

The Pastor and People.

Conspicuous Ministry.

Some men when their sky is clear And wholly let it glow, If one should speak of dark appear In their great heaven of blue; And some with the faithful love are filled If but one stroke of light, One ray of God's glory, fill The darkness of their night.

Beecher's Yale Lectures on Preaching

CHRIST, THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD.

In the lecture of yesterday it was sought to develop our conception of God mainly from the old Testament Scriptures as that conception is related to nature and paternal government. To-day I shall speak of that manifestation of God which is to be found in Jesus Christ. In the earthly life of our Saviour there was as regular a development, external and internal, as ever took place in any man's life. Coming into the world and assuming human conditions, he passed through the growing in stature and wisdom. He entered upon his ministry a teacher of morals and piety. The qualities of the old Hebrew teachers reappeared in him. He had much in common with the best Rabbis of his day. There was, however, one distinct element of his teaching which appeared early and grew in strength from day to day, coming at last to be the very center of instruction. That idea was that in his own personal life and being he was the Truth, and that all other truth had validity through faith in him, as manifested to them who heard him. No prophet had ever before said, "I am the center of my own argument; and no teacher has ever dared to approach this thought. It is unique. It stands alone among the thoughts and conceptions of some men. In the fancies of insane men, thoughts of this kind have been indulged; but no teacher in his right mind, before or since, has claimed so much for himself. If I should say to you, "Only such of you as believe in me will understand what I say," you would wonder, and rightly. But he did this with a sovereignty always calm and serene. He said, "I am the Truth, the Life and the Way." "Believe," he said, not in my mission, not in my instruction, but "believe in me." Out of that belief there grew all the phenomena which he had predicted and promised. If, in searching, you shall find out this truth in Christ, by that element you may bring men into a personal recognition of him. You will preach superficially, if you preach only the knowledge of him; you will preach thoroughly, if you preach this life that was in him.

Here is the test of pastoral orthodoxy. To preach Christ one must have this vital conception of him, this full appreciation of his personality. He must be brought home to men in his biographical and historical life. During the last fifty years, some one hundred biographies of Christ have been written and published. This shows the drift of thought in this century. No ministry can be fruitful and neglect this field. We must secure a more perfect rendering of Christ as he existed in time. The work of arranging and bringing into order the geographical and archeological elements, delineations of the psychology of the period in which he lived, all these may enter more largely than formerly into the work of the ministry. There are difficulties in the way. There are disagreements in the structure of the four Gospels that will perplex. If you hang on one Gospel, you will convict the others of irregularities. An entire harmony of events in the order of time is impossible. Yet this does not invalidate the authority of those records. Conceive of four old men talking together who remember New Haven fifty years ago. Let each give his recollection of President Dwight. One anecdote, one incident of college life will start another. They will all be related in the order of association of thought—not in the order of time—and all may be equally correct. So with the Gospels. They are a collection of memorabilia; sometimes there is the order of events, and sometimes not. The historic element, however important, is only preliminary. You might deliver a series of lectures on his life, his inception and birth, his childhood, his entrance upon the ministry, following him all the way through to his death; and not bring Christ into any near relation to your people. You may present his life as you would the history of Caesar and his campaigns without enkindling any new life or awakening men's souls to a sense of want.

It is often thought that Christ is preached when his divinity is set forth and proven. I don't undervalue this old textual battle, although I think it the weakest method of preaching Christ. To my mind, the preponderance of the textual evidence is unquestionably in favor of his divinity, but with me it amounts to but little, as there is other evidence so overwhelming. There are many persons to whom the hidden meaning of his washing his disciples' feet amounts to nothing, but to me it is one of the greatest proofs of that divinity. The wants, however, of the so-called practical men must be met. If one rests after reaching his Biblical ground of proof, he comes almost infinitely short of the spirit of the task assigned him, for a Christ proven is not a Christ received.

In the preaching of Christ undue prominence has sometimes been given to the doctrine of the Trinity. I am a Trinitarian, not because I understand it, but because, all things taken into account, the doctrine seems to me the most complete and most natural solution of the mysteries of the divine nature. In Boston, during the Unitarian difficulty, it assumed an abnormal importance. Because the doctrine may be important in theory, and important in forming a system, it does not follow that

it is important in saving men. When men come to me and say, "How can you conceive the Trinity?" I may say the analogy of nature is in favor of such a view. For, looking in the light of modern discoveries, we see that life first starts from the simplest possible forms, then becomes complex, separating into groups; then, coming up to a man, divides into families of families. The next step, according to the analogy, would be a multiplication of personalities. Why may not the analogy be carried to this point, and the fact of Trinity be, at least, suggested? If it is asked me, "How can you believe in Christ as God with such limitations and weaknesses as are ascribed to him?" I may answer, no man is able to determine how much is necessary for Deity. Who can draw the line between human beings and angels—between angels and God? It is enough to know that Christ is divine by reason of his relation to human wants and human souls. If one can love Christ with all his soul, lean on him and trust him wholly, then it is manifest that he is God, for what more could a man do toward a God? In my ministry I have met with many Unitarians who were in doubts regarding the Godhead of Christ. I have sought to awaken in them a strong need, a growth, a yearning for something which they did not possess; then I would say to them, "There is a view of God in Christ that is perfectly adapted to your want, and I have that conscious want as the best argument. Develop the wants of men, make them hungry in soul, and they will accept Christ. Afterward you may use the moral arguments. Lay aside the controversial manner, build up the spiritual life and thousands will be brought into a sweet relationship to Him, which they never would have found on the battle-ground of text or Trinity.

I believe the preaching of the personal life of Christ is more effectual with men than that of the atonement, however important that doctrine may be. Christ must be so preached that he will be accepted as a living fact. The living, personal Christ ought to be the end of your ministry, because the majority of men are more susceptible to fact than to any explanation of it. In the thoughts of many men there is much perplexity, because we go back to Jerusalem for our Christ. In the beginning of my ministry I used to sit with Him under the olive trees, and walked with Him to Bethany, looked with Him down upon Jerusalem, and was in bondage to the historical Christ, but I got loose from it. Now, to me the present, living Christ is a thousand times more glorious than Jerusalem ever saw, fuller of the manifestations of love, enveloping every soul as the atmosphere of a continent overshadows every flower. If you take your people back to Him of Jerusalem, it is a weary pilgrimage. The risen Christ is that manifestation of God that will be most potent with your people. When Christ appeared on earth, there was among men a knowledge of the one God as governor. Christ came to make Him known in his love, in his innermost and personal disposition. He came not to tell men they were sinners; they know that before; but to release them from sin. He came to impart his own life to men, that from that source all godliness should spring, as in a great factory all the machinery starts when the great wheel is put in motion.

Never have I had clearer conceptions of the Christ that now is, than when endeavoring to release men from their bondage to sin. As the light began to dawn on them, and they obtained spiritual freedom, the thought flashed upon me, "That is Christ in you." Then I went back to the Word of God, and it flamed where it smoldered before. I had almost said, my Christ is formed out of these fragments of Christ's likeness in men. When I think of how much men suffer for one another, of fathers and mothers suffering for worthless children, who live only in the prophecy of their hopes, I gather all this together and frame it into a conception of the everlasting Christ, and come to my people as certain as Job was that my Redeemer liveth. My belief is a life and a power.

Young gentlemen, the one thing essential to success in your ministry is Christ-likeness. None of you will successfully preach him till he is formed in you. You should stand for Christ to your people. This is a thought to make one tremble. If when you come to them they see the likeness of your Master, then they, seeing your good works, shall glorify your father which is in heaven. You say to the Lord, "Oh, that I may sit at thy right hand," but he answers, "Are you willing to drink of the cup which I drink of?" Are you willing to suffer with him that you may be glorified together? Then shall you be able to preach Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The Christian in Sorrow.

"God had one Son on earth without sin, but never a son on earth without affliction." This has long been regarded one of the best sayings of Augustine. It is very true and quite coincides with Scripture. It is fully borne out by that saying of the prophet David: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous. Blessed Paul says: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." And sixty years after his ascension to glory Jesus himself said: "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten."

All this when rightly considered, is seen to be far and fitting. For if the Saviour suffered, it is right the saved should suffer also. It is a great thing to be conformed to Christ in temper of suffering. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." "We which remain do fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." As Christ's sufferings prepared Him to be the Captain of our Salvation, and our sympathizing friend; so our sufferings make us mindful of the sorrows of our Lord, and increase our sympathy with Him in all His undertaking for us.

There is a 'need be' for all the trials of God's children on earth. Their pangs promote their purity. God puts them in to the furnace that He may consume their dross, take away all their sin, and bring them out as pure gold. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of

men." He has no pleasure in seeing His chosen suffer; but He delights to see His image on their hearts perfected. He chastens them for their profit, that they may be partakers of His holiness. He is a wise and good Father; and all His people on earth are more or less wayward. Blessed be His name; He will not cease to chastise them till their wills submit to His, and rejoice in tribulation. Thereby the Lord is honored and their salvation promoted.

Future glory will be somewhat in proportion to what Christ's people suffer for Him here. The crown of martyrdom is exceedingly bright. The glorious throng, which John saw, was made up of those who came out of great tribulation, and had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. How sweet will be rest after turmoil, peace after war, a quiet home after a long and perilous journey.

Where is the experienced minister who has not often seen one year of suffering do more for the glory of Christ than five years of service?

N. D. was a small man with an effeminate voice. His tones sounded as if he were not in a good humor. He was not popular. He lived in considerable retirement. He had but little worldly goods, yet no one accused him of closeness. For one in his circumstances he gave liberally. He was a great student of the Word of God. He saw in men much that he could not approve. Nor did he keep silence at such times. He was very punctual in attending the house of God. He maintained family worship with great regularity. No one saw any flaw in his morals. But he could not express himself well on any subject. His manners were stiff and awkward.

When he had been a professor of religion for about twenty-five years, he became a great sufferer. A complication of diseases came upon him. No such case of bodily disease had ever been seen in his neighborhood. No one saw him sleep for as much as six weeks at a time. He was in constant and excruciating pain. No one could see him without feeling great pain at his bodily distress. He wore away rapidly. He could not walk at all. He could not turn himself in bed. In this sharp trial his piety shined forth with great clearness. Not a murmur escaped his lips. He showed no impatience. His meekness and mildness were very striking. His voice, still effeminate, had quite lost its querulous tone. He was full of thankfulness to God and man. Of the least favor done him he would make some respectful and grateful mention. His whole character seemed to be changed.

Yet he did not profess to be recently converted. On the contrary, he still believed that he had met with a saving change of heart long before. He spoke with delight of many pleasant days he had in youth, when alone or when publicly worshipping God. He seemed to remember with accuracy, and to quote with appositeness considerable portions of God's Word. He was a wonder unto many. Yes, he was a wonder to himself. He expressed his views as candidly as ever, but with the greatest gentleness and charitableness. His case was much spoken of. Many a Christian went miles to see him. The feeling of every one seemed to be much like that of the prophet, when he saw the bush in the midst of the flame unconsumed: "I will turn aside and see this great sight." And truly, it was good to see how grace could bear one up, and bear him on, and bear him through, when his body was racked with exquisite tortures.

N. D. lived several years after this season of violent suffering, but he never ceased to be an invalid, nearly helpless, and often full of pain. His faith seemed to grow exceedingly. His end was peace.

This little narrative should teach us

- 1. Not to judge of character by mere voice or manner. Some good men have no manner at all. And some very good men have very bad manners.
2. Yet we ought to study to commend to others our religion by those ways which are pleasant, lovely, and of good report. Piety is no foe to the amenities of life.
3. No man knows what he can do, and what he can bear, till he is tried and receives new supplies of grace. N. D. considered himself a wonder of mercy.
4. Let no man judge his brother. "The weak brother shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." He who is most humble, is best prepared to stand severe tests.
5. We greatly err when we lightly esteem the least of Christ's disciples, the poorest of the saints. On trial they may quite outshine us.
6. It is certain that neither N. D. nor any other good man, who has left this world, regrets any sufferings he ever endured on earth. All is well that ends in glory.
7. Amazing is the distinguishing love of God, which often takes men, who are naturally neither attractive nor amiable, and makes them the monuments of redeeming mercy. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.—Rev. William S. Plumer, D. D.;

Without the Bible.

The world has had six thousand years to bring in its "more excellent way." What has it devised, apart from the Bible, to heal the sores of the broken, wounded, bleeding heart? What has Rome, in her ages of martial glory, or Greece, in her era of philosophic culture and refinement, done to solve the vexed problem of aching humanity? What streams of comfort has the rod, wielded by the greatest intellects, or extorted from the barren rock? What trees have they planted in the world's desert "whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed, whose fruit shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof be for medicine?" On the other hand, how many thousands and tens of thousands, racked with pain, tortured with doubt, worn with anxiety, agitated with remorse, darkened with bereavement—the sick, the weary, the lonely, the dying, have been cheered, and refreshed, and comforted by the everlasting consolation of this holy Book.—Macaulay.

Something Wrong.

The Church is not reaching the masses. What is the matter? Jesus went to them; we wait for them to come to us. Religion is kept too much in Sabbath clothes. We should take it with us to the markets of trade and shops of industry. It is more at home and more beautiful clothed with the farmer's frock, the carpenter's apron, the coat of toil, than in silks and broad-cloth. Many Christians are so grave, pretentious, formal, and precise, that they enail and repel. Some are silent about religion and bring it into contempt. Churches are unsocial, formal, dignified, a terror to the rough and rustic. Saloons are a hundred times more accessible. Pow-runs and fine clothes lock the doors against the masses. How can we correct such evils? We must make our Churches more social, more accessible, and common; we must seek summers where they are—go to them, go in love and wisdom—get hold of them, help them, save them.—Baptist Union.

A Scene from Life.

A young man entered a village tavern and called for a drink. "No," said the landlord, "you have had delirium tremens once, and I cannot sell you any more." He stepped aside to make room for a couple of young men who had just entered, and the landlord waited upon them very politely. The other had stood by silent and sullen, and when they had finished he walked up to the landlord, and thus addressed him: "Six years ago, at their age, I stood where these young men now are, I was a man with fair prospects. Now, at the age of twenty-eight, I am a wreck, body and mind. You led me to drink. In this room I formed the habit that has been my ruin. Now sell me a few glasses more and you will be done! I shall soon be out of the way; there is no hope for me. But they can be saved. Do not sell it to them, sell to me and let me die, and the world will be rid of me; but for heaven's sake sell no more to them!" The landlord listened, pale and trembling. Setting down his decanter, he exclaimed, "God help me, this is the last drop I will ever sell to any one!" And he kept his word.—Exchange.

The Darling Sin.

"Take heed especially of this sin, says an old writer, "the strength of sin lies in the beloved sin, that is like a humor striking to the heart, which brings death. I have read of a monarch that, being pursued by the enemy, throw away the crown of gold on his head, that he might run the faster; so that sin, which thou didst wear as a crown of gold, throw it away, that thou mayst run the faster to the kingdom of heaven. Oh! if you would not loose glory, mortify the beloved sin; set it, as Uriah, in the forefront of the battle to be slain; by plucking out this right eye, you shall see the better to go to heaven."

Who that is honest and earnest in the business of working out his salvation, does not desire to know what his darling sin is? Attention to the following points will be likely to result in the possession of this knowledge: 1. It is the sin which the man most cherishes, and to which all other sins are subservient. 2. Which he does not like to have reproved. 3. Which has the most power over him, and most easily loads him captive. 4. Which he uses arguments to defend. 5. Which most troubles him, and rises up first in his conscience in an hour of sickness and distress. 6. Which he is most unwilling to part with.

But, however it may be, let the Christian find it out, watch it, wage war against it, strive to overcome it, and pray God frequently and fervently to deliver him from it, that it may not destroy his peace, blight his influence, stain his character, and possibly weigh his soul in the agony of an unconquered passion or lust.—Presbyterian Weekly.

Of Loving Jesus

The consciousness of loving Jesus never brings up in the heart so, nor runs over in such irrepressible tears and vows, as when a new act of contrition has been done and a new pardon got. Then is the poor soul glad to find its rest again, and see the cloud pass from the loved face, and lie low, yet near, in the recovering countenance of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, when it has washed its feet and is clean every whit, is it ready to sit down with Him, and forget toil and fight and danger of falling, forget the outside wintry world and snares of Satan laid in the dark, for the present joy of communion with Him whom it loves. I wish you cultivated this warm penitent love that rests in its own conscious assurance, and is pleased to lie still and say, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest." Religion which stops at feeling love without doing anything is one-sided; but so is a religion which undervalues silent, meditative love for the sake of bustling or showy activity. We have here something to learn from those Christians, plentiful in other generations, who spent their days in the ardent exercise of this grace, feeling the love-fire on their own hearts. To muse on Jesus till one's thoughts begin to burn within, and the fountains of the deep are stirred, and the soul overflows in lavishness of affection, thanks, and tenderness; to break thus the costliest perfume of one's heart on His feet who alone is worthy of it, is not very unlike the much-pardoned, much-loving woman in the Gospel, not very unfit for pardoned sinners in any age. Very good would it be did we now and then take our hearts to task for their coldness; asking them, amid all our manifold duties, "Heart, lovest thou Jesus? Why art thou never in a glow? Why so seldom even warm with love? What love is that of thine which wasteth no alabaster boxes, is never lavish of its thanks, nor ever outgushes with any restrainable tenderness of feeling? Hast thou, then, been forgiven so very little, that thou canst give only the cold, decent proprieties of a circumspiced and just man, who never was lost, instead of the melted, repentant love of a pardoned harlot, a returned prodigal, or a converted Peter?"—J. Oswald Tucker.

Worthy of Hire.

Is the minister worthy of his hire? The good book says so. Some people who are not ministers, who seem obvious to the fact, would see and declare it too, if they were ministers for a little while. The custom of inviting ministers to officiate at anniversaries, funerals, dedications, meetings, and what-not, and then leave them to pay their own expenses, is as much a grievance on the other side of the Atlantic as on this. The London Christian World enumerates five remarkable instances: One minister went six miles and attended a delectable service; another travelled three hundred miles and delivered addresses; another forty miles, and a fifth nine miles and officiated, and in every case without remuneration one penny being given towards defraying expenses. People do such things in this country too, and probably will continue to do so long as selfish and thoughtless people constitute so large a part of the world's population.

The Prepared Place.

It is no dream of fancy, no fond illusion, this place prepared "beyond the rainbow and the setting" by Jesus for his disciples. And we know not how near the time may be when, through trouble of heart and sorrow of spirit, our place in this world may become to us so sorrowful, or our stay in it so short and full of pain, that our thoughts will find no refuge but in the thought of that ether, better, higher place where he has gone, and in the thought that he is there, and is preparing it for us.

How does he prepare it? First, by being there himself. Without his presence heaven would be no heaven to those who love him. He prepares it also as he has prepared our earthly dwelling-place, by making it a place where man can be happy; not a mere whirl of circling angels, like a painter's dream. We cannot dream, far less paint, what it might be: "for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" but if even in this world those things make them so happy, how much more will it be so there! But again, Jesus prepares a place for us by a way full of sorrow to us now, but full of hope for our future, even by taking our loved ones there. Our dear ones are not lost; they fare safe with him, kept for us. If the old home is broken up, a new one is being made ready.—Selected.

Congregation Singing.

One of the most cheering features of the times is the tendency to a healthful reformation in the praises of the sanctuary. The leader of the music and his choir often act as if they were put into their position to take charge of the music, and some have taken charge of it in their own way, impressed with the idea that they were employed to do the singing much the same as the minister the preaching; and some congregations have accepted the situation, quietly settling down into the impression that they were to be preached to during one part of the service and sung to in the other.

But how can the congregation generally be induced to take part—and take part heartily—in the singing? I answer, by a persistent urgency of the duty and the privilege by the pastor. A sermon on the subject may be well enough, but that is not sufficient, nor even a request now and then to join heartily in the service. Mr. Spurgeon used to hammer away at it constantly, until he gained his end; and he often does so still, by way of reminder. On announcing the hymn he sometimes invites, and sometimes rebukes, or remonstrates, or perhaps denounces, as the case may require; but he keeps at it one way or another, until it gets to be understood that everybody is to do his part in the praises of the sanctuary. And the result may well be the admiration and an example to all other congregations.

One other thing we may also do, viz., utilize our Sabbath-schools. Never has there been such children's singing as is often heard in our Sabbath-schools. And yet how great the contrast, after listening to the volume of animated song in the Sabbath-school, to go into the church and find how "isotonas languish on the tongue," and all "devotion dies," even where there is a good choir to assist! Why should this be? Why not bring a number of the Sabbath-school songsters together in the house of God, and let them, in co-operation with the choir, lead the congregation. But as things now are the Sabbath-school songsters become dumb when they are in the sanctuary.

What has been said as to choir by no means applies to all. Many do their work well, feeling themselves part of the congregation, and earnestly desiring to be an important adjunct to the pulpit. But others sadly need reform; and as to congregational singing, the importance of an improvement, so that all can and will join in the singing, can scarcely be over-estimated. Made what it should be and may be, it becomes not only an attraction to the house of God, but an inspiration to both preacher and hearers. "Let all the people praise God."

One Anna Wilkes has brought out a book to establish the theory that Ireland is the ancient "Ur of the Chaldees." Assuming that Shinar is Europe, the authoress proceeds to assign fixed localities to other places which are mentioned as being situated in that land. She concludes, after many speculations, that Ireland, being Ur of the Chaldees, was, therefore, the scene of the "rise of some of the patriarchs," among them of Abraham. She states that probably his father Terah gave name to ancient Tara and that the Tuatha-de-Danann were a colony of the people of Dan. "Now we find," she says, "that Jacob on this mount of Gilad took a stone and set it up for a pillar. It is not a little remarkable that on the mound of Tara was a stone so sacred and valuable that it was the custom for many centuries to crown the kings of Ire-