

## Pastor and People.

### THE HOUSE OF MY PILGRIMAGE.

'Tis "the House Beautiful!" its frescoed ceiling,  
Studded with stars of light,  
Is ever to my lifted gaze revealing  
Visions of worlds so bright  
That I am awed with wonder God should care  
To make the pilgrim's wayside inn so fair.

Its pillared mountains draped in emerald glory,  
Its tessellated floor  
Illumed with creation's golden story,  
And rich with such a store  
Of lavish loveliness on every hand,  
Too vast, too marvellous to understand.

Light, colour, fragrance, all beyond comparing;  
Sweet melodies that make  
The ear that listens overwhelmed, despairing,  
Through very rapture ache.  
So much of worldless beauty, grandeur, grace,  
Just for sojourners' brief abiding-place!

And wherefore? Is it that my heart should linger  
Content as it hath been,  
Seeing with what adornment God's own finger  
Hath hung the pilgrim's inn,  
That, with my senses satisfied through bliss,  
I ask for no diviner home than this?

Nay, nay, not so! If earth's seducing splendour  
Can eye and ear engage  
With such a full content as even to render  
My house of pilgrimage,  
With all its ills, so beautiful to me,  
What must the "house of many mansions" be?

—Margaret J. Preston.

### ON PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

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

#### NO. XIV.—EVANGELISTIC PREACHING.

There is a type of preaching that may properly be called evangelistic, because it lays great emphasis upon the saving truth of the Gospel. It constantly reiterates that. It sees man mainly as a lost sinner, who is to be rescued from his perilous position and brought back to God. It realizes deeply his danger and the doom that is pronounced upon him—eternal death—and so it bestirs itself to arouse him to a sense of his condition, and to pluck him as a brand from the fire. That this kind of preaching is needed and is justifiable, no one will question. It may be far more necessary than many a minister imagines, because there may be many fair professors in the Church, who are only professors and no more. All the care a Session may take in examining candidates for Church membership; the most searching questions that may be put to them, may fail to elicit the true condition of their hearts. A saving faith may not be in exercise on the part of the applicants, and no Session can see the heart, and so unsaved and unjustified persons may find a place among the sons of God. This cannot be helped. But alas! not unfrequently there is such a desire for numbers that any kind of a profession is admissible. The late Dr. Bayne, of Galt, was wont to have candidates examined repeatedly ere they were commended to the Session as fit and proper persons to sit down at the Lord's table. In many cases, I am informed, candidates appeared before him thirteen and fourteen times. In these days, it is to be feared, that in too many cases sufficient care is not taken to see that there is a good clear knowledge of the plan of salvation, and a cordial acceptance of its terms, and an entire reliance upon the divine provision, ere persons are admitted to the Lord's table. We may have got too far away from knowledge and have fallen into the arms of an empty faith, so that we accept persons who say they have faith. I cannot imagine that we are so enlightened that we are superior to the requirements of John Knox, who insisted on all who approached the Lord's table having a knowledge of the Lord's prayer, the creed, the ten commandments, the number, use and effect of the sacraments, the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, of His offices and natures, and how to pray, and wherein their righteousness stands or consists, "seeing that the just lives by his own faith, and Christ Jesus justifies by the knowledge of Himself." Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God; hence, knowledge underlies faith, and is, according to Paul, inseparable from it. If care is not exercised here at this point, the Church will soon be loaded with thick clay and will require evangelistic preaching as much as those who are unconverted. And that for the simple reason that it is not a saved community, and needs to be converted to the Lord. It is a sin of no small dimensions to receive into Church fellowship unsaved and ignorant persons, that is, ignorant of the saving truth of the Gospel. It is simply to them a delusion and a snare, because they imagine that when they have been received into the Church they are all right, and so settle down in their unawakened condition—heart dead, conscience dead, mind dark—just to live their old carnal life in new circumstances. Terrible, terrible, is that! Oh, how much these poor souls need Gospel truth. Evangelistic preaching is the aggressive element in the minister's work. In that he assaults the strongholds of Satan and offers mercy to the sinful, pardon to the rebellious, and peace to the troubled. He extends the gracious invitation of the Lord: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." He proclaims His welcome assurance: "Him that cometh unto Me I will

in no wise cast out." He declares the great alternative. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He beseeches men in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God. He seeks the immediate conversion of souls. For until men be turned from their sins, there will be nothing attractive in God or in holiness. The Word of God will have no winning voice, and the ways of God no charm. A man must be born again to live as a child of God. He must accept Christ Jesus as his personal Saviour ere he can be a Christian. And to do this he must realize his own lost condition, he must have knowledge of what Christ has done to deliver him, and he must with his whole heart accept Christ as his Saviour, and henceforth live by the faith of Him. There is no other way of salvation. This, evangelistic preaching insists upon, and that, too, with the multifarious variety of statement found under the altar forms of the Old Testament, and the cross-forms of the New. How richly our Lord presented the Gospel! He, with His great diversity of statement, met the peculiar needs of all kinds of mental character. Any minister who will study the Bible, and drink into the urgency, and love, and compassion of God in their varied expressions will become a grand evangelist. This kind of preaching is not to be relegated to those who are specially called to evangelistic work. It belongs to the functions of every minister, and it should be assiduously cultivated. Without this how shall the minister save some? This lies at the very foundation of his work as a minister. It opens the door into it. It prepares and provides a field of labour for him. It gives him evidences of the genuineness of his call to serve God in the Gospel of His Son. As Matthew Henry says: "Ministers are fishers of men—not to destroy them but to save them, by bringing them into another element. They must fish—not for worth, wealth, honour, and preferment, to gain them to themselves; but for souls to gain them to Christ. It is Jesus that makes them so. It is He that qualifies them for this work, calls them to it, authorizes them in it and gives them success in it; gives them commission to fish for souls, and wisdom to win them."

Richard Baxter, in writing the life of the Rev. Joseph Alleine, speaks of him in this way: "His fervent zeal and thirst for the people's conversion and salvation was a great advantage to his success. For, let men's parts be ever so great, I have seldom known any man to do much good, that was not earnestly desirous to do good, if he long not for men's conversion, he is seldom the means of converting many."

Dr. Richard Sibbes, in familiar discourse with Thomas Goodwin (afterwards Doctor), said to him, doubtless, with all the earnestness and sweetness of his heavenly soul. "Young man, if you ever would do good, you must preach the Gospel and the free grace of God in Christ Jesus." Goodwin never forgot this and his ministry was very fruitful. That is the secret in successful evangelistic preaching. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." This is often overlooked and something other than the Gospel is preached, and we wonder why we have no results. We sow dandelion and expect wheat. We sow science and philosophy and expect conviction of sin and salvation, but such results do not follow, and thank God that they do not, or else we should soon have no Gospel at all, men so adore the fruit of their own toil, and the product of their own efforts.

Spurgeon says, "We have not success, because we have not faith. A young brother once said to me, 'I have preached in the streets, and I have seen no converts.' I said to him, 'Do you expect people to be converted every time you preach?' He replied very humbly, 'No, sir.' When I said, 'That is the reason you do not succeed, because you do not expect to do so.' 'According to your faith, so be it unto you.' If you preach, hoping that you will have success, possibly you will get a success; but if you preach knowing that the Word cannot return void, and that God the Holy Ghost is with you, you will not have long to wait before your faith shall be rewarded." Oh, for more prayer and more faith. Oh, for more power with men for God, because we have more power with God for men. Were the doctrines we preach to fill our souls, heart, and mind, till we became saturated with them, then would our preaching, teaching, and working, be with power; then would the hundred-fold harvest be granted us."

John Berridge, of Everton, England, gives an account of his life-work in a letter he wrote to an intimate acquaintance, entitled "Justification by Faith Alone," in which he shows that for many years he preached salvation partly by faith and partly by works, "and pressed sanctification upon the people very earnestly, yet they continued as unsanctified as before, and not one soul was brought to Christ. There was indeed a little more of the form of religion in the parish, but not a whit more of the power." Then he traces his anxieties and prayers and long continued heart trouble till the true light of the Gospel broke in upon him, and he saw that the rock he had been splitting on for nearly thirty years was "some secret reliance on my own works for salvation," instead of trusting in the free grace of God in Jesus Christ alone. This lifted him out of the pit where he had laboured uselessly so long, and carried him into the light and clothed him with power, so that he became one of the best evangelistic preachers in England and was used in saving many. Berridge's letter is well worth reading. This is one reflection he makes: "I preached up sanctification very earnestly for six years in a former parish, and never brought one soul to Christ. I did the same at this parish for two years, without any success at all, but so soon as ever I preached Jesus Christ and faith in His blood, then believers were added to the Church continually, then people flocked from all parts to hear the glorious sound of the

Gospel, some coming six miles, others eight and others ten, and that constantly."

Outside the Bible, there is one book every minister should read who would realize the value of souls, namely, "Baxter's Reformed Pastor."

### WORK FOR THE NIGHT IS COMING.

Poverty, misfortunes and calamities come to the industrious, but not so frequently as to the sluggard who wastes the golden moments which fly so swiftly.

Broken limbs or severe illness often change the circumstances of the cheerful and energetic labourer. To these sufferers sympathy and help are freely given by those who can spare from their own abundance. For the sluggard there is not in the present wide-awake period even pity. Nothing but contempt. Some one has said the "world wants and will have your best."

I am surrounded by earnest, wide-awake young people who are "up and doing," giving of their best to useful and elevating study, making good use of each opportunity that is afforded to improve themselves. Many of them have bodily said, "We will give to the Lord our very best."

Quite lately I have seen sad wrecks of men and women who are daily falling back, back in the march of life, weary and worn, unable to keep step. For them life is almost done. The life blood flows sluggishly through their veins. The burden bearers must help them along, unable to rescue them from the fatal lethargy which has paralyzed bodily and mental power.

A scoffer lately, while taunting a young Christian girl with her inexperience and weakness, said: "Where are your sheaves? How many do you suppose you can garner in?"

For some days she sorrowfully thought: "Nothing but leaves." Can it be that I will have nothing more to offer the Lord?

A wise friend was confided in, who advised, "Break off one bad habit, Ruth. Cease to be a dreamer. Get down to work, real work. Speak pleasant words, look for the good things in your friends' characters. Don't see their faults unless you can help them overcome them. Dreams accomplish nothing, though the dreams may be beautiful plans for work, if the plans end only in dreams. The time spent in your indulgence of this habit may be better used in helping your tired mother. You are cultivating idle habits. Remember, dear, that the Bible especially warns Christians against slothful habits. Time is given us to use wisely. The more that we make of ourselves, the greater opportunities we shall have to gather sheaves. Jesus was a tireless worker. He went about doing good. His whole life is a sermon against slothfulness and day-dreaming, and nothing was too humble for him to notice. Look about you, Ruth, and see the different influences exerted by the sluggards and the wide awakes. When you dream, dream to some practical purpose."

Ruth profited by the needed reproof. She immediately began trying to leave off day-dreaming, a habit which was fast leading her into sluggish ways. She now finds work for every waking moment, and trusts the winning of the sheaves to the Lord of the harvests for whom she is working.

Among the threadbare, even ragged, men and women who find the world a dreary place for the incompetent and weak, a great number of them have not had that blessed help to a future life of usefulness, a busy, studious boy and girlhood: shielded from every hard thing, allowed an abundance of time to "enjoy youth's pleasure in," the "work habit" was not formed in time to make it easy to "buckle down" when the need came.

The happiest boy that I have ever known is a laddie who has been an "Endeavour" ever since he was seven years old. Always up in the morning in time to help mamma "just a little" before breakfast, and doing something for somebody all the day long.

For mamma's "company" he began to go to the prayer meeting church and mission services, growing up into a tall boy who is yet "mother's company." His life is a busy one, and his laugh is contagious. With clean hands and heart and great energy, I think he will be a well spent life, since he has chosen for his guide the Saviour. He will be no slothful servant, for he knows that drowsiness will clothe a man with rags, and that no dreamer of idle dreams will hear the "Well done thou good and faithful servant" from our Lord, who has promised the reward to those who hold out faithful unto the end.

### DOUBTS AND NO DOUBT.

I heard a good man and a great preacher recently say, and with intense earnestness. "If you imagine that as a Christian I am never vexed with doubts, you are greatly mistaken." Admit, then, that the Christian is sometimes troubled with doubts, still the best Christian is the best citizen, the best husband, the best father, the truest friend, the worthiest man of business, the most faithful agent, the most useful teacher, so that the religion of Christ has promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come. Unbelief adds nothing to a man's genius or to a man's greatness, to a man's courage or to a man's culture, to the development of his mind or of his body. Poetry is not its child, nor is oratory, nor courtesy, nor the sweet charities of life. Gentlemen and gentlewomen lose none of their gentleness by gathering about the cross of Christ, and the man of letters loses none of his power over men by learning of Christ. Why read any history, if not the history of the Bible; and poetry, if not the poetry of the Bible; any biography, if not the biography of the Bible?

Whence comes the inspiration of all human law? What bad advice has the Bible given to father, mother, child, workman, warrior, priest, patriot, sovereign, soldier, rational man or woman? No Christian was ever by virtue of his Christianity made stingy, unsympathetic, unneighbourly, uncharitable, unreliable, unforgiving, unattractive. There can be no honest doubt of that. —Sunday School Times.