

Miscellaneous.

EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

THE AMERICAN BRANCH OF THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE held its anniversary meeting on a recent Sabbath in New York. The spacious Collegiate church on Fifth Avenue was crowded and the services, from beginning to end, were of intense and unprecedented interest.

It was a great meeting, because of the great men that composed it. There were no near-sighted Christians there—men whose range of vision is bounded by their own denominational church; no dwarfed materialistic Christians, who cannot conceive of a Catholic union of believers, without the suggestion of free-love, and a sensuous communism; no hard dogmatists, haggard heresy-hunters, and lean tinkers of creeds; none of these were there; but the guaranteed, and large-hearted men—the representative men of the Christian church, such as DAs. ADAMS, SMITH, SCHAFER, HALL, &c.

It was a great meeting, because of the noble utterances of the speakers. The Rev. Prof. H. B. SMITH, the eminent scholar and author, said; the object of the founders of the Alliance was to reveal to the world the essential unity of Evangelical Christians, and to use this compacted and energized influence for civil and religious liberty. Dr. SCHAFER, the world-renowned church historian said, "It is time that Christian union should receive visible expression. It is the great object of Protestantism to unite union of effort with liberty of conscience. One of the greatest ideas, is this of co-operative Christianity—united in love."

It is curious to see what an angry stir and buzzing is made among Episcopalians by the insertion of even so small a stick as this into their hive. These gentle shepherds, who are habitually accustomed to stigmatize all other Christians (except the Greek and Roman) as "dissenters," "schismatics," the "sects around us," etc., lift up their hands in virtuous amazement at having a very little of their own sauce applied to their own persons. One would think they were the most peaceful, the most charitable, the most non-resistant souls in the universe; instead of being, in fact, the most insolent, abusive, and narrow-minded of all the sects into which Christendom is divided.

From all such theological empiricism, and strife-engendering work, we turn away, and hail, with all our heart, this noble effort for Christian union and active co-operation in the work of the Lord. And why should it be thought a thing incredible, that true believers should unite on a practical basis of Christian interest and sympathy, in the great work of saving souls, and hastening the coming of Christ's Kingdom? Why indeed? But because of our sectarian narrowness; because we love our party more than our Church, and our Church more than our Christianity? What we need, for the higher spiritual life and cooperative Christianity contemplated by this Evangelical Alliance, is not absolute uniformity of belief in all the details of a creed, but more internal grace of the Spirit, and more power of divine love in Christ. In this want is found the real cause of our divisions and weakness; and until there is a profounder Christian spirit among our Churches—a spirit; not of factious zeal, but of earnest working for Christ—a spirit at once more intense and more tolerant, more gentle, and yet more practical—we shall never rise to the full stature and power of Christian union. Christian men must feel how immeasurably greater is God's truth, than human dogmatisms; how even wide differences, both critical and speculative, are not only consistent with, but the very condition of a higher, practical cooperation. They must open their minds and hearts yet more to the full reality of Christ's love, and the unutterable value of the souls He died to save, before this visible union of all Christians can be realized in a united Church, and a regenerated world. The Lord bless the "Evangelical Alliance," and hasten the consummation of its good and glorious object—the fulfillment of that beautiful prayer of Jesus, "That they may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."

THE IMBECILE PULPIT.

Dr. Hopkins writes as follows to the N. Y. Independent, in a propos of its recent editorial on his sermon before the Rochester Assembly:—

In speaking incidentally of the Episcopal pulpit as imbecile, I confess I supposed I was uttering almost a truism. No doubt a milder and less offensive word might have been used. I might have called it feeble, or

timid, or uneducated, or even intensely conservative. The idea expressed in all would have been substantially the same—viz, that the Episcopal ministry make very little of the work of preaching. Of course, it was not affirmed or intended that there are no exceptions. There are earnest and eloquent preachers even in the Greek and Roman communions, which does not neutralize the proposition that the ministry of those churches is ignorant and superstitious; and the fact that, in specifying the exceptions to the common imbecility of the Episcopal pulpit, everybody resorts to the same examples of half-a-dozen evangelical clergymen amounts to a confession of the general truth. While the ministry of other Protestant churches is generally a preaching ministry, that of the Episcopal denomination is a prayer-book ministry. They are not taught to preach, but to read the service, and argue for their polity; a fact in which the Presbyterian clergyman looking for the church, particularly rejoiced. That there are able and faithful preachers of the Gospel among them, nobody thinks of denying. But they are such as, by virtue of genius and piety, and not unusually also of a good Presbyterian education, have risen above the level of their sect. What is a sermon, according both to theory and practice in the Episcopal denomination? "What in modern times we mean by it (says the Rev. Dr. Goulburn, the well-known author of Thoughts on Personal Religion, &c.) is a religious essay and exhortation; delivered after divine service, by a clergyman."

It would be impossible to express more happily the character and position in public worship of most Episcopal sermons. They are essays and exhortations "delivered after divine service." Dr. Goulburn, indeed, protests against this narrow view of the work of preaching; but his testimony remains as to the actual fact. And that it applies equally to the Episcopal pulpit in this country, I appeal to the observation of all candid men who occasionally attend upon those ministrations. Who ever heard from it (leaving out a few cases like those excepted) anything like a profound discussion of a great Christian doctrine, or a broad, manly treatment of any question of Christian ethics, or in the time of our great national crisis, a vigorous, energetic appeal to the patriotism of the people? An essay after divine service; formed on the model of the Homilies, obsolete in style, feeble in thought, and pointless in application, is the character of most of the sermons even of their bishops and doctors of divinity. This at least has been my experience during thirty years of occasional attendance on Episcopal services; for it happened to me to be baptised and baptised in that communion, and all my life to have been in near relations to some of its ministry and membership.

It is curious to see what an angry stir and buzzing is made among Episcopalians by the insertion of even so small a stick as this into their hive. These gentle shepherds, who are habitually accustomed to stigmatize all other Christians (except the Greek and Roman) as "dissenters," "schismatics," the "sects around us," etc., lift up their hands in virtuous amazement at having a very little of their own sauce applied to their own persons. One would think they were the most peaceful, the most charitable, the most non-resistant souls in the universe; instead of being, in fact, the most insolent, abusive, and narrow-minded of all the sects into which Christendom is divided. They are amazed that anybody should go out of his way to make a "gratuitous attack" (this is their usual style of complaint) against them; and they begin forthwith to protest their own meekness and their affectionate regard for their "brethren" of other denominations. I believe it is only in such connections, and when they think it wise to play the role of suffering martyrs, that they speak of other Christians as their brethren. The poliest words we usually get from them are, "sectarians," "followers of Calvin," etc. I have no particular fondness myself for the word "sect," and am not in the habit of applying it to other Christians; but, since the Episcopalians do not like it, it is just as well to give them the benefit of it until they learn at least-better manners. And the only regret I feel at your strictures (not taking any exception to the hard words you chose to apply to myself) is their strengthening Episcopalians in the conviction that they are entitled to calumniate all other Christians without being replied to. A bully and braggart will venture any lengths on the forbearance of quiet people, until at length he gets well cuffed, when he subsides instanter into meekness, and wonders anybody should make a "gratuitous assault" on such a peaceable Christian. It is an ill office, my dear sir, and too suggestive of the Dat veniam corvis, etc., to apply your editorial balm to the habitual offender, and your attic salt and vinegar to one who merely attempts abating the nuisance.

SPURGEON AND HIS PREACHING.

In another place we give our special correspondent's full account of a day with Spurgeon and his people. It may be interesting to our readers to compare with it the following from one of our city editor's, not a very ardent supporter of religious institutions at home.

LONDON, May 26th, 1867.

Sunday in London is almost as sedate as Sunday in Philadelphia. There is a general closing of shops and stores, and in fine weather a general exodus to the outside resorts, such as Richmond, Kensington Gardens, Duddly Park, &c. But as we have only seen the sun about half a dozen times since our arrival, and then by the merest glimpses, and as this morning presaged another spell of gold and rain, I thought the better way to spend it was by hearing the popular

preacher, Mr. Charles H. Spurgeon, in his great Tabernacle, close to the Elephant and Castle. It was an hour before the time when we reached the spot, and so we had the leisure to inspect his church, a vast building of Italian architecture, with porticoes costing over \$150,000, most of which was raised by the individual efforts of the energetic clergyman. It will hold over four thousand people seated, and ingress and egress is through fifteen doors, to prevent danger from fire or sudden panic. It is built with strict regard to the laws of hearing or sound; has two tiers of boxes like a theatre running around the sides and one of the ends, the other end being the platform from which he speaks, and is situated midway between floor and ceiling, to add to the facility of discourse, singing, and listening. There is no building in Washington or Philadelphia to which I can liken it.

About half-past ten the crowd came pouring in by all the doors—working people, with hard hands, toil-worn faces, in decent, humble apparel. Here, as everywhere else, I traced the marked contrast between what are called the laboring classes in England and America. In Philadelphia, the loveliest city in the world, if this is a fine afternoon; Broad street, from Chestnut to beyond Master, will be thronged with people, men, women, and children, who if seen in London, would be set down as the nobility, judged by their neat and almost costly dresses, the beauty of the females, and the noble bearing of the men. Here toil and poverty, as almost everywhere, go hand in hand, and you realize what Bulwer says of "low birth and iron fortune" in the care-worn faces and common clothing of those who frequent such churches as Mr. Spurgeon's, or pass along the highways of this world or town. I was not carried away by his eloquence or his language. He has a wonderful voice, and he manages it with wonderful skill, and there was not a soul in the vast audience that did not bear him. A small man, about the size of Rev. Dr. Sunderland, of Washington, a little over thirty, with heavy dark hair hiding a not very high forehead, and disclosing a good-humored but by no means intellectual face. In point of ability I would not think of identifying a comparison between him and the bold, incisive, magnetic scholar and preacher for God and the Republic in our national capital. We have twenty more powerful and cultivated divines in Philadelphia. He preached from the 33d chapter of Isaiah, 17th verse: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off;" a noble theme, most inviting to the imagination, and to a display of such Scriptural knowledge as would have been invaluable to such listeners. He did not catch the scope of the lesson, but repeated himself until his iteration became almost painful. Yet that he was doing good among his parishioners was very evident. The story of his connection with them is very instructive. He began to preach in what was a very dismal and impoverished part of London when he was only eighteen, and now, at the end of twelve years, he, and he alone, may be called the builder of the splendid temple in which they worship with him. A little beyond thirty years old, he is their instructor and their idol. To their interests he gives all his time. He rarely acts by deputy. To educate worthy young men connected with his church, he has established a college which he sustains by lecturing. He presides at their prayer meetings, leads in their choir, attends to their finances, ministers to their wants, settles their disputes, and fights their battles. It is said that he refused to preach in the Tabernacle until every dollar of the money needed for its construction was raised and paid, even refusing to take his own salary till the debt was extinguished. Better, far better, is such a record, than education without heart, scholarship without humanity, and genius without sincerity. And when I look over this startling scene of human life, and think that three millions of human beings are compressed into fifteen millions of brick and mortar, and that there is not a day that passes from morning into night, and from night into eternity, that does not see "one more unfortunate" added to those who go to their long account unshrined and unknown, I feel that I would rather be CHARLES H. SPURGEON, surrounded with the love of the rescued souls of the working people of his parish, than the Lord Bishop of a thousand churches in England.

—COL. J. W. FORNEY in Wash. Chronicle.

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