

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1865.

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THE CHILDREN'S EVANGELIST.

If it is true that there has been a peculiar preparation among the very young for the gospel, and a sort of "fulness of time has come" in the spiritual status of this class, what more likely, or more accordant with God's plans, than that the church should be led in some special manner to improve the privileged moment? We cannot believe, it would be suffered to go by, while Satan and this world only reap its advantages. We should expect that providential developments would concur with other favorable circumstances, to reveal the grace of God in new aspects and fuller measures, to secure large fruits of the work of redemption, to exhibit in a new light the many-sided adaptedness of the gospel to the nature of man, to strengthen the church in numbers, and in the greater symmetry, consistency, and power of the Christian character, thus implanted and entwined with the first beginnings of conscious moral existence. What more likely than that some representative individual should arise, in whom the qualities and endowments especially needed for gathering in this harvest should combine, and upon whose labors the Divine blessing should rest in a remarkable degree? Such a person would be full of faith in the capacity of young children for genuine conversion, and in the utility and propriety of revival efforts among them. He would be full of hearty and earnest sympathy with children, would readily gain their confidence, would have the happy faculty of adapting the gospel to their understandings and conscience, would know how to collect, and manage them in crowds, and to minister to the spiritual wants of the awakened ones in Christian simplicity and love. He would exert a beneficial and wide-spread influence upon Christian parents, Sunday-school teachers, pastors, and all workers for the children of the destitute and neglectful, turning a general tide of Christian interest towards the younger portions of the community, and giving still greater potency to the means already so successfully employed in their behalf.

There are many judicious persons prepared to say that Mr. Hammond answers so exactly to all these conditions, that he must be recognized as the apostle to the children in our day. We do feel that his work as a revival laborer among young children has been so successful and so eminently blessed, that it marks an epoch in the history of Christian work for the young. And it is certain that he does possess, in a large measure, those qualities, and does largely exercise that influence among the young and the teachers of the young, which we have described as attributes of the representative man in this sphere of labor. Rev. Dr. Arnot, of Glasgow, at a presentation to Mr. Hammond in that city, freely acknowledged the eminent services of Mr. Hammond in this regard, in the following language:—

"Last and not least, Mr. Hammond helped us to interest the children. . . He has given us something new in method, and has shown us how to put life in the old method."

Referring to "the employment of music to enlist the sympathies and habits of children on the side of Christ," he said:

"In this walk Mr. Hammond has done great work. If envy were lawful at all in this matter, I would envy Mr. Hammond the place which he has been

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enabled to gain for Christ in the hearts of hundreds of children, and the place which he has himself in their hearts as the servant of the Lord."

Another speaker on the same occasion said:

"They should never forget Mr. Hammond had been the first to institute among them children's prayer-meetings, which he believed were destined to mark an epoch in the history of the church."

The seals to Mr. Hammond's ministry among children are counted by thousands. In Glasgow, during Mr. H.'s labors, their daily meetings filled one of the largest churches for weeks.

In a volume entitled "Little Ones in the Fold," he has given us brief extracts from the letters of great numbers of converts, nearly all of them under twelve years of age. In Bath, Maine, as we learn from this volume, as many as three or four hundred of this tender age would be present at the children's meetings. It was found impossible to speak to the hundreds that remained to be conversed and prayed with alone. A pastor at Auburn, in the same State, speaks of twenty-two little children having joined the church, as the fruits of a recent revival enjoyed in connection with Mr. Hammond's labors. In Brunswick, the seat of Bowdoin College, the crowd of children on one occasion was so great, that an out-door meeting had to be improvised for them. In Hamilton, C. W., over a thousand children were present at the first children's meeting. About 300 came to the first inquiry meeting; numbers of them soon gave evidence of a change of heart. Their meetings were kept up with great interest for months.

In the spring of 1863, Mr. Hammond visited several places in central New York, particularly Utica and Rochester, where his labors were followed with a very great blessing. In a single Sabbath-school, in the former city, one hundred and fifty of the children were reported by the judicious pastor as indulging a hope, and the work embraced almost all the churches in the place. In Rochester multitudes of children from the Sabbath-schools were hopefully converted; and an extract from a letter addressed by the principal of one of the largest public schools to Mr. Hammond, and published in our columns May 21st, says that nearly eighty of the scholars expressed a hope of forgiveness, and that the work was still going forward. Our corresponding editor in Rochester gave the following account of the closing scene of Mr. Hammond's labors in that city:—

"Mr. Hammond gave his farewell address to the children in the Brick Church. Immediately upon the close of the service he took the cars; a great throng of children, and not children alone, accompanied him to the great central depot in this city, where they sang quite a number of their sweet hymns, and received a few words of parting from Mr. H., as he stood on the steps of the car ready to start. There also, in that unwonted place, he offered a few words of prayer, as the children stood with faces covered, and heads bowed with reverential awe."

In one of the churches in Rochester, one hundred children were soon after received into communion, and the Monroe County Sunday-school Association, at their annual meeting in the fall, reported one thousand conversions from the Sabbath-schools for the year, about one-eighth of the entire number reported in that year for the State.

Later in the year, and early in 1864, Mr. Hammond was engaged in Boston and neighboring towns. At the first children's meeting, in Dr. Kirk's church, though no inquiry meeting was appointed, the children would have one, and they gathered around Mr. Hammond in groups. Of the work in Lawrence, an Andover student wrote to this paper, December 10th, 1863:—"The work of grace in Lawrence is a grand repudiation of the infidelity of the church respecting the conversion of children. There were probably six hundred children at the meeting yesterday, of whom perhaps three hundred remained at the inquiry meeting. Scores have already found hope in Christ, while others were in the gall of bitterness because without hope. The emphasis given the name Jesus in these meetings symbolizes the whole work. 'Jesus Christ and him crucified' is constantly held up before the young. These

children are wonderfully influenced by the motive of Christian love. One grand cause of the usefulness of these children's gatherings, is the child-like simplicity of all the exercises. The hymns are simple, the prayers are simple, and thus all are admirably adapted to fix and hold the attention of the young." Another correspondent in Lawrence, December 29th, speaks of "about fifty little girls under twelve years of age," who "sent a delegation of three of their number to ask one of the pastors for the use of his vestry in which to hold their daily union prayer-meeting. It was granted."

The indirect influence exerted by Mr. Hammond in this sphere of labor is well illustrated by a fact stated in connection with the revival in Philips' Academy, Andover, in the early part of the year, in which sixty of the two hundred students expressed a hope. The fact, as stated, is that "the most marked and decided impulse to the work was given by young men who had attended the meetings of Mr. Hammond in Lawrence."

In March Mr. Hammond was at work in Newark, New Jersey, commencing with an immense children's meeting on the 13th. The next day the largest audience-room in the place was filled to repletion, and not less than six hundred children remained for conference and prayer. The feeling was deep and overwhelming. Among the scenes of deep interest reported, was a meeting of sixty boys in the side-room of one of the churches, all on their knees, praying one after the other, with solemn, quiet earnestness, and "with as much order as in the Fulton Street Prayer-meeting." Another speaks of "little girls and boys, from nine to thirteen years of age, pleading, with tears in their eyes, with their little companions to 'come to Jesus just now,' and bowing before the throne of God, with their little simple though earnest prayers, for the salvation of the souls of their playmates. Unable to instruct, many of them simply tell how they found Jesus, and how very precious he is to their souls."

So far as they have been tested by time—a year or two—the results of these labors are permanent. We believe they are unparalleled in the history of evangelism, or in the history of the Church itself. Such a work among children has hardly been dreamed of as possible before. Conception and execution alike belong to Mr. Hammond. His labors and successes fairly earn for him the title of the *Children's Evangelist*. And though his labors among adults have been perhaps quite as productive of good as those among children, yet it is doubtless his adaptation to the young, his simple tenderness and earnestness, which have opened to him the hearts of the more aged. We regard his appearance and his marvelous successes among young children just now as strong confirmation of the idea thrown out at the commencement of this article, that the set time to favor this class of persons has come, and as affording encouragement of the strongest kind to labor, pray, and hope for their conversion, in tender years, and in great numbers.

CHRISTIAN CONVERSATION.

BY REV. E. H. GILLETT, D.D.

Cowper calls conversation "an art." To converse well is indeed a high and a rare entertainment. Eminent men have made it an aim, and their fame as conversationalists has been due as much to special culture as to natural gifts. Some have gone so far as to prepare themselves for the anticipated occasion, accumulating a stock of facts or sentiments, as Sheridan did his stock of wit, for a more effective display. Such persons may succeed in attaining the object which they have in view, and yet fail of end which every disciple of Christ must regard as most essential.

We would not overlook the social pleasure which conversation affords, or regard it as unimportant. With La Bruyere, we would not forget that "there is speaking well, speaking easily, speaking justly, and speaking reasonably." There is good sense, too, in what D'Alembert says, "remember that conversation is a relaxation, and not a fencing-school, or a game of chess. . . You are not to engross the discourse to yourself, nor to deliver your opinions in a magisterial tone. . . Another defect to be shunned is, speaking like one reading, and having what is called a well-written conversation." But conversation is degraded

from its true end when we are content to make it merely agreeable. The tongue has been called "the glory of man's frame," and speech is one of the most wonderful of God's gifts. The solemn rebuke of Scripture is administered to those who say: "Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?" That selfish assumption is—as implied in the language—practical atheism. Our lips are not our own. We are as truly bound to use them for God as any of his other gifts. A tyrant may as well claim the right to exercise his power as he pleases, as any man to speak as he lists. That wonderful social power which we possess, by means of speech, which may make words as effective to shape character, as the blows of the hammer on the anvil to shape iron, which may by a breath scatter firebrands, arrows, and death;" which may pour into wounded hearts a more than Samaritan's balm; which may make a word or a tone like an angel beckoning toward heaven; such a power is not to be esteemed lightly. It is a precious, as it is a sacred trust.

The man who has no higher aim than to amuse, or to make a self-glorifying exhibition of himself, desecrates this gift. And yet even he, studying his phrases, as well as marshalling his thoughts, may rebuke the indolence or inadvertence of many a Christian disciple, who, in his association with others, never asks, how can I use that influence which I possess by the power of speech, to do them good? How can I correct their errors, or lead them to serious reflection, or win their sympathies to the cause of truth and duty? Usefulness should be our constant aim. That was the very highest eulogy which Christ pronounced upon one of old, "She hath done what she could." There are some who seem to have few other talents, who can yet let their light shine" by words that bespeak their devotion. The right utterance of these is the practical wisdom that wins souls.

And here there are two extremes to be avoided. There are those who would violate taste, and propriety, and defeat their own aims, by such frequent or ill-timed references to sacred things as repel rather than attract. Pious words may lose all their force by vain repetition or indiscriminate use. They may seem at least to degenerate into "cant," and then are they indeed like "salt that has lost its savor." Their principal effect is to mask the real attractiveness of religion, or rather to make it odious. There is no ridicule of sacred things so effective with the mass of men, as that which is occasioned by the technicalities of pious speech, or the ill-judged attempts to force religion upon listless and unwilling ears. Duty is by no means attractive in itself to one whose heart rebels against its claims; but when these claims become monotonous and irksome, by too constant or impertinent repetition, we see an illustration of one of the reasons of what John Foster denominated the "aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion."

And yet there may be an opposite extreme, which is equally to be avoided. The cause of religion is not to be betrayed by silence. We ought not to be fearful of casting our pearls before swine, as to hoard in our own heart the pearls of truth. There may be an excess of modesty or caution. But in this case, as good old John Newton says, "love is the best casuist." A warm heart, glowing with Christian anxiety for the souls of others, will often be wiser than our cool philosophy. It will prompt to fitter and wiser utterance. Few men, if we may judge from his writings, his varied gifts, and his peculiarly attractive social qualities, could readily have excelled as a Christian conversationalist, better than William Wilberforce, and we may well envy him those rare qualifications which we know he made so available on many occasions. And yet even he felt rebuked by the example and the experience of one far his inferior in almost every respect, and confessed his own short-comings. In one of his letters he remarks, "I called a few days ago on —, but I could not turn the conversation to anything really useful. How often am I reminded of a simple Yorkshireman, a youth of great natural shrewdness and strong sense, under a gawky exterior, who, exciting in me some surprise, by telling me that at Cambridge, where I knew he had done good, he used to proceed cautiously, and especially began warily, instead of rushing into the midst of things.—I went on to inquire what had been these distant gradual approaches. 'Why?' says he, 'I generally begin, sir, by telling them of the new birth, and asking them if they could think they had experienced it?' Alas! in a dozen visits, I fear I should scarcely get so far."

And yet Wilberforce was by no means indifferent to the art of religious conversation. He had made it evidently a diligent study. He advises his friend, Babington, to conduct himself toward a certain stranger he was to meet, "so as to moderate his prejudices," and "who," he asks, "knows but that you may have

an opportunity of throwing in something by and by, which may tend to his eternal benefit?" He then relates an anecdote to enforce his suggestion. "I remember hearing that Governor Johnston, meeting Lady Huntingdon at Cheltenham, expected her to open to him directly with a religious battery,—at a second meeting the same. She behaved with great politeness and propriety, but did not bring forward her religion. This piqued him, and it went on, till after a while he was very earnest with her to explain to him fully all her sentiments. This, of course, she did, her listening with the most serious attention, to what he would probably have heard with coldness or contempt if she had bolted it out to him prematurely and unseasonably."

Certainly there is wisdom to be learned both from the Yorkshireman's experience, and from the prudence of Wilberforce.

END OF THE PEACE MISSION.

The round-about and disingenuous efforts lately in progress for peace have ended in nothing. The chief envoy of this discreditable mission has had the back door shut in his face, and comes home from Richmond a sadder, and, we hope, a wiser man. Those who put any trust in his mission we hope have also gained wisdom. No true patriot regrets the issue of those illegitimate negotiations. No true patriot but felt an undefined uneasiness during their entire continuance. Negotiations for peace in such hands, and by such methods, involved

negotiations for peace, and by such methods, and by such frequent or ill-timed references to sacred things as repel rather than attract. Pious words may lose all their force by vain repetition or indiscriminate use. They may seem at least to degenerate into "cant," and then are they indeed like "salt that has lost its savor." Their principal effect is to mask the real attractiveness of religion, or rather to make it odious. There is no ridicule of sacred things so effective with the mass of men, as that which is occasioned by the technicalities of pious speech, or the ill-judged attempts to force religion upon listless and unwilling ears. Duty is by no means attractive in itself to one whose heart rebels against its claims; but when these claims become monotonous and irksome, by too constant or impertinent repetition, we see an illustration of one of the reasons of what John Foster denominated the "aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion."

We shall have peace, but not by disgraceful visits to the back door of the rebel cabinet. We are at the front door, with our army and navy, and we are making its posts shake, and are splintering its panels, and are making such a clamor with our incessant knocking, that the rebel conclave look into one another's faces in dismay. They will be compelled to let us in, without any Blairs or Singletons asking "by your leave?" We shall have peace, by the Divine blessing, with the help of the three hundred thousand additional fighting men to be called into the field, if Sherman, and Grant, and Terry, and Thomas, with their victorious legions, do not anticipate the new levy. Let us give it cheerfully. It may not be required to fire a shot; the very fact that it is coming may invigorate our men to such a degree, that the war may virtually be brought to a close. But let us set our seal of utter reprobation upon such trifling as has lately been witnessed, and let us make our public men understand that the nation is in dead earnest, and that it is high time they recognized the fact. We shall not consent, at this late day, to be made the sport of broken-down politicians in a matter for which we have risked, and are still willing to risk, every earthly good.

MISSOURI.—SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY AND OUTSPREAD UNIONISM HAND IN HAND.—The St. Joseph, Missouri, Union, of January 12, has a very satisfactory account of the progress of the Westminster (New School) Presbyterian church in that city. It says:—"That church was organized some months since by twenty loyal members who had withdrawn from the Presbyterian churches of the city. Dr. Parsons took charge of the infant church, amidst a spray of denunciations from those who disliked his coming. He has labored with much energy, breathing forth a constant stream of pure loyalty, and receiving enthusiastic sympathy from his congregation. The result is summed up in the fact that the Westminster is the leading church in the city in point of numbers and influence—a fact that shows the virtue of loyalty. Such instances are numerous throughout the State, and we direct attention to the fact that those churches yet compromising with treason, and tolerating such a sin in their midst, may take warning before irretrievable ruin overtakes them. The atmosphere of Missouri is impregnated with loyalty, and a spot of treason on any church is the precursor of death."

WILMINGTON PRESBYTERY.—A Pro-Revolutionary meeting of this body was held in Hanover Church, January 26th, when Mr. W. H. Edwards was received as a licentiate from the Presbytery of Monmouth, and examined with a view to ordination as an evangelist, his expected field of labor being in connection with the new Mission Chapel of Hanover Street Church in Hedgesville, a suburb of Wilmington. The examination was thorough, (Mr. Edwards being from another Presbytery, and a graduate of Princeton Seminary,) developing the theological soundness of the candidate, and his accordance with the generally received views of doctrine in our branch. His ordination is arranged to take place on the 8th of February.

The Presbytery also heard an interesting report from the committee of Home Missions, and directed that measures be immediately taken in connection with the Assembly's Committee, to meet the wants of the large Presbyterian and other immigration now flowing into the State. A great increase in the contributions to this important cause is hoped for from the churches.

REVIVALS. We find revivals reported in Rev. Edward Taylor's congregation, in Brooklyn, N. Y.; in Menasha and Green Bay, Wisconsin; in the Monson Academy, and in the Conway Academy, in the Andover State.

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