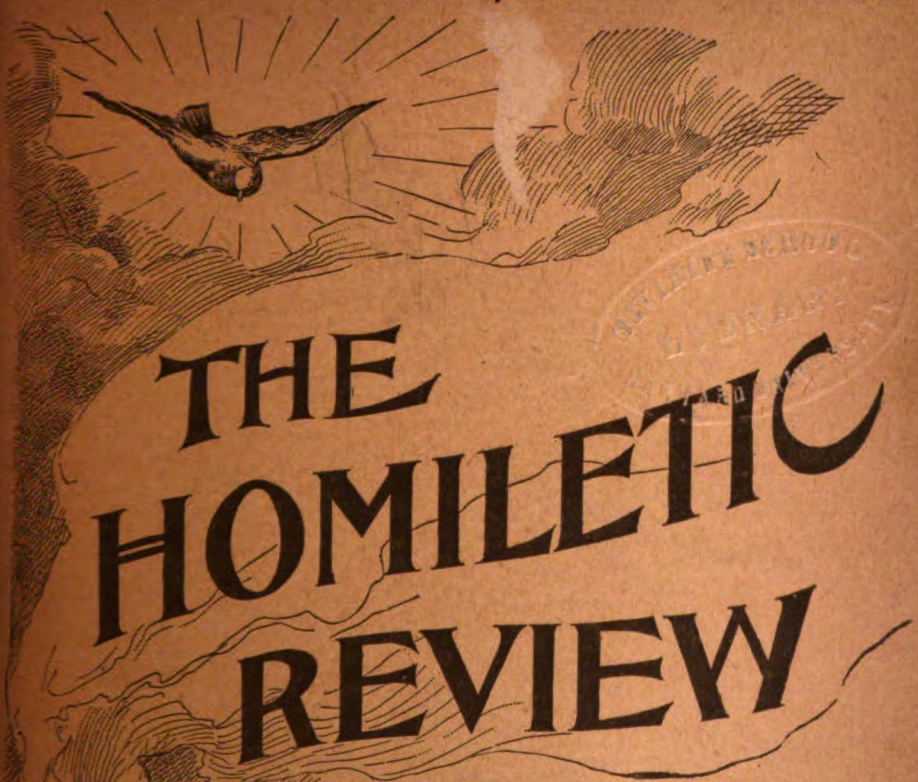


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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE CREDULITY OF SKEPTICS.

BY E. FITCH BURR, D.D., LL.D., LYME, CONN., AUTHOR OF
"ECCE CÆLUM," "THE STARS OF GOD," "FABIUS THE
ROMAN," ETC.

PYRRHO of Elis has the reputation of having been a religious skeptic—the first known to history. But we are told that his skepticism was not confined to religion. He doubted not only the reality of Deity, but the reality of everything. He claimed that nothing could be proved. And yet he affirmed, and claimed to know, that neither himself nor anybody else knew anything, in any proper sense of the word "knowledge"; also claimed that there is no real difference among things—that black and white, truth and falsehood, virtue and vice, life and death, are really at bottom the same thing.

As we read such stuff as this we are tempted to doubt whether there ever was, or could be, such a person as Pyrrho. But the traditions are against us, and we submit. We allow that Pyrrho was, that he was no fool, that he founded a school of philosophy in which such absurd things were taught, and that he seemed to act, more or less, as if he really believed them. What a belief it was! He was confident that he had no ground for confidence. Does one say that Pyrrho did not really believe such self-contradicting things? I answer, that he *professed* to believe them, and that in this article I shall take skeptics at their word.

The Pyrrho of the last century was David Hume. But he was a somewhat revised edition of the ancient skeptic. He admitted the reality of chains of ideas and exercises; but held that we have no evidence of the reality of anything else—none of God, none of an external material world, none even of a perceiving soul.

He affirmed, and tried to prove, this paradox. He asked the world

NOTE.—This periodical adopts the Orthography of the following Rule, recommended by the joint action of the American Philological Association and the Philological Society of England:—Change d or ed final to t when so pronounced, except when the e affects a preceding sound. —PUBLISHERS.

clerical dress does not always mean the right clothing of the spirit. Men may fast in order that they may get a reputation for piety. These idols will suggest others. It may even be an idolatry to condemn idols. The heart may be worshipping that meanest of all gods—the non-idol. There is an idol of *Bravado*,—men glory in irreligiosity, in fantastic theories, in heterodox creeds, in defiance of religious habitudes.

We speak with pity or derision of heathen people selling their idols for silver, their gods for pieces of crystal. The derision may be ill-placed and ill-timed. God is bought and sold in Christian countries. When a man stifles conviction that he may increase his income, he has repeated the knavery of Judas Iscariot. When a man attends one place of worship instead of another because he can get a repu-

tation for respectability, he has sold the very name which he professes.

The Kingdom of heaven is not in meats and drinks—it is not in mere habits, ceremonies, observances. Strange as it may appear, a creed may be an idol. When a man has to look at his written creed in order to understand what he believes, the creed is to him an idol. Some people would not know the Gospel if they did not hear it from certain men, in certain places, at certain times. The very pew itself may become a species of idol. The only right way is to have the soul filled with the Holy Ghost. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." God has broken up the narrow idolatry of mere place; His temple is the great Everywhere,—every mountain is an altar, every valley a sanctuary, every moment an opportunity.

LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOKS OF THE PROFESSOR.

RAISING CHURCH REVENUES.

By PROF. T. D. WITHERSPOON, D.D.,
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It seems to be very difficult to get people to see the difference between what Christians may do as individuals and what the church may do as an organized community. When, for instance, we object to church bazars, church festivals, church suppers, *et id omne genus*, as a means of raising church revenues, we are at once asked what harm it can possibly be for Christian people to sell garments and devote the proceeds to church uses, or to serve strawberries and cream, or supply luncheons and dinners, and put the profits into the church treasury. And at first the question may seem difficult to answer. For certainly any one must admit that a private member of the church may make money in any honest and legitimate way, and devote it to the Lord by putting it into the church

treasury. And if one individual may do this, then two or more may unite in doing so; and when a large number have thus joined hearts and hands in a business enterprise of this kind, in sewing with the needle, or in cooking and serving refreshments, and devoting the proceeds to the maintenance of the ordinances of religion, what is the difference between this and the church festival or the church bazar? The latter are not necessarily under the immediate authority and direction of the officers of the church. Even if they are conducted under the auspices of a church society, what is the church society but a voluntary association of Christian people for church work, and wherein, therefore, does a festival or a bazar conducted by a church society differ from one conducted by a number of private individuals who have agreed to cooperate in its management for some pious or benevolent end? If we admit the legitimacy of one, must we not recognize that of the other also?

If we condemn the bazar or festival of the church society, how shall we acquit that of the temporary association of Christian people, devoted to the same objects, and conducted apparently in the same way?

It is evident that there must be some regulative principle here which shall determine for us what entertainments of this kind may legitimately be employed in raising money for religious uses, and what may not. There is a regulative principle, recognized in the very application to a certain class of these entertainments of the titles church bazars, church festivals, church sociables, etc. It is not found in the fact that the entertainments are projected or governed or even authorized by the church authorities, or that they are held on the church premises, or attended by the church people, but in the fact that patronage is urged and expected on the ground of church relations. You are expected to buy the wares offered, not because you need them, not because you want them, not because they are serviceable and cheap, but because by buying them you are helping the church. The motive appealed to, therefore, is not the commercial one of getting at a fair valuation something that you need, but it is the religious one of giving of your substance to the Lord for the benefit of His church.

Viewed in this light, the whole system of church entertainments for pecuniary purposes is fatal to the true spirit of Christian beneficence. It is so in many respects. In the first place, its effect upon those who plan and carry out the entertainment is unfavorable to true beneficence. It leads them to expect to secure from others, through the medium of barter and trade, money for the treasury of the church which they ought to take out of their own purses and lay as a free-will offering upon the altar of the Lord. In the cases previously alluded to, in which the individual Christian, or association of Christians, places upon the market,

under the ordinary laws of trade, certain articles for sale, relying solely upon their intrinsic value and the commercial demand for them, the money received for them will be but a legitimate compensation for the labor, time, and skill expended on them, and as legitimate business profits these moneys may be laid upon the altar of God. But in the church entertainment, because of the religious motive in the buyer, large returns are expected for small outlays, and that is laid upon the altar of God which has cost very little, and so the spirit of self-sacrifice is stifled. The question becomes not, How much can I give? but How much can I induce some one else to give? And so the painful spectacle is often presented of the wife of the millionaire, with her diamond-studded fingers, dishing out the cream to be sold at ten cents a saucer, to make a little money for the treasury of the Lord.

And this barter is equally unfavorable to development of the spirit of giving in the patrons of the entertainment; for the religious motive which brings them to the entertainment to help the church is certainly a very mixt one—mixt with anticipations of hot coffee, scallopt oysters, and ice cream. Steadily, therefore, the Christian givers of the congregation are being educated into the idea that when they give they are to expect something in the way of gratification in return—something in food, or drink, or music, or recitation, or social converse—while the true theory of all Christian giving is that we are to give, expecting nothing in return, giving freely as Christ also gave Himself for us.

All that has thus far been said is based upon the idea that the church entertainment is kept free from those objectionable methods to which in their intemperate zeal Christian people often resort, such as raffles, grab-bags, and other money-making devices. It takes no account of the heartburnings and jealousies which are so apt to arise

between the Tryphenas and Tryphosas who are engaged in this good work. It looks upon the church entertainment as at its best, and finds in it, however prudently and conservatively managed, elements unfavorable to the cultivation of the spirit of Christian liberality. Its legitimate conclusion, therefore, is that there is no appropriate place for the church entertainment in raising the revenues of the church.

Nothing has been said or implied as to the use of the church entertainment in developing the social life of the congregation. The discussion of this point would carry us beyond the prescribed limits of this article. It is only

necessary to say in conclusion that nothing that has been said would legitimately oppose the sale of manufactured articles or the serving of refreshments in connection with these entertainments, and the devotion of the proceeds to religious uses, provided it is made perfectly clear that there is no religious or church obligation upon any one to invest, the whole being conducted upon the simple commercial basis of supply and demand, and every one being left perfectly free to purchase or not, without the least implication of the question of personal liberality or devotion to the interests of the church.

SUGGESTIONS FROM EXPERIENCE.

THE YOUNG PASTOR'S STUDY MACHINERY.

By REV. GEORGE FRANCIS GREENE,
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It has occurred to me that a few helpful suggestions might be made to some of the younger clergy concerning several homely topics relating to the pastor's workahop. I have in mind those who are about to be installed pastors, or who have been pastors not more than, say, two or three years. Experience often brings a gradual understanding of various practical methods of maintaining system and saving unnecessary labor; but surely it must be so much gain for a young pastor if so much as in a single particular he may profit at the outset from the lessons already learned, perhaps painfully, by others. The following suggestions relate to what perhaps may be termed the *drudgery* of the pastoral office, in distinction from its more exalted duties. But the humbler elements of our work are not to be treated contemptuously. They are indispensable, just as the type and the printing-press are requisite in journalism no less than the nobler function of the

pen of the editorial writer. There is a best way of attending to those duties of the study that are subordinate to sermon-erecting; and hence I hope that the hints I shall offer will prove serviceable to those for whom they are particularly designed.

I. Concerning the sermon record. The advantages of keeping a complete record of all the sermons preached from the beginning are obvious. It is often important when preparing a sermon from a particular text to know whether that text has been preached on before, and when—a matter that can not, strange as it may appear to a layman, be trusted to the memory; and it is often desirable at a moment's notice to lay one's hand on a particular set of sermon-notes. Without some business-like method of keeping this record, one's sermon-notes will after two or three years get into a hopeless tangle. I advise, then, the early purchase of a suitable book for this record of sermons. I know of none better than "The Pastor's Ready-Reference Record" (Funk & Wagnalls Company). Books that combine with the space for the sermon record that for other data, such as baptisms, mar-