TO SUCCEED AS A MINISTER

Rev. Dr. John Hall Points Out the One True Way.

SPIRITUAL RESULTS THE REAL MEASURE

"Preach Nothing but Christ in the Pulpit"—The Veteran New York Divine's Strong Advice to Young Clergymen.

(Copyright, 1898, the S. S. McClure Co.)

What is ministerial success? Not the attraction of a crowd, nor the awakening of admiration for an "elegant preacher," a brilliant speaker," a "splendid orator." What is a minister? An ambassador of Christ, beseeching men to be reconciled to God through him. The success is to be measured by the extent to which this reconciliation is promoted. Suppose that the Spanish government sent an ambassador to Cuba to beseech the rebels to be at peace with Spain, and the ambassador was described as "eloquent," "brilliant," "very interesting," in his address to the rebels, and by them, yet they held on in their rebellion—could he be described as successful?

This article, as I understand it, is not to deal with the choice of the ministry as a profession. The young men to whom it is addressed are supposed to have settled that momentous question in the affirmative. They desire now only the few suggestions that experience can give to inexperience as a guide in their life work.

A minister's duties divide themselves under two heads—his work as a preacher and as a pastor. Neither one should be emphasized to the neglect of the other. Some men succeed in the former field and fail in the latter, or vice versa, but to make his efforts effective for the promotion of God's truth the minister should labor assiduously in both. As a preacher the minister is called upon to prepare and deliver sermons to his congregation. In this, the first thing to determine, is his range of subjects. On this point Christ has explicitly directed us, "Whatsoever I have commanded you." To the appreciative student of the bible this is sufficiently definite, and rules out many themes that have found their way into the Christian pulpit.

THE CONSTANT THEME.

The central figure of all bible teaching, the most effective that the preacher can present, the one he is especially enjoined to herald is the Christ. This should be his constant theme. He is to lift up Christ, to set forth his saving work as finished on the cross, and to show that while he is Prophet, to be our teacher and King to rule over us, it is by his atoning death that we have life through believing in him. This is glorying in the cross. This presentation of Christ implies the setting forth of God's attributes as holy, just, merciful and faithful, man's sinful condition, and it implies obligation on men, when they believe in and love the Savior, to keep his commandments. And so true evangelical preaching is the divinely-given means for producing good ethical results—for promoting morality.

This exhibition of Christ's saving work is to be presented in reliance on the Holy Spirit, not in one's genius, pursuasiveness or earnestness; and then, when souls are saved and brought to confess Christ, the glory is given to him who opens the eyes, creates anew in Christ, and is, in the life of a believer, the spirit of holiness.

It may be objected that this preaching of Christ puts away variety from the pulpit and produces a dull sameness in the sermons. If hearers are simply looking for entertainment, for "sensational" talk of "the times," they will sympathize with the criticism, but if they attend church to worship God and be taught of Christ they will find variety in the teaching, for in the history of the race from the opening chapter of Genesis through the Mosaic economy the history of the Hebrews, the works of the prophets and all the New Testament, Christ, the Savior, and the godliness that comes through faith in him, are more or less clearly set forth, and that in beautifully varied aspects.

There are many useful points about the preparation and presentation of pulpit discourses, but most of these the young man will hear fully discussed in the course of his special preparation. No scientific knowledge, no classic, no learning, no human truth comes amiss to the preacher, yet there have been many men with "little Latin and less Greek" who have mightily influenced the lives and aspirations of their fellows toward the kingdom of God. The best cardinal rule I can think of is to know your bible (the English version) thoroughly. Know it so well that you can draw readily on it for apt quotation to enforce and emphasize your points. When it comes to uttering a grand truth or voicing an eternal warning the language of the book is more forcible, more convincing, sticks more firmly in the mind of the hearer, than any you can command.

POSITIVE, NOT ARGUMENTATIVE.

The tone of the preacher in his pulpit, in my opinion, should be positive, not argumentative. We are not philosophers finding out things, we are expositors of a revelation that settles things. When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, the life; no man cometh to the father but by me," he spoke positive truth, which it is our business to echo. Let authors, poets and philosophers have the field of speculation and amagination. We, my brethren, give ourselves to another task; we are to direct human pilgrims, according to settled and fixed commandments from the Lord, into the way that leads through the gate into the city.

That part of his duties comprised in his work as a pastor the young man needs to be especially reminded of. It is the side of his work that he is likely to hear and to think least of during his period of preparation.

To fill the requirements of his place in the congregation the minister must know his people. How is he to know them? Obviously the best way to make their acquaintance is to go to their homes, to see the family where the family lives, and converse with them in the freedom of their own homes. He may direct this part of his work as his special situation makes it seem best, but he should go among his people as much and as often as he can. Any ordinary minister who is to do spiritual good to his people must love them. Ordinary men found their affectionate interest on acquaintance. It is not love in general and in the abstract that makes a channel to the human spirit, but love to individuals, into whose faces, and in some degree into whose hearts you have looked.

All this will make the pastor a better preacher. A man tells you of his life, his sorrows, perhaps his sins; his lip quivers and his eyes overflow in the recital. If you have the first elements of a minister's nature in you, you must feel and speak to that man ever more with some influential memory of the interview.

It may be added that the life of a preacher is to be in harmony with the truth that is taught. He must show by his walk and conversation that the message he carries is true to himself, firmly believed, and sincerely acted upon.

Let it be said in conclusion, that ministerial success is not to be measured by the audience, the crowd, the popularity of the preacher, the fashionable, wealthy and attractive congregation, but by the spiritual results as seen by the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, in strangers to the Lord brought into his family, and in members of his family fed with the sincere milk of the word.

JOHN HALL.

REV. DR. JOHN HALL. (From his latest portrait.)

RELIGIOUS.

Rev. Mrs. Coates, who died in Denver the other day, was the only woman pastor in Colorado.

There are about 130,000 ministers of the gospel in the United States, 180,000 churches and about 25,000,000 communicants.

Henry M. Stanley reports that last year Uganda had twenty-three English Protestant clergymen, 699 native teachers, 6,905 baptized Christians, 2,591 communicants, 57,380 readers, 372 churches and a cathedral which can hold 3,000 worshipers.

Last year the Society for the Propagation of Christian knowledge (connected with the Church of England) issued 145,205 Bibles, 22,995 Teetaments, 324,426 Books of Common Prayer and 8,588,902 other books, nearly 3,500,000 tracts, the total amounting to more than 12,000,000.

Bishop Anzer, the celebrated Catholic prelate of northern China, who has been honored by the Chinese government on numerous occasions, is in San Francisco as the guest of the Franciscan order of that city.

Dean Stanley, upon his return from this country to England, was asked if he had been surprised at anything. He replied: "Chiefly by my own ignorance." Whereupon the Congregationalist says: "Dean Stanley seems to have been even a greater and wiser man than we thought."

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith of New York City was recently incorporated, the object of the society being to perform missionary work for the Catholic church. The trustees are Archbishop Corrigan, Bishop John Farley, Very Rev. Joseph F. Mooney and other noted Catholic divines.

Prince Oscar Bernadotte, who on his marriage renounced his succession to the throne of Sweden, made his appearance at Copenhagen recently as a mission preacher in connection with the Young Men's Christian association of Stockholm.

Father Tuohy of St. Louis, whom Archbishop Kain is attempting by law to put out of his church, St. Patrick's, has applied for a change of venue. The case was to have been up before Judge Hennessey, a Catholic, and the priest wants a Protestant justice, who will not be influenced by his loyalty to his church.

Rev. Sherman Coolidge, who is presenting the cause of Indian missions in various Episcopal churches in the east, is a full-blooded Arapahoe Indian. He was graduated from the Hobart college, Geneva, N. Y., and after his ordination to the priesthood he took up missionary work among the members of his tribe in Wyoming.

Today, Rev. Dr. Henry M. Field, editor of the New York Evangelist, and Rev. Dr. Edward Everett Hale of Boston, will become "veterans of '76," for they will celebrate their seventy-sixth birthday. Dr. Field continues to perform as usual all his editorial duties. He is vigorous and alert in both mind and body, and is good for many more years of active work.

Pope Leo was able to show deference to an older man than himself at the celebration of his coronation. Cardinal Mertel, who is 92 years of age and the senior cardinal in length of service, having been cardinal deacon for forty years, had himself carried to the vatican, but was unable, after the pope's address, to join in the defile, past the throne. The pope, noticing this, stepped down from his throne and, walking to Cardinal Mertel, wished him many more years of life.

Rev. Dr. William Griffin, who has just died at Troy, N. Y., was for many years one of the best known Methodist ministers in New York state. He was president of the Round Lake association for fifteen years, and was once president of the Saratogian Printing company of Saratoga. He was an ardent friend of education. He endowed the chair of philosophy at Wesleyan university at Middletown, Conn., and the chair of history and political science at the Syracuse university. Cazenovia seminary, where Mrs. Griffin had been both pupil and teacher, received from him $25,000 to endow the chair once occupied by him, and to perpetuate the memory of the place which had ben so closely identified with himself and his wife. He was a generout contributor to other educational institutions, both of a public and a private nature.

A Remarkable Rescue.

Mrs. Michael Curtain, Plainfield, Ill., makes the statement that she caught cold, which settled on her lungs; she was treated for a month by her family physician, but grew worse. He told her she was a hopeless victim of consumption and that no medicine could cure her. Her druggist suggested Dr. King's New Discovery for Consumption; she bought a bottle and to her delight found herself benefitted from first dose. She continued its use and after taking six bottles found herself sound and well; now does her own housework and is as well as she ever was. Free trial bottles of this Great Discovery at Kuhn & Co.'s drug store. Large bottles 50 cents and $1.00.

XERXES.

AN EASTER SKETCH.

Xerxes was tired. Xerxes was hungry. Stopping for a moment to rest, he sat down on the lower step of a brownstone front. It was a bright Easter morning and Xerxes, despite his shabby attire, looked about him with keen appreciation.

Who was he? A "vag," a "hobo," a "dead beat"—you might have called him; but, according to his own story, a "gentleman of limited income and uncertain locality." Only a poor devil, who, during his youth, had known the finer things of life, but for whom, from the glass of Fate, had been poured only disappointment and misfortune. The old story of an indulgent father and a reckless, improvident son; of business reverses and heavy losses, which worried the old man into his grave; of the son, now grown, blase and profligate, having no vocation to call his own, no experiences in his life—save those of a youth with wealth at his command and Bohemia his favorite stamping ground. Not much upon which to base the foundation for a practical livelihood. For years he had drifted aimlessly around, till failing to find his niche in life, he had, as he expressed it, "tried to fill the next easiest one," and here, on the lower step of a prosperous looking mansion, a fashionable church on the corner opposite with the glorious sunlight of the perfect Easter morning lighting up with unpitying accuracy every detail of his shabby attire, we find Xerxes, a gentleman of leisure—otherwise, a tramp.

* * * * * *

Down the steps of the house next door, overwhelming him with their daintiness and their fresh, young womanhoood, came two girls, clad in all the fluttering laces and ribbons that go to make up the fin de siecle damoiselle. They were talking too earnestly to notice Xerxes, who drew humbly back that their perfumed skirts might not brush his soiled garments; and little did they realize that to the half-starved soul of the poor fellow on the lower step, the sight of them was like a burst of spring, filling his heart with radiant warmth and the memory of happier days so long ago.

"Look, Nell," said one, blushing and holding out a tiny hand for inspection.

"Ah, how lovely," and Nell bent over a glistening jewel on the little finger—"from Jack?"

A shy nod gave assent, and as they passed on, their eager young voices came back to him, like sweet music.

"And I once had a sweetheart," he mused, with a sigh, "and I gave her a ring, too. I remember that I kissed her little hand when I placed it on, that night. Ah, that night—the sweetness of it! Where is the little ring now, I wonder, and—where is she? "A woman's voice floated out to him from an open window, softly humming the refrain from that old serenade—

"Good night, ladies,
We're going to leave you now."

"So long ago," he murmured, staring with eyes that saw not, at the pavement beneath his feet—"so long ago. * * * I sang that beneath her window once."

* * * * * *

The sweet strains of the closing anthem floated across to him like a benediction. Involuntarily, he bowed his head. The ushers threw open the doors of the church and the worshipers poured into the street. As they hurried past, they glanced at Xerxes, some with curiosity, some with pity, some disdainfully. "All sorts and conditions of men," he mused, as they went by—old men, young men, self-important youths and earnest students; mischievous boys and grandsires in their dotage; matrons, maids and spinsters, all giving a glance, but rarely one of kindness, to the shabby figure on the lower step.

* * * * * *

A deacon with unsmiling face and sanctimonious mien went gravely on his reverend way, benignly lettling fall on our tattered friend a superior glance, which prompted him ironically to quote, "Verily, Lord! I thank thee that I am not as other men!"

Then a rotund little business man, whose faultless broadcloth and prompous air bespoke the successful financier, stopped before Xerxes and patronizingly inquired:

"Why don't you go where you belong, my good man?"

"Because," tranquilly, "I'm trying to be a better man and knew I could profit by the example of a good, charitable, kind hearted Christian like you!"

* * * * * *

A gentle voice made him turn and a sweet-faced old woman, with silver hair, pressed a coin into his hand as she said: "You are in need, my poor fellow. Will you take this with the hope that you may do better?"

"Heaven bless you, lady," he said, as he stood before her and bared his head, "Heaven bless you always, for a kindly word to a poor ne're-do-well and for recalling the face of his dear mother."

There was a misty smile in his eye and a thrill of happiness in his heart, long after she had gone.

"Bless her," he said, "if there were more like her, the new woman would never have been born."

* * * * * *

"Hello, there! Is you tired?" And a radiant little vision with the bluest of eyes and the sunniest tangle of flying curls, a world of mischief in the roguish laugh and a wealth of love for everybody in the sweet, little face, came flying toward him. Xerxes almost held his breath as the little figure came up and held out to him a flower no fairer than herself. How many years was it since he had been so near to such a dainty, well-cared-for bit of humanity?

"Thank, you, little one," was all he said, but his voice was very gentle and the child, looking up into his eyes, read with the instinct which, alas we all outgrow so soon, the sweetness and patience of a soul that knew not much joy.

* * * * * *

"Didn't I tell you not to talk to strange men?" and an irate mamma swooped down on the little woman, and gave her a vigorous shake. "Are you never going to mind me, miss?" The blue eyes filled with tears, but she bravely nodded farewell and tripped away. "Oh," sighed Xerxes, with a pang in his heart, "the Christ of whom you have just been learning would never have said that. He who called the little ones unto him, who said: "You must become like them," would never have wounded a childish heart when it had done no wrong," and the fragrant flower from the tiny hand, with the silver coin from the withered one were long cherished, recalling the "one touch of Nature" that makes us all akin.

* * * * * *

A Thespian of the old school crossed the street and sauntered down the avenue. His well-worn Prince Albert with shiny seams was buttoned tightly up to his chin. His silk hat was of antiquated pattern and showed the traces of many brushings. He wore no cuffs, but swung a cane in one hand while the other was thrust between the top buttons of his coat. About his eyes were traces of make-up and his whole bearing bespoke the actor, long in the profession, but unsuccessful. "Life is but a play, after all," mused Xerxes, "but how we all scramble for the leading parts, forgetting that the low comedy and eccentric characters must be played by someone. How we fail to learn our lines and neglect to take up our cues, and hinder better actors from playing their parts successfully; and when the curtain falls on the last act, how bitter comes the realization that our part in the drama of life has marred what might have been a perfect performance; that the play would have been better had we never been cast. Well, come now Xerxes! down't rail at Fate! This isn't your cue to make a scene!"

* * * * * *

"Morin' Hurald, Jurn'l an' Tribune!" sounded a cheery voice, and little Tad, a newsboy, his ragged cap on the back of his head and a few unsold papers under his arm, stepped jauntily around the corner. His clothes were poor and his hands were grimy; but his face was blithe and his laugh the essence of happy good nature.

"W'y, hello, Xerxie—old boy! Wot you doin' here? Watchin' the swell peoples go home from church? Say! wot d'you tink? I met a rich bloke down de street wot gimme two tickets to a charity dinner down on de sout' side! Wot d'you tink of him? Wasn't he all right? Can you beat 'im? Come on, and we won't do a ting to de spread—oh, not! Just de-molish it, that's all! If we eat there today dey'll have to feed de rest of de push tomorrow. Have a cigarette? Nit? Say, wot's de matter wid you today, Xerxie? Ain't you square wid de world?"

"Yes, Tad," replied Xerxes quietly, putting his arm about the boy's shoulders, as they strolled off together toward "de sout' side," and the promised dinner. "I guess I'm square enough with the world for I wouldn't change places with any man in it today. Yes, I'll take dinner with you, Tad; but next time it will be your turn because you see—I'm getting tired of being utterly worthless and tomorrow—well, tomorrow I'm going to look for work!"

Tad looked up, his eyes round with astonishment. "Gee!" he said.

ELSIE REASONER.