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. CONTENTS .



EDITORIAL	3-7
COMMUNICATIONS	8-11
SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON	12
MID-WEEK SERVICE	13
CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR	13
AMONG THE YOUNG PEOPLE.....	14-17
OF INTEREST TO WOMEN	18-19
CORRESPONDENCE	20-21, 28
THE WORLD FOR CHRIST	22
HINTS FOR HOUSEKEEPERS	23
CHURCH NEWS	24-25
BOOKS AND BOOK NEWS.....	26-27
DEATHS, MARRIAGES AND NOTICES..	29

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THE PRESBYTERIAN

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The New Year.

The old year is gone, and the new one is opening to us, with all its hopes and possibilities. We can only look on the past with mingled feelings of gratitude and regret; gratitude for mercies and privileges, and regret for mistakes and opportunities misimproved. As we look backward we see how homes were darkened by sorrow, and unexpected changes were brought about, and the great work of life went on with its self-denial and burden-bearing. We can see, also, what a glorious thing it is to live on earth, to partake of the joys of friendship and of doing good and serving God. "The living, the living, they shall praise Thee." But we cannot stand looking backward. Our faces are turned to the future, and we press toward it. Through the days and years that are yet before us, we will journey on, till we come to our last year, and then pass from earth to another state of existence.

We try in vain to read the future, but are baffled at every attempt. The unexpected comes forward. Before this year is over, things we do not dream of now may come to pass. No science, nor inventive skill can aid us in reading the mysteries that lie concealed in any of the days to come. We have lamps to guide us, the sure word of prophecy, the experience we have gained and the counsel of others; but these only show us one step at a time, and do not reveal certainly what lies behind the veil of futurity. What, then, shall this year bring to any of us? Shall any have deeper sorrows, sharper trials, heavier burdens, than they have known? Shall there be increased strength, enlarged abilities, greater fields of usefulness? We are now on a new and untried pathway; we "have not come this way heretofore." How shall we walk in it?

We must walk with unfaltering faith. If the way before us is so dark, we cannot walk by sight. But there is One to whom the darkness and the light are both alike. By faith we can take his hand and he will lead us. It may be over rough ways and in dark valleys and by strange paths, but his hand can lead his children, and safely lead them. We need to trust him every step we take. "He can lead the blind by a way they know not." "Commit thy way unto the Lord and he will bring it to pass."

We should go forward keeping our vows. This is a time for good resolutions. Some of them are loudly proclaimed, and some of them secretly uttered, only to the all-hearing ear. Let resolutions be wisely made. It is better not to vow, than to vow and not perform. Religion will be dishonored all through this year, by some who do not keep their New Year promises. The promises are well enough, and we thus set a mark before us, for higher attainments, but after they are made, must come prayer and energy and carefulness to secure their fulfilment. Some people pride themselves in the assertion that they are as good as their word. Let the passing year be a witness, that resolutions sacredly made are faithfully kept and that everyone is as good as his word.

As the year rolls on, we must be on the alert to do good. New opportunities will come to us and new fields of usefulness will open up before us. Whatever the ser-

vice we can render in heaven, there is work to do on earth that cannot be done in heaven. It was said by one, when asked why he was so careful in his dealings with others and in his treatment of them, "I expect to pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now. Let me not defer, nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." So with this year 1900. We have not passed over it before, nor will we ever again. If there is any good we can do in it for God or man, let it be done quickly, for we shall not pass this way again. As these fleeting days pass, we must use them quickly, or they will be gone, with all the precious opportunities they bear.

Is this our last year on earth? This is not suggested to sadden any heart, but in the secret records that are not open to our eyes, it may be written, "This year thou shalt die." The possibility is enough to stir our zeal and increase all our activities. "The night cometh, when no man can work." How well it will be, if there has been no loitering nor neglect of anything, while the day lasts. If there is work in the church or community, that rests on us, let it not be neglected nor cast on others. It will soon enough fall on other shoulders. When Wesley was asked how he would spend the next day, if it were his last on earth, he gave the outline of a busy day, from early morning till late in the evening, and said then he would commit himself to God and fall asleep and awake in glory. So let this year be spent, as if it were our last, filled up with labor and prayer and self-sacrificing devotion to Christ.

Whether this shall be our last year or not, it is possible to make it the best we ever spent. Everything is propitious; the promises brighter than ever, grace in fuller measure, our hearts more sanctified and heaven nearer than ever before.

Our kindest greetings go forth to every reader in the opening of this New Year, and our fervent desire for ourselves is that we may serve God and our generation, by bringing a blessing to every home into which "The Presbyterian" enters.

Shiftings of the New Theology.

"The new theology" hardly feels sure of its ground. On one point its supporters are agreed, and that is, to pick as many flaws as possible in "the old theology," and to cry up something better, if possible, in its stead. With this as a starting point, they are flooding newspaper, magazine, rostrum and pulpit with a literature which calls for theological recasting, or for the formulation of truths more popular to the natural man, and more in harmony with modern taste and an easy-going age. The hard, robust, character-forming and principle-developing doctrines of revealed Christianity are set aside, more palatable and pleasing teachings substituted. Science is called into play and Rationalism summoned to the front, and as the result, God and the Bible are given a new relation to man, and stress is laid upon what are called more loving and comprehensive religious ideas and inculcations. But as one traces their outgivings from time to time, he notes

A Light Withdrawn.

In Grateful Memory of Dwight Lyman Moody.

By Mrs. Findley Braden.

A feeble light it was, when first it met
The gaze of those who were both hard and cold;
And yet there was no atom of regret,
In all the story Time can now unfold.
It flickered for a time uncertainly,
But fanned by fervor, humble trust, and prayer,
It stronger grew, till e'en the blind could see,
Its warmth and beauty, ever gladly share.
It shone so steadily throughout the years,
All filled with earnest, unremitting toil,
In spite of failures, trials, secret tears,
And what seemed sent to almost wholly foil.
A beacon light it was, so clear and bright,
That men were guided into havens fair,
Whose bark of life had drifted in the night
Upon the shoals of Sin, and Black Despair.
It grew to be a search-light, strong and grand,
Extending, too, so far across the sea;
And greater the results than had been planned,
Because each beam proved such a tender plea.
It filled the world with radiance white and pure,
And darkness fled, before its piercing rays.
The many saved, could unto death endure,
And joy thus crowned the measure of their days.
The good it did, a record half unknown,
The peace it gave, a guerdon free to all,
Promoting happiness which long had flown,
But could return again, at God's low call.
And it is now withdrawn from mortal ken,
To shine refulgent in the sight of God;
Forever fixed, revered by living men,
Who still will onward, upward, bravely plod.
A great Soul-winner he, now from us gone!
A light the coming ages to illumine,
All-glorious, and ever stretching on,
His faith in God, and work, a rare perfume.

Popular Preachers vs. Technical Theologians.

By Rev. Henry Collin Minton, D.D.

Dr. T. T. Munger, in his recent readable and comprehensive book, "Horace Bushnell, Preacher and Theologian," takes occasion to say that a "preacher is seldom a technical theologian." Elsewhere he cautions us not to regard Bushnell as "what is usually called a popular preacher;" and the observation is added that "men of the first order of intellect seldom win that name."

But we are hardly to think of Bushnell as a technical theologian; at any rate, we may be pretty sure that no one would have been more swift to disclaim this character than Dr. Bushnell himself. All this is a trifle confusing. Probably the clue to the solution is in the distinction between a great preacher and a popular one, and between a real theologian and a technical one.

Certainly, Horace Bushnell could preach. Living witnesses testify to his unique pulpit power and who that has read his sermons can doubt it? The New York "Tribune" may not be a very high homiletical authority but, whatever its judgment is worth, it has pronounced his sermon on, "Every Man's Life a Plan of God" one of the three greatest sermons ever preached; and it is interesting to know that the other two are Canon Mozley's on the "Reversal of Human Judgments," and Phillips Brooks' on "Gold and the Calf." That Bushnell was, as Munger

says, "pre-eminently a great preacher," we can scarcely question or deny.

But was he a theologian? According to Dr. Munger, hardly. "In Bushnell the preacher absorbed the theologian and supplanted his method," he says. Like Edwards, and not unlike Chalmers, his theology came to the world by way of his pulpit. And yet, he has left a very distinctively theological legacy. Munger says, that the Christ which Bushnell preached is now accepted by the majority of intelligent English-speaking believers; and President Harris, of Amherst, lately a theological professor of Andover, thinks Bushnell's theory of the atonement has more believers than any other. There is no denying that he has left such an impression upon theological thought as to entitle him to the honor—or the dishonor, if so it be thought—of being some kind of a theologian, technical or otherwise. And to this judgment any competent reader of his works must give his assent.

There is no room for doubt, however, whether Dr. Munger is right in his view that it was the preacher that spoiled the theologian. Coleridge was not a technical theologian, and yet few men have more deeply affected theological thinking than did the Sage of Newgate. Coleridge, the philosopher, and Coleridge, the poet, competed with each other in making way with Coleridge, the technical theologian. In Bushnell, we should say that the poet and preacher combined to shut off the theologian, and that the former of the two allies did far more than the latter. Bushnell had the poetic instinct. He did not write verses, but his prose is the mellifluous expression of highly poetic forms of thought. His theory of language made indefiniteness a gospel. He was a Higher Critic on pure grounds of philological theory.

But is it true that popular preachers are never technical theologians? Or is the converse true? Possibly so; only we must know what the words mean before we make reply. We suspect that most people would define the terms so as to shut out at once the possibility of either being the other. By "technical" is probably meant "dry," and who that is dry can be popular? A good deal must depend upon the pew, too; "take heed how ye hear." Dr. Munger thinks men of great intellect "are unwilling and unable to bridge the chasm between themselves and the throng."

But we must not be allured into this tempting discussion. Dr. Hitchcock used to say to his students, "Young gentlemen, know theology and preach religion." There was a time when the doctrinal theologian was understood to be the technical theologian par excellence; but his primacy is disputed in these tumultuous times, and the critic claims the crown. Now, if the critical frame of mind is that of the theologian, then we believe that Munger is exactly right. The pulpit calls for the positive mind. "I believe, therefore have I spoken." The philosopher may doubt everything in order to begin right, but the preacher must believe everything he preaches or he will never begin or proceed right.

Dr. Hitchcock was right. No man can preach without some kind of theology. The physician's technical knowledge of anatomy or of chemistry does not spoil him for the work of a practitioner. A popular preacher, once upon a time, preached a sermon upon a deeply doctrinal text, and, ere he had preached long, he took the congregation into his confidence so far as to remark to them

parenthetically, that he was nothing of a theologian; and then, having put himself right with his hearers, he proceeded to tease his theme and to murder sound thought in a most popularly cruel fashion. Has the reader never observed that it is often such popular preachers as are most forward in modestly disclaiming any attainments as theologians, who are also very forward in preaching upon distinctively theological themes and in dogmatizing most fearlessly upon the very subjects concerning which with profound and indisputable credulity, they have so plainly declared their unsophisticatedness?

There is a humility that is proud of its meekness; there is a charity that is cruel to those who shamelessly lack the gentle graces with which it has been crowned, and there is a kind of theological modesty which delights to announce itself at the first and then to proceed, forthwith, to oust all homesteaders without the formality of any credentials.

If Horace Bushnell had been somewhat more of a technical theologian, he might have been a truer one. He lived ahead of his time; he was a good deal of a Ritschlian before Ritschl. He was more of a mystic than of a rationalist; he was more of a poet than of a philosopher; yes, he was more of a preacher than of a theologian.

The technique of the theologian is not the technique of the pulpit. One contemplates logical and systematic form; the other popular and persuasive presentation. The substance is the same, only the form is different. There may be psychological reasons why the man who habitually affects the one is correspondingly disqualified for the other, but that pre-eminence in either involves the impossibility of high attainment in the other is disproved by the lives of some of the most illustrious men, dead and living, in all the history of the Christian Church.

A Model Church Member.

By Rev. Dr. R. M. Patterson.

Let me describe one from real life. I picture a living woman. She is a member of a rural church. On Sabbath morning, in addition to discharging all other necessary household duties, she prepares five of her children for the Sabbath-school and church: In the school she leads the singing; also, in case of the absence of the organist, playing the melodeon. Then she has a class of a dozen girls. From the school she passes into the church and the choir, the children also remaining, and, with the father, occupying the family pew. Inclement Sabbaths do not keep them at home, when many, living very near the church, will not venture out of their houses, they, though living four miles off, are in their places. The husband, a ruling elder, and the assistant superintendent of the school, has also a class of boys. The two take some part of the Sabbath at home to study together the lesson for the next Sabbath; and they are found at the second service and the prayer meeting.

This wife and mother is also an active member of the Ladies' Missionary Society of the church. Her husband is a director of a bank three miles further from their home than the church is. On the afternoon on which the Society meets in the chapel at three o'clock, the bank directors meet at two. The husband and wife leave home together; she drops from the phaeton at the church and spends the hour which intervenes before the missionary meeting in reading or some useful work; and at the close

of the meeting he calls for her on his return from the bank. There is further a mission Band of little ones with which she meets on another afternoon, and helps and guides. To encourage the young she actively co-operates with a Young People's Association. And everything else that is proposed for the benefit of the church she heartily enters into. Her pastor can always rely upon her as a loyal supporter.

I repeat, this is strictly a picture from real life—of old fashioned religion in the family and the family in the church. But in our churches are multitudes of members who are not in the Sabbath-school; who are not regular and punctual at the Sabbath morning church service, because sleeping late and complaining of being tired after the week's work and dissipation; who neglect the second service and the prayer meeting; who engage in no mission work; who are not active in anything about the church; and yet whose position and circumstances would make it easier for them to attend to all these duties than it is for the beloved Christian whom I have portrayed. Where the spirit is willing, difficulties and obstacles disappear.

When the eye of this Christian woman falls upon this article, her innate modesty will prompt regret that I should thus have portrayed her. But Paul wrote: "I praise you;" and praise should not be postponed until after death. And the picture may incite to faithfulness some who have hitherto been useless in the vineyard of the Lord. My object is not merely to laud one, but to stimulate many.

In an interesting article on the free circulating libraries of New York, the "Evening Post" gives these facts about books and readers: At all these places it has been found that the best works of the standard authors are in constant use, and a greater proportion of works other than fiction is called for in these neighborhoods than in those occupied by people with larger means. Strange as it may seem, there is very little call for German books here, in spite of the great German population. When the Germans get to this country they seem to lose interest in their language. Some of them even appear to be ashamed of it, particularly the newcomers. When foreign books are called for it happens frequently that the works desired are not by foreign authors, but are translations of American or English works. The circulating library of the University Settlement is in the stronghold of Russian and Polish Hebrews. These people, although many of them are wretchedly poor, are very intelligent and eager to learn wherever a chance is offered. "They are remarkable readers—particularly the children," said one of the persons in charge of the library at this point. "While not more than 10 per cent. of the older people can read English, fully 75 per cent. of the young folks can, so you see our work is mainly in the interest of the latter class. The girls read Sophie May and Susan Coolidge, calling for Charles Reade, Miss Mulock, Miss Alcott, and Marion Crawford as they get older. The latter author is popular with the boys, too, but as a rule they choose works of history or biography. In reading fiction they look for stories of adventure and of city life. The boys like the Henty books and they love Trowbridge. When they think they ought to take up something a little further on they begin on Sir Walter Scott. In the boys about fourteen years old one noticeable trait is their desire for humor. Mark Twain and other humorous writers are sought for in a way that is surprising." To the public schools is ascribed most of the credit for the interest which the children take in reading. The schools encourage and to a certain extent require, the use of books from the circulating libraries in connection with the school work, while the effort to interest the pupils in the nation and its history seems to be meeting with much success.