creature reached out her brown and skinny hand to put in—two mites!

Down went the talents into the treasury-vase with a splendid dash, and all the metal in that treasury reverberated with the crash. *Chink* went the two mites, with a sound so thin and faint that not a single person heard it. Yes, there was One who saw and one who heard it. Over opposite the treasury sat, in quiet observation, One from whose parted brow the brown hair fell down upon the shoulders, and whose white and calm face none could look upon with indifference. He saw and heard, and He was the only one. But if only He saw all Jerusalem might look away. He had been thinking of what He saw.—He knew what was in men, and needed not that any should tell Him. Not a thing had He seen worthy of remark. The equivocations of the stings, the arrogance of the proud, the ostentation of the vain, the perfumery alacrity of some, and the indifference of others—what were these but the common events of daily life—the muddy flow of human nature in its accustomed channel?

But this poor woman fastened His gaze. He did not see her wrinkled

face, nor her skinny hand, nor the pitiful mite clasped within it. He saw her heart; and that was very rich.—She was so poor that her religion was all that was left to her in the world.—Something she must love, something she must do, for that. She was not shut out of the family of man utterly; for she, too, could serve the temple, and help its treasury. What if it was but a little to the cashier that counted it—it was a great deal to her that gave it. She counted the gift as her heart weighed it, and not as the scales weighed it.

Two mites! They were not each of them as much as a drop of dew.—What if in the still night one should hear one fairy drop commencing with its fellows, and saying: "What are we compared with this great ocean, or these rolling rivers, or even with the great round drops of rain that yesterday fell singing through the air?"—Yet, each sweet, invisible drop of dew holds on its way, and lights upon the grass, and leaf, and flower; and when the sun comes up, behold, all the ground is wet, and all that grows upon it is refreshed and beautiful! It is not much, but it fell out of the great, pure, cool bosom of the sky. And her mite was small, but her heart sent it.

"And he called unto him his disciples, and said: Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury."

Was not this like Him? That He should have been so sensitive to any genuine trait among the poor, was exactly like Christ. That he should have invited out praise to one not used to receiving it; that he should have pierced through the veil of outward appearances, and seen the nobility of the heart, rather than the scanty means by which the heart expressed itself; that he should have taken sides with duty, with sincerity, under the poorest garbs, rather than with ostentations vanity and worldly pride—that was like him.

But you will take notice that only by implication did the Saviour criticize the gifts of the rich. The force of his remarks is the commendation of the poor widow. They had given of their abundance. She had given her whole living. They gave, and nothing was lacking at home. Their table was still covered with the banquet; their wine flowed; their white linen and purple were still the same. But she gave, and went home to fast. She had given her daily bread. Not until she had by painful toil earned another mite could she buy food for her hunger, and gain strength to bear her life-load. She put in her case, her rest, her bread, her time, and her heart. They put in what they did not miss—their gold and their vanity, neither of which would suffer any diminution.

It is the divinity of this judgment that will strike every one—a judgment easy to be made now, but not so easy to be made then. For our Saviour, in these few words, dissected the acts of men; and their charities and generousities showed how there were two measurements. And the one that was the most common and the least important was the measure of a charity according to what it was worth in time and space—according to its physical power, its arithmetical or geometric proportions. Not without value are these; but they are not the only valuable elements. When men are dealing in matters of patriotism and of religion, these are not the chief points of measurement in judging of their actions. On the other hand, they are to be measured from the bow that sent them, from the motive which inspired them. Men measure their virtues and their virtuous actions by the easiest standards. They measure them by those agreements among themselves upon which men consent to praise.—They do not select the noblest motives of conduct. Indeed, many of men's actions in the right direction are coerced from them. They seldom think that a generous deed should be done from the most generous reason. They seldom feel that when a good thing is to be done, it should be clothed with all beauty. God loves beauty everywhere, but nowhere so much as among men. And He who clothed the rocks, and made them beautiful,

and the soil, and made it beautiful, and the heaven with endless changes of beauty, has also commanded that men should not only do things that are right, but should do things that are beautiful. The Lord loves a cheerful giver, and the Lord abhors a grudging gift. It is not enough that a man should give; that he should be generous in act; it is necessary, before it can be well-pleasing to God, that it should be a right deed, performed from a right motive, and with an amplitude of feeling. Many and many a good act has crept and crawled out of men, as if it were an insect; but men's good actions ought to fly out of them as eagles in the morning out of their nests, with wings spread all abroad, sun-painted. It is not enough that a man should do a thing that is right outwardly, and in its lowest and material effects. It should take its rise deep in the soul, and bear out from thence something of the treasure, of the dignity, and of the nobility, which can come only from the affections. Best is that act which comes full freighted with the dignities and generousities of a noble and princely heart, and which also has such proportions that it sounds among men with weighty footsteps and with a hand of power. These combined make perfect deeds. But how seldom are they joined! How almost always are they separated! Men that can produce material effects perform their actions too much from vanity and pride; and though the act is large and ample in time, the moral power of it is small. And, on the other hand, those that have generous natures, and full throbbing hearts, and that can give with princely feeling, are under circumstances such that they have little to give but the heart. So slender are their acts, that it seems to them as though there was no use of their giving anything, or doing anything.

God, then, judges by the heart, and sees in physical things that which is good in them, and looks on and beyond to see what it is that the heart gives, as well as what it is that the hand places.

Miscellany.

From Every Month.

The Dignity of Labor.

(From Dr. Deems' plan for the N. Y. working woman's protective union.)

In the beginning we may as well disabuse our minds of any errors into which we have fallen or be led into in regard to the *dignity of labor*. There is no dignity in labor in the sense of taxing toil. It is a degradation, a curse, the fruit of sin. It is an abnormal condition for a human being, made in the intellectual and moral likeness of God. Holy Scripture plainly teaches that. And all the instincts of men teach that. Every effort of every toiler is to put himself in such a condition as to render toil unnecessary.—Men work hard that they may the sooner cease to work hard. The very men who write books and deliver lectures on the "dignity of labor," striving to glorify inglorious moiling in the dirt, and the deep degradation of unloved and unloved work, go through the drudgery of labor that they may obtain that which will procure some beautiful paradise on the Hudson or elsewhere, where they need no longer whip, up their bodies and minds, like gray horses, to pull the loads of life.

The burden-bearers bow themselves and sing the songs of toil that they may forget their troubles; and to preserve their self-respect they cherish all the words you speak to them about "the dignity of labor." But the very phrase has a sardonic grin and a tone of bitter sarcasm. Dignity, indeed! There are operations of the intellect and exertions of the body which may be in accord with dignity; but they are such only as give pleasure while performed, and leave no pain, no headache, no heart-ache, no limb-ache behind, and are such as one returns to with as much alacrity as one leaves.—The work of God is such. He never wearies Himself. When we speak of God "resting from His work," we can only mean that His work ceased.

So when Adam and Eve were in Paradise, and went to bed when they wished, and rose when they chose, and

tended and trimmed the vines and bushes of their garden, making no fatiguing exertion, never weary, taking just such exercise as made repose sweet; trimming no midnight lamp; void of anxiety as to the morrow's breakfast; nutributed as to the condition of some distant part of their plantation; without knowledge of alarm clocks, factory bells, bank hours, business engagements, work to be done, work to be undone, work to be taken home, and all the other discomforts of modern toil and modern civilization, the anxieties that make premature wrinkles and the wrenching work which pumps copious sweat from men and women—then there was dignity in work, for it was the unwearied work of a gentleman and the unfatiguing work of a lady, "the grand old gardener and his wife." But Patrick digging in the sewer and Bidy scrubbing in the suds do not strike us as being eminently suggestive of dignity.

Come look at this person in a cheerless and chairless garret, sitting on an empty soap-box, in a thin, torn calico frock—

"In unwomanly rags,
With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A wretch, in poverty, hunger and dirt."

Go stand under her shattered roof and on her naked floor, in the dull December light or when the weather is warm and bright, and speak to her who has

"No blessed leisure for love or hope,
But only time for grief—
A little weeping would ease her breast;
But in their bright bed
Her tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread."

Tell her of the "dignity" of labor, the "nobility" of toil. You will seem, as you will be, a heartless mocker of the unfortunate. Go to the poor lace-maker who works in a cellar, because the threads which her cunning fingers make into marvelous beauty are so exceedingly fine that they must be wrought in a damp place, and while she aches with her rheumatism and feels that she is bringing on blindness that night in which no woman can work, tell her of the "dignity" of labor! Go to the poor writer, racking her brain for plot and incident, for sentiment and rhyme, for what will make a "sensation," will sell to the editor or publisher, an unloved work, not the spontaneous outgush of hearty poetry, but bitter waters laboriously pumped up from the almost dry wells of her brain and her heart, for a pittance which merely brings enough to keep soul and body together—meet her on the way from office to office in rusty garments and darned gaiters, and tell her of the "dignity" of labor!

They will tell you that they seem naturally to prefer the dignity of the lady who wears the laces of the one and reads the books of the other.—They will tell you that it seems so strange to them that if there be "dignity" in labor there never has been found yet a solitary man or woman, since the day Adam and Eve went fleeing from swords of cherubim, down to this blessed date, who has sought the dignity of labor. Millions have struggled for the dignity of place, of power, of learning, of wealth, of honor, of social position, of thrones, sceptres and crowns, but never a human being for the dignity of labor. Everybody wants dignity, but nobody wants the labor. It is a notion, a sham, a pretense, a lie! There is no dignity in an undesired, unloved or forced, a painful, a wearing toil. He or she that endures it may be white or black, may have suffrage or be without ballot, but he or she is a slave, and doing the work of a slave, whether the master be known or unknown.

But there may be a very great worthiness and a very noble dignity in the man or woman who is toiling in poverty, weakness, wretchedness, in mine or smithy, or shop, or cheerless cellar or attic. There is a dependence upon others worse than the worst labor. There may be an alternative more degrading than the most degrading toil. There is no labor so undignified as a cowardly shirking of one's responsibilities. There is no employment so mean as not to be chosen before an inane giving up to die of mere inefficiency. The strong swimmer in his agony has more dignity than the floating corpse. Immunity from painful exertion of limb or brain may be purchased at the price of the surrender of virtue and honor, of peace of conscience and of self-respect. The price is too great for the purchase.

Frequently it happens in the chances and changes of this mortal life that a man comes into such position that the very existence of those to whom he is bound by every human tie depends upon his giving his whole life to a drudgery, incomplete, unwholesome, irksome, and contrary to all his natural instincts and cultivated tastes. To prefer all lowness of position and all loads of labor before the suffering of those we love, that is really dignity; but the dignity is in the man, not in this dirty work. It is the break of day. Painfully do the first rays of the winter sun break through the soiled and cobwebbed windowpanes of a garret on the outskirts of the city. A poor, thin girl rises from her poor bed, on which all the clothes of herself and her little brother have been piled to keep them endurably the cold night.—It was midnight when she retired; he had been in bed several hours; she had worked on by the dim light flung from a fluttering candle, wasting away at the top of a bottle. Through those solitary hours her heart had gone back to her childhood, to the birth of that little brother when she was ten years old, to her father's struggle against the stream, to his death to her mother's widowhood and speedy decline and departure, to the hour when she stood in all the world with no relative but that little brother; to the resolve she made to be father and mother and sister to that boy until he would be able to take his place among men. Her needle sewed all those memories with her seams, and when the midnight hour struck she dropped her work from chilled fingers and lay down beside her little brother, her head burning, her feet so cold she dare not touch him lest he cry. And now when the morning came, after her uneasy sleep, she rises stiffly on her aching limbs, and counts a few coals out of that a bushel of which has cost her the making of a coat. And by this little fire she must work through all the day and take no time to rest. A coat must be made for the fire; two shirts must be made for the rent; and then, if she has strength to make any thing more, that may go for food, and if the three meals of her brother and herself cost fifty cents, she must make six flannel shirts, or nine heavy overalls for men. At night she must cross the ferry and thread the streets, and carry her work home and bring back another bundle, dragging through snow and slush in poor, thin raiment.

Is there any dignity in that labor?—None whatever. Is there any dignity in that young woman's character?—Much every way. She prefers toil to crime. She has a dignity unknown to the bedizened courtesan who spreads her painted charms to every lounge on the steps of St. Nicholas and Fifth Avenue Hotels, brazenly gazing at every passing woman. And, my fair and virtuous sisters, dear ladies of my congregation, ye roses of the fashionable avenues, ye lilies of the broad streets, so like the flowers in that ye toil not, neither do ye spin, and yet in your array surpassing even Solomon when he was playing dandy-husband to a thousand wives let me tell even you that that working girl, in all her toil and drudgery, has more dignity in the eyes of true men and of God than you with all the fine point of your manners and all the Vere de Vere repose of your caste. She prefers to bend her body rather than her soul, and to crush her flesh rather than sacrifice her spirit.

Spurgeon's Views of Communion.

No name is to-day more illustrious in the Baptist denomination than that of Charles H. Spurgeon. His brilliant talent, extraordinary eloquence, fervent zeal, devoted piety and wonderful success, have won for him a world-wide reputation. His sermons have been published, in this country, both in books and newspapers, by hundreds of thousands. His is the largest Baptist church, we believe, in the world. The views of such a Baptist, therefore, on the subject of communion, are of peculiar interest. It is well known that he is an advocate of open communion, and that such is the practice of his church. His views on this subject have been omitted from his sermons—we will not say with how little honesty—by the close communion

American Baptist publishers; but they are found freely expressed in the English editions.

In a sermon, for instance, on the text, "These be they who separate themselves" (Jude 19), we find a very strong expression in favor of open communion. This, in the American edition, is one of the mutilated sermons; but the English edition besides other pungent sentences, contains the following forcible and eloquent plea for unity at the Lord's table:

"There is not a Christian beneath the scope of God's heaven from whom I am separated. At the Lord's table, I always invite all Christians to come and sit down and commune with us. If any man were to tell me that I am separate from the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, or the Methodist, I would tell him he did not know me, for I love them with a pure heart fervently, and I am not separate from them.—This bears rather hard on our strict communion Baptists. I should not like to say anything hard against them, for they are about the best people in the world; but they really do separate themselves from the body of Christ's people. They separate themselves from the great universal Church.—They say they will not commune with it; and if any one comes to their table who has not been baptized they turn him away. *The pulse of Christ is communion*; and woe to the Church that seeks to cure the ills of Christ's Church by stopping its pulse!

"I think it is a sin to refuse to commune with any one who is a member of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. I should think myself grossly in fault, if at the foot of these stairs I should meet a truly converted child of God, who called himself a Primitive Methodist, or a Wesleyan, or a Churchman, or an Independent, and I should say, 'No, sir, you do not agree with me on certain points. I believe you are a child of God, but I will have nothing to do with you.' I should then think the text would bear very hard on me: 'These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.'"

We do not know, in all the range of Baptist literature, a more terse and admirable plea for open communion. It turns the tables completely upon the close communionists. It makes *close communion* the sin—the sin of bigotry and schism! We scarcely wonder that such bold utterances should have been hushed by strict communion publishers. Too deadly thrust does Spurgeon make at the idol of sectarianism to please in this the High Church Baptists. So they resort to the cowardly practice of striking from his sermons all such passages. The above quotation was sent to us by an English Baptist clergyman. We doubt if any "regular" Baptist newspaper would have the courage to publish it; and so we in turn send it to you, dear Churchmen, brave ever in defence both of unity and liberty.

COSCORDIA.

Sands of Gold.

Never wish a thing done, but do it. If you can say nothing good of any one, say nothing at all.

In friendship as in love, we are often happier in our ignorance than in our knowledge.

Men are generally like wagons; they rattle prodigiously when there is nothing in them.

The body is the shell of the soul, and the dress is the husk of the body; but the husk often tells what the kernel is.

No man should complain of being poor, or of hard times, who can afford to use rum or tobacco.

The true wealth of a community lies in the integrity of its citizens, and its chief honor arises, not from the possession of great riches, but the possession of true men.

There is one single fact which one man opposes to all the wit and argument of infidelity, viz: That no man ever on his deathbed repented of being a Christian.

A call is issued for a convention of negro representatives of the Border States in Baltimore, on the 4th of August for the purpose of the organization of the negroes of that State to agitate the question of equal rights.