

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### PREACHING.

"Preach the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah iii. 2).  
 God the Father.—"Preach the gospel" (Mark xvi. 15).  
 God the Son.—"Preach the gospel" (Luke iv. 18).—God the Spirit.

MR. EDITOR,—Having long held and frequently uttered the maxim that, "As a man treats God's word so he treats God's self," I was not only struck but staggered when lately I leisurely looked into a volume of "Moody's Sermons and Addresses," which casually came in my way, where I saw with sorrow the frequent and often flippant interpolations which Mr. Moody so unscrupulously interweaves into the Scripture record, and so ill in keeping with the three-fold and divinely uttered injunction which heads this paper. To my mind and it may be to others, such fancied and fictitious emendations, alike unwarranted and unwise, seem not only to transform the Scripture narrative into a kind of religious romance, but to give a prominence and a power to the conceit, that if to Mr. Moody instead of to "holy men of God" had been committed the writing of the Scriptures he would have drawn up a record far more attractive and instructive than that "Scripture given by inspiration of God," and which "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Without, however, characterizing farther either the man or the matter, and while scorning "to set down aught in malice," but rather "laying aside all malice and all guile and all hypocrisies and all evil speaking," I would simply lay before your readers a few samples out of many to substantiate my statements, so that they may not only judge for themselves, but search if they may for others where these selected have been but too easily found.

NOAH.—The idea that God was going to destroy the world was preposterous to the men of his day. No doubt if there had been any insane asylums in his day they would have put him in one of them. No one minded Noah except to rail at him. The astronomers began to look at the stars and could not tell that any flood was coming; the geologists were examining and digging down into the earth only to discover that there was no God; scientific men said that God didn't create man, that he came from a monkey, and they talked of evolution and scoffed at the words of Noah, politicians were putting men in office and fixing things to suit their ends; their banking-houses were open as usual, their saloons and billiard halls were as busy as ever. No doubt forty-eight hours before, Noah couldn't have sold the ark for much more than kindling-wood. But there came a little cloud like Elijah's, not larger than a man's hand, but it grew larger and larger until it covered the sky.

ABRAHAM.—When God commanded Abraham to offer his son, we read that the next morning the old man saddled his ass and started. He didn't tell his wife anything about it; if he had she would likely have persuaded him to remain where he was. As he goes on, he looks at his boy and says, "It is a strange commandment that God has given; I love this boy dearly, I don't understand it, but I know it's all right, for the Judge of all the earth makes no mistakes." The first night comes and their little camp is made and Isaac is asleep; but the old man doesn't sleep. He looks into his face sadly and says, "I will have no boy soon; I shall never see him on earth again, but I must obey God." I can see him marching on the next day, and you might have seen him drying his tears as he glanced upon that only son. The second night comes; what a night that must be to Abraham. "To-morrow," he says sadly, "I must take the life of that boy, dearer to me than life, dearer to me than anything on earth. The third day comes and as they go along they see the mountain in the distance, when he says to the young men, "You stay here with the beasts." As they ascend the mountain Isaac says, "There's the wood and the fire, father, but where's the sacrifice?" And he answers, "The Lord will provide a sacrifice; everything is ready. And now," he says, "my boy when I was in bed three nights ago, God came to me with a strange message in which He told me to offer my child as a sacrifice. I love you, my son, but God has told me to do this and I must obey Him. So let us both go down on our knees and pray to Him." After they have sent up a petition to God Abraham lays him on the altar and kisses him for the last time. He lifts the knife to drive it into

his son's heart, when all at once he hears a voice, "Abraham, Abraham! spare thine only son."

LOT.—Lot got into Sodom. It was business that took him there. He might have said: "Well, I've got a large family; I've got a great many dependent upon me and I must get rich faster, so I will go into Sodom. Business is the first consideration, and it must be attended to." If you had gone into Sodom before these angels came down you would probably have found that no man had got on so well. If they had a Congress, perhaps they sent him to represent Sodom, because no man had done better in business. Perhaps they might have made him Mayor of Sodom. If you could have seen his "turn-out" it would have been one of the very best. Mrs. Lot must have moved in the very best society of the city. The Misses Lot were looked upon as the most fashionable people there. They got on well, oh yes, that is the way men talk now. Men thousands of miles from God take their children right into the whirlpool that takes them to sure ruin. Perhaps he was a judge, and when the angels got to the gate they might have heard of the name of "the Honorable Judge Lot." It sounded pretty well. He might have owned a good many corner lots; he might have owned a good many buildings with "Lot, Lot," painted all over them, and on account of his property he might have been a very high man in Sodom. But time rolls on, and Lot while sitting at the gate one evening saw two strangers on the highway coming toward Sodom. Likely these Sodomites did not know them, but twenty years before Lot had seen these men at his uncle's home, had seen them sitting at his uncle's table, and he knew these angels when they approached, and bowed down and worshipped them, and bowed down to the ground and invited them into his house. But it was a sink of iniquity and they would not go in, yet I suppose Lot lived in a marble-front house there. But he pressed his invitation on them and they accepted. Then these men said to Lot, "Who have you got here besides yourself? What is your family? Have you got any others besides yourself in this town?" Well, the father and the mother had to own up that they had married their children to some of the Sodomites. "Now," they say, "if you have any, get them out of this place, for God is going to burn it up. Tell them this, and if they won't come, escape for your lives and leave them, for He will destroy the city." Look at the scene. There are the men at the outside of the door groping about to find it, and Lot starts out to tell his son in law of the coming destruction. I can see the old man. He goes to a house and knocks. No sound, all are asleep. He knocks again, and perhaps, too, shouts at the top of his voice, and the man gets up and opens the window. He puts out his head. "Who is there?" "Your father-in-law," answers the old man. "What has brought you out of bed at this hour? What's up?" "Why," says Lot, "two angels are at my house who say that God is going to destroy Sodom and every one who remains." "Why, you go home and go to bed," replies the son-in-law, and mocks him. I can see him now go off to another daughter's house. I do not know how many daughters he had, he might have had as many daughters as Job; and he goes to them and they mock him too.

JACOB.—God chose Jacob rather than Esau. By nature Esau was the better of the two. Some people say that God hated Esau before he was born. This is not the teaching of Scripture, even though one of the minor prophets long years after mentions it. Jacob was all the time making bargains. It does not pay to make bargains with the Lord. Jacob wanted to trust God no farther than he could see Him. The Lord promised to Jacob from the top of the ladder what he should have. Jacob gets up and says "If God will be with me and keep and clothe me, then shall the Lord be my God." What a low, contemptible idea he had. God had promised him all from Dan to Beer sheba. We find Jacob after this in Haran driving bargains all the time, and the worst of it is, he gets beat every time. There was a man wrestled with Jacob. It was Christ. When did he prevail? When his thigh was out of joint all he could do was to hold on and get the blessing. Would to God his thigh had been left out of joint so that there was no more of the flesh in him.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.—Let us look into the camp of Israel. There are three millions of people coming up out of Egypt. They had disobeyed God. —He has brought judgment upon them—they were dying everywhere, and a petition went up to God to

have mercy on them. You could hear the groans of the wounded and the dying from one end of the camp to the other. There is a mother bearing away her loved child to the grave and lamenting over her lost one. At another corner we see a son mourning over the death of a mother. Again, we see a family group plunged in affliction. The father has died and left a widow and a large family, and they are bearing him away to that grave in the wilderness. There is a young man who has just been cut down. He was in the bloom and flush of manhood; and here is a young lady who has received the fatal sting and is being laid in her narrow bed, her friends mourning that they have to leave her in that desert forever. Not a family but who has lost some loved one; all is despair and desolation. These serpents were very busy, and the moment a man or woman was bitten they were gone. When Moses lifted up that serpent as a remedy how the news spread. I can see a mother whose boy has been bitten. There she is leaning over her boy and she says, "O, my son, those beautiful eyes will soon be closed in death, and you will be gone forever." She sees the glaring film gathering over them, she feels the cold hand of death stealing over her darling. She hears the death rattle in his throat, and all at once there is a great noise. Some one at that moment rushes past her tent, and she stops him and asks, "What is all that noise?" "Why," says the man, "God has provided a remedy, and all those who have been bitten by the fiery serpent can live if they but take the remedy." "Tell me what it is! Where is it?" eagerly inquires the woman. "Well," responds the man, "God has told Moses to make a brass serpent and lift it up with prayer, and that shout was the shout of all Israel when the serpent was lifted up." "Where is it?" she inquires with eagerness. "Right up yonder on the hill." And she goes a little way and sees the serpent, and comes running back to her boy and says, "You haven't got to die, my boy, God has provided a remedy." "A remedy," ejaculates the boy. "Yes," says the mother, "God has told Moses to make a brass serpent and put it up, and if the people who have been bitten but look at it they will be cured." "Is it true, mother?" asks the boy with a little incredulity. "Why certainly it is true, my dear; I saw some persons running about who had been bitten." "How I wish I could walk to it, but I can't, I'm too weak." So the mother just takes the boy in her arms and runs with him to the foot of the hill and turns his face to the serpent and tells him to look. There is a film almost over his eyes, and he says, "Mother, I can't see it." "Keep on looking my boy," urges the mother, and he strains his eyes in the direction of the serpent, and at last he catches a faint glimpse of it, and leaps from his mother's arms perfectly well. I can see him now running about and telling every one how he has been healed. He hears of a man who has been bitten and rushes to his tent and shouts, "I've got good news for you, you can be saved." "That's nonsense," says the man. "I never knew of a man who had been bitten but who died." "O but God has told Moses," says the boy, "to lift up a brass serpent, and tell every one who has been bitten to look on it and they will be saved. I was bitten as bad as you are, and I have been saved." "Why," replies the man, "you don't think I am fool enough to believe that a man as near death as I am can be saved by merely looking at a brass serpent on a pole." "Well, I tell you," urges the boy, "twenty minutes ago I was as nearly dead as you are now. My mother came and told me of it, and I was too weak to go but she carried me where I could catch a glimpse of it, and in a minute, yes, in the twinkling of an eye, I was made perfectly whole." "You don't say so," he responds rather curiously, "Yes, I do say so," rejoins the boy. "Why," says the man, "you don't think I am going to make such a fool of myself unless you can show me the philosophy of it?" etc., etc., etc.

Thus your readers may have the opportunity of comparing Moses with Moody, God with man. Comparing Moses who wrote under the inspiration of God with Moody who spoke his utterances, as the preface to the volume tells us, "under the noblest inspirations, and they deserve to be read by millions of people who want to know the gospel in its simple, Scriptural purity, and how it is proclaimed by one whom God has placed at the head of evangelists, and who has a wonderful facility of adapting his discourses to the occasion, and thus gives them a freshness that extemporaneous speakers, repeating themselves, often lack. And not only so but his mental activity and spiritual growth impart newness and power to his addresses and prayers which men who speak much, and live upon themselves, as it were, are apt to want." \*\*\*