

of-hand, wonderful, rather than edifying, to hearers. Quite in contrast with such a procedure, Dr. Maclaren sets the wholesome example of laying, himself, a listening ear to the lively oracles of God. He will not speak until he hears. He will first learn and afterward teach.

What I now mean may best be shown in specific example. Almost at random—for Dr. Maclaren's habit hardly admits of exception—I light upon this; it is the beginning of a sermon entitled "God's True Treasure in Man." The text is a double one:

"The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."—Deut. xxxii: 9.

"Jesus Christ (who) gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people."—Titus ii: 14.

"In my last sermon I dealt with the thought that man's true treasure is in God. My text then was: 'The Lord is the portion of my inheritance; Thou maintainest my lot,' and the following words. You observe the correspondence between these words and those of my first text: 'The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.' The correspondence in the original is not quite so marked as it is in our Authorized Version, but still the idea in the two passages is the same.

"You may remember that I said then that persons could possess persons only by love, sympathy, and communion. From that it follows that the possession must be mutual; or, in other words, that only he can say 'Thou art mine' who can say 'I am thine.' And so, to possess God and to be possessed by God are but two ways of putting the same fact. 'The Lord is the portion of His people' and 'The Lord's portion is His people' are the same truth in a double form.

"Then my second text clearly quotes the well-known utterance that lies at the foundation of the national life of Israel: 'Ye shall be unto me a peculiar treasure above all people,' and claims that privilege, like all Israel's privileges, for the Christian Church. In like manner Peter (1 Peter ii: 9) quotes the same words, 'a peculiar people,' as properly applying to Christians. I need scarcely remind you that 'peculiar' here is used in its proper original sense of 'belonging to,' or, as the Revised Version gives it, 'a people for God's own possession,' and has no trace of the modern signification of 'singular.' Similarly, we find Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, giving both sides of the idea of the inheritance, in intentional juxtaposition, when he speaks (i: 14) of the 'earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of God's own possession.' In the words before us we have the same idea; and this text tells us besides, how Christ, the revealer of God, wins men for Himself, and what manner of men they must be whom He counts as His.

"Therefore there are, as I take it, three things to be spoken about now. First, God has a special ownership in some people. Second, God owns these people because He has given Himself to them. Third, God possesses, and is possessed by, His inheritance, that He may give and receive services of love. Or, in briefer words, I have to speak about this wonderful thought of a special divine ownership, what it rests upon, and what it involves."

What, in effect, is that admirable introduction? What but a thoughtful, reverent, obedient study of the texts, conducted with a view to learn—or rather to put hearers in the way of learning exactly as the