

The Pastor and People.

Becher's Yale Lectures on Preaching.

THE POWER OF THE INVISIBLE.

I am to speak to-day of the power that lies in the invisible, of men's relation to the doctrine of a future life, and of the use of the doctrine of man's continued life in your ministry.

Paul, in showing by argument the superiority of the moral forces over the physical, somewhere speaks of God's choosing the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are; that is, of his using the forces above our natural senses, the super-sensuous truths of the other life, the invisible truths of man's spirituality, to overcome forces having an outward manifestation. These unseen powers are stronger than the embattled forces of matter, whether in the household, in society, or in the church.

When we turn to the New Testament we meet with precisely the antithesis of this. The New Testament is steeped in the doctrine of a continued existence. The great after-life overhangs the world as the sky overhangs the earth, and all good is nurtured and brought out by it as the products of the earth are nurtured and matured by the sun.

A belief in immortality affects the conscience. Ethics, when the conscience, but the belief in a continued existence throws it upward and outward, makes the sense of right and wrong larger than rules, tears it from localities and all specialties, makes it a part of the constitution of things, and gives it an infinite scope.

class itself. Men of genius are irresistibly drawn to men of genius, the rich to the rich the noble-born to the noble-born. So there is a perpetual stratification. There is no harm in this, provided the higher class is always drawing up the lower. There must be some way in which the men above can make up the deficiencies of men below.

The other life is presented in the Scriptures both in light and shadow. In the New Testament the use of the bright side is immensely in disproportion to the use of the dark side, as it should be. Fear works to repress. There is no aspiration in it; yet we should not shrink altogether from presenting the fearful side.

The revelation of the life to come is pictorial and not literal. It is addressed to the imagination, and constitutes a grand auroral fresco in the temple of truth. The inspired writers have taken the best things of earth to make up the picture of heaven. Not the least of these best things were the negation of many bad things.

When we begin life, heaven is like the pictures on the ceiling of a cathedral. It tires the boy's neck to look up at them, and they don't please him much when he does see them. Before long he associates the idea of safety with it, and heaven seems a good place in which to get away from hell.

until his little child goes up to open it for him. I have five who have gone up there, and thus become to me evangelists of the heavenly. So we build our heaven out of our griefs and pleasures, but we know that everything will be far better than we have sketched it.

Young gentlemen, if you would be successful in your ministry, you must deal largely with the invisible, the illimitable, the infinite, the absolute. These are the elements which men need to lift them away from the animal. We are born animals, but we are born again spirits, and we are to make our spiritual nature flourish.

In a recent lecture I emphasized the need of the study of mental philosophy in its practical forms, but you may be in danger of becoming a specialist in ethics. Some of the old preachers became such specialists. They were afraid to preach on morals, fearing they might lose the elevation that comes from the larger relations.

Here are three or four simple arguments for the expediency, wisdom, and safety of total abstinence from all intoxicants. Science does not contradict one of them. God's Word does not contradict one of them.

Married Forever.

"And I will betroth thee unto me forever."—Hosea ii, 19.

How wonderful and varied are the figures which Jesus employs to express the tenderness of his covenant love! My soul! thy Saviour! God hath married thee! Wouldst thou know the hour of the betrothment? Go back into the depths of a by-past eternity, before the world was, then and there thine espousals were contracted.

Postpone a present indulgence for a future good.

Left Luggage.

A friend said to me that a good man he named had died, and left £30,000.

I held up my hands, and said, "What a pity!"

He looked surprised, and said, "What do you mean?"

"I mean just what I saw," I replied; "for surely it is a pity, w. . . the man might have sent it on before him, that he should have left his £30,000 behind him, for he will very likely never hear of it again."

"I remember," I said by way of explanation, "that some years ago, as I was travelling, I left my umbrella in the train; and when I found myself in the rain minus my umbrella, I said instinctively, and felt it too, 'What a pity that I should have been so stupid as to have left my umbrella in the train.'" And it is surely a great pity that it should be said of Christian people, he or she has died and left an enormous amount of substance in the train of this world, after allowing for the most liberal interpretation of 1 Tim. v. 8.

Honest Duncan Matheson once said to me, "What a pity that ——— should have left £60,000 to fall into the hands of the devil, for those who will get their hands over it are worldly people." Far better, surely, would it have been to have given Duncan the interest of it for his great self-sacrificing labors, and saved him from all anxiety about money; and instead of his being worked and worried perpetually into a premature grave, he might have been labouring in the gospel for many years to come, and greatly furthering the cause of Christ.

He said, I remember also, at the same time, "If ——— were ever getting back to this world for half a day, the first thing, I believe, she would do, would be to break her will." I suspect there are not a few dead Christians, who, if they got a chance to return to earth, would break their "wills," and bequeath the means they left to the Christ who died for them on Calvary.

It would be a curious sight to look into the Christian left luggage office, and also to see Christians arriving in glory without any luggage to speak of, when they were spoken of as great and wealthy people down here in the professing Church.

It is surely a pity that Christians do not lay out their money for Christ, and be their own executors, and thus send it on before them, for they would find they had been laying up treasures in Heaven: or at least make such arrangements with regard to their means that "their works should follow them."

We hear a great deal just now about the subject of sanctification. The world literally means separation; and we never have anything like an approach to divine sanctification until there is a practical separation between a man and his money. The proof that conversion is thorough is that it has reached down to a man's pocket, and that he spends his money for Christ, and His cause, helping valuable servants of the Lord in their work, and giving to the diffusion of the gospel as he has opportunity.

When we come into the Church by conversion we are consecrated to God, along with all we have, by the blood of Christ. When Aaron and his sons were made priests, it was by first having their ears, hands, and feet touched with blood, and then with oil; and this was symbolical of our separation from self and the world to God, by the blood and spirit of Christ; and as priests of old had no inheritance among the people of the land, so the priests (that is, all saints) of the New Testament period, are to have no inheritance here, but to look for association with a self-sacrificing cast out Christ, who gave up all and himself also for God's glory and man's redemption, and to be content with persecution, pilgrimage and poverty.

The test which Christ gave to the amiable rich man, who was such a good character naturally that Jesus loved him, was, "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions" (Matt. xix, 21, 22).

How wonderful and varied are the figures which Jesus employs to express the tenderness of his covenant love! My soul! thy Saviour! God hath married thee! Wouldst thou know the hour of the betrothment? Go back into the depths of a by-past eternity, before the world was, then and there thine espousals were contracted: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Soon shall the bridal hour arrive, when thine absent Lord shall come to welcome his bride into his royal palace. "The bridegroom tarrieth;" but see that thou dost not slumber and sleep! Surely there is much all around demanding the girded loins and the burning lamps. "At midnight!"—the hour when he is least expected—the cry may be, shall he heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" My soul, has this mystic union been formed between thee and thy Lord? Canst thou say, in humble assurance of thine alliance to him, "My beloved is mine, and I am his!" If so, great, un-speakably great, are the glories which await thee! Thy dowry, as the bride of Christ, is all that omnipotence can bestow, and all that a feeble creature can receive. In the prospect of those glories nuptials, thou needest dread no pang of widowhood. What God hath joined together, no created power can take asunder; he betrotheth thee, and it is—"forever!"—Faithful Promiser.

such expenses by the firm to which they belong, and to which they are so important, and it would be a sign of madness if such men were set to manual labour to support themselves, when they could bring business or wealth to the establishment by devoting all their time and energies to the promotion of its interests. "The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light."

The apostle Paul is sure to be brought up here, and his conduct presented as a reason why Christian laborers should not be supported, because he wrought with his own hands and supported himself. It was noble in him to do it rather than be burdensome. But it was ill-judged of the Church of his day to subject him to that necessity, for the time he wasted making tents could have been used in preaching and writing; and who that has plenty of money would think himself justified in keeping it if he could set a Paul at leisure to give his full time for preaching the gospel, and writing his precious Christian epistles? It was noble in Paul to do what he did, but it was not very creditable to the Church to let him.

There are no doubt tens of thousands of pretended ministers of Christ who have mistaken their calling, and ought not to be supported; but this makes it all the more necessary to give good support to those who are manifestly called by Christ as his ambassadors, and whose successful labors in the conversion or edification of souls show the seal of the Holy Ghost upon their mission. It is only the spiritual mind that has drunk deeply into the spirit of the Christ of God which can enable us to understand the seemingly contradictory conduct and statements of the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. ix., and Phil. iv., for in the former he seems to refuse to have support, and in the latter he appreciates it, blames other Churches for imputation for not giving it and calls the Philippians gift an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (Phil. iv. 18).

We must distinguish between the mercenary and diabolical system of men entering the minister's office for a piece of bread, and the real Christ-given ministry. The former should not have a farthing from the saints of God; the latter should have liberal support, that they may give all their time to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

A Lying Charge.

The late Bishop Andrews, in his last conversations, gave this charge, among others, to the preachers in his communion: Tell them I love them, and to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as they know their labor is not in vain in the Lord. Tell all the Church I feel I have lived very imperfectly, but my hope and confidence are in God, and I hope to meet them in heaven. Tell the preachers not to neglect the Sabbath schools. The children are in an important part of the Church. The words of the Master are: "Feed my lambs."—London S. S. Times.

That's Enough for Me.

"What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?" asked a child who had a mother of one who had none

"Mother told me to whom to go before she died," answered the little orphan. "I go to the Lord Jesus; he was my mother's friend, and he is mine."

"Jesus Christ is in the sky. He is away off, and he has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It's not likely He can stop to mind you."

"I don't know anything about that," replied the orphan. "All I know is, He says He will, and that's enough for me."

What a beautiful answer that was! And what was enough for the child is enough for us all.

Divine Guidance to a Field of Labor.

When the Rev. Elias Cornelius was solicited to occupy a new field of ministerial employment, he sought direction from God, by His word, His providence, the wants of men, and the counsels of Christian brethren, with the greatest anxiety. He wrote to a friend, saying: "With my eyes turned to heaven, and death and the judgment before me, I am trying to ask, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? I desire to have my ears open to everything which is likely to make known His Will. Everything else appears to me comparatively of no moment. We had better be in our graves, than to be in any other field than that which He has chosen for us." This is the spirit which should fill the breasts of those who are going forth, in Christ's name, to guide sinners to the way of life.—Presbyterian Monthly Record.

One Thing Needful.

Let every one who would not suffer shipwreck on the great voyage of life, stamp seriously into his soul, before all things, the great truth of the Scripture text, "One thing needful." Money is not needful; power is not needful; cloverness is not needful; fame is not needful; liberty is not needful; even health is not the one thing needful; but character alone—a thoroughly cultivated will—is that which can truly save us; and, if we are not saved in this sense, we must certainly be damned. There is no point of indifference in this matter, where a man can safely rest, saying to himself, if I don't get better, I shall certainly not get worse. He will unquestionably get worse. The unskillful part of his nature, if left uncultivated will, like every other neglected function, tend to shrink into more meagre vitality and more stunted proportions. Let us gird up our loins, therefore, and quit us like men; and, having by the golden gift of God, the glorious lot of living once for all, let us endeavor to live nobly.—Blackie's Self-Culture.