

fierceness of his countenance drive them from his presence amid a thousand lashes to go and answer their own prayers with such assistance as he may see disposed to give them. As well may one pray for God to give him his daily bread, and the raiment he wears and then sit idly down and wait for God to send him bread and meat direct from heaven prepared for his table, or supply him direct from the seat of the universe with a ready made suit of clothing! Away with such unscriptural and supercilious nonsense!

More than eighteen hundred years ago the Savior said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," and this is just as true today as then. There is therefore a sense in which every man can answer his own prayer, and he is obligated to the fullest extent of his ability to do so. Hence if God's children pray for the conversion of the people, they should work for it. If they pray for the success of missions, they should be willing to support them with their money. If they pray for the suppression of intemperance, they are also obligated to work to that end. Otherwise, all such praying is vain. To fail to supplement our prayers with active work for the cause of Christ, is to follow the example of the hypocrites of old of whom the Savior said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." Hence, he asks, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

SAVING THE PEOPLE.

It would seem that many of the present methods of the church and her ministry in preaching the gospel are not specially adapted to the salvation of the *people*. This is not as it should be. It was designed by its Author that the gospel should be the power of God unto the salvation of every one who believes and obeys it; hence it was commanded to be preached to *every creature*. It is not only intended for the rich and the noble of earth, but the poor, the despised, the most humble, sinful and degraded may come and drink of the water of life freely. That church or that ministry, therefore, which lives and works on an intellectual or social plane too high for the common people,

and thus fails to stoop down and lift up the most lowly, is not the church and the ministry ordained by God for the salvation of the world. We believe the soul of one man is as precious with God as the soul of any other man. God is no respecter of persons. While the religion of the Bible may fully satisfy the demand of the really educated, the refined or cultured, it is equally adapted to the poor and unlettered, and intended for their benefit. Hence the Church of Christ is not authorized to adopt methods which will neglect or drive from it any class of fallen humanity that may desire its social advantages or spiritual influences. But on the contrary, it should send its servants out into the highways and hedges, and streets of the city and bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind that the Lord's house may be filled and that all may partake of the spiritual feast. But how often do we find it otherwise! It is a fact that the world is fast creeping into the churches; and just in the same proportion that this is true, the purity and simplicity of apostolic Christianity as well as the moral and spiritual power of the church is driven out. We have before us a book, recently published entitled "A History of the Cross," the author of which James M. Sherwood, of Brooklyn, handles some of these evils in a bold and practical manner. We beg leave to copy a few paragraphs bearing on the question in hand. He says:

"Not a few of our Christian churches are fast coming to be run after a fashion borrowed from the theatre. The gospel preached, or desired and sought by the people, is not the simple, grand old gospel preached by Paul, Peter and John,—preached by the Reformers in the days of Huss, and Luther, and Melancthon, and Zwingle,—preached by the Puritans in old England and in New England, and by the Huguenots in France, and the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont—preached by Hooker, and Edwards, and Bellamy, and Hopking, and Davis, and Dwight, and Griffin, and Richards, and Edmons, and Lyman Beecher, and Albert Barnes, and Finney and Moody. But it is a gospel of man's devices, the main end and feature of which are to draw a full house, to attract a fashionable, wealthy, respectable, cultured and above all, *paying congregation*.

A *new dispensation* really has crept in—a dispensation of showy, costly, and luxurious edifices, with all modern improvements, in the way of operatic music, and esthetic culture, and social festivities, in-

cluding church entertainments, concerts, festivals, dancing entertainments, and even in one instance an 'annex theatre' for amateur theatricals!—a new dispensation in the matter of *preaching*, under which doctrine, sturdy common sense, loyalty to convictions and settled opinions, plain, practical, faithful exposition of the Word, have given place to a most lamentable extent, to mere culture, learning, fastidious tastes, fine sentiment, and highly wrought sensational methods."

These are vigorous paragraphs, but who with the present condition of the churches before him, can doubt their truthfulness? Does not this account largely for the failure of the churches to reach the masses? Where is the simplicity of pure Christianity? and where is the practical feature in such work? The worldly-mindedness and perverted tastes of the people loudly call for such sensational methods, and the ministry seeks to supply the demand. Our author, speaking of the large number of ignorant and degraded in our large cities, and of the ministerial education adapted to the wants of this class, continues:

"One thing is certain. The present methods of education fail to give us a class of ministers adapted to reach and work successfully among the lower and ignorant classes in our cities and other great centers of population. The church as such has now no hold on them; the gospel is exerting no more direct influence on them than if they lived in the heart of heathenism."

Again he says:

"The lesson taught by these facts is too obvious and important to be ignored. The law of *fitness* in the spiritual as in the natural world, is one which God always honors. We can not set it at naught and succeed. 'The poor ye have with you always,' saith the Master. There is a world of practical truth in these words. But are not his ministers being educated for the rich, the learned, the refined and the cultured, those high in the social scale—educated mainly with reference to the pulpit, the stately sanctuary, and the surroundings and attractions of an eligible 'settlement'? There is such a thing as educating ministers *away from the common people*—educating them with reference to a *class*, and not towards and for our common humanity; educating them into effeminacy, and over-fastidious tastes, and scholarly methods and habits, and into the love of ease and literary pursuits—with little real earnestness of purpose, and robustness of character, little genuine sympathy with man as man, lost, ruined, and going down to death in an almost unbroken mass. And this is just what we have been doing for a whole generation!"

We conclude that the only reme-

dy is to be found in a complete return to primitive Christianity, in form, in spirit and in simplicity. Let the churches seek only to elevate and to save the *people*, and let the ministers follow only the example of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, who confessed not with flesh and blood, but become obedient to the heavenly vision, and hence was determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

THOUGHTS ON THE BIBLE.

The reason why the people have so much trouble to understand the Bible is because they are all the time trying to reconcile the Bible to their views, instead of trying to reconcile their views to the Bible. Many people make a kind of a tool of the Bible. They use it as if it was given simply to prove their peculiar views or doctrines. They never seem to get the idea that what it contains is "for doctrine," and that its author requires us to lay aside our doctrines and theories and humbly take it as the man of our counsel, and learn the blessed lessons he has recorded therein.

No one can understand the Bible unless he has a humble and teachable spirit. The proud heart is sealed against its truths. And just in proportion as our natures are made like unto Christ's nature and lifted up out of sin, just in the same proportion will we be able to understand and appreciate the grand truths of the Bible. The sentiment of our heart at all times should be "Speak Lord thy servant hearth."

Some church members are great sticklers for "a thus saith the Lord," for every thing that is done in church work, and yet these same people will turn their backs upon the church and worship of the Lord's house, sometimes on account of the smallest provocation. We have known them to entirely abandon the church just because the great mass of the members saw fit to introduce an organ. Now we would like to ask these persons where they find any Scripture for leaving the church of Christ? Come, brethren, turn to chapter and verse and give us a thus saith the Lord for your conduct in forsaking the Lord's people and house, even if there is an organ or something else there that you do not like.

When the Savior came to the world he found that for centuries