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→ S E R M O N S ←

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PRAYER ANSWERED.

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*So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.—I KINGS xviii., 42.*

CARMEL is a hallowed spot to the Church. We tread its soil, even in imagination, with solemn step, and could we but, in the body, stand on that historic mountain, it would be a privilege whose value could not be estimated in earthly coin. So grandly beautiful is it, that the sacred writers could find no better type of the Bride of God, the blood-washed Church, and as they gazed on its wooded sides rising above the smoke and dust of the valleys, on its majestic peak crowned with verdure and sunshine, they thought of the Church in her sanctified beauty, clothed with the garments of salvation and crowned with the glory of God. "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel" (Song of Solomon). "The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon" (Isaiah xxxv., 2).

But this hill of luxuriant beauty is of peculiar interest to the Church, because upon its sides was witnessed one of the sublimest miracles recorded in the Bible, and on its summit one of the grandest divine testimonies of God to His covenant faithfulness in answering prayer. We will not pause to consider the first, for you are all familiar with the picture of the heroic prophet Elijah, standing in the presence of the gorgeously robed priests of Baal and of a vast multitude of God's people who had dishonored Him by idolatry, standing by the altar which

that these tablets have actually survived the burial of *twenty-five centuries*.

One of the most important facts learned from this tablet history is, that the belief in the one God prevailed in those earliest ages, long before the time of Assurbanipal, for these tablets assert that what they narrate was copied from far earlier tablets found in the sacred city of Erech, ninety miles southeast of Babylon, in ancient Chaldea.

On these tablets we read that the one God explains to the newly created man his duties—the phrase “God and man” sometimes occurs; “God and the king” is very frequent. The evidence is clearly developed on these tablets, as translated by Mr. G. Smith, that in the earliest ages the doctrine of one supreme God was taught. It is very interesting to learn from other cuneiform tablets, now in the

British Museum, dated in the reign of several ancient Greek kings and found at old Erech, that the doctrine of the one God supreme was taught to a late period; the only name of a deity found on these tablets, and this is many times repeated, is “God One.”

Now, this city Erech, mentioned in Gen. x., 10, was an old city several centuries before Abram left Ur. It was only fifty miles northwest of Abram’s native place on the opposite side of the Euphrates, and it was the seat of learning for all Chaldea and, in after centuries, for Babylon and Nineveh. It is probable that both Abram and Melchizedek received their early impressions of the Most High God from these traditions descended from the time of Noah, “the preacher of righteousness.”

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## HELPFUL HINTS FOR WORKERS

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### **Self-Preservation in Church.**

By JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D., N. Y.

Self-preservation is usually counted a law of nature. A case may arise where a man is in the way of duty in disregarding the law. Martyrs have died rather than deny their Lord. But they only carried the law into a higher field and exemplified it. Christ and His cause and they had become one. To have renounced Him and His cause would not be to preserve, but to destroy. And the history of the Church justifies their action. Our line of thought, however, as indicated in the heading of this column, does not run into the region of heroic sacrifice, but into the matters of ordinary prudence and the common details of church life. The attempt is modestly made to suggest to the friends of churches—and no one is exclusively contemplated—some things, severally of little consequence, but jointly amounting to much, attention to which would conserve, strengthen, and perpetuate organic life and promote usefulness.

One of the first of these is the instruction of the people in the grounds of ad-

herence to their Church. There is a “High-churchism,” resting on unscriptural and un-Protestant grounds, of which men have heard much and unfavorably, and they fear the appearance of running into it, or anything like it, in their section of the Christian community. But extravagant statements in the temperance cause are no good reason for being silent on the whole subject. They rather call for true declarations. As a defence against this very “High-churchism” and other evils, it is wise and right to let the members know the grounds on which a Church claims their allegiance. It is mischievous to men, injurious to the truth, dishonoring to Christ, when the Church is regarded as a kind of club, and when relations to it are sought on any other than scriptural grounds. Let us have intelligent Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists. The man who says, “I do not know much about our congregation; they seemed a nice lot of people and I wanted to be somewhere, and went in there,” is not a positive force on which much reliance can be placed.

2. Church members should be taught to economize the pecuniary benevolent resources. They can give so much. Their Church is committed to certain forms of work, and their brethren are responsible for its maintenance. But fantastic, romantic, or "fashionable" causes appeal to them and receive a response. These causes are managed they know not how, and may expire with the life of their present friends; but that is not thought of. They give the money, and when the claims for which they and their brethren are honorably bound come up, they have not the means to help them. This is not Christian prudence nor Christian honor.

3. Church members should utilize their working power on lines for which they are responsible. That they should never go beyond these lines, we do not for a moment suggest; but when a pastor appeals for teachers in their Sabbath-school, or their sewing-school, and his own people disregard his appeal because they have been drawn into work elsewhere, which is "very nice," he must be a remarkable man if he is not a little discouraged. We all pray, if we are sincere, for the usefulness of our Church and pastor. Is it not

well to move in the direction of our prayers?

It is true that "union" societies and agencies have been necessary and very useful. They did their work when no one body was strong enough or earnest enough to enter the field. It is only by an adequate maintenance of the ministry that gifts of a high order can be permanently secured for it. Possibly, in an ideal condition of spiritual life it might be otherwise, but we have to deal with actual facts. As long as congregations count to a nicety for just how little a minister can be supported, or be drawn from his present charge (a rule never applied to other professions in view of contracts), there will be weakness here, and we shall need artificial eleemosynary agencies at both ends—to draw men into the ministry and to keep them from starvation, when years or infirmities disable them. How much better to give adequate incomes and let ministers, like lawyers, doctors, farmers, and merchants, "provide for their own!" Till this is approximately done, the class that must lead, teach, mould, and represent the Church, works at a disadvantage.

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## ❧ Prayer Meeting Service ❧

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### The Leader's Part.

BY REV. S. W. ADRIANCE (CONGREGATIONALIST).

The work of the leader divides itself into three sections. If leaders will know this, their leadership of the meeting will be still more profitable.

#### I. HE MUST GET HIMSELF READY.

I don't know why an active member of the Society of Christian Endeavor should fancy he can effectively lead a meeting without prayer, and study, and thought, any more than his pastor. It is not that he needs to prepare much to say. That is a fault and not a virtue in a leader. But the warmth and heartiness of the beginning of the meeting can only be obtained

by prayer, before coming to the meeting.

If the leader wishes also to have a large number take part he should set the example. By a few well-chosen words, he may give the meeting a good beginning. It is almost always possible to tell which leader has prayed over the subject.

#### II. HE MUST GET OTHERS READY.

Take a hint from the methods of successful prayer-meeting pastors. They often send postal cards to some brethren who do not usually take part, with special request "to be present, and take part first." If five or six are asked to "take part first," it is probable that at least one will endeavor to do so. With few exceptions, if the first ten minutes are taken after a meeting is open, the blessing is