

Original Communications.

THE LAST CONVERT TO UNITARIANISM.

Saturday's *Leaflet* contained, in one of its most characteristically Philadelphian columns, the following announcement:

REV. MR. THORNE, late of the Presbyterian Church, DARTY, will preach for Dr. Furness, corner of TENTH and LOCUST streets, SUNDAY MORNING.

This notice seems to us carefully constructed to lead the foreman of the paper to put it among the Presbyterian pulpit notices, as each denomination is arranged now by itself. And the purpose in view was effected, and this Unitarian church was, by a little artifice, made to appear in better company than the miscellaneous religious fag-ends of our city, among which it would otherwise have appeared.

As it was designed especially to attract Presbyterians, we thought we would go and see what sort of intellectual feast was set before them. The outside of the church is familiar to most city readers. An unpretentious square box of a plastered building is the Philadelphia temple of Liberal Christianity. A few marble pillars in front, which once stood in front of the old water-works at Broad and Market, form the only ornament. Inside the house is just as plain—Venetian blinds, hard cushions, deal pews, stiff, old-fashioned pulpit, twenty slim chandeliers, &c. A gallery across the south end accommodates the choir. The windows have evidently been made with a view to the erection of side-galleries; but to judge from the number of the audience below, they will not be needed for a long while. A notice on the main door informed us where, and for how much, we could get Dr. Furness's last book. Another announced that the doors were open at half past ten, and the service began a quarter of an hour later; also how we might hire a pew. A box for contributions to the Unitarian Aid Society did not seem to be extensively patronized.

Christians of old times built their churches to symbolize their creed; it struck us that in some respects these religionists, with their pillars of strength and grace borrowed from older structures, their unneeded yet provided facilities for growth and expansion, and their scanty gifts to the beauty of the Lord's house—so bare in comparison with their own houses—did but symbolize their half-faith.

The audience, by many infallible proofs, I judged to be mainly from New England, unless the creed has the faculty of developing Yankee characteristics in Philadelphians. The sharp-cut, prominent nose—made to push—the restless air, the frequency of long hair, the air of determination to do, and to be seen and admired in the doing, all seemed to me foreign to our city. Few, indeed, did I see of our self-satisfied, touch-me-not, self-withdrawn, Philadelphia faces, bearing on every line the traces of the Quaker's weaknesses. I should say that the weakness of most of them was toward New England vanity, not Philadelphia pride.

The preacher of the day, though I knew nothing of what Americans call his antecedents, more than is told in the advertisement quoted above, seemed to me as little Philadelphian as his audience. [He is an Englishman.] He murdered, indeed, the first vowel of our alphabet, but not in Philadelphia style. Nor was his choice of words the Quaker one. Terms borrowed from Boston Liberals who believe nothing, from English Broad-Church men who believe something, and turned into slang in the borrowing, were plentifully interlarded in his discourse. I wish I had counted how often he used the word *helpfulness*. His voice was not powerful enough to fill properly the little church edifice, but it seemed quite in proportion to his mental power.

The introductory exercises were not long. The opening prayer was addressed to the "God of good nature," as Coleridge described the Unitarian deity. Among the blessings for which thanks were rendered was this—"that we were made with imperfections, and, therefore, under a necessity to grow and expand." It was, therefore, an agreeable surprise when, towards the close of the discourse, confession was made of "sins and wanderings," though none of sinfulness and depravity, as either the ground or the result of these. The hymns sung contained some pretty commonplaces about "traditions" and "the dust of ages," and sounded very much like a versified editorial from *The Liberal Christian*, though, to be sure, Unitarian hymn-books have no monopoly of versified "preachments."

The text was a fine one for the occasion, if there had been a fine preacher behind it. Indeed, as the old Baptist deacon said, when asked his opinion of the pulpit efforts of a young brother: "I'll go bail for the text." It was the words of Christ, (whom the speaker invariably called *Jesus*.)—"He that is not against us is for us." Scarcely was he under way, when out popped a sneer at our Young Men's Christian Association, as a persecutor and proscriber of "Liberal" men and books, which sounded just a little queer after the preacher had been reading Paul's grand—almost lyric—words on *charity*. The text came up every now and then throughout the discourse, "not (we were told) because Jesus said this, but because of the depth and breadth and helpfulness of these words." But no analysis of the words was given. We were never told what it

was to be for Christ, much less what it was to be against Him. Indeed, the impression conveyed to the writer's mind, was that every well-meaning man, whatever his creed and whatever his work, if he only meant to "cast out devils," was to be patted on the back and praised, not censured or withstood. The casting out of devils was merely the banishing of evil thoughts which came into men's heads from those who have gone before them or dwell around them. Possession by real devils was an obsolete superstition of the Jews. Good and evil thoughts are the angels and devils who possess men. His audience were urged to co-operate with all who were trying to cast out these, whether in the name of Jesus, or of Calvin, or of Theodore Parker.

The persecutions of those "who followed not with us" were taken as a type of those which had fallen on every "anointed soul," and the speaker thought that if a faithful record of these could be made, it would be one of the saddest and most instructive of books,—in fact the Bible of the ages to come. Nor did his new friends escape. Liberal Christians he had found to be merely very liberal toward themselves. [We listened sharply here, expecting some bold and independent speech.] When in Boston a few weeks ago, he had found men who called themselves Liberal Christians, shudder with horror at the idea of calling Mr. Abbott [Rev. F. E. of Dover, N. H., who publicly rejects the name of Christian] and Theodore Parker, their brethren! This was all he told us on that most fruitful theme,—the illiberality of Liberal Christians, whose illustrations reach from the proscription of orthodox professors in Harvard College, down to the petty persecutions inflicted by many a Unitarian father on his orthodox wife and children. [Vide, N. Y. Examiner and Chronicle.]

For some thirty minutes Mr. Thorne continued his sermon or address, dividing it into formal heads, each of them very much like the other. What impulse to self-denial, to purer living, to deeper faith, to more charitable thinking, to an effort for the removal of the sins and miseries of the world, he imparted to any, I know not. He said much to confirm prejudice, to flatter vanity, to comfort "them that sit at ease in Zion," and who cry "Peace, Peace," when there is no peace. At one point, he informed his hearers that there was a deeper truth than that of the text, though he would not now emphasize it, as it was not the practical truth. This truth was that all are in the end for us, whether against us or not, and (as we framed the thought) on the chess-board of life in the great battle between good and evil, both sides are played by the same hand. What an incitement to activity was there!

I trust that this is not the weekly pabulum set before the church at Xth and Locust, and that a little more "grinding among the iron facts of life" will show Mr. Thorne that this is not the Truth that all true men must live by.

ON THE WING.

SUCCESS IN THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

Doubtless the true Pastor is divinely fitted for his work. He is a combination of genial and large-hearted traits together with superior executive ability, under whom a laggard enterprise gathers courage and renews its youth, whose very presence betokens faith and hopefulness. Although not every minister of Christ is gifted with this genius for successful work; yet there are certain salient features which all may cultivate, and which are indeed indispensable.

The successful pastor has a due appreciation of personal influence. He knows that contact wins favor. Important as fidelity in the study may be, the charm of books and fresh investigation must never trench upon frequent visitation. To secure personal influence he must mingle with his people. He must be seen elsewhere besides in the pulpit and on Sabbath days. In their homes, and at their places of business, socially, religiously, and casually, he must needs become familiar with his people. Power in the pulpit is desirable; but for continued usefulness, the insensible influence of association and character is essential. Such a pastor will be able to accomplish anything that is reasonable among his flock. What would be refused the gifted orator, or the learned logician will be granted to the man who, by friendly intercourse, has won their hearts.

Last week an individual said: "I was indifferent to churches and ministers; but when affliction came upon my family, the kindness of my present pastor secured me to the church as a worshipper." Personal influence in this case effected what pulpit oratory had failed to do. The successful pastor estimates correctly the great might of individual power, and therefore, puts forth continued effort to win to the church and the Lord those with whom he has secured personal favor.

A disinterested desire for the welfare of mankind is a special qualification for this office. A perfunctory performance of duty, or even strict conscientiousness is not sufficient. In this regard, the people are never deceived. They always distinguish between the genial and affectionate service, and labor under the galling yoke. On the whole, a man is rated at his true value. Unselfish interest, beaming forth from the countenance and irradiating the whole demeanor makes a normal impression.

A disregard of mere human distinctions marks the character of the successful pastor. Society

classifies mankind into rich and poor, refined and rude. Society is ever busy in making wide the separation between man and man. But everything which partakes of the caste spirit is absent from him who desires the highest influence in his generation. He has too much regard for manhood and immortality to be satisfied with the little distinctions of human pride and vanity. Consequently the poor feel honored in his presence; for in him they see a friend who looks beyond the mere surface, and who values them for their native, God-given possessions and their moral character. It is true he recognizes the fact that there will be classifications from causes that are not sinful; but yet he beholds in every member of his congregation—rich or poor—the possessor of an immortal soul, a person for whom Christ died. Hence in full view of these great facts, social distinctions fade away. M. P. J.

ENCOURAGEMENT IN INDIA.

DEAR BROTHER MEARS:—In my last I endeavored in brief terms, to give you some idea of the immense extent and importance of this mission field. Most pressing and urgent is our need of fellow-laborers here. I would gladly enlarge on this point, and with much importunity. But these "few general items" are extending far beyond my original purpose, and I must force them to a close.

One item about my preaching tours is that they are now attended with much more personal interest and satisfaction than they were in my early missionary life, 22 years ago. I commenced this kind of labor before I had been quite a year in India—making long tours from Ahmednuggur to Sholapur, Pandharapur, Aurungabad, and in all parts of the Ahmednuggur and Poona collectorates. With the exception of two years when engaged in church-building, I have prosecuted this work, more or less, every year of my life in India to the present time. Probably no missionary in India has ever preached the Gospel in more villages, towns and cities than it has been my privilege to do. I mention this in no boastful spirit—the Lord knows how very imperfect have been my best endeavors—I mention it, in devout thankfulness to Him who called me to this work and has sustained me in it; and to place on record here my high appreciation of this kind of labor, and yet my still higher appreciation of those agencies which bring our hearers under regular, oft-repeated and permanent instruction.

In some quarters I have suffered reproach as being unduly attached to schools. My estimate of *Mission Schools* has arisen not more from seeing their happy working and results, than from the conviction forced upon me on my preaching tours, that to secure the thorough enlightenment, conviction and conversion of our hearers, and the open confession of their faith in Christ, we must adopt some plan to bring and hold them under regular, continuous Christian instruction. [This I believe to be a *sine qua non* to genuine converts, and to an intelligent and efficient native church. And for this purpose, every year's experience in India has deepened my conviction that it is far better to gather our hearers into schools where the love of learning is the centripetal force to hold them under our Christian instruction, than to make this force the love of money, either given in charity, or for nominal service, or expressly to support inquirers, thus bringing them under temptation to practice deceit and falsehood in their efforts to secure and prolong their stipends, while having no care for their souls, no real love for the truth, and no wish or purpose to embrace it. It is my painful conviction that our mission work in India has been hindered and suffered loss, in several ways, from the injudicious use of money as this motive power, both in drawing hearers, gathering converts, and supporting them in mere nominal service or unmitigated idleness. It brings us more Judasses than Pauls, makes the native churches weak, mercenary, and too often a standing reproach among the heathen.]

But this is a digression. I used formerly to encounter many virulent defenders of Hinduism who withstood the truth and often gave me much pain by their blasphemies. Once I was so hard beset by a crowd of "lewd fellows of the baser sort" set on by such Brahman opposers in the city of Aurungabad, the capital of old Aurangzeb, that I found "prudence the better part of valor," and retreated to my quarters—the more respectable men of my audience kindly and considerably keeping between me and the mob to protect me from its violence till I was out of the city; and on reaching our quarters I found my brother missionary, there before me, trembling with agitation and suffering from bruises, he having been violently thrust out of another part of the city by the same mob before it set upon me. On another tour with the same brother, he was assaulted by Brahmins at Kurvat and violently thrust out of a temple. Latterly I have encountered no violence of this kind. Probably I have more knowledge of Hindu human nature, more facility in the use of their language, and am more successful in so presenting Christian truth as to make it effective, temporarily at least, in silencing their objections and constraining their assent and civility. But, be this as it may, I am impressed with a feeling that a change is perceptible on the part of the people generally—that they better understand the true character and object of missionaries, and have more respect for them than formerly. I remember only one instance of in-

civility on the part of my hearers on all the tours of the last five years, and that but very slight. In most cases my message has elicited frequent, spontaneous expressions of approval. In more than 500 villages, my audiences have expressed such approval *nem. con.* And in more than 200 villages, have the intelligent and responsible men of my audiences assured me they would cast away their idols and become Christians, if Government would protect them in so doing and cease to support the idols. I would not attach too much importance to such promises, made under the excitement of the first earnest presentation of Christian truth, but I could not have better evidence that they indicated the true feelings and convictions of those who uttered them at the moment, and if the conditions named were complied with, and earnest permanent efforts continuously prosecuted in those localities, I cannot doubt hundreds of them would make good their promises, renounce and abandon their idols, come fully to understand the truth and embrace it in the love of it. I have all confidence in the efficacy of God's truth and Spirit of grace. Let idolatry cease to be supported by the power, prestige and funds of the State, and Christian truth be taught in place of the grovelling superstitions of this people, and India will soon be evangelized—her millions converted and saved. Yours sincerely, R. G. WILDER.

HOW DID YOU GET RID OF YOUR PASTOR?

A FEW MORE WORDS TO VACANT CHURCHES.

You have finally succeeded in your wishes. You have dismissed your pastor. How did you manage the matter? After you became satisfied that he ought to leave you, did you go to him and tell him frankly what you thought, and as delicately and kindly as possible give him your reasons for thinking so? Did you tell him that you thought him remiss in his duty, or dull in his preaching, or that he could not make a bow in your parlor quite after the approved modern style? These are all-important matters, all must admit, especially the latter, and no reasonable pastor ought to feel aggrieved at you for wanting him to leave you, if he fails in any of these capital points. But I fear some of you did not do this thing. You thought it too delicate a matter to go to him and tell him of his fault between you and him alone. You preferred to tell it to his neighbor. It may be, he could have explained some things to you. It may be, he would have mended his ways and manners. But this was not exactly what you wanted, was it? You rather preferred that there should be some objections. The thing you wanted was divorce from him, so that you could marry another. I fear that was the case with some of you, though I am sure I would not judge you harshly and unjustly.

When you got into that state of mind, were you not rather glad if he really did preach a poor, or dull, or an unpopular sermon, and rather sorry if he preached a good one? Did you not look at his defects, and talk about them, and blind your eyes to his good qualities? If you thought he failed to notice some families as much as he ought to, did you not go to them and stir them up to discontent about it? It was necessary to shake the confidence of as many as you could, in order to make out as good a case as possible.

You knew he had some warm supporters. Did you not try to destroy their confidence in him, by word or look, or silence? You know that sometimes silence will do more to injure a man than anything you can say. Did you not hear some reports about him, which you were satisfied were false, and not open your mouth to correct them? You were not bound, you say, to be his champion. But I deny that. Your covenant vows bound you to do this when you heard his name traduced.

Did not three or four of you make up your minds that you would have your way, come what would? You would compel the Church to come to your terms by withholding your support. You thought they could not get along without you, so you would hold that club over their heads. Well, did you refuse to pay your share for his support? That was not honest. You promised with the rest of the congregation, to pay him so much while he remained your pastor. This was contained in your call, and you reiterated it when he was installed. You responded in the affirmative to the following interrogation: "Do you engage to continue to him, while he is your pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?" He was your pastor until the relation was regularly dissolved by action of Presbytery, and you were bound by that contract as solemnly as by any you ever set your hand to. This was a greater injury to the church than to the pastor, and a greater injury to your own souls than to them. It might have exalted you to a factious importance as stumbling-blocks, whose opinion must be consulted from fear, but it nearly or quite destroyed you in the confidence and esteem of most of your brethren.

And when you got an expression of the congregation, did you do it in that neat, shrewd, wire-pulling way, so common among politicians who have little regard to anything except accomplishing their ends? Did you not spring the question, when neither the pastor nor his

warmest supporters had any previous knowledge of your intentions, and so were utterly unprepared for it? You succeeded in making him feel very miserable, and in creating grief and hardness among his friends, and in dividing the church in feeling, if not in action. Then you had a first rate text to preach from. The church was divided; you must have somebody that would unite it, and, therefore, the present incumbent must take his walking-papers.

I will not ask you if you reduced his salary in order to starve him off, for that is too mean for any church that has a particle of self-respect, or regard for the Master to think of doing.

I will not ask you if you cut him and slighted him socially, in order to make him feel as uncomfortable as possible, and so leave you to get relief, for that is too cruel for a heathen to practice.

I will not ask if you stayed away from the house of God in order to make it appear that his congregations were falling off, so that you might have that to say against him, for that would be worse than heathenish, as I do not believe that the heathens would stay away from their temples for any such cause.

Now there is an open, manly, Christian way of getting rid of a pastor whose labors are really unacceptable. But the candid will admit, that none of the above expedients come under this head. I will not insult your common sense by attempting to tell you what that way is, for I am persuaded that you know it, if you have the courage to pursue it. And if you have not the courage, do you not think you had better keep still, and let somebody else do the matter, that has? I throw out these sharp hints to guide you in future, not as an enemy, but as a friend, who loves the Church, and labors and prays for its prosperity. I ask you to receive them in the same spirit which prompted them, and so some unnecessary burdens may be removed from the shoulders of a class of men that otherwise have their share. AMICUS ECCLESIE.

News of Our Churches.

New York.—*Obituary*.—Mr. Wm. A. Booth, who went to Syria with his youngest son who was in declining health, has telegraphed to his family the news of the young man's death.—Mr. Jas. W. Bishop, a devoted laborer in the City Mission in the XIIth ward, who had gathered a large congregation in a comfortable mission chapel, is dead. He was the father of Rev. Albert C. Bishop, of Sand Lake, N. Y., and of the wife of Rev. F. A. M. Brown, of Delhi, N. Y.

Charleston, S. C.—Mr. Adams writes to *The Evangelist*: "On the 7th of March our new building was opened for the first time for Divine service. The pastor spoke in the forenoon from the words 'Ye are God's building,' after which communion was administered to not less than 400 persons, not less than 700 being present, although occupying but the lower floor of the main body of the church. We received into full communion twenty persons on profession of their faith, the fruits of a protracted effort which we have been promoting recently, and by which the whole Church has been much revived." In the afternoon Rev. T. W. Lewis, of the M. E. Church, and in the evening, Rev. J. Seabrook, of the P. E. Church, preached, and collections amounting to \$280 were taken up during the day. The edifice is as yet unplastered, and seated only with rude benches, so that some \$8,000 or \$8,000 are needed to complete it. Exhibitions and concerts are being employed to raise funds for the purpose. The day school in connection with the church has about 125 pupils, and is conducted by Mr. T. J. Minton, of our own city, a graduate of our Colored High School. Mr. Wm. E. Dodge, who has given most liberally to the object, and is travelling in the South, visited them not long ago.

Sandy Spring, O.—The church building was burned on the morning of April 4th. The scholars were just gathering to the Sunday-school, when the roof near the flue took fire, and could not be extinguished. The church had been built about forty years, and was dear to many a heart from memories of the past.

Aurora, Ind.—Our church at Aurora celebrated the 25th anniversary of its organization last Sabbath.

The West.—Several new and promising fields are now being opened and occupied, and the cry still comes to us for help from places not yet reached in Dakota Territory, in the interior of Nebraska and Iowa, and from points along the lines of the Union Pacific Railroad and its branches. We are also invited to establish mission churches in three of our most important and growing cities, as soon as suitable men for that work can be found. We find a few of our people in the outskirts of these cities and among the new settlements. They naturally look unto us for the "means and the ordinances." If we supply them now, they will soon take form as organized churches, but if we fail to do this, others will do it instead of us, and by and by they will be in possession of our inheritance. Besides these there are several churches in Iowa with membership ranging from twenty to eighty, and dependent, in part, upon missionary aid, now looking for ministers, viz.: Adel, Albion, Clarence, Clermont, Centre point, Centreville, West Liberty, and Janesville. These placed are all good fields for earnest, active men. Within the past six weeks six new churches have been added to our list of churches, and but one new man to our list of ministers. Three of these churches are in growing railroad towns.—*Cor. Evangelist.*

San Francisco, Cal.—There are 44 scholars, from ten to sixty years of age, in the Sunday-school of the Howard church. These 44 pupils have 10 teachers, and Mr. Geo. Barstow, the superintendent of the school, says of the Chinese: "They are, without exception, models of order and docility, quick and eager to learn, and contrary to the belief of many Americans, they are very cleanly—no kicking the seats or spitting on the carpet."