The Christian Life.

Familiarity With Sacred Things.

Familiarity even with what is most thrilling and solemn, or with responsibilities the most important and weighty, may lead to a diminished reverence or regard for them, and a zeal for their promotion. However justifiable, in a qualified sense, this is to merely material things—for many important matters can only be entrusted to a familiar and practiced operator—yet this course of conduct is allowed to apply where the responsibility directly imposed by God, and the realities of eternal things are involved. The peculiar, the momentous responsibility enjoined by God upon one whom he selects to preach the Gospel is not surpassed if equalled by any angel in heaven, and we do not think that any one with a proper appreciation of the ministry would enter upon it without a conscientious and clear conviction of his call being divine. Such a one stands for the time being as did the prophets of old in the very place of God. He is the ambassador for the King of heaven to the inhabiters of earth; and the authoritative declarer of the mind of God. Like Ezekiel he is a watchman to hear the word at the month of God, and warn the people from Him. The words of one who realizes his call will not be the enticing words of man's wisdom, and the Holy Spirit will give the unction to make his ministry effective. The design of preaching is "to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, for the perfecting of saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ."—The ministry to be effective must be like that of the apostles, Mark 16:17, "The Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." We heard of one who after preaching twenty years said he did not know of one who had been converted under his labors. The ministry of one who can preach and perform the functions of his office, no matter with what degree of propriety and acceptableness, but fails to have the "signs following" is a failure.—Such familiarity with sacred things is awful.

The pathway of duty is not entirely a paved one, with blue grass borders dotted with flowers and shaded by bowers of beautiful trees. There are breaks along its course where one has to pick his way through the thorns and brambles, over rocks and stones, exposed to the burning rays of the mid-summer noon-day sun. These latter conditions are necessary to bring out the beauty and appreciation of the former. It has been poetically stated that Spring would be but gloomy weather, if we had nothing else but spring.—So would our path of duty become monotonous and unattractive if it was only strewn with roses. It requires the harsher elements in order to bring us to a realization of our surroundings. Every time we pass through trying circumstances we are only the better prepared to enjoy the beauties beyond. Criticisms, whether just or unjust, are often our best monitors.—*Industrial School Courier.*

Epworth League.

Loyalty.

The *Western Christian Advocate* notes an evil:—"In the early evening they assemble in their church to attend the league devotional meeting, where they welcome their fellows cordially, talk and sing heartily, and pray devoutly. They may even pray for the church and the pastor, but the first thing they do, when the meeting is dismissed, is to walk straight out of the church—out of the church—and go perhaps to a neighboring church, where there is to be a baptism, or a sermon by a foreigner in costume, or an address upon some topic of town talk. The loyal members of the church notice the disloyalty of these young people, and their hearts are pained. If they should criticise the league for being practically in competition with the preaching services of the church, are they to be blamed? The pastor sees this conduct, and groans in spirit. His young people offer him an open affront Sabbath after Sabbath, and he is powerless to influence them otherwise."

The *Western* notes these things, and then comes to the point: "We wish we could burn it into the hearts of all our Epworthians that they must be loyal. Without loyalty to the pastor, to the church and to God the league will be a humiliating failure. Do not deceive yourselves. You cannot receive credit for loyalty or honor without deserving it. You are observed. Many eyes are watching you. Why run after pleasure and frivolity and excitement? Why not be a man, a woman, a Christian? Why be a nonenity in this world of action, of conflict, of glorious possibilities? Have fidelity, steadfastness, and moral power no attraction for you? We rejoice in what the league as a whole is doing. Let every member come to the standard."

Letter from Bishop Fitzgerald.

MR. EDITOR:—I have watched the Epworth League movement in our church with great interest from the beginning. Would it be a big failure? Or would it begin a new era? This was my attitude and that of thousands of others in the church toward the new organization. I was dubious, but willing to give it a fair trial. The general conference had committed the church to it. The need of further and more efficient methods of reaching and saving our young people, was everywhere felt. It was evident that something should be done; the Epworth League was born of this conviction. Briefly stated, the result of this observation up to date is that the Epworth League can do the work it was designed to do. It has worked well wherever it has been fairly tried. In some places it has worked wonders. "The Epworth League has revolutionized the lives of the young people of my town," said recently the pastor of one of our largest Alabama churches. In the few places where it has failed, the failure was owing to special hindrances rather than to adherent defects in the organization. The feasibility and usefulness of the League admit of no doubts in my mind now. It has demonstrated its capability for good, and its right to live. The church has adopted it. Its novitiate is over.

What remains is simply to work the Epworth League for all there is in it. Its possibilities cannot be measured. Let our pastors take hold of it in earnest. Let our people co-operate with them everywhere. Let them read, study, organize and move forward in this new and timely movement in behalf of our young people.

From Texas and elsewhere inquiries are coming as to when The Epworth Book will be out. The printers at the Publishing House are setting up the type for it, the artists are making the pictures for it, and the book-binders are getting ready for it. It will help the cause, it is hoped, and glorify God.—*O. P. Fitzgerald, in Epworth Methodist.*

EDUCATIONAL.

Report of C. B. Way, County Superintendent of Public Instruction of Buncombe Co.

To the Hon. County Board of Education:

Although this is only the middle of the school year I presume the Board, as well as the public, would like to know what has been done during the half year that has passed since July 1st, 1892, and also what are the prospects for the ensuing school year. Therefore I present the following brief synopsis of what our records show. Three Teacher's Institutes were held under the supervision of the county superintendent. Two of these for the white teachers, were held at prominent places in the county outside of Asheville—one at Weaverville, and one at Leicester. At Leicester there was and attendance of fifty-one teachers, and quite a large number of citizens. The school committee there co-operated heartily with the superintendent teachers, and greatly aided in interesting and bringing out the people. To one of the members of your body, Hon. B. G. Gudger, living near the village, we were also indebted for valuable aid, by his constant attendance, active influence, and his excellent address on the "Public Day." Miss Stephenson, of the Home Industrial School, at Asheville, also has our thanks for attendance and a valuable lecture on teaching grammar. Prof. H. E. Ketron, of Leicester, greatly endeared himself to officers and teachers by tendering the use of the large college building, performing well the special work assigned him, being always ready to take part in any work of the Institute, and furnishing a free home to several teachers. Hon. John W. Starnes gave us one of his stirring educational addresses on public day. Several young lady teachers read very excellent papers on school work assigned them. I am assured that this Institute was entirely satisfactory to teachers and people.

At the Institute at Weaverville fifty-six teachers were enrolled, and there was a fair attendance of the people. The college building here was tendered for our use, and the teachers found no trouble in securing good homes. Professors Rheim and Reagan rendered important services by lecturing on teaching arithmetic and U. S. history. I also had the assistance of that admirable teacher, Mrs. McDowell, of the Weaverville College, for several days, and to her we were indebted in a large degree for the success of the institute. C. E. Chambers, T. W. Shelton, and others of our country teachers, did good service. A general satisfaction was manifested with the conduct and labors of the Institute. I am fully confirmed in the opinion that it is better to have two or three Institutes in these central country places, than one at the county seat. They are more accessible for the teachers, less expensive to them, and the attendance on the sessions is more continuous and regular.

I held one Institute for the colored teachers in Asheville. There were forty-three teachers enrolled, and they were prompt and continuous in attendance, earnest and interested at all times. Some of the professors from their leading colleges were present, and complimented the Institute in high terms. I am sure our colored schools are making progress. Up to date full reports have been made by 67 white schools, and 16 colored. In the district where these white schools were taught, there was a school population of 5941. Of this number 4111 were enrolled, nearly 70 per cent. The average daily attendance was 2372, about 40 per cent. The average length of the term was 18 weeks.

In the districts where the 16 colored schools were taught, there was a school population of 989.—Of these 709 were enrolled, and the average daily attendance was 403. Enrollment 72¼ per cent.—Average attendance 41 per cent., and length of term 14½ weeks.—These districts are all outside of Asheville. The reports from the schools in Asheville will not be received until the session ends.—I am confident the year's work will show an enrollment of 70 per cent., an average attendance of 41 per cent., and an average length of term 18 weeks. I have visited very nearly all these schools and carefully examined into condition of them. In many the teaching is very good, in most it is fairly good, and few are liable to unfair criticism. But it would be impossible to take at random, a hundred lawyers, doctors or preachers, all of whom had license, and not find a few who were deficient in some parts of their profession and practice.—Our teachers, as a body, are faithful, moral, earnest and intelligent. School committees and parents ought to exercise a constant care over each school. They ought to visit the schools (some portion of them) every week. They may thus furnish a spur to a teacher who is disposed to be careless or slothful, and will surely stimulate and encourage the faithful teacher and the children.

Viewing the general results thus far, I am sure a reasonable degree of advancement has been made.—Yet, the progress ought to be far greater. The people must take hold of this as their most important work in life, and then the proper results will quickly come.

For the coming year the financial prospect may be briefly stated. The available school fund, after deducting all estimated expenditures for collecting, and administering the law, will be $21,117.31. Giving $1.50 each to 13,585 children, requires $20,377 50. Special appropriations to nine small white districts and eight small colored districts requires $322.00. Leaving $417.81 unapportioned for contingencies. Not meaning that this balance will be expended for any expected extras, but as the money is not collected, these estimates may not be fully realized when it is; and if they are, why that balance will remain in the treasury.

With a reasonable assurance that we shall hereafter have four and a half months public school in every year, it appears to me the most pressing question now is, how to get the children in the schools. We are constantly pleading with parents to send their children to public schools (the State don't beg us to pay school taxes), urging committees teachers to make greater to induce them to do so; and there our power ends. The state has claimed the right and recognized her duty to educate her children. She has entered upon the discharge of that duty by enacting a public school law. The substance and practical execution of that law may be summed up and illustrated very plainly, thus:—There is Mr. Brown, who owns a large estate, he has three hired men who have ten school children which they are unable to educate. The State says to these hired men, you are not able to educate these ten children, but I am, and my duty requires me to educate them and I am going to do it. It will just take a dollar and a half each, per year, to do it. Here, Brown, you must pay fifteen dollars school tax to educate these ten children. Pay it over to the tax collector or I will sell your property to get it. Brown pays it to Mr. Collector; Collector pays it to Treasurer, and the school committee hires a teacher and starts a school in a mile of the ten poor children. Then the State says to the parents, "Didn't I tell you that I was bound to educate your children? I did, and I am going to do it. There is the school. I have provided to educate them in, but you need not send them to it unless you want to." (Didn't offer any such discretion to Brown about paying school tax.) Well, the result is, so far, only one out of every three wants to go; and the other two exercise the great American right to do as they please, stay out of school, grow up in ignorance, march up like true sovereigns to the polls and ask somebody to read their ticket for them.

If the legislators of the State, just now to meet in general assembly at Raleigh, can devise any measure that will remedy this radical defect in the school law they will merit the eternal gratitude of our people.

The Buncombe County Teacher's Association has, I trust, become a permanent institution. Its meetings are regularly held, pretty well attended, and a source of pleasure and advantage to the teachers.

I desire here, to assure the teachers of my high appreciation of their uniform courtesy and kindness, and to return heartfelt thanks to the good citizens who have so cordially welcomed me to their homes. I may not record names here, but they are safely held in memory.

C. B. WAY, C. S. A.

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