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For the Advocate. Our Virginia Correspondence.

BY REV. JOHN E. EDWARDS, D. D.
LENTEN SERVICES.

It was stated in my presence the other day that a young lady was heard congratulating herself on the near approach of Easter Sunday, and the close of Lent as observed by the church in which she was a communicant. She said that she had abstained from pastries and a rich diet until she was tired of the limited bill of fare; but, more than that she had been restrained from attending the theatre, and opera, and dancing parties until she was sick and tired of the restriction laid upon her by the Lenten season. She nevertheless seemed to feel that there was some compensation for her self-denial in the fact that a German, which was to come off during the week following Easter Sunday, which would be enjoyed with a double relish by reason of the "forty days' restraint from the delightful amusement now in store for her. This is received with sincere sorrow and regret, and with no purpose whatever to cast any reflection upon the church within whose pale this humiliating incident occurred. But, we have all heard of Lenten Balls, and of the engagements of Operatic couples, and of theatrical companies, expected to make their appearance immediately after the close of Lent, to meet a demand created by the temporary restraint imposed on church members during the Lenten season. "O shame, where is thy blush!" I repeat that this is recorded with sorrow. The blame is not laid altogether at the door of the reactors—"bishops and other clergy," of the church within whose communion these abuses occur. Faithful exhortations and warnings have been delivered during the Lenten services against such indulgences; and yet, in utter disregard of these admonitions and warnings; and as it would seem, in defiance of church discipline and authority, the young and gay pleasure seekers, go from the communion on Easter Sunday, and not a few from what is called "the Apostolic rite of confirmation," into the ball room, and into the factious German waltz, and into the smoking theatre before the first Sunday after Easter. "Tell it not in Gath!" It would seem too incredible to publish, and yet the facts confirmatory of what has been said above, have already actually occurred in most of the towns and cities where the Lenten services have been observed. Reprisals are thus made, by professed Christians, for the religious self-denial or abstention from the observance of Lent. Bishop Randolph, assistant Bishop of the diocese of Virginia, refused, last year, so I was credibly informed, to lay his hands, in the rite of confirmation, on any candidate who would not promise, in advance, to abstain from the German waltz, and other "round dances," as they are called. But, it is a notorious fact that a great many who are communicants, as observers of Lent, are found at the theatre, and at the German, participating in its performances, before a week has elapsed after the close of Lent. No wonder that our religion is made a subject of mockery and derision by men of the world, in the face of such inconsistency! No wonder, indeed, that they feel the church! It is, to my mind, a matter of surprise that the deserters of worldly pleasure should wish to connect themselves with the rich of God, or to remain within his pale, when the vows they take at baptism and confirmation so clearly and positively involve a prohibition of the indulgence in the worldly amusements to which they resort, with avidity, as soon as the Easter services are over. What sort of a religion is that which finds more enjoyment in the dance and theatre than in the self-denying service of God?

SOMETHING FURTHER.

Thorough repentance, involving conviction for sin, confession of sin, contrition on account of sin, a forsaking and turning away from sin—repentance, as thus described, goes before saving faith. That false, absurd, and unscriptural view that saving faith goes before evangelical repentance must receive no countenance or quarters among us, as Methodists. If we catch the hoary old error in our camp, we must put it to the knife. It contradicts our avowed doctrinal beliefs; stands with uplifted hand in the face of our preaching, and the traditions of our church, and inverts the order of repentance and faith, as taught in God's word; as preached by Wesley and his successors in the ministry, and as held and believed by the Methodists of to-day, as firmly and unwaveringly as it has ever been held by the old field leaders in our Israel in the days of by-gone years. Repentance, faith, justification, regeneration, adoption, and the witness of the Spirit. These are the old battling-rams with which the Methodists, through all periods of their history, have beaten down the walls of opposition and doctrinal error wherever they have been encountered, in the progress of our church, from its feeble infancy to its present gigantic strength and maturity. It is no time now, at this advanced stage of our progress, to surrender our doctrines to the dictation of men, often of very moderate ability, called evangelists. The revivalists that attend our own ministry—pastor assisting pastor—where the old "altar work" is kept up, and where deep and thorough repentance is preached, and insisted on, and where the penitent is taught to expect conscious conversion, divinely attested, always result in the most permanent good to the church. Shallow, surface conversions, I repeat, are filling our churches with worldly members. Then, the careless, off-hand way of too many of our pastors, of receiving members into the communion of the church, without previous personal examination, as to the "genuineness of their faith," and their willingness to conform to the moral discipline of the church, and to support its institutions, tends to foster the increase and growth of the evils that just now are assuming a dominating influence, in more branches of the Christian Church than those that keep Lent.

THINGS BY THE WAY.

Rev. H. W. Brown, the evangelist, after closing his meetings at the First Baptist Church in Lynchburg, returned to Richmond, where he has held a meeting of two weeks' continuance, at the Centenary Methodist Church, attended with the usual results. Large numbers were reported as converts, but without corresponding accessions to the church. Just now Mr. Brown is beginning a meeting with Dr. Landrum, at the Second Baptist Church, in Richmond, where he will spend two weeks, after which he is under an engagement to come to Danville, to spend two or three weeks with Dr. Starr, in the conduct of a meeting in Main Street Methodist

Church. Mr. Brown was expected to be in Danville earlier, but by consent of parties all round his visit has been deferred two weeks. We are praying and hoping for good results to attend the meeting. The proper authorities are forecasting for the new organization in carrying on, without interruption, the exercises of the "Danville College for young ladies." A full corps of officers and teachers will be ready, in due time, to keep up the institution to its high grade. The death of Prof. Blackwell is keenly felt, but will not interfere with the continuance of the College exercises, either at the present or in the future. Rev. H. C. Cheatham, of Centenary Methodist Church in Lynchburg, has been engaged to preach the Commencement sermon, on the 5th Sunday in May. The usual annual exercises will come off during the week following the sermon. Prof. Buchanan, Superintendent of public school instruction in Va., will deliver the annual literary address before the Pierian Literary Society of the College, on Tuesday night, following the sermon.

HOW IT IS THAT WORLDLINESS CREEPS INTO THE CHURCH.

The growth and increase of worldliness in the church, and especially in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is attributable, in great measure, to two things; namely, first, to shallow, surface conversions; and, secondly, to the loose, slipshod mode of receiving members into the church. Too many of the rambling, irresponsible evangelists, so called, who lower the conditions of Scriptural conversion to a plain, but little above the dead level of an avowed purpose to reform the life, with a publicly declared willingness to "accept Christ" as the Savior of sinners, are chargeable, in part, with the evils complained of. The physical fact of "standing up in the congregation," or, of coming forward and "shaking hands" with the evangelist, is pronounced conversion, and another notch is made in the tally stick, in the numerical count of the converts. In two many instances the going through with this drill is called conversion, and the persons—men and women—so converted, are received into the church, too many of whom are still "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." They started right, and took steps in the proper direction, as the initiative of a religious life, but stopped short of the great work of spiritual regeneration by the direct energy and power of the Holy Ghost. There may have been an intellectual assent to the truths presented to the mind, and a rational acceptance of them as great and vital truths; but the moral element of unreserved and unconditional trust in Jesus Christ alone, for a present forgiveness of sins, and for a consciously felt, and a divinely attested renewal by the Holy Ghost was lacking. The word of the evangelist was taken, rather than the direct witness of the Holy Spirit. The convert, by the new process, turns out, in too many instances, to be the "stony ground" hearer. The seed springs up, and makes a show; but, for want of depth of soil, only abides for a short time, and then withers and dies away. Such converts crowd our churches with half-hearted, worldly, dancing, theatre going members.

For the Advocate. The Rambler.

That is a charming criticism of "Mary Wilson" on the Rambler's view of singing—only the Rambler has been very much misunderstood. There is nothing on earth the matter with "Heavenward March," and nobody is distressed to see "Jesus Lover of My Soul" occasionally in every-day clothes, but a harmless march is not a holy march, and to sensitive spirits every-day clothes look a little rusty Sundays. A sweet singer might render "Charles Wesley's fine hymn" to "When the Swallows Homeward fly," and think of holy things, but somebody will be thinking of the swallows—ugly and black and noisy. And the dear girl who feels her spirit soaring beyond the clouds while entertaining the boys with Heavenward March will be shocked when she turns around to find that she has been furnishing music for a drill on mamma's new carpet. Hearts like harps may be tuned to different keys.

I repeat, there is nothing the matter with Heavenward March—on Mondays. What was complained of was the spirit which usually controls the music at these Sunday afternoon "sociables." Won't Miss Angelina be kind enough to play something? Miss Angelina has always been very kind and there is no reason why she should not be so now: she will play. But what shall it be? Boys don't like church tunes—they are too solemn. Saunkey is lively, but Saunkey is worn threadbare. And there isn't another thing in the parlor save a pile of every-day music on the end of the piano. The young man who has been fingering with that pile for the last five minutes, and now comes forward with his "favorite," is warned in a half whisper that mamma is in the next room, and mamma is one of the old-fashioned sort, you know. There is a pause. The man who can relieve them of this dilemma shall be called blessed. The author of Heavenward March gets the blessing. Here is a secular tune—that will satisfy the boys. And it has a religious label—that will pacify mamma. And it is just so with Jesus Lover of My Soul to a "selection from the latest opera." The boys want the opera and mamma wants the words; both will get what they want, and the divine performer thanks her stars that she is easily out of the dilemma.

The Rambler is so far from being old-fashioned in his musical tastes that he can't with difficulty hold himself down to the level of ministerial notions. He loves operatic music; at the concert loves operatic music and cries more and more, "my neighbor gets pinched often." The finest music sounds, to the bottom depths in his heart which popular airs never reach. And yet the Rambler would not have operatic music introduced into the churches. For his own sake he would have it and for the sake of those who are constructed on the same plan. But the "hog and hominy" taste abounds, and you can't satisfy a "hog and hominy" appetite with white of egg—or anything that looks like it. Plain, substantial tunes for every-day, substantial people is the motto for to-day and forever. We operatic folks are of no better fiber than the man who can't turn Old Hundred. Hog and hominy people will sing as grandly up yonder as their white-of-egg neighbors.

is in tune with their hearts; something they can take up quickly and run through like lightning and send them back to their seats all flushed and happy. The wise mother sings a hymn to her child only when she would put it to sleep.

EDWARD L. PELL.
For the Advocate.

Our New York Letter.

BY JOSEPH S. TAYLOR.

The fate of high license for New York and Brooklyn is sealed. By writing the little word "No," Governor Hill has put himself on the rum side of the contest. His prattle about "sumptuary legislation" and the "Constitution" is simply a blind for certain supposed simple-minded individuals who believe in Andrew Jackson, but also in sobriety. Their votes in a certain contingency may be needed; and so an effort has been made to show that a good cause has been defeated by being embodied in a bad law. Nevertheless, the simplicity and innocence of common intelligence which has been assumed for these temperance men seem to have been slightly overestimated by our sagacious Governor, for a scheme is on foot to entangle His Excellency in the meshes of his own logic. He has pointed out certain objections to the bill which was passed by the Legislature, leaving the way open for the inference that what he has not formally disapproved he tacitly approves. Consequently, the friends of the defunct high license bill have already introduced a new measure devoid of every feature which Mr. Hill objected to, and embodying such portions as were approved. If this reaches him, he can not help signing it or stultifying himself. The veto, besides disappointing temperance men, deprives the city of \$4,500,000 of revenue. This, may or may not be an evil; for, as long as rum pays the taxes, avaricious men will stick to rum.

"All but philosophers," says Plato (Phaedo), "are courageous only from fear, and because they are afraid. And are not the temperate exactly in the same case? They are temperate because they are intemperate. For there are pleasures which they must have, and are afraid of losing; and therefore they abstain from one class of pleasures because they are overcome by another."

This is the danger of the license system. The more you tax rum, the deeper the saloon system becomes rooted in the avarice of men. Every man who votes for high license is called and calls himself a temperance man. But we fear many of these are temperate by being intemperate. They are "temperance" men because they are intemperate in their love of money.

A paragraph in Harper's Bazaar said last week that Dr. Hall's great success as a preacher lies in the fact that he always writes his apparently extemporaneous sermons. One need not be a sermon architect to inform this philosopher that he is very unphilosophical. If I should say, "This fire is hot because it is in a stove," I would be speaking after the manner of the paragrapher. If Dr. Hall is great because of something which he does, then he simply obeys the law of greatness; and since it is a law, it is general and not particular; therefore, if other men obey this law, they, too, will be great. Or, substituting the words of Harper's philosopher, all who write their sermons are great preachers. Would they were indeed!

Now, no man is great because he does anything in a particular way. To say that he does it to substitute the accidental for the essential, or the effect for the cause, is not to be great because he does anything; he is great because he is great. And for him the doing of great deeds is just as natural and as easy as the doing of small things is to ordinary men. A great man knows and obeys the law of his nature; if he does not, he can not be great. And if that law impels a preacher to write sermons, he must write them; if it impels him to preach extemporaneously, he must preach extemporaneously. I devote a little space to this subject because the spirit of the teaching in schools and colleges appears to be that if one will only do what great men did, he will be great; whereas imitation is the infallible test, perhaps the essence, of smallness. "He is great who is what he is from nature, and who never reminds us of others." So says Emerson.

Young people ought to be encouraged to discover their own natures, to know themselves, so that they shall not attempt to fire 42-calibre balls with a 32-calibre weapon. The violet is blue not because it is blue, but it is blue and modest because it is a violet. It is beautiful because it is the nature of violets to be beautiful. If we were involuntary creatures like the flowers of the field, we should each of us grow according to our natures into intellectual lilies or oaks, and into moral violets or sunflowers. But we have will; and we are sinful; and by our sinful will we thwart nature in her efforts to build us up in the likeness of our Maker, for whose mercy we should all be cut down as weeds and cast into the furnace.

But there are extremes to keep clear of. It is wise to keep away from the North pole for many reasons. The preacher, who wrote to the Nashville Advocate that he loved our church hymns so well he was determined to introduce them into the Sunday-school, has swayed from one pole to the other. Church tunes for children! Might as well send a Brushy Mountain moonshiner to hear Patti. Tie a bright, nervous, happy child down to a slow, melancholy hymn and you bandage him like a papoose. The pale little girl, who mopes about the house humming Naomi, is going to heaven if a physician is not called in. Children who sing hymns of their own accord may be suspected of eating dirt—of their own accord. Let us have no poky, nodding hymns in our Sunday-school. Give the children a song that

been mentioned as Mr. Beecher's probable successor in the Plymouth pulpit. He has accepted an invitation to deliver the memorial oration at a proposed public meeting in commemoration of the great preacher. Those who have been in the habit of hearing Mr. Beecher will be disappointed, I fear, no matter who may occupy Plymouth pulpit. Beecher was a man who reminded one of no one else; consequently no one else reminds one of him. He was as unique as Shakespeare. Let most men announce a subject, and you know pretty nearly what they are going to say. You can think through their brains. But no man could make himself at home in Beecher's brain. He was always full of surprises to the keenest of listeners. And the effect of this indescribable and incomprehensible power upon some of his regular hearers was so great that it induced a sort of Beechermania. I saw a man in the gallery of the church one Sunday morning, who acted during the sermon as if he had hold of an induction battery. He fairly trembled under the terrific spell. And he told me he had sat in that same spot for twenty years. If Dr. Parker comes, I fear this man will commit suicide!

Our Mayor is a party to a measure which has been reported in the Legislature, permitting the saloons to be open on Sunday until 12 o'clock. Mayor Hewitt is the son-in-law of Peter Cooper, one of New York's uncanonized saints; he is a church member; he is the head of Cooper Union, an institution that educates a thousand young men and women every year in the arts and sciences. Yet this Mayor has allowed his name to be connected with a measure that would command the support of thieves and murderers and the dregs of society generally, and would outrage every sense of decency and every obligation of Christian morality. All classes of citizens have respect for the Mayor and confidence in his integrity. They can only say—in charity—that the Mayor must be under a delusion, if indeed he is not, the dupe of the liquor power.

Easter in New York is the prettiest, sweetest Easter! It is a festival of flowers. All the churches have flowers in profusion, flowers, beautiful emblems of the resurrection and of immortality! They are the most convincing argument the Unitarian has. Their influence seems divine. In their power of inspiring devotional feelings they go hand in hand with music.

By the way, it is much easier to be a prohibitionist in theory than in practice. In truth, it is very inconvenient to be a prohibitionist in practice. One must be proof against failure, and ridicule, and public denunciation. Prohibitionists are often represented as a milk-and-water sort of men wearing long hair. The fact is, it takes a fixedness of purpose and a persistence of moral energy quite foreign to the simpering virtue of the imbeciles that are held up to public scorn as specimen prohibitionists. No, gentlemen; it takes a hero now-a-days to be a prohibitionist.

Miss Catherine C. Wolfe, lately deceased, belonged to that species of noble philanthropists which, for the sake of Christianity and the needy, we hope may never become extinct. With an ample fortune which descended to her from both branches of her family, she early began to follow the footsteps of her dead father, who had taken delight in ministering to the necessities of the poor. Not as property, but as a trust, Miss Wolfe regarded her wealth. She used it accordingly. Money is a good or evil; and whether it is to be one or the other depends upon the wisdom or folly of those who use it. "If I had that man's fortune I would do thus and so," you say. Would you? Why, almost anybody can make money, but how few there be who know how to spend it! Miss Wolfe knew the divine fine art of spending money, not for gratification, but as one who felt that she carried the keys of power that belonged to another.

The death of Ray Palmer, in Newark, on March 29th, reminds the Christian world of the debt it owes to that great scholar and hymn-writer. In 1830, when he was twenty-two years old, and just after he had graduated at Yale College, he wrote the hymn *My Faith Looks up to Thee*, which alone would entitle its author, to immortality. I have before me an illustrated edition of that hymn, containing a *face-simile* of the first two stanzas from the first complete manuscript copy. It is a small, delicate hand, full of character.

It is nearly sixty years since the composition of this lyric, and after a long and fruitful life the author died in that "faith" of which he sang so sweetly. Who doubts that this prayer, the concluding stanza of the hymn, has been answered in the death of Ray Palmer?

"When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll;
Blest Savior, then, in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
Oh, bear me safe above—
A ransomed soul!"

I must confess that "The Rambler's" article in the last ADVOCATE has given me no little pleasure and relief. When

Rev. Dr. Parker, of London, has

Brother Smith's unkind letter on Beecher appeared, I was sorely tempted to reply; but I had enough self-control that time to suppress everything that struggled for utterance on that topic. I considered it a triumph of grace that I had been able to write a Raleigh letter without using the name of Beecher or Smith. If that letter of Bro. S. had remained unchallenged, I had determined to take it as the *opinion* of the readers of the ADVOCATE; and who am I that I should antagonize what seemed to me the *feeling* of a community, rather than a *judgment*; and that not on the merits of the man, but on his relation to a certain question?

Mr. Pell has revived my courage. I shall say a few words, not to answer Bro. S., particularly, for whose writings generally I have the very greatest respect, and often admiration. When I read that Mr. Beecher "has done more harm to Evangelical Christianity than any man of his age," Ingersoll excepted, I said to myself, "How can any man who has ever read or heard a single sermon of Mr. Beecher make such a statement?" And when it was further asserted that he had degraded the divinity of Christ, I came to the conclusion that Bro. S. never could have read a prayer or sermon that emanated from Plymouth pulpit. For the above and other statements are simply not true!

When Bro. S. asks, what permanent work has Mr. Beecher done? we are almost tempted to suggest that the answer is near at hand; for a part of Beecher's work was also Gen. Grant's and Pres. Lincoln's. Perhaps Georgia is as well qualified as any other State to attest the permanency of this part of Beecher's work.

As to Mr. Beecher's character. Mr. William A. Beach was the leading counsel of the plaintiff in the great trial. He declared before he died that, after hearing Mr. Beecher's own defence, he believed him innocent. "I felt," said he, "that we were a pack of hounds trying in vain to drag down a noble lion." Bro. S. is hardly imitating the example of the One who said: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

As to his orthodoxy. "Great believers are always reckoned infidels . . . But he denies out of mere faith, and not less. He denies out of honesty. He had rather stand charged with the imbecility of skepticism; than with untruth." Thus says Emerson.

And one would think the philosopher must have had Henry Ward Beecher in mind when he wrote this passage. His own personal experience, however, is described by the observation. He had been ordained to preach dogmas which his expanding thought soon outgrew, and he was compelled to resign his office to save his self-respect. But he wrote the words we have quoted of Montaigne.

"Great believers are always reckoned infidels." Did any man ever, after reading "Wilhelm Meister," ask to what church Goethe belonged? Or did any student of Hamlet ever wonder whether Shakespeare was a Papist or Protestant? Such questions would be ridiculous. And yet none but a small mind would accuse either Goethe or Shakespeare of skepticism. So commanding are their intellects, so universal is their genius, that Goethe as a Baptist and Shakespeare as a Presbyterian are inconceivable. So was Mr. Beecher too large for the creeds. Yet he was a "great believer"—ten times greater than any time have called him "infidel," "atheist," "skeptic." He was too honest to say, "I am a Congregationalist, when he knew that Congregationalism could not hold a millionth part of him. It would be as if the lion should say, "I am an oyster," or the eagle, "I am a duck." Nevertheless, when Mr. Beecher withdrew from the Congregational body, declaring honestly that he was not what every intelligent man knew he could not be, there were not wanting those who cried "Pity!" "Shame!" "Atheist!" "Hypocrite."

New York, April 22nd, 1887.

Short Selections.

"One drop of sympathy sincere,
A lake of tears may calm;
'Tis oil upon the troubled waves,
Four, pour, the precious balm!"

Learn to govern yourselves, and be gentle and patient.
Remember that, valuable as is the gift speech, silence is often more valuable.

Beloved, God meets those who are in the way; Satan meets those who are out of it.—*Livington Evans.*

Guard your tongues, especially in seasons of ill-health, irritation, and trouble, and soften them by prayer and a sense of your own shortcomings and errors.

Let the minister sent of Christ, delivering Christ's message to his fellows, have good courage. Let those who receive him with his message have like good courage. Receiving the messenger of Christ, with the message of Christ, he has received Christ himself.—*Southern Churchman.*

The faith that brings us into the "valley of blessings so sweet," comes out of a furnace of desire, glowing with sevenfold ardor. It is not in harmony with the nature of the human sensibilities that this intensity of desire should be awakened and sustained in a state of passivity. Endeavor intensifies desire.—*Love Enthroned.*