FOUR BIG PREACHERS WILL SOON BELONG TO TRADITION.

Bishop Warren A. Candler in Atlanta Journal.

About thirty years ago there was a great group of preachers in and around New York.

Henry Ward Beecher, Richard S. Storrs, Charles F. Deems, and T. De-Witt Talmage. The last of them passed away in Washington City a few days ago, and a retropsect of them may be useful.

No principle of classification would justify grouping them together except that they all appeared about the same time. No men were ever more unlike.

By far the ablest of them was Henry Ward Beecher. His was a colossal brain. In his day no intellect appeared among the public men of America superior to the mind of Beecher. He was not a man of scholarship, nor one of very accurate information. There is no saying what he might have attained if he had been a careful student. But he was an orator, aiming always at immediate effects, and generally absorbed in pressing some reform. For success in such a career his remarkable brain furnished without much study all that was necessary. In his earlier days he was a man of simple faith, and in those days he was almost irresistible. In his latter days he seemed to believe very little, and to have no fixed faith in anything long at a time. His creed was in a state of flux, and underwent the most frequent and rapid changes. His pulpit power was diminished and his pulpit utterances were often contradictory with each other within the limits of a fortnight. He rarely hit in the same place long at a time, and his blows became ineffective.

Richard S. Storrs was a far different man. To the graces of an orator he added the studious habits of the scholar, and he brought only well-beaten oil into the sanctuary. His sermons, delivered without notes, might have been printed as they fell from his lips, and then they would have been more perfect than the carefully written pages of most men. He was always orthodox, and was never sensational. He delivered strong, steady blows in furtherance of fixed convictions.

Charles F. Deems was a Methodist preacher, who from North Carolina went to New York after the war, and became pastor of the church of the Strangers, where "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt with his southern wife worshipped. Doctor Deems, in fact, created the church of the Strangers. He was a man of evangelical faith, captivating utterance and of almost infinite industry. He was without the scholarship of Storrs—a nervous, ready speaker of great power, nevertheless.

Dr. Talmage was utterly unlike any of them. He whs less intellectual than any of them. He was orthodox, but hearing or reading his sermons you never thought of his orthodoxy or his heteordoxy. He treated simple common-place truths in a bright, scrappy, illustrative style, and he delivered what he had to say theatrically. One will seek in vain to find an original thought or a dull line in all his thousands of sermons, and he literally printed thousands of discourses, for he and the newspapers got on amazingly well together. Of course there was a sameness about his sermons. They seemed to have been manufactured prodncts from materials drawn from scrap-books and "cyclopedias of illustrations." They bore no marks of either learning or profound meditation.

Yet they interested and profited many thousands, and when he died the other day the hearts of multitudes were bowed with grief.

The work of Dr. Storrs will outlast that of all the others. Plymouth church is an isolated organization, which seems to care for none of Beecher's views. Since the great preacher went away they have had the rationalizing Lyman Abbott and the orthodox Hillis as their pastors. The church seems to care little for what is taught from its pulpit if only the preacher talks what he teaches in a bright and interesting way. Orthodoxy is nothing and heterodoxy is nothing but a pleasing sermon is all in all.

The descendants of the Vanderbilts worship no more where Deems preached, and the pastor of the "Old Commodore" has had no successor.

When Talmage's church burnt down there was not enough life and zeal in the congregation to rebuild it, and he moved to Washington, where he did without a pastorate, at the last, I believe.

But Storrs labored in a great field of foreign missions, president of the American Board, and besides that great work he left his work as a pastor fastented to something permanent to give it enduring force.

Herein is a great lesson: An isolated ministry is an evanscent ministry, though it be the ministry of the highest genius. A man must belong to something and stand for something if he is to amount to much. A hen that does not lay in the nest may be a great layer, but if some other hen were not employed to do the hatching of the eggs, her breed would speedily become extinct.

If Beecher's church had been less independent, and had more perfectly kept the step with the great congregational body his ministry would have been a thousand fold more fruitful. Many erratic utterances he would have suppressed long enough to think twice about them, and then he would not have said them at all. He would have felt more responsibility for what he said, and would not have been so reckless at times. It would have saved him many inconsistencies of speech—and doubtless some irregularities of conduct.

If Dr. Deems could have left the church of the Strangers incorporated in some such body as the old North Carolina conference, of which he was one a member, the fruits of his toil would not so quickly have disappeared.

If Dr. Talmage had identified his work more perfectly with the Presbyterian church it would thereby have been foreordained to last longer. When his tabernacle was consumed by flames another structure would speedily have risen in its place, and another man could now carry forward his work. As it is his work has ended.

Independentism may be a very fine thing, but it is very transient in its hold on men. That one may speak today in one way and tomorrow may feel at liberty to deney all he thought today, may be very exhilirating; but in the long rung run it does not command confidence. Men say of a man who does so, "Well, doubtless he is very honest, but he is not very safe. He always says what he thinks, but he does not think enough to have the same opinion two days in succession."

Comets attract more attention while they last than all the stars in the heavens; but men do not sail by them.

Fixed stars only are reliable guide-posts for the mariner in the trackless deep.

Moreover, preaching simply to entertain a crowd is somewhat of a profanity. It is much as if the messenger of God, commissioned to proclaim eternal truth, should renounce his high calling to win wages and applause as a harlequin. But preachers who hire themselves to a congregation rather than attach themselves to a cause may easily yield to the ever present temptation to please the men who hire them rater than the Savior who redeemed them.

Nor are men greater for being independent. Storrs was great enough. His influence went far beyond the limits of his denomination. Dr. John Hall did not limit his influence by being a sturdy Prebyterian. Phillips Brooks was felt and is felt as a national force, though he never affected independentism.

Beecher, Deems and Talmage—great men all of them, but great as they were, they will soon be little more than traditional names. They have left little that is permanent. So is every one that doeth like them.

Neither in New York nor elsewhere are present day preachees as great as the men of thirty years ago. Living evangelists are far below Moody and Finney. Living pastors do not approach the great preachers of that group who have now all passed away. We have tent-stretchers and hymn book peddlers and photograph venders, and faith healers, and reformers of all sorts, but no Moodys. We have musical programs and splendid buildings, but no Storrs or Brooks in the pulpit. Great men in the American pulpit were never before so scarce. It is difficult, if not impossible, to point to one of the first magnitude now living.

Why is this so? For one cause more than all others—commercialism. Phrophets are scarce in a nation that falls to worshipping mammon. Israel was never so prosperous as when Solomon reigned, but Israel had no prophets then. David had his Nathan. Ahab his Elijah, and Manasseh had his Isaiah, but Solomon had no messenger of God to reprove him of his idolatry and immorality. In his glorious temple there were any number of petty priests burning with infinite precision "the fat and the two kidneys;" but in all the land there was no prophet. So we have abundance of men of a certain sort. Many of them make admirable members on a musical program, and say beautiful little pieces between the choir acts. Dainty auditors swoon away under the influence of sacred entertainments, but the sermon must be pretty, and it must not be long. Preaching is scarce because it is not much in demand with a commercialized people who prefer to be soothed rather than saved.

Some men in the pulpit today would preach if they only believed in the Bible. But by what is sometimes called "the higher criticism" and kindred rationalism of a higher sort they have been emasculated. With the fear of the critics before their eyes they come into the pulpit as Agog came into the presence of his royal captor—"walking softly." Commanding pulpit power is impossible in the absence of confident faith. Men who preach with authority must be great believers. "I believe, therefore have I spoken," is both David's and Paul's account of the earnestness and eloquence of their speech.

Pertinent in this connection are the words of old Basham Miles, in Page's "Old Gentlemen of the Black Stock." He says: "The pulpit has lost its power; thrown away its best prerogative, the gift of preaching. The clergy no more believe with power, because they no more believe with strength. * * * Why should I go to hear a young man of far less knowledge than myself holding forth to worldly people worldly considerations to induce them to embrace a religion of which the Founder preached the blessedness of sorrow. The poorest preacher, sir, is impressive, so long as he believes himself the minister of God. I may not accept his message, but if he believes in his mission I shall respect him. If, however, he questions his own credentials I will not listen to him."

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Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets, All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure. E. W. Grove's signature is on each box. 25c.

A Brilliant Career.

Adolph Ochs in 1870 was a newsboy on the streets of Knoxville. In 1872 he had risen to the dignity of a printer. He is now owner of the Chattanooga Times, the New York Times, and the Philadelphia Times, and is contemplating buying the Philadelphia Record, the purchase price being $2,000,000. The Southern boy only wants a good opportunity.

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Cotton Claims Bill Reported Favorably.

Washington, April 27.—Senator Taliaferro reported favorably yesterday the cotton claims bill for claims committe of the senate. This is the result of Senator Taliaferro's persistent effort.

THE OCALA STATESMAN.

The Sumterville Times Booms Zewadski.

We call attention to the announcement of Hon. W. K. Zewadski for state senator which appears in this issue. Mr. Zewadski is a citizen of Ocala where he has been for the past ten years or more engaged in the practice of law. By reason of his ability and close attention to business he has built up a large practice not only in Ocala but in the adjoining counties. He has figured in many of the biggest cases in Marion county and elsewhere in the state.

Mr. Zewadski is a native of Florida, born under the sunny skies of our fair "Land of Flowers," he is by nature and environments in full accord with all that he believes for the material welfare of his native state. Though now one of the state's foremost lawyers he is not a stranger to the farm or plow handles, having formed a very close acquaintenance with both when a lad. His parents were not financially able to give to him a college education, he had only the advantages of the common schools of Florida, which at the time he was growing up were far from encouraging, and he was not even permitted to enjoy those limited advantages to any great extent. However, Mr. Zewadski was not of the kind to wait for an education to come to him, he sought it out and when other young men would be enjoying leisure hours he was endeavoring to fit himself for a high and useful life. How well he succeeded has been shown by his remarkable success in life thus far.

Marion county has attested her appreciation of Mr. Zewadski by electing him to the state legislature three consecutive times. In the legislative halls he took a prominent part from the very beginning. Each session he has been a member of the judiciary committee. To be a member of this committee is a mark of special honor, it being considered by far the most important in the whole list. At the last session Mr. Zewadski was the chairman of the committee, the next highest place to speaker of the house. The Times editor has served with him the last two sessions on the judiciary committee and can speak from his personal knowledge of his standing as a member and as a chairman of that committee.

As a representative Mr. Zewadski attained such prominence that he has been urged to become a candidate for congress for this district but it appears that Mr. Sparkman will be a candidate to succeed himself and Mr. Zewadski has declined to enter the race against his personal friend.

Those who know Mr. Zewadski best have the highest respect for his ability as a legislative officer. If elected he would go to Tallahasse with valuable experience and continue as he has been in the past a leader among the members of the legislature. As a parlimentarian his worst enemies concede him to be one of the best ever upon the floors of our legislative halls. Mr. Zewadski says he will come among the people to discuss the issues with them.—Sumterville Times.

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D. R. BRINSON,
G. T. FISHER.

The McEachern Lumber Company hereby assumes all bills payable and all debts are due and payable to McEachern Lumber Co.

MCEACHERN LUMBER CO.
411m Per D. J. McEachern.

Notice.

The next semi-annual meeting of the Medical Examing Board of the Fifth District of Florida will be held at the office of Drs. Cyrus & Welch, in Palatka, on May 14th, 1902.

4811-5t GEO. E. WELCH, M. D.

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