

Vol. 70

March 21 1900

No. 12

THE PRESBYTERIAN.

. 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
CHURCH NEWS	24-25
BOOKS AND BOOK NEWS.....	26-27
DEATHS, MARRIAGES AND NOTICES..	29
HINTS FOR HOUSEKEEPERS	31

• PHILADELPHIA •
• NEW YORK •

THE PRESBYTERIAN

Vol. 70

Philadelphia, March 21, 1900

No. 12

The True Uplift of Humanity.

When Paul was led to write, "It is the power of God unto salvation," it is doubtful if he was able to understand that truth as we can at this day. He could believe what the Gospel could do, but we can look back and see what it has done, as the great sovereign remedy under the blessing of God, for the ills of humanity. When salvation comes to a soul, it transforms it; to a family, it makes it a different home; to a community, it changes its habits and customs. It found the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons in the lowest condition of savage heathenism without proper food or clothing, or houses, and it wrought upon them and on their descendants, till we have the result to-day, in the foremost race of people on earth. He is a dull or unwilling student of history, who has not found this out. In 1820 the same Gospel found the Sandwich Islanders in so wretched a condition, that the first missionaries hesitated about going on shore, and in 1900 they are ready to be American citizens. The divine remedy has not exhausted itself. The same old human nature is still to be contended with, but the same grace of God is ready to bless his own truth as in the past. We have faith to believe that no people anywhere are so degraded, that the Gospel cannot reach them, nor any slums so foul that they cannot be purified by wise and persistent efforts to induce sinful men to hear the Gospel of Christ and believe in him. Jesus is able and willing as ever, to lift men out of their low condition and transform their lives and save to the uttermost all who will come unto God by him.

If these words come under the eye of any discouraged minister, who labors in a hard field, where everything seems to be unfavorable to success, let him rise up with new faith and a brave heart. To encourage him we spread before him the account that Dr. John Brown, in his famous lectures to the Yale Divinity School, gives of Baxter, and his work in Kidderminster in England, two and a half centuries ago. He says: "If I were asked what, in the year 1646, was one of the most unpromising towns in England, to which a young man could be sent, who was starting in his career as preacher and pastor, I should feel inclined to point at once to the town of Kidderminster in Worcestershire. With a population at that time of between three and four thousand, mainly carpet weavers, it had been morally and spiritually so grossly neglected as almost to have sunk into practical heathenism. Few indeed were those in whose hearts any seeds of godliness had taken root. The majority of the people were ignorant beyond the ignorance of the time, debased beyond its defilement, disorderly beyond its rudeness." "Again, if I were asked who of all men, taking merely physical reasons into account, would seem to be the most unlikely man to be sent as pastor to this most unlikely and unpromising place, I should have said that man was Richard Baxter. Scarcely ever has a man who has done any work at all, done it under circumstances of such difficulty and pain as this man did his. For fourteen years

he had scarcely a working hour free from pain. If Richard Baxter had done nothing but take care of himself as an invalid, no one would have had the heart to blame a man to whom life was thus one long and weary battle with disease and pain." "And yet once more, if I were asked to single out one English town of the seventeenth century which more almost than any other came under the influence of the Spirit of God, and one preacher who more than most was successful in winning men for Christ and in organizing a vigorous church life under his pastorate, I should say that town was Kidderminster and that preacher was Richard Baxter."

Dr. Brown quotes Baxter's words as to the change wrought in the place: "On the Lord's days there was no disorder to be seen in the streets, but you might hear a hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons, as you passed through. In a word, when I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshiped God and called on his name; and when I came away there were some streets where there was not one family on the side of a street that did not do so; and that did not by professing serious goodness give us hopes of their sincerity."

Dr. Brown shows the secret of the success of Baxter. It was "in the natural way he spoke to men and the divine earnestness which possessed his soul. He spoke directly from Christ to the people. Christianity was to him no mere set of doctrines to be received or a code of ethics to be followed; it was the power of an endless life. Go and listen to him in that crowded church in Kidderminster any Sunday you like, he is the same man with the same theme. No one suspects that this soldier of the Cross fights uncertainly as one that beats the air. You feel that his message is not so much about his Master as from him; and it is not a message that might do for any audience at any time, but it is clearly intended for the living men and women then and there before him."

Dr. Brown then speaks of his faithful pastoral labors from house to house and his own deep piety and consistent life before the people; all resulting in that great success attending such labors, so that Dean Stanley could say, "There have been three or four parishes in England which have been raised by their pastors to a national, almost a world-wide fame. Of these the most conspicuous is Kidderminster; for Baxter, without Kidderminster, would have been but half of himself; and Kidderminster, without Baxter, would have had nothing but its carpets."

Those who suppose that some new methods are required to reach and influence the hearts and lives of men, would do well to study the works of God through his appointed agencies. No better means has yet been found for the elevation of humanity than the earnest teaching and preaching of a pure Gospel and faithful pastoral labors. What God has always blessed, we are persuaded he will continue to bless. Let none grow weary in well doing, or look about for new ways to reform society. They must apply themselves with new zeal to do God's work in his way.

cating drink would entail in the years to come, we would have expected him to banish wine from the feast, to warn the guests of its danger, in no uncertain language to condemn their custom. What did Jesus do? He commanded the water-pots to be filled with water, and performs his first miracle by turning the water into wine. Wine so real, wine so good that it is pronounced by the judges the best of the feast.

So we might cite incident after incident in the life of Jesus, when he certainly did not do that which we might have expected him to do. The finite cannot conceive the purposes of the infinite. The human that can perceive only partially cannot pre-determine the action of the divine who understands wholly. "What would Jesus do?" concerns us very little. What would Jesus have me to do? becomes a far more pertinent question. And as we receive his revelation for the direction of our personal lives, so let us live for him and receive the apostle's exhortation, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Funerals of the Irreligious.

By Rev. Dr. R. M. Patterson.

One of the excellent and laborious Philadelphia pastors, the Rev. Dr. Robert Graham, in preaching an anniversary sermon recently, gave some figures which suggest both the hard work of a city pastor and the difficulties with which he has to contend. During the year he gave two hundred sermons and addresses, an average of four a week; made over two thousand visits, an average of forty a week; and had forty-seven funerals, an average of almost one a week; and had twenty-one marriages. A large amount of hard work is packed into those figures. During the whole pastorate of sixteen years eight hundred have been added to the communicant membership, but removals to other churches and deaths leave the present roll not one-half that number. That is one of the discouraging things in such a church.

But here is one of the most suggestive statements that this pastor made. Of the forty-seven funerals that he had during the year, only three were members of his church. Forty-four were of persons who contributed nothing to his support, or that of his church, and probably cared nothing for religion; but when death came their friends thought they must have a Christian burial. Probably each funeral took a half day of the pastor's time. The twenty-one marriages probably gave a money return, though we doubt whether their sum total amounted to much. But the funerals were, I suspect, generally fee-less; and suggest that pastors are not mercenary, but that they do a great deal of work for which they do not get paid.

In this case, the proportion of the funerals of the non-church-going to those of the church-going may be exceptional, but will not the most of pastors testify that they have more funerals to attend of persons who are not in any way connected with their churches than of their members; and that more trouble about funerals is given by religion-neglectors than by church members? That has certainly been my experience. I recall one case which was suggestive.

In the Bible class of the Sabbath-school of my church in Philadelphia was a young man whose father and mother never attended church. The mother died. The son came and asked me to have a service at the house, say-

ing that I would not be expected to go to the cemetery, which was a long distance off. I went to the house at the time appointed. Then I found that, in order to accommodate the undertaker, and without notifying me, the funeral had been put back an hour; an hour more of my time taken. Informing me of that, the husband added: "You will of course go out to the cemetery." I replied that I had been told that would not be expected, and I had, therefore, arranged for other work elsewhere after the service at the house. "Why," retorted the husband, with some indignation, "it would be like throwing a dead dog into a hole, to bury my wife without a religious service at the grave." Of course I yielded. I rode in the carriage with the husband and the son; and during that ride the husband could not refrain from showing his contempt for religion, by attacking churches and church members. And yet he must have a religious service over his wife. This may be an extreme case. But around us now we have multitudes who have drifted off from the churches; who are living in neglect of religion; who give not a cent for the support of ministers, but who, when death enters their homes, will expect a minister and a religious service at the funeral. They sneer at religion and churches and ministers, and yet in extremity call upon them; and the ministers give their time and labor, and get nothing in return—unless it be further fault-finding. The large proportion of the "denominational affiliations" or "preferences," which the Washington's Birthday Census in Philadelphia reported, would, on closer examination, be found to be of this kind.

By the way, the returns of that census, as far as they have been reported up to the writing of this, if accepted as representative of the whole, do not, in the impression which they make as to the relative strength of the different denominations, harmonize with the denominational official reports. "Denominational preferences" will be found a very unreliable factor.

Changed Conditions.

By Rev. A. Parke Burgess, D.D.

The whole religious world will be moved by the pastoral letter just issued by the Methodist Episcopal bishops, calling all their people to fasting and prayer, the week beginning March 25. This is more, by far, than an incident, in the history of that great denomination. While not a "scare," or note of needless alarm, it is a profoundly solemn appeal, in the face of most profound and moving considerations. A decrease in membership and falling-off in church attendance in a body so devout and loyal as the Methodist Church cannot be of less importance and seriousness than this action indicates. And, a fact that "gives us pause" is that these signs of the times are not limited to that body, nor consequent upon any causes that exist wholly within its boundaries. As visible occasions of this sad depression of spiritual interest, the bishops name these: "Labor troubles, from the solution of which the Church stands aloof; the submerged tenth, left by the Church to the care of the Salvation Army; speculations and vagaries of 'Christian Science,' abandonment of campmeetings; prevalence of light literature; character and excess of amusements; side-tracking of moral and spiritual forces and lack of self-denial; abandonment of revivals, because skeptics make light of them;