

Pastor and People.

Teaching and Preaching.

(A paper read before the Beeches Sunday School Union, by the Rev. S. St. N. Dolson, B.A., of Bungay.)

It is not my intention to discuss to-day the respective spheres and duties of preacher and teacher as those words are technically understood. The subject deserves and receives the anxious attention alike of minister and Sunday School teacher, but my remarks will apply exclusively to the work of the Sunday School. I am anxious to guide you to some intelligent conception of the proper relationship between teaching and preaching in the utterances of the teacher.

The distinction between teaching and preaching is universally accepted, even if somewhat vaguely understood. For the purposes of this discussion, I offer this rough definition of the terms in question. By teaching I mean the statement, explanation, and illustration of the facts and doctrines of Holy Scripture, including the exposition of the relation between facts and doctrines, and of the interdependence of the doctrines themselves.

By preaching I understand personal, pointed appeal to the feelings and conscience of the scholars.

It is a mere truism to affirm that a divorce between teaching and preaching would be fatal to most cherished ends of Sunday School work.

Mere teaching never brought a child to the Saviour. If the result of the instruction be the simple loading of the memory with facts and dates, it does not matter whether the subjects be secular or sacred. The spiritual life is as likely to be fed by lists of the Plantagenet kings as by the ages of the antediluvian patriarchs or the dimensions of the Tabernacle. As little spiritual profit would result from a mere memoriter acquaintance with formularies of religious truth.

I need not adduce instances of the evil of failing to accompany teaching by preaching, but I give one illustration of benefit resulting from the union of the two. One very wet morning one of the senior classes in a school I know well consisted of one young woman. The teacher took the opportunity of asking her very earnestly whether she loved Jesus. The question led to thought and prayer, and before long to decision. Admission to the Church soon followed. In this case the conversion was prepared for by many years of careful teaching, but the immediate cause of the surrender to Christ was the earnest preaching of the love of Jesus.

On the other hand, preaching without teaching cannot, in the nature of things, originate a manly, intelligent piety. Excited feeling, with no basis of intelligent conviction, must necessarily be a mere animal and transitory emotion. We are saved by believing on Jesus. A sense of unrest, need, longing, may precede and prepare for faith, but the faith itself must be based upon the knowledge of who Jesus is, and what He has done for us. We are sanctified by the truth, but of course the sanctifying influence of the truth depends upon our acquaintance with its teachings.

But the question arises, can we arrive at any reliable standard of THE DUE PROPORTION BETWEEN TEACHING AND PREACHING?

—between the didactic and the hortatory elements of Sunday School instruction? The examples of our Lord and His Apostles afford valuable guidance here.

Jesus was both Teacher and Preacher, but for every passage in which He is said to have "preached the Gospel of the Kingdom," there are many who say, "He taught the people." It would be quite true to say He was a great preacher, but instinct and custom lead us to call Him "The Great Teacher." What we call "The Sermon on the Mount" is prefaced by the statement, "He opened His mouth and taught them;" and exposition and statement form a large, if not the larger, element of the discourse. In most of Christ's subsequent addresses, exposition forms the substance of His utterances. His parables are rarely accompanied by what we should call "application." They are left to germinate in the mind, awakening thought, and gradually unfolding senses and bearings not at first perceived. Appeals and denunciations are usually uttered in answer to enquiries or objections. The 11th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, for instance, contains thirty verses, of which twenty-seven consist of narrative and instruction, while three suffice for the pathetic appeal, "Come unto Me all ye that labour," etc.

The same general feature characterizes the discourses of the Apostles. The record of Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost consists of twenty-two verses of argument, citation, and interpretation of prophecy, and only three or four of exhortation, only one previously to the people's question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Stephen's discourse contains fifty verses of calm historical facts, with their appropriate explanation—only three of personal appeal. Exactly similar proportions mark Paul's sermon at Antioch in Pisidia, at Athens, and all his recorded discourses.

The practical conclusion seems obvious. We admit the authority of Jesus and His Apostles as regards the truth to be imparted. Can we doubt the wisdom of imitating their methods of imparting it? Their example teaches us, first of all, to erect a broad platform of truth, and from that to hurl a few well-aimed missiles of earnest, affectionate appeal. Let us only ask wisdom from above to teach as plainly and pointedly as our inspired models, and then exhortations as brief as theirs will suffice. We need teachers in the pulpit, but we need them still more in the Sunday School. We expect (often too sanguinely, I fear) that our adult hearers should possess some acquaintance with the main facts and fundamental truths of the Bible. But the child has scarcely any knowledge when he comes to us, no memories to which we can appeal. The commonplaces of our Christian knowledge have all the freshness of novelty to him. It is our work, as Sunday School teachers, to store his mind with the treasures of Divine truth, and on the basis of the knowledge so imparted to appeal to his conscience and heart.

The Christian Law of Giving.

A common error is, that a part of what is in any man's keeping under the name of a "possession" is really his own, whether to hoard for himself or to spend for any selfish satisfaction. Revelation, from first to last, discloses the contrary doctrine. No practical idea is more thoroughly rooted and interwoven in the whole groundwork and texture of the Christian religion, than that all that the Creator of men allows us to have while we are here, to take charge of, belongs to him; and that a certain proportion of it is to be regularly rendered back to him. We can in no way nullify this fundamental law of the kingdom of love. We shall not go to the bottom of our difficulties or our duties till the secular illusion which invests the word "property" is dispelled. In the Christian vocabulary ownership is nothing but stewardship. The word "giving," too, by logical sequence, as literally applied to offerings to God, perpetually misleads. In relation to a fellow-man, what I part with may be a gift; in relation to my Maker and Father, it is no gift at all; it is more like the interest on a loan; it is rather a small sign of indebtedness for an unreckoned and unreckonable bounty. Power to get wealth, the calculating faculty, physical capacity, time, opportunity, natural materials, are all the Creator's, loaned and withdrawn at His will. "Of thine own have we given thee," for of our own we have literally nothing to give. So long as these terms are emptied of their Christian meaning men will continue to disown their duty, refusing alms altogether, or making a merit of self-interested bestowments and a parade of insignificant enterprises, and will reckon as a reserved right the polite apology of having "nothing to spare," which the Bible calls by the plain and awful name of a "robbery of God." Can it be denied that in some quarters the most affectionate appeals for the Redeemer's due proportion of the people's gains are treated very much as the subjects of Pius II. treated his despotic demands of the tenth for a crusade—some of them paying instead of a tenth a fortieth, and others proposing a sixtieth?

Another error is that Christians are somehow fulfilling the obligation of almsgiving when they are only paying the expenses of their church. How often do we hear—"Our congregation is doing less than we should like to do for missions, or for the poor, because we have so much to do at home. We are building a new church; we have a church or school debt; the minister's salary must be increased, etc., etc. Excuse us till these things are finished, and then." The idea appears to be that all our expenditures for religion are to be reckoned on the credit side of heaven's account with us. Every pound we yield for the appointments, conveniences, and adornments of our church, which is our own household, or for the maintenance of its services, is just as much a matter of interested outlay for a full equivalent as any other provision you may make for the life of yourself and family. Few "popular fallacies" have done more mischief than the maxim that "charity begins at home." Avaricious people quote it, not intending that charity shall begin anywhere. Honesty, kindness, economy, thrift, and some other virtues, start, no doubt, in the home circle. Charity very rarely begins there, because, till we pass beyond that bound, the realm of voluntary and self-sacrificing bounty is not reached. Up to that point we have been at best only "providing for our own," doing what if we leave undone, an apostle says, we are worse than infidels. Almighty justice and Almighty love can give us no receipts for our church dues. God needs none of them; we need them, and he is gracious enough to lend us the ability to produce them. But if we were liberal enough to give half of our goods for them, or faithless enough to provide none of them, so making ourselves and our households heathen, our obligation to offer in other ways of our substance to him to whom the silver and the gold belong would stand just as it stood before.

Book of Daniel and Its Canonicity.

"That this book should have had a place in the Hebrew canon can be accounted for only on the supposition that it was known to be genuine. The canon was probably closed not long after the return of the Jews from the captivity. Josephus says it was closed in the time of Nehemiah during the reign of Artaxerxes; it may have been somewhat later, but it cannot be placed later than the beginning of the fourth century B.C. Now, as the Jews were most careful to distinguish between books canonical and books apocryphal, as they regarded the former with profound reverence, and repudiated the latter, nay, regarded the reading of them as a sin, and as the eminent men who were engaged in closing the canon cannot but have known whether the Book of Daniel was genuine or not, their placing it in the canon as one of the sacred books affords a proof which cannot be set aside, that it is indeed the production of the prophet whose name it bears. Our Lord expressly quotes this book as the Book of the Prophet Daniel. Unless we are to ascribe this either to ignorance or to a disregard to truth on the part of Christ, we must accept this testimony as final and conclusive as to the genuineness of this book. Our Lord also seems to have borrowed the title He so generally gives Himself, 'the Son of Man,' as well as the description of His coming again in the clouds of heaven, from this book. St. Stephen evidently had this book in his mind when he exclaimed, 'Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God;' (Acts vii., 56, comp. Dan. vii., 13, 14), and this accounts for his calling Christ 'the Son of Man,' a phrase which none of the other disciples but only Christ Himself uses. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews evidently refers (xi., 38) to what is recorded only in this book. St. Paul appears also to have had it before him."—Sunday Magazine.

Man's lives should be like the day, more beautiful in the evening; or, like the Spring, aglow with promise; and the Autumn, rich with golden sheaves, where good works and deeds have ripened on the field.

Beneath His Wing.

BY HORATIUS BONAR, D.D.

I come, I rest beneath  
The shadow of His wing,  
That I may know  
How good it is  
Here to abide;  
How safe its sheltering!  
I lean against the cross  
When fainting by the way;  
It bears my weight,  
It holds me up,  
It cheers my soul,  
It turns my night to day!  
I clasp the outstretched hand  
Of my delivering Lord;  
Unto His arm  
I lean myself—  
His arm divine—  
It doth me help afford!  
I hear the gracious words  
Hosannoth to my soul;  
They whisper rest,  
They banish fear,  
They say, "Be strong,"  
They make my spirit whole!  
I look and live and move;  
I listen to the voice  
Saying to me  
That God is love,  
That God is light,  
I listen, and rejoice!

God's Lilies.

God's lilies droop about the world,  
In sweetness everywhere;  
They are the maiden-souls who learn  
To comfort and to bear,  
And to smile upon the heavy cross  
That every one must wear.  
O lilies, beautiful and meek!  
They know God's will is right,  
And so they raise their patient heads  
In dark and stormy night,  
And far above the Eastern hills  
They see the dawn of light.  
They know that when their day is done,  
And deep the shadow lies,  
The cross will weary them no more;  
So lightly they arise  
To meet the angels when they call  
"Lilies of Paradise!"  
—Sunday Magazine.

What is "Fundamental."

We have lately seen it denied that the institution of the Church by Christ is a fundamental truth in religion. It is gravely argued that nothing is fundamental to religion which is not fundamental to human nature, and therefore that religion cannot be exterminated, whatever may happen to its incidents. Doctrines may perish, the Bible may be blotted out, all ministers die, but religion will survive. The plain result of all this talk, with its fanciful, and often forced, illustrations, is that religion is the creation of man's own moral instincts. Nothing is fundamental in it, save the abstract truths which owe their power to their origin in the heart of man. The facts of the Bible are nothing. Sweep them all away—the Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection and Ascension—and "religion" will remain; that is, man's inwardly-developing power of self-salvation. This is the modern creed of the new Independency fairly stated. "I believe in myself" is its sum and substance. This may be a religion for ought we know, but it certainly is not Christianity.

We do not, of course, mean to limit the Divine power, or to say that if, by some monstrous convulsion, all monuments of the faith should be swept away, and all memory of it be obliterated from the human soul, God could not find some way of restoring the lost truths of revelation. But this is not the question at all. This is as purely abstract as to discuss the point whether, if the ark had foundered in mid-delve, God's power would have reached to the reparation of the loss. The question really at its issue is thus, that it is not worth while to be very anxious about Scriptures, or the Church, or any other "non-fundamental" element. The only need is to keep up a good stock of moral sentiments, and let the human nature find its way into the light.

This sort of teaching is actively demoralizing, and infinitely more so than open infidelity. The direct attacks of open denial can be met, but it is this constant hostile pressure on the flanks which is to be dreaded. When ministers are found saying, "Never mind these arguments of the unbeliever; what of them, the position they assail is not worth defending," no doubt there will be a vast number of listeners who will begin to think this to be true. We do not hesitate to pronounce this to be actively anti-Christian. It denies revelation to be essential to religion, except such as directly enters into the soul of man by express operation of God's Spirit. In other words, man's knowledge of God, which he has within himself, is the only essential knowledge. All else is merely local, temporary matter of opinion. If this does not strike us, the very foundations of Christianity are at a loss to say what does.

To come more closely home to the point thus denied, we maintain that the divine origin of Christianity, in the shape of visible institutions, is fundamental. These are the living witnesses to past facts. These facts are of essential moment. Does the modern Broad Churchman, who is found now-a-days in every denomination, mean to say that it is of no consequence whether Christ was really born of the Virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost, so long as we have the idea of obedient Sonship unfolded to the world in his history? Does he mean that the death upon the cross is nothing save as it suggests an idea of self-sacrifice? Will he permit the doubter to sneer away the resurrection from the dead, provided only there is the great and fundamental truth that spring comes after every winter, and that out of death is constant renewal of life? Yet this is precisely the hopeful sort of Gospel we are introduced to by this new teaching.  
—Weekly (Pres.) Review.

The keenest abuse of our enemies will not hurt us so much in the estimation of the discerning as the injudicious praise of our friends.

An Everlasting Refuge.

It is remarkable how many times God speaks of Himself as a refuge and defence. In His word we read of Him as a strong tower, into which the righteous run and are safe; as a rock of defence and tower of refuge; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; and as a Father that pitieth His children.  
"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry," says the sweet singer of Israel, and Peter, in his letter to the churches repeats it. In each of these cases, the Holy Spirit represents God as tenderly watching over His people, and bending down His head with a quick ear to catch the feeblest breath of prayer. Very often, in the Bible we are invited and urged to commit our ways unto the Lord. The original is, "Roll thy ways on the Lord." It so appears on the margin of many of our Bibles. "Roll it all on me," says God. "I will bear it. You are carrying too great a burden. It will crush all hope and joy and peace out of your life. Bring it all to me, and cast it on my heart."  
One marvellous thing about all this is, that though so often neglected, alighted, and forgotten by His children, He still stands and waits to help them. A man may be deserted of all friends on earth, and lose all hope in himself, but God never gives him up. How meanly men treat God, and still He is their "refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."  
"Fools, because of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted; their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord and He saveth them out of their distress. They rebelled against the words of God and contemned the counsel of the Most High; therefore He brought down their hearts with sorrow; they fell down and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their troubles, and He saved them out of their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and break their bands in sunder."  
The father runs to meet the prodigal when he sees that he is coming back. Ragged was the prodigal and wretched indeed; but he was coming back. Disobedient had been his life. Honor, gone, character gone, money gone, but he is coming back and that is enough. That coming back is all God asks. He has food for the hungry, clothes for the naked, honor and character, and all that has been forfeited by sin. He has the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for a spirit of heaviness.  
"Joy of the desolate, light of the straying  
Hope when all others die, fadeless and pure;  
Here speaks the Comforter, in God's name saying:  
Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot cure."

Teach Your Children What Relation They Sustain to the Church.  
"Yes, my daughter was at the dancing party last night. You know she is not a member of the Church, and, besides she could not well decline to go without giving offence."  
So spake a mother who was a professing Christian, and so many parents who are professing Christians speak. Who has not heard them? Scarcely do we know how to reply to a remark, which coming from such a source, implies such amazing thoughtlessness, and at the same time inconsistency.  
Thoughtlessness, because that same mother, when as yet her daughter was an infant, brought her to the house of God, and before the congregation of the people stood up and solemnly covenanted to train her up for God, as a lamb of the Great Shepherd's fold, while the minister of the Lord Jesus, by Divine authority, and in the name of the three persons of the God-head, applied to her child the visible mark of the Shepherd's fold—the sacramental seal of His Church.

And has that mother forgotten all this? Has she forgotten her solemn covenant engagements in behalf of her own child? Has she failed even to teach that child her relation to God's Church? And as though this was not enough, has she even talked as though her child sustained no connection with the visible Church, and educated the child so to think—taught her daughter to regard herself as under no religious restraint, but on the other hand free to indulge in worldly frivolity, and such practices as are regarded sinful in church members.

Not only does language such as was expressed by that mother, indicate an amazing forgetfulness—a forgetfulness of covenant promises and covenant obligations, but also of amazing Christian inconsistency, in another regard.  
Such a statement would indicate the notion that a child may go, and without impropriety or risk of harm, where a grown Christian man or woman may not go, because he or she professes to be a Christian and is a church member.  
In all matters of the world, the parent is ready enough to claim that superiority of judgment which experience furnishes, and is very slow to allow the child to be placed in a condition of exposure to bodily injury. If such exposure becomes unavoidable, then the parent, keeping near, and with eye fixed upon the inexperienced and unsuspected child, strives to secure it against danger, by constant watchfulness, and words of caution.  
But where the soul is exposed to danger the child is allowed to go, without the parent or any Christian friend, to whisper one word of caution or of warning. What a thought—an inexperienced child or youth, encouraged to go, where a Christian parent may not go, and encouraged by the Christian parent in doing so!—Transylvania Presbyterian.

The ideal of beauty is simplicity and repose, and thence it follows that no youth can be a master.  
You cannot build a house on the tops of trees, and you cannot build up a church that symbolizes the real church idea that rests on the upper level of fashionable society. If the church intends to represent God, then must it fill its bosom with affection for the lowly, and with anxiety for those that are morally lost.

"Mother Church" in Difficulties.

These are evil days for the Holy See. Another revolt from its authority is threatened among the faithful of the Spanish American Republics. The President of the "United States of Venezuela" has hurled a defiance at the Court of Rome, a parallel to which is hardly to be found in the history of Popedom since the sixteenth century. Addressing the Venezuelan Congress, the President protests that the delays and tergiversations of the Rome compel him to solve promptly the questions that have been for a long time in controversy between the Catholics of Venezuela and the Holy See. He declares that the safety of the State requires an immediate ending of these hostilities, and scornfully glancing at "enemies of religion masked as its defenders," he proposes a law establishing "the Church of Venezuela in independence of the Bishop of Rome, and decreeing the election of the curies by the parishes, of the bishops by the curies, and of the archbishop by the Congress." "Such (says the President) was the primitive organization of the Church"—the argument of the Reformers. "It is also," he adds, "the organization that will be adopted by all nations solicited for their freedom of government." To give practical effect to this policy the President declares his intention of filling the vacant episcopal see of Merida "by choosing a virtuous and conciliatory prelate incapable of throwing difficulties in the way of civil power." This language is audaciously revolutionary to come from a member of the Church, and one of those earthly rulers who are supposed to be their nursing fathers, for it deposes the Supreme Pontiff by a stroke of the pen, and reduces him to the level of an ordinary bishop, the overseer of a diocese only, and not of the entire Church. Unquestionably, however, it would not have been employed had not local opinion favoured the step; and, taken in conjunction with other demonstrations elsewhere, it shows that the allegiance of most Catholic South America to the Vatican hangs by a slender thread. Guatemala, Nicaragua, Salvador, and others have agitated and partially accomplished the expulsion of the Jesuits, and all their legislation of late years has been anti-ecclesiastical; the present Presidential election in Chili largely turns upon the Church question, and the predominance or defeat of Ultramontane influences; the revolt in Ecuador had a similar origin; some of the most intelligent Peruvians favour the adoption of measures towards the Church of Rome modelled on those carried out by King Henry the Eighth of England of blessed memory; and Brazil has been much vexed lately by the spiritual assumptions of its superior clergy and a few bishops. All these countries, it must be remembered, have, until lately, been among the most carefully guarded preserves of Papeacy, and no religion but that of Rome was tolerated. They offered, in fact, faithful reproductions of the big races from which they sprang, and neither Spain nor Portugal took more elaborate pains to shut out the contagion of independent religious opinion than did their representative offshoots in the New World. But intercourse with the outer world of thought and action, especially with the progressive mind of England and the United States, has shaken to its base the old structure of fanaticism and superstition, and the Ultramontane pretensions of modern Rome have completed the work of disenchantment. In one form or other, every South American State is showing restiveness under the dominion of the Vatican, and a craving for emancipation. The further developments of this spirit should be watched with interest, for Rome is not likely to abandon her hold without a desperate struggle, and she has a large and determined following, not wholly among the illiterate.—London Weekly Review.

He who has once done you a kindness will more readily do you another than will one whom you have benefited.

In every act of worship there should be the strictest regard to truthfulness. It is a bold profanity that will attempt to deceive the Almighty, and the double disaster sure to result from it should deter all from so impious a thought. For this reason all religious observances should be arranged so as prevent unnecessary means of temptation. They should be plain, simple, appealing but little to the disposition to show and pretence; and it is right here that ritualism is especially offensive. In its very nature, it trains men into a condition of exaggeration and insincerity.—United Presbyterian.

MR. STANTON, one of the proprietors of the Herald and Presbyterian of Cincinnati, a delegate to the late International Y. M. O. A. Convention in this city, writes as follows:—"Toronto is a city of churches and colleges, of which I may write hereafter. It is a thriving city, numbers some seventy-five thousand, and is increasing in wealth and prosperity. Presbyterianism is the dominating type of Christianity in this city, though several other denominations are strong. The first General Assembly (since the union of the several Presbyterian bodies) of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion of Canada" met here in June. Everything looks favorable to the progress of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the recent union may be deemed a success."

A BUSINESS man hit one side of Moody's preaching by saying, "He talks and acts like a business man, like a merchant with five hundred barrels of beef, which he is determined to sell quick for cash." This business manner—for nothing else so well describes it—strips off from religion a mass of disguises that it has worn for the popular eye, and brings us face to face with the bare realities of Christian faith. No doubt men of affairs are incessantly moved to reflection by listening to one like unto themselves in address and speech. It is the lay element utilized. Another commendable and noticeable thing is that he does not preach about D. L. Moody; and in this respect he is wise generally—all the other evangelists we ever heard spent half their time in telling their exploits. What Jesus did is the subject of Moody's talks. We wish the rest would imitate him.