

A Great Preacher Gone.

BY THE EDITOR.

"DR. JOSEPH PARKER is dead," was the message borne by the cable across the sea a short time ago. The news was not unexpected, as he had been in a very infirm condition for some months.

Probably no preacher in the world was better known, as almost every visitor to London, who was at all interested in the churches, went to hear him in the City Temple, and his published works have been widely read in both the old world and the new.

In every sense Dr. Parker was a remarkable personality. His appearance was unusual and attracted attention everywhere. A massive head, covered with hair that seemed to defy comb and brush to bring it into subjection; a keen, intelligent face, and a voice of marvellous fulness and power, made him a unique figure in the pulpit and platform. When he began to speak, his utterances were so original and striking as to compel attention. In terse, epigrammatic and forceful forms of expression he was unequalled.

Dr. Parker gave himself to God in very early life. His own testimony in regard to his religious experience is interesting. He says: "I cannot remember when I did not, in some degree, know the love of God's only Son. From a child I knew the Holy Scriptures, for it was the book most read in our house; from a child also, I have known something of tender spiritual experience. I remember the Sunday night when, walking with my father, and a most intelligent Sunday-school teacher, I declared my love for Christ, and asked Him to take my child heart into his own gracious keeping."

Having thus started right, he very soon joined the "Junior League," or at least began to do the same kind of work that many of our boys and girls are now doing. He tells us:

"As a boy in my early teens, I do not ever remember sitting down to my own Sunday dinner without first taking a plateful of smoking refreshments to a poor widow who lived not far away. Having deposited the little gift with her, I ran back and enjoyed my own dinner all the more for this little recreation."

He began to preach when twenty-three years of age, his salary being £130, which he thought, and said, was too much. The first twenty pounds that he saved was sent home to his parents. He kept on sending money home until all that his father had expended upon his education had been repaid.

Dr. Parker's habits of life were very simple. He was accustomed to rise every morning at seven o'clock and usually took a cold shower bath. His diet was plain, and did not include any expensive or luxurious dishes. In the use of his time he was exceedingly careful and systematic. In order to prevent waste, he would make a sort of programme, arranging the work of the day so that nothing should be neglected that needed to be done. He would sometimes say, "Let us have no talk about want of time. There is time for everything and that time always occurs in the morning."

Dr. Parker commenced his ministry in 1853, and in 1858 went to Manchester where he soon attracted an immense congregation. In 1873 he was called to London, and took charge of a new church to be known as "The City Temple." This pulpit became a throne of influence and power, felt to some extent all over the Christian world. At the very commencement, the great preacher declared his intention to make the City Temple "a terror to evil doers, a tower of strength to all who are honest and pure, and a light to all who are asking the way to the truth and love of God," a purpose which has been fully realized.

Next to its striking originality, the chief characteristic of Dr. Parker's preaching was its evangelical character. He declared the old truths of the Gospel with great clearness. He believed that the Bible was the Word of God; he believed that Christ made atonement for the sin of the whole world, and that men who died impenitent went away into everlasting punishment. He claimed that "evangelical doctrine

answers more questions, satisfies more aspirations, responds to more necessities, and supplies better motives for service than any other doctrine that invites the confidence of man." At the same time he was not in favor of persecuting men who believed differently from himself. He was too large-minded, and too large-hearted to take any pleasure in heresy hunting.

It has been worth a great deal to have such a pulpit in the very centre of the Christian world for thirty years. His enduring monument, however, will be "The People's Bible," which contains the results of his life work. It is not so much a commentary, as a collection of sermons and expositions which were first used in the pulpit.

Dr. Parker was a great preacher but a poor pastor. It is very seldom that any one man excels in both departments. No man can perambulate the streets all week and preach remarkable sermons on Sunday.

He was generally regarded as egotistical, for he was not at



REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

all backward in speaking about himself, but this was part of his personality. He was conscious of his power, and could not help manifesting it. It is a great deal better to see a man with a touch of egotism, if it is natural, than the one who is always hiding his talents.

In view of his recent departure, Dr. Parker's closing words in his autobiography are interesting: "I am nearing yonderland. It outlines itself in morning and evening clouds, and talks to me in breezes which have wandered through heaven's own summer gardens. In dreams when sleep is sweetest, I sometimes hear its freemen sing. It is a fair land. I have heard that its inhabitants shall no more say that they are sick, neither shall there be any more pain. They say old friends forgether there, and see one another more clearly than they could see on earth, and that they together follow the lamb to living fountains of water. They say that in Yonderland there are little children, but no old men. There is 'no setting sun, no scattering storm, neither shall there be any more sea. I am glad to have heard of Yonderland."

The great preacher now knows the secrets of "Yonderland."