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SPIRITUAL TACTICS AND STRATEGY.

A crooked policy is contemptible and un-Christian; but policy without crookedness is only another name for prudence. It is the choice and use of the best means to an end. It is circumventing obstacles which cannot be surmounted. It is approaching an object cautiously and secretly, instead of openly; attacking by flank and rear instead of in front. It is relying not on the simple force of truth, plainly and powerfully spoken, great as that is, but upon the mode of putting it, as well. It is the adaptation of means to ends, which arises from the study of both. It is living and acting on principles gathered from a wide range of experience and observation, or reached by a gift of natural shrewdness, rather than by mere instinct and impulse, however good.

It is not only allowable, but a duty as well, to use honorable policy in accomplishing a good end. We are not justified in confining ourselves to blunt methods in attempting to reach the heart and conscience of the unconverted, or of the godless poor of our cities; to the bare dispensation of justice in the effort to suppress crime; to hard discipline and peremptory commands in the management of children, and then in piously laying the blame on Providence if we fail. We are under the most solemn obligation to inquire into the causes of our failure; to change our methods and make new efforts from entirely different starting-points. By all means we must save some.

We repeat, it is a duty to be politic in our efforts to do good in the family and the world. It is simply a question of accomplishing a greater or less amount of good. And while the character of simple piety, the example of undemonstrative, unassuming and undoubted excellence, the warm exhortation and solemn reproof, coming from the heart, the simple statement of the grand truths of the Gospel from believing lips, are powerful for good, in the circles of private life and in the pulpit; by themselves, they have not done, and they could not do, the work of the Church in the world. It is not only for the possession of goodness that we shall be held accountable, but for effective goodness, to the extent of our faculties. Every actively good man, every liberal man, can increase vastly his efficiency by studying his opportunities, by laying a plan beforehand of his work and of his gifts. How vastly is every individual Christian's efficiency multiplied by union and co-operation with the Church! What grand enterprises of benevolence have been accomplished by organized effort in a thousand diversified forms! The grouping of the forces of Christianity in these forms of effort, is one instance of what may be called "spiritual tactics," the field of which is as inexhaustible as the combinations on the chess-board.

We earnestly believe there is call for ingenuity in a good cause far more than in a bad one. The fact that truth has an intrinsic and victorious energy, does not save it from great disadvantage and peril in a deeply fallen world, full of the deceitful works of darkness. The devices of a cunning adversary, who has no scruples as to the means used by himself and his agents, must be matched and counteracted by better wisdom and deeper strategy, on the part of those who will not stoop to dishonor in the defence of truth.

The Master himself recognizes the principle of conduct which we are inculcating, when he says to his disciples: Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves. And again, when he lays down the maxim of conduct: Give not that which is holy unto the dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine. An apostle warns us not to allow our good to be evil spoken of. And we all are familiar with the example of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, whose manner of life and action was not more replete from "the hidden things of dishonesty, walking in craftiness or handling the word of God deceitfully" than it was from confiding in the unaided power of the truth alone. So confident and so clear in conscience was he on this point, that he uttered the well-known saying of "becoming all things to all men that he might by all means save some," without deeming it necessary, or without being impelled by inspiration itself, to add

any sentence or word of limitation against the possible abuse of the language. And we know that he boldly practised on his principles. We read how the uncompromising champion of Christian liberty at Jerusalem was actually found circumcising Timothy because he was the son of a Greek, in Lycaonia. He was not at all afraid of the charge of inconsistency, on which envious or thoughtless persons, acquainted with these facts, might have raised a terrible scandal. Students of Paul's language, as recorded in the Acts, have noted with what extraordinary shrewdness he adapted his addresses to the exigencies of the case. How, on one occasion, he stilled a Jewish mob; how, by an adroit stroke, he turned the arms of the hostile parties in the Sanhedrim against each other and away from himself; how he dispirited many mouths with the sophists of Ephesus; and charmed with his eloquence and conciliated with his courtesy the Stoics and Epicureans of Athens; how he awed Felix and stirred the better nature of the corrupt Agrippa, by a presentation of the truth, skillfully adapted to the character and history of each. And the examination of his fourteen Epistles shows the same masterly adaptation to the case in hand; the versatility of a mind of endless expedients; the ever-appropriate use, now of entreaty, now of invective, now of hearty and handsome commendation; now of condensed and rapid argument, now of warning, now of hope; contemplating and administering to every want and every crisis in the life of the nascent church, over which he watched.

It is not a sufficient answer to ascribe all these characteristics of Paul to inspiration. We do not regard inspiration as designed to act upon character. John, who was just as truly and remarkably inspired as Paul, was apparently destitute of any share of Paul's astuteness and magnificent practical qualities. His whole nature was bathed in the light of divine philosophy. One deep, calm sea of holy love filled his soul. Artlessness is the type of his style. He was content to be, to feel, and to speak in a sense of the divine nearness. Consulting our feelings, we should, perhaps, be less willing to dispense with John than with any other of the apostolic circle. Regarding the interests of Christ's kingdom among men, we should give the pre-eminence unhesitatingly to Paul.

A great example of strategy in the history of the Church, is the Romish system. In all the history of religions, there has been nothing so artful, so politic, so worldly wise as this. But, alas, it is policy at the outrageous sacrifice of purity, and cannot serve our purpose in this discussion. On the other hand, the Reformed Churches and Protestantism generally have some need to beware lest they sacrifice policy needlessly, in the supposed interest of purity. It is to be feared that a tendency to depend exclusively, may we not say lazily, on truth itself, is current, and needs watching, in these Churches. Yet there have been some distinguished ecclesiastical statesmen and diplomatists among the Reformed Churches. Such was John Calvin as distinguished from Luther; such, too, was John Wesley as contrasted with Whitefield.

But we turn back to the life of the Master himself. If we may reverentially speak of such an aspect of Christ's life, we would say that to us it seems the result of a profound plan, a master-piece of strategy. It was the triumphant solution of a most peculiar and perplexing problem. Christ must reveal himself at once, as human and divine. His divinity must be so evident as to satisfy every reasonable condition of credibility. The witnesses must be able to write: "We saw his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the word of life." And yet this sufficiently clear evidence of divinity, must be so tempered as to leave room for the equally satisfactory and convincing exhibition of his humanity. The proofs of divinity must not be overwhelming or appalling; they must not keep men at a distance; they must not extort homage from an unwilling, self-deceived, or hypocritical worshippers. Above all, the Messiah must not make such a display of his deity as to defeat the great end of his coming—to die as a voluntary sacrifice for the sins of men. He must appear in such a light that wicked men will dare to lay murderous hands upon him.

How utterly the whole design of his coming would have been frustrated by the slightest unmistakable revelation of his Almightiness is seen in John's account of the capture in the garden, (Chap. xviii. 6, 7;) where, at the utterance of two words only, from his lips, the whole multitude is described as going backwards and falling to the ground. It was necessary that Christ should die under the operation of the ordinary principles of fallen humanity, and in a perfectly natural order of events. And to this end, it was needful that he should be dealt with by men as a man; and yet, to accomplish his full mission, it was just as necessary that he should give all the proof that could in reason be required, of his regal divinity. This, we say, was a problem which only the most sublime strategy could solve. And Christ's life, did, solve it. Men were, and are, convinced of his divinity, and yet room was left for the play of prejudice, injustice, and malignity in the carnal heart, so that the divine Saviour was sacrificed as a criminal, and all the prophecies and types of the Old Testament and the plan of God in Redemption, were freely accomplished by the wicked hands of men.

This temperance in the use of supernatural power is the master-piece of Christ. It is a moral miracle, superinduced upon a physical one. This response in greatness makes him surely the most sublime image ever offered to the human imagination. It is precisely this trait which, gave him his immense and immediate ascendancy over men. He, whose power and greatness as shown in his miracles were overwhelming, denied himself the use of his power, treated it as a slight thing, walked among men as though he were one of them. He, until petrified and bewildered with astonishment, saw him arrested and put to death with torture, refusing steadily to use in his own behalf, the power he conceived he held for the benefit of others. It is the combination of greatness and sacrifice which won their hearts, the mighty powers held under a mighty control, the unspeakable condescension, the Cross of Christ.

A MELANCHOLY END.

Died of delirium tremens, September 3, in the city of Albany, Hon. James A. McDougall, late U. S. Senator from California. Few who have read this announcement are surprised at the fate which has befallen the individual in question. The whole American public has been forewarned of it, and we trust that the melancholy notoriety of the case may give it the greater effectiveness as a warning to our youth and our public men generally. It is, indeed, the old story of fine talents, brilliant prospects, and high honors miserably sacrificed to the appetite for strong drink. Yet it is not often that intemperance finds its victims among those who have but recently sat in the highest seats of political power. Thank God, the number of seats in the Senate of the United States has been so few, that a child might write them; indeed, we believe the most simple of the numerals is now alone required in telling the story of disgrace which still cleaves to that otherwise honorable body. One of those whose loathsome exhibitions brought a burning blush to the cheek of every true American citizen, is dead—died of delirium tremens; let the other one beware. Let Delaware take warning from California. And there are some who are trembling lest the White House itself may be irretrievably disgraced by a similar scene to that which has just taken place in Albany. Certainly its occupant has been playing a part which can scarcely be explained, except on the supposition of the influence of strong drink—that enemy which men put into their mouths to steal away their brains. Perchance impeachment may come in seasonably to spare us the dreaded denouement.

From such melancholy exhibitions of infatuation and subjection to an evil appetite, working immense damage to the public good, we turn with satisfaction and hope to facts of a far different character in the career of some of our most distinguished public men. Drunkenness and disloyalty have got into high places, higher, perhaps, than ever before; but more marked, too, and frequent than ever before have been the evidences recently given of piety and temperance among our statesmen and generals. Only two days before the sad case of delirium tremens in Albany, Gov. Geary, of this State,

publicly attached himself to the people of God in the First Presbyterian Church (N. S.) at the capital, and by raising the family altar, and by consecrating his children to God in baptism he has proved that the act was no unmeaning ceremony. We remember the recent similar act of Senator Wilson. We joyfully call to mind the position of Genl. Grant, of Speaker Colfax, and many others of our most trusted and honored generals and statesmen upon the subject of temperance. We believe the people are sick of impiety and inebriety in high places. We believe it is only necessary for pious and upright men to enter vigorously into politics in order to control them for righteous ends.

GOVERNOR GEARY.

The secular press having noticed the public profession of religion recently made by Governor Geary; it may be proper for us also to record it, which we do with unfeigned satisfaction. The noble public stand which the Governor took on the subject of temperance, immediately after his inauguration, was so full of religious principle, that we were somewhat prepared for this further advance in the line of duty. This public acknowledgment of the claims of religion and avowal of Christian purposes is no hasty, but a well considered thing. The solemn events of the war in which he bore so conspicuous a part, including his own personal sufferings by wounds, and the deeper laceration of feeling in the fall of his son by his side in battle, have been, no doubt, a solemn training, under the blessing of God, for the position he has just taken. The communion services at the First Presbyterian Church, Harrisburg, when on Sunday, the 1st inst., Governor Geary and his estimable lady united, including the baptism of their four children, were very impressive; and will be long remembered by those who witnessed them. We have so few men in leading official stations who are willing to identify themselves openly with Christ's kingdom, that it is useful, we think, to record instances of this kind. They are incentives to prayer that others in high places of power may be led to do likewise.

THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

AMSTERDAM, AUG. 23d, 1867.

This is the sixth day of the sessions of this majestic body. The programme of its discussions has long been before the American people, but the quaint and interesting surroundings and conditions of this meeting, no one but a person on the ground can fully know. It is easy to say that Amsterdam is under the dykes and below the level of the sea, and that canals run through most of its streets, and that it has nearly four hundred bridges, and that, if it were not for the skillful management of its sluices and dykes it might be submerged at any moment; but the imagination cannot construct beforehand any such conception of the place as will prevent the visitor from a delightful and constant surprise. The place in which the Alliance holds its sessions is unusual and peculiar. It is called the "Park Zaal," and is nothing less than a large and commodious building in one of the most delightful gardens of the city, and not altogether unlike some similar resorts of the German people in Chicago. Here under the trees are tables and chairs, where amid the perfume of flowers, and of an occasional cigar, and lulled by the music of a fountain, and perhaps of a band of trained performers, the members of the Alliance can drink either coffee or tea, as suits their taste. The people of Amsterdam have welcomed the strangers with a noble hospitality. Private homes have opened with the most abundant Christian fellowship, and every thing has been done to make visitors from abroad delighted with the city and its people. It has been found most convenient for the Alliance to dine together in one large hall in the Zoological Gardens, a place of public resort, very near to the Park Zaal. It is a fine room adorned with the portrait of the King of Holland and when the Evangelical Alliance is in it, holds about six hundred persons. "Baron Van Wassenaer Van Catwyck," the President, presides. The divine blessing is invoked in two of the four languages in which the Alliance conducts its deliberations, and at the close of the meal, which lasts an hour and a half, thanks are returned to God in the other two languages

all standing. Whether you consider this imposing body in the midst of its deliberations in the Park Zaal, or unbent and free for social enjoyment, in the great eating hall, surrounded by tigers, hyenas, lions, porcupines, hippopotamuses and every bird or beast, which the earth affords, the view is equally interesting.

The great men of the world are here. Today, it was Tholuck and Van Oosterzee who implored the divine blessing at the table. It was Pressense and Guthrie, who returned thanks at the close of the meal. Near me at the table sat, Dr. Lange, famous for his commentaries, and Dr. McCosh, famous for good books and good deeds, and other good and great men, too numerous to mention. It would be impossible to give extended reports of the discussions of the Alliance in any dozen letters like this, but I may afford pleasure, perhaps, by giving some notice of a most interesting address made to-day by Rev. Dr. Guthrie, of Edinburg, on the subject of

RAGGED SCHOOLS.

and how he became connected with them. In his early life, the general orator told us, in that charming way which is so natural to himself, he was the pastor of a most excellent country parish containing a thousand souls. Of these all went to church except one, and he was lame, and all could read except one, and he was crazy. And among these sober and intelligent people he remained for some years, until at last he found himself called to the midst of a parish in the city, containing vast numbers of the most wretched and vicious. They were often starving, and as he came home from his visits among the degraded and the suffering, he loathed the food on his table, thinking of the misery of those who had no bread. Often he saw children pushed into crime by unnatural parents, arrested, tried, convicted and hung, and the thought forced itself upon his mind that "not those children, so much as the judges of the courts, and the ministers of religion deserved most to be convicted and hung." It seemed to him a most unnatural and hideous thing that a child trained to crime should suffer the extreme penalty of the law while those who went free who never in their lives made a single effort to remove that child from the training of vice and misery. "Not all the money that Amsterdam could pile upon that table," said he, "could induce me to endure again the anguish and torture of mind I felt in those days of sickening parish labor." But out of all this mental distress God ordained good by leading him to labor in the work of instructing the children of the poor.

The manner of proceeding was two-fold. He took a poor, pinched starved child, squalid and wretched, and into his head he put knowledge, into his stomach he put porridge. The effect was beautiful. "See," said he, "a child with a body six years old, and wan, wrinkled and suffering face, seeming to be sixty, so marked is it by distress and hunger, coming to the ragged school. And see that same child six weeks later! The wrinkles are gone from the brow. The roses are growing on his cheeks. Freshness has come to the complexion and fullness to the limbs. So great is the change, you would hardly recognize the decrepit child of six weeks ago. Behold the good effect of porridge."

These children were trained to useful employment, fed, and clothed, and instructed, and they turned out well. "They did as well as any children, and that was enough." But to have instructed their minds, while their stomachs were suffering the pangs of hunger would have been useless, and worse than useless. It would have been nothing else when they asked for bread than to have given them a stone. The good doctor concluded his address with two facts illustrating the moral condition of the children in these schools, which drew tears from a thousand eyes; but which would be spoiled by reporting, so much was expressed by tone and gesture.

The invitation from the branch of the Alliance in the United States to hold the next general meeting in New York is entertained with great favor by many individuals, though of course, no official action has yet been taken. The American and English delegates meet to-morrow to confer concerning the matter. In the afternoon there will be excursions to Haarlem and Zaandam. C. C. K.