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G. C. RANKIN, D. D., EDITOR

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Editorial.

THE WISDOM OF ORGANIZATION.

No movement, however important and forceful, can long continue unless its powers are properly and wisely conserved. The Church of God itself, with the tornado-like power which characterized its beginning under the new order of things, would have gone to pieces and become a spent force during the first century had not its great Head ordained and established the means by which it might be conserved and perpetuated in the world. The Wesleyan Revival which, upon all hands, is agreed to have been the greatest religious movement of the eighteenth century, would today be only a memory, had not its wonderful leader possessed the foresight that enabled him to catch and conserve its mighty impulse and to transmit it to posterity as a perpetual power. Not that organization alone is sufficient for these things; not that machinery can take the place of the vital force which it is only intended to embody and direct any more in the realm of Christian activity than in the sphere of individual existence. The body without the soul is dead. But it is also true that the soul without the body seeks another sphere and exercises itself under new conditions. For all necessary purposes in this life the body must be kept intact if the indwelling spirit is permitted to exercise its best endeavor. This principle holds good in every department. Mere impulse, however good and wise, must be harnessed and directed in order to its continuance and effectiveness.

These thoughts have been suggested by certain odious comparisons made between the work of our Church and that of our sister denominations in the realms of educational and missionary activity. It has been pointed out that thousands and thousands of dollars have been subscribed at different times under the influence of the enthusiasm of a single hour, while with us there are neither any such great gatherings of people, nor ingatherings of money. At first blush Methodism seems to be discounted in the face of these facts. When we are asked, "Did a Methodist Conference ever subscribe one hundred thousand dollars for any cause? When did thousands of Methodist people ever gather together for the furtherance of any one great special work?"

The answer to these questions, and to all that they imply is found in the fact that, because of organization, the source of Methodist income is one constant and inexhaustible supply. The assessments for our several connectional institutions upon the conferences of our Church are made annually, and the collections on an average will reach nearly ninety per cent. As an example of the wisdom of this orderly manner of raising money, the educational collections given annually to the Southwestern University from the Texas Conferences amount to the interest of one hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars endowment. The same thing is correspondingly true

of our Home and Foreign Mission supplies, and indeed of all the institutions of our Church. The easiest way to make this the plainest, is to take a certain period of years and compare our statistics with those of our sister Churches who raise their supplies by the uncertain methods adopted by their conventions. Such a comparison will show beyond a possibility of a doubt the worth and wisdom of organization, and bring out clear and strong that the method of Methodism in comparison to all other people is the most methodical.

THE DANGER OF SELF-DECEPTION.

It is bad enough to be deceived by those whom we trust. When they do it, we are shocked beyond measure; but the fact that they deceived us is not always our fault. We loved them and reposed implicit confidence in them. They are the ones to bear the blame and to receive condemnation. We may suffer some on account of their imposition on us; but they suffer infinitely more. To have such deception practiced upon us, gives to us a shock from which it is hard for us to recover. We trusted them, and they deceived us.

But there is a worse form of deception than that practiced on us by those whom we trust, and to whom we give our confidence. It is self-deception. It is possible to deceive ourselves? It certainly is, and it carries with it an almost fatal result. Listen to what our Savior says about such people. "Then they shall say unto me: 'Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And I shall say unto them: Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you.'" This is awful. We are left to infer that many people in that day will wake up to this fearful delusion. During life they acted in such way as to convince themselves that they were true disciples. Having put their consciences to sleep, they went on to the end, feeling that in some way or other they were the children of God, but at the end they found their mistake. But there is no excuse for self-deception. Paul says: "I know whom I have believed." And it is the privilege of all to enter into that certainty of knowledge concerning their relation to God. We had better make sure of our ground while we are living. It will be too late to make the correction when we stand before the Judge. If we deceive ourselves, we alone are to blame.

THE USE OF THE WINTER EVENING.

The winter is now upon us and the long nights have begun. Daylight does not come until after six in the morning and by six in the evening the sun has disappeared. Nine o'clock is early enough to retire, and this gives two hours after supper to sit round the fire and talk over the events and experiences of the day. As a rule, we do not need that much time to devote to such matters. One hour is sufficient. What ought to be done with the other hour? We ought to have a

good book or magazine, and give this extra hour to close and intelligent reading. A few chapters in the Bible will be very improving. This is the way to grow wise and know what great minds have thought and are thinking. And if we are studiously inclined, ten o'clock is early enough to retire, and instead of one hour we can devote two to the study of a good book. In this way we can have one hundred and fifty hours to give to wholesale reading during the three winter months. And we accomplish this by saving two hours after supper. We ought to be able to read a score of good books by the use of that much time. At least we ought to read a dozen. Most any young man or young lady by thus husbanding their time and applying it can become acquainted with the best books in the world in the course of three or four years. The quiet of the evening is a delightful time to read. The world is silent, and there is a stillness abroad that is conducive to study. The hours thus applied fill mind with useful knowledge. They make you intelligent, and teach you how to make yourself interesting and helpful to others. They bring you into sympathy with the greatest scholars and literary people living and dead. You learn their thoughts and catch the inspiration of their lives. Try the experiment, and you will never regret it. This is far better than running after society fads and dissatisfactions.

IAN MACLAREN ON PREACHING.

Dr. John Watson, better known as Ian MacLaren, the great Liverpool preacher, recently retired from the active pastorate, and in speaking of his long ministry he said: "If I were beginning instead of closing my ministry, I would be careful about three things in particular: I should be more attentive to my English; I would preach shorter sermons, and I would preach more comfortingly." These are the practical suggestions of an old man whose ministry has been a great success, and they are worthy the close thought of younger men in the ministry. Good and pure English is necessary to the permanent success and efficiency of the Christian preacher. To know it and to know the use of it is a rare accomplishment. For the past ten or fifteen years there has been a tendency toward the use of slang in the pulpit. It came in with the popular evangelist, and its contagion became marked. It had a novelty about it that seemed to attract the crowd, and hundreds of preachers adopted it. And there are those, to-day, who seem to think that the inelegancies of slang add much to the attractiveness of preaching. It is a common thing, even now, to hear men of fair education use words in the pulpit, that the most uneducated and unlearned preachers, even, would not have been guilty of fifty and sixty years ago. They regarded the pulpit as a sacred place and the ministry as a high calling, and they endeavored to preach accordingly. It ought to be the case to-day. The man who stands in the pulpit to preach the gospel ought to clothe his message in the purest English. Pure thought seeks a pure medium through

which to find articulate utterance. The slang of the gutter and the saloon is a disgrace to the pulpit and decent people ought not to tolerate it.

There is something, also, in the short sermon. The matter of a sermon does not depend on the length of time it requires to deliver it. Great thoughts compacted into few words are more easily understood and retained than a few feeble thoughts scattered through an hour of repetition and ranting. Condensation and conciseness are wonderful accomplishments in the preacher. An incessant flow of words is characteristic of shallowness of mind and an impoverished condition of ideas. And this is the trouble with most long sermons. They merely kill time, and they almost kill the congregation. One good thought, thoroughly developed and fully digested, is about all the average mind can stand at one service; and when you put this in good form, and apply it with power, it will abide and bring forth fruit in the life and character of the hearer. But a long drawn out sermon with a number of misty and intangible thoughts scattered through it will only tire and confuse the mind, and send the soul away empty and disappointed.

The last suggestion of Dr. Watson ought not to be overlooked. In every congregation there are people with oppressed spirits, hungry hearts, and wounded natures. They are oppressed with burdens, they have distresses, and they carry griefs of which the world knows nothing. They go to the divine services to find relief. The preacher is, therefore, a wise preacher who puts something into every sermon that will comfort and inspire. He may not know it, but he will make glad some poor heart that is heavy and cast down. The mission of Christ's ministry was, "Heal the broken-hearted," and that same ought to be heeded by those who go forth in his name. No one has such an opportunity to lift burdens off the hearts of mankind as the minister of Christ's gospel.

Quite a number of charges have not received the preachers they desired, and quite a number of preachers have not been sent to the works they preferred; but no congregation is without a preacher and no preacher is without a work. Hence, the law of compensation in our itinerancy works out the best results in the end. Everybody ought to be satisfied.

While it is all right to honor and respect all church organizations, yet we have no patience with that sentimental idea that one Church is just as good as another. The Church to which you belong is the best Church in the world for you. Free-lovism in religion is as reprehensible as in social life.

A gossip is a scavenger, and a conference gossip is a vulture. The one cleans up the filth of the streets, but the other lives on decayed matter. Both are out of place among intelligent and well bred people. They carry with them an odor not refreshing to decent olfactories.

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GEORGE AND GOLDIE.

By P. N. Ingraham.

As two drops of water may fall side by side to earth, separate and go in opposite directions until thousands of miles intervene, then by merest chance meet in the great ocean, one perhaps as a part of an iceberg clear and beautiful while the other finds its way to the great deep at the mouth of some muddy, impure stream, so two human lives may be reared under the same roof, drift very far apart and finally in some unexpected way be brought together.

George and Goldie were brothers who in the spring-time of their lives received the same treatment from a mother's loving hands and like counsel from a father who almost idolized them both. These boys seemed much alike both in point of ability as well as in fondness for their parents. If either had any advantage over the other it seemed rather to be in favor of Goldie, for he it was who usually finished the preparation of the lesson at the big round table in the living room, and at school he was considered one of the bright boys, and while George was no sluggard, yet he had to be content with somewhat slower progress. During the days of youth Goldie developed a very great fondness for baseball which was then becoming popular in the community in which these boys were raised. Long before completing his high-school course this would-be athlete had given up his studies and the little reading he was doing was often of a questionable character. Very much against the wishes of his parents and brother he joined a league team of baseball and was devoting his time, talent and energy to amusing the public, which to say the least of it is rather a low calling for any man. Not that games are wrong when engaged in at proper times and places and conducted in proper ways, but the fact that all kinds of people go to public places of amusements; that playing with league teams means playing on the Sabbath which is a violation of the law of God and most of the states of our country, and the character of one's companions when engaged in such a business, all make it very difficult for the young man to keep himself unspotted from the world. Though Goldie became a very expert pitcher—in fact a noted one in sporting circles, and commanded a good salary during the playing season, he never saved any money, for all the time he was living a high, unreal life, had formed many expensive hurtful habits which all taken together soon sapped away the vitality and real interest in life.

In the meantime our other character, George, had completed his high school course along with his class, won a medal in oratory, learned to love and appreciate good books and had taken a full course in one of the medical colleges of his state. There he had won the admiration and esteem of the faculty and student body by his uniform courtesy, his powers of application, and by his ability to do original thinking and making original investigations. After having practiced for a few years in a town not far from his home place he was elected a lecturer and demonstrator in a leading southern medical college. Time passed rapidly by in the lives of these two men and it had been years since they had seen or even heard from each other. Goldie who had married in the meantime, saw his wife laid away in the grave, having died of a broken heart and blasted hopes on account of the drunkenness and general neglect of the man who had vowed to love and support her. A few days after the burial a pistol shot was heard in an upstairs room of a cheap, questionable boarding house and on investigation a miserable wretch of a man was found dying from the effects of a bullet wound self administered. The hospital ambulance in answering the call came dashing over the pavements, its gong ringing out its brassy metallic warning to give it right-of-way in the street. After coming to a stand-still the end door with its big red cross on it was thrown open and the man fainting from loss of blood which seemed to flow so easily from his emaciated, honor soaked body, was quickly carried therein, and in a few moments was having all that human hands could do for him. Death came in the hush of night in the hours that precede the dawn, and after lying for the required time in the "dead house" of the hospital, his body was given to the authorities of the medical college last mentioned, to save burial expenses on the part of the county, and to serve as a "stiff" for the dissecting room.

Late in the spring term of the college when the medics begin to get anxious to return to their homes, in some special work before a large class, one afternoon our Professor George in making an incision into the side of the skull of his subject was noticed to halt suddenly, his quick fingers drew away, his eyes stared and seemed transfixed and after a few moments of

awkward and awful suspense he fell in a swoon saying, "This is my poor brother Goldie. These are the scars on his head."

Within a few hours under the direction of the grief stricken teacher and brother, the body, marred by sin and the merciless scalpel in the hands of students was prepared for shipment back to the old home where it went to its last resting place at the hands of loving parents bowed low with grief for their long lost boy.

JOHN W. STOVALL.

Out of a heart crushed by the loss of my wife, who had been my life-companion since February 6th, 1870. I want to say something about this man whose life affected my life more than any man I ever met.

Before I ever saw Brother Stovall I heard that "Our new presiding elder is smart but has no religion." I was prepared to receive that statement with "a grain of salt," for I have crossed the track of H. V. Philpott and had heard the same thing of him and knew that the criticism was born of that spirit that seeks always to divorce religion from common sense. Stovall was my presiding elder two years, and happy years they were to me. In his company I forgot my troubles if I had any, but he never let me forget the great Methodist Church, her doctrines and her heaven-born mission in the world. He had all patience with the untrained boy struggling to become, in fact as well as in name, a Methodist preacher, and it was his delight to give out to his brethren the benefit of all he had learned. In less than an hour I discovered that Vanderbilt University stood behind every position he assumed, especially on any doubtful or disputed question. John W. Stovall was a Methodist, a Democrat and a Prohibitionist, in all that those three names imply, and he had no patience with any one who presented the one or the other in a false light.

The last time I saw him was while he was stationed at San Marcos. It was in the midst of a Prohibition campaign; he was chairman of the executive committee and sent me to Kyle to address the Epworth League. He managed that campaign as he did everything else, with energy and common sense.

In the two days I was his guest he talked much of the blunders resulting from false sentiment and misguided zeal affecting the Prohibition cause, the Democratic party and the Methodist Church. What seemed to worry him more than anything else, he had just returned from the commencement exercises of Southwestern University, where some man had taken advantage of an invitation to preach, to air his pet vagaries and try to sustain his erratic opinion with unreliable authorities. Stovall said: "He talked an hour and a half and no congregation ever received more misinformation in the same length of time."

Recently I have been reading "The Way of the Preacher," by John A. Kern, and almost every page reminds me of J. W. Stovall, Kern's pupil. God bless Vanderbilt University. No wonder Bishop Hoss wishes he had five hundred of its graduates.

J. C. S. BAIRD.

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