

Pastor and People.

PREACH THE GOSPEL.

BY REV. JOHN DUNBAR, TORONTO.

Mark xvi. 15

What is the Gospel? 'Tis good news to man
Warning all that they're on the downward road,
And showing plainly, clearly, how they can
Through grace, be brought to holiness and God.

Preach then the Gospel, preach "the truth in love
Bring from its treasures things both new and old,
Its precepts teach, and its positions prove
Its promises and prospects, too, unfold.

Preach all the Gospel, all in order give,
Nought else is needed, God has nought else given,
"It is the power of God," and to believe
Ensures salvation and makes meet for heaven.

Preach but the Gospel, near or far abroad,
And not so-called philosophies instead,
For the world's wisdom's foolishness with God
And never can supply the sinner's need.

Preach thus the Gospel, feel as Paul of old,
Woe's me if I the Gospel do not preach
Clearly, "Christ and him crucified" unfold,
His grace and glory, too, fail not to teach.

Preach aye the Gospel, both known and believed
And show its power in all you do and say,
Lest, preaching unto others, self-deceived,
You may like Judas be a castaway.

THE PASSING BELL.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

When the end comes, the passing spirit sometimes drops a word that rings as melodiously and sweetly as a marriage bell. A word that gathers up into it the confidence and rest of the soul, the hope and expectation of the heart, or the clear, undimmed vision of the purged eye that sees adown the vista of the future. That last word is full of meaning. It is usually the genuine expression of the nature. It therefore portrays in the strongest way the real character of the man. In it he paints himself in vivid colours. At the last hour all the restraints of society, all the considerations that crowd in upon the mind in health, all the curbs of conventional usage fall away, and the man is perfectly true and perfectly natural. We see him as he really is. As Dr. Young sings:

A death-bed's a detector of the heart,
Here tired dissimulation drops her mask;
Through life's grimace, that mistress of the scene!
Here real and apparent are the same.
You see the man; you see his hold on heaven.

How true that is! The saintly Samuel Rutherford in his last hours was joying and feasting on God's sure word of prophecy, as he had been all his life, when some, we are told, spoke to him of his former painfulness and faithfulness in the ministry, he said: "I disclaim all that, the part that I would be at its redemption and forgiveness through His blood. 'Thou shalt show me the path of life, in Thy sight is fulness of joy,' there is nothing betwixt me and resurrection, but 'to-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.'" Mr. Blair saying, "Shall I praise the Lord for all the mercies He has done and is to do for you?" He answered, "Oh, for a well-tuned harp!" To his child he said, "I have again left you upon the Lord, it may be you will tell this to others, that 'the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places. I have got a goodly heritage.' I bless the Lord that He gave me counsel.

Thus says the tender-hearted John Howie: "The renowned eagle took its flight into the mountain of spices." Mr. John Livingstone knew Rutherford personally, and what does he say of him? This is his clear and comprehensive statement: "Mr. Samuel Rutherford, a most profound, learned man, a most plain and painful minister, and a most heavenly Christian as was in his time."

How lovely and faithful was the life of the Countess of Huntingdon! Her gracious spirit breathes its kindness and sweetness still, and her helping hand has not yet been withdrawn through her magnificent endowment of theological schools and chapels, and her beautiful Christian example shall never pass out of the memory of the godly. It will live on to inspire purged hearts for ever.

Full of years and labours, like a shock of corn fully ripe, she was gathered to her fathers. On her deathbed she often repeated: "I long to be at home! My work is done! I have nothing to do but to go to my Heavenly Father." And, aged eighty-three years, she went to Her Father's house in peace, June 17, 1791. These words show the turn of her thought. Home in the Father's house! Risen with Christ, she sought the things that were above.

Lady Colquhoun, of Ross-dhu, was one of the most exemplary Christians of her time. Careful in the Christian training of her children, and in the conduct of her life, her influence was healthy and blessed. Shortly before her death one of the servants, to whom she had often spoken on the concerns of her soul, came into the room. After saying a few kind words, Lady Colquhoun offered to pray with her. That prayer of the dying lady will not soon be forgotten. Then she gave solemn injunctions to her sons and daughters, and all her servants, individually, to seek the Saviour, and said of herself: "I die at the foot of the cross; I know that

my Redeemer liveth; Christ is my hope—should be my motto; I rely entirely upon His finished work."

Thus prepared, she fell asleep Oct. 21, 1846, leaving behind her a memory fragrant with the savour of a Christly life.

Cesar Malan, of Geneva, whose life was one full of Gospel blessing to all who came in contact with him, was laid aside for months e'er he was called to take his departure, and during all this time his patience and fortitude and beautiful trust in God under excruciating pain, amounting to torture, was a sermon of a kind seldom enjoyed. It impressed the most obdurate. It spoke home to the conscience. Once, when one of his sons had prayed with him, he said: "That's the thing to do me good." "How fearfully you suffer, my dear father," said the son. Raising his hand with an effort, and looking at him with his long and speaking gaze, he replied: "I do not suffer a moment too much. I say not that God allows it! No! No!" he added earnestly, "but God ordains it," and the next moment: "It is that that gives one real consolation." On another occasion, shortly after this, his son tells us, "I spoke to him of the heavenly glory, of entrance into the dwelling of the Lord, of the sight of Jesus, of his beloved Master. Fixing on me a deep, calm look, conveying an expression of semi-surprise: 'Why God,' he exclaimed, 'heaven, glory, the Saviour, these are realities—realities! Why employ them to work ourselves into an excitement. They are realities,' he repeated. 'It is this that passeth away,' showing me his emaciated and all but paralyzed hands." To one who visited him he could say: "The Lord is with me, as I have ever known Him," adding the next moment, with his sweet and tranquil smile: "I have always accepted the entire Gospel without disputing either its commandments, its mysteries or its promises. The Lord is faithful." No marvel that one of his friends, on leaving the room, said, as though speaking to himself: "He had, as it were, a halo of glory around him." As the paleness of death swept solemnly over his features (which through the whole morning had been singularly bright, and one might almost say grown young again) his face flushed up with a sudden gleam of delighted surprise. The servant who was standing in front of me at the foot of the bed broke the stillness by exclaiming: "Oh, how glorious! Look, sir, look!" I did not catch his expression at that particular moment, but I heard one of my sisters reply to the appeal: "Yes, our father's spirit was introduced at that instant into the presence of celestial glory."

Holy George Herbert, the poet of "The Temple," one of the richest, rarest and most spiritual poems in the English tongue, whose whole life has been a persuasive sermon to holiness and charity, died saying: "Lord, forsake me not now, my strength faileth me; but grant me mercy for the merits of my Jesus. And now Lord—Lord, now receive my soul."

Brownlow North, the evangelist, was visited by Mr. James Balfour, who gives us his last word: "I drew near him and took his hand, saying: 'Do you know me, North?' He looked up, and with a smile pronounced my Christian name. It was touching, as he continued to hold my hand, to look on him lying there, like a wearied child, able to speak only in whispers, and slowly and with an effort. He again looked at me, and said very softly, 'Jesus came to me and said: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and up to this time He never has. But,' he added, 'I have been a beast.' I said: 'I have often thought that the verse on which I should like to die is, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 'That is the verse,' he said, 'on which I am now dying. One wants no more.' I said: 'This dying is what you and I have often spoken of.' 'Often,' he answered. 'Have you peace?' 'Perfect peace,' he said with such meaning. That was the last expression of his faith and hope."

When James Hamilton, of Regent Square Church, London, lay on his deathbed, his devout and lovely spirit shone forth in undimmed splendour. "The sweetest sound I could hear," he said to a friend, "would be the Master's voice calling me home." And to another: "Do not ask life for me, but pray for an abundant entrance." In taking farewell of his wife he said, "The Lord bless you and keep you, and be ever with you!" to which she replied: "As He is with you." A sweet smile of assent lighted up his features as he said: "And with you!" After a short interval he clasped his hands upon his heart, saying, "Come Lord Jesus. Come quickly." And so he rested.

How these words ring out the great life hope and life purpose of each one. They are a focus that gathers up the life of the past into a point, and then dashes it over the face of the hereafter. How distinctly they tell us that they have not followed cunningly-devised fables, but rather, that beneath their feet there is the solid and immovable truth of God; that all is reality, reality, reality. O, to learn the lesson they teach! Let me die the death of the righteous and let my end be like His. It can only be so by living his life.

Dr. Adams, the rector of Edinburgh High School, was dying, and no longer able to see. The old man's mind wandered; he imagined himself in his class room, and called aloud: "Now, boys, you may go. It's growing dark." How pathetic how the life story lies gathered up in that sentence!

How true to fact are Goethe's last words "More light! more light!" His life a search for light, yet wanting more. Ah, he did not see the Sun of Righteousness, whose light satisfies, quickens and rests the soul. Do not let us miss our lesson; at death the whole life of a man comes to judgment, and He Himself is the judge and declares the sentence. It cannot be kept back. It is the passing bell.

THE FOUNDER OF MODERN MISSIONS.

Dr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon contributes the following to the *New York Independent*:

This is no great affair of a world, this earth of ours. Even among our own planets it is only third or fourth rate. In comparison with our sun it is only a speck. And when we begin to make comparisons outside of the solar system, this little hanger-on of one of the stars of the Milky Way is quite fades out into invisibility, it is so minute.

It is a very little world, even when measured, not by celestial comparisons, but by our own earthly standards of dimension. It is about 24,000 miles around—that is all. A railroad train at full speed would go around it inside of three weeks, if the rails were laid; and even with existing facilities, a diligent traveller can manage to compass it three or four times a year.

But it is not even as much of a world as it would seem from these figures. We speak of it sometimes as made and equipped to be the abode of man; it would seem almost as true to say that it was contrived to prevent men from living on the greater part of it. There are patches of habitable territory on it, no doubt; but by far the greater part of it is hopelessly untenable. We have to deduct from the surface of this undersized planet more than two-thirds of it, which is waste ocean; and then a large part of the remaining third for the eternally ice-bound and uninhabitable Arctic and Antarctic continents; and another large and indefinite part for the African and Asiatic and Australian deserts; and yet more for vast tracts which, even if they are habitable, are practically uninhabited. Making all deductions, the inhabited world consists of a few strips of territory with a very scamped and stunted area.

Such is "all the world" into which we are bidden by our Master to go and preach. And "every creature" of the population of it is no innumerable multitude. The world will not hold a very great many, and it is only half full. There are some 1,200,000,000 of us—possible 1,500,000,000—enough to make about three thousand first-class cities. That is all there is of extant mankind; and very few indeed of the whole number live more than six months' journey from New York.

In view of these rough computations, it is no staggering, overwhelming duty with which we are charged by One whom we love with the profoundest gratitude and whom we delight to honour and obey. It is hardly even an arduous duty, and it certainly ought to be reckoned a pleasant one; it is to go through this limited area, to this limited number of people, who are in many respects in a forlorn, depressed and hopeless state, and give them good news. We cannot wonder that, in view of the definite discoveries of modern geography, and the wide opening of the world by modern international politics, and the bringing of the world into one place by improved transportation and telegraphy, there should have grown up among generous men a feeling in which as fine a chivalry as ever glowed in the breast of a knight-errant is blended with a nineteenth century coolness of calculation and business system, and which says: "Go to, now; let us take this thing in hand and finish it up."

This I take to be the characteristic of modern missions—this sense of the unity and universality, and at the same time of the narrow limits of the work. The field is the world; and and this time the Church has got the field surveyed and measured and plotted and fenced in, and has set itself about the work of bringing the whole of it under culture.

This never has been so in any ancient age. I have tried sometimes to imagine the meeting of some church in the second or third century sitting at Antioch or Constantinople to receive tidings from missionaries and confessors in every direction. For that was a great missionary age, the Gospel was making noble advances in those days. Here should be messengers from the flocks that Thomas and Thaddeus had gathered in Arabia; there should be news from Egypt and the Upper Nile, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and where the Pentecostal seeds had been sown, and had sprung up into the churches that dotted all the Southern Mediterranean shore. Labourers among the barbarous tribes of Britain and Scythia and Germany might be there to tell of the blood of martyrs springing up and bearing fruit to God. But what was this to "all the world"? The world was vast; no man had ever found its limit. What myriads of heathen nations might there not be beyond the frozen north, beyond the Arimasian deserts and the lands of Sinim, or southward in the unexplored depths of Africa, or beyond the Pillars of Hercules, in those westward-stretching seas which no adventurous keel had ever dared explore? It was all vague and vast. Faith wavered and the Church grew weary of pursuing a way that might have no end.

Who was the founder of modern missions, the forerunner of modern missionaries? I venture to name in reply, Christopher Columbus—no unworthy name to stand at the head of such a roll of heroes, nor to bring up the rear of that stately procession that is marshalled before the gaze of later ages by the writer to the Hebrews. By faith he gat him up from his kindred and his father's house and went forth, not knowing whither he went. There are many things in that great career—things higher and nobler than his mere conformity to the religious dialect and usage of his times—to justify the proposed canonization of Christopher Columbus among the saints of the Roman Church. But "the faith that dared the sea" in pursuance of personal conviction, defying the authority of tradition and the scorn of universal public sentiment, assimilates him rather to the noble host of the Reformers, who were