

Pastor and People.

FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED.

He walks beside you in the street,
The crowded street of common-places,
And does but glance into your face
A moment when you chance to meet ;
But eyes made wise by love can see.
However swift his steps may be,
He carries with him everywhere
A weight of care.

You have your burden, too ; but yet
It does not press at all sometimes,
And you can hear the heavenly chimes,
And so the weary way forget ;
You have a Friend your griefs to share,
And listen to your softest prayer,
You know how safely they abide
For whom Christ died !

But he has found it hard to trust,
For life is hard and rough to him ;
The skies above his head are dim,
And his work lies among the dust.
Small hope has he to cheer his way,
Nor light of love to make his day,
No heavenly music meets his ears
Through all the years.

He is your brother—give him love !
"Destroy not him, him for whom Christ died,"
By tyranny, neglect or pride ;
Within the Father's house above
Is room for him and you ; and here
You well may hold your brother dear,
Nor make the space between you wide,
For whom Christ died.

O, greet your brother in the street,
With friendly smile and helping hand ;
Give him his portion in the land,
Be good to him whenever you meet ;
It may be through your love that he
The Father's love and care will see ;
Then win, and keep him by your side,
For whom Christ died.

—Marianne Farningham.

ON PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

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

NO. XI.—BOLD PREACHING.

There are many kinds of preaching, such as Biblical preaching, bold preaching, experimental preaching, evangelistic preaching, educative preaching, earnest preaching, and so forth, each of which, while included to some extent in the others, is nevertheless quite distinct and will admit of a separate treatment, the advantage of which is, that the excellencies and adaptations of each is seen in a strong light, and the true value of each properly appreciated. Now, we take up bold preaching because it stands at the front in both Testaments. The prophets were commanded to : "Cry aloud, spare not ; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins," Isaiah lviii. 1. "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions : be not afraid of their words, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear : for they are most rebellious," Ezekiel ii. 6, 7. Repeated mention is made of the boldness with which the apostles spoke the word of God. And their united prayer was : "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings : and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word," Acts iv. 29. Paul asks the Ephesians to pray for Him "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds ; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak," Ephesians vi. 19, 20. There is an element of the character of the preacher that must always be prominent, because he deals with men's sins, men's shortcomings, men's defections from the love of God and allegiance to His will ; and he deals with them to recover them and restore them to righteousness. He must therefore be thorough and not heal slightly the daughter of God's people. He comes to men with a message from God. He has a Gospel to proclaim, not a philosophy to propound. His preaching is not a preaching of "ifs" or "buts," it is dogmatic. It is not a half-tone, but a strong, firm, sonorous note of no uncertain sound. It is the utterance of a heart on fire with "inward power," and of a soul knit into triple strength. It is the outcome of conviction ; of the realization of the truth ; of the sense of God's presence ; of the unspeakable need of man. How does the preacher see man ? In the light of the judgment seat and eternity. He is a spiritual being with an immortal nature, for whom there are the highest, noblest, grandest possibilities, if he will but accept the overtures of mercy, and the blessings of grace. That that may be done the minister uses great plainness of speech in telling men of their lost condition and all its outworkings and manifestations in the life ; of their need of conversion, and what is even more their need of regeneration, that they may be new creatures—the great change being a heart change more than a head change ; a change in affection more than a change in opinion—and of the provision God has made to accomplish all this. Each step in the process is a humiliation for man, a casting him down, taking away from him all the false grandeurs to which he clung, stripping him naked that he may be clothed anew with the garments of Christ's righteousness.

This requires courage. It requires also faith. It is so much more easy and pleasant to do something else than this, to deal with other themes, philosophic, scientific, historical, poetical, that the hard and honest truth men need to know first is not seldom slighted or ignored altogether. To tell men that they are spiritually dead and blind by nature ; to tell them that except they repent and turn to God through Jesus Christ the only way, they must perish ; to tell them of an endless punishment because of their sin, of the wrath of God's indignation poured out upon them demands the boldness that is rooted in faith and love and profound conviction. The great cardinal truths of divine revelation condemning man at the bar of his own conscience, as well as at the bar of God, do not please, do not bring applause, do not secure followers, and therefore more popular subjects are selected and discussed, many of which merely waste the sacred hours of the Sabbath, or let slip the precious opportunities enjoyed for working with God's good spirit in convicting men of sin, righteousness and judgment. Consider it how we will, a faithful preacher of God's holy Gospel must be a bold man ; brave and courageous in heart ; fearless in utterance, and no respecter of persons. A man who with the eye of faith sees the peril of the immortal soul and proclaims the provision made for its deliverance.

He is a man, too, whose urgency comes from an inward impulse, his spirit is overborne by a mightier spirit so that he cannot but speak the things he has seen and heard. He that would convince others must be convinced himself. He that would make others feel deeply must feel deeply himself. He that would move others must be moved himself. The heart and soul must be responsive to God's touch. God seldom uses a dead man to quicken dead souls.

Boldness is needed for direct personal dealing, such as results from intense desire to save. How much of this there is in the epistles, and in the messages of the prophets. No far-off allusions satisfy their consciences in the discharge of their duty. No unmeaning generalities, no polite euphuistic phrases cover up the horrid and hideous blackness of the people's sins. They lay them bare in homely speech. They strike right home, and at once the blow is felt. The most famous man in our day speaks thus : "Say ye, I am personal ? I am personal ; I mean to be so. I wish we were more personal. We cannot be too personal to save your souls. When the minister stands at last before God he will be asked as to the honesty of his intentions, and whether he endeavoured to save men's souls. The faithful minister cannot be too personal. Ye must listen to the truth ; and though it be unpleasant, ye shall startle at it."

The minister has to awaken conviction of the right all along the path of duty. And to do this he must appeal to the conscience, enlighten the mind, and correct the conscience. Many things he may say will create opposition but that he is prepared for. His work cannot be done without a measure of that. And so he, like the boatman, keeps right on through the great waves while the fresh spray rains on him. He finds exhilaration in overcoming the resistance. Oliver Cromwell described the famous James Guthrie as "the short man that would not bow." How would James VI. describe Andrew Melville who was so brave with him ? Ah, those old Scottish ministers knew nothing at all of such action. They realized too fully whose they were, and before whom they stood. Crowns and coronets had no power to dazzle them or dim their eyes to flagrant sins. They lived too near to God to fear man. They were lifted by their spirituality of mind above every earthly consideration. They were God's noblemen. And how many kindred spirits had they on English ground, men who were the glory of the Church. Latimer may be taken as their typical representative. Preaching before King Edward VI. in 1550 from the text : "Take heed and beware of covetousness," he began in this singular way : "Take heed and beware of covetousness—take heed and beware of covetousness—take heed and beware of covetousness. And what if I should say nothing else these three or four hours (for I know it will be so long in case I am not commanded to the contrary) but these words : 'Take heed and beware of covetousness.' It would be thought a strange sermon before a king to say nothing else but '*Caveat ab avaritia*,' "Beware of covetousness." And yet as strange as it is, it would be like the sermon of Jonah that he preached to the Ninevites, as to the shortness and fewness of the words. For his sermon was : "There is yet forty days to come and Nineveh shall be destroyed." . . . We are many preachers here in England, and we preach many long sermons, yet the people will not repent nor convert. This was the fruit, the effect and the good that his sermon did, that the whole city at his preaching converted and amended their evil living and did penance in sackcloth. And yet in this sermon of Jonah is no great curiosity, no great clerkliness, no great affectation of words nor of painted eloquence ; it was none other but, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed" ; it was no more. This was no great curious sermon, but it was a nipping sermon, a pinching sermon, a biting sermon ; it had a full bite, it was a nipping sermon, a rough sermon, a sharp biting sermon." And so the grand old master of pulpit eloquence proceeds hewing to the line with a directness and earnestness that seem to us in these days of prophesying smooth things, fierceness. He turns to the king and looks at him full in the face, saying : "Here I would say a thing to your majesty." And with tremendous incisiveness he speaks of the sins of the noblemen and the court, uttering ever and anon lofty sentiments like this : "The poorest ploughman is in Christ equal with the greatest prince

that is." Latimer is a model preacher for direct, forcible, bold, and thoughtful preaching. He reminds us of John Welch preaching before the University of Saumur with great boldness and authority. On being asked how he could be so confident among strangers and persons of such quality, he made answer, "He was so filled with the dread of God that he had no apprehensions for man at all." John Howe, the author of "The Living Temple," "Delighting in God," and much else of high and refined thought, and beautiful conception and chaste, crystalline expression, was for a time chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, and while serving in this capacity he preached a sermon on "A particular faith in prayer," to combat and destroy a common opinion in the court, that whenever eminently religious persons offered up their supplications for themselves or others, secret intimations were conveyed to the mind, that the particular blessings they implored would be certainly bestowed, and even indications afforded of the particular way in which their wishes would be accomplished. During the discourse Cromwell knit his brows as was his wont when angry, but Howe heeded not. When he had finished a person of distinction came up and asked him "whether he knew what he had done," at the same time expressing his apprehension that he had irretrievably lost the Protector's favour. Howe coolly replied "that he had discharged what he considered a duty, and could trust the issue with God." How many noble, grand men stand in this apostolical succession ? Men in every age, for God has never been even in the worst times without witnesses. And how many have suffered for their boldness ? Chrysostom of Byzantium, Calvin of Geneva, Edwards of Northampton and a mighty host of others not so famous but not less faithful.

A more recent instance is worthy of note. While the actress Sara Bernhardt was in London, Canon Wilberforce, son of the Bishop of Oxford, in a sermon in Westminster Abbey, described her as having "dared to come to London, bringing her illegitimate children with her, and flaunting her skirts in the very face of royalty." Then turning on the Prince of Wales, he said : "It is the nation's disgrace that Britain's future king should so far forget what belongs to the dignity of his station that he should visit this woman in the theatre green-room and speak face to face to her in flattering words." Then in closing the Canon said : "Oh, how deeply virtuous England regrets the premature death of the good Prince Consort ! Had he been living to-day this could never have happened."

There is ever need of boldness in preaching. As the ordinary Christian is called on to add to his faith, virtue or courage, so is the preacher of the word. He must not fear the face of man or he is sure to fail. He cannot fear man and be faithful. Without boldness to declare the whole counsel of God he is simply contemptible. He is a time-server, trimming his sails to catch a favouring breeze, and so becomes a trifler with the truth which determines the eternal destinies of men. Instead of being a beacon light warning against peril and hazard, he is an *ignis fatuus* luring only to danger and death.

FORGETTING THE GIVER.

It is very possible in receiving benefits to forget the giver. Our Lord found but one man returning to give thanks for being healed of his leprosy, and asked the question : "Where are the nine ?" They may not have been altogether ungrateful. The love of home may have inspired some to go at once to proclaim their cure, and others may have been eager to go to the priests to be assured of recognition as clear of their leprosy. There are many now who do not make such acknowledgment to Christ as is His just due. It is possible to accept the truths of the Gospel system, to have a place in the Church and entertain a hope of heaven, and yet not to feel that sense of obligation to the once-suffering Saviour who has redeemed us which we ought to possess. If we felt as thankful as we might for the salvation Christ has procured for us we should be found constantly like that grateful stranger who "fell down on his face at His feet giving Him thanks."—*Christian Index*.

THANKING GOD FOR OUR THORN.

Dr. George Mathewson, of Scotland, is totally blind, and yet he is one of the most learned and gifted men in all Britain. He was a member of the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance of Belfast in 1884, and no man in all that body of great men was heard with more profound attention than he. In oratorical power he had few, if any, equals in that body of eloquent men. He spoke with such fluency, power, and magnetism that he swept everything before him.

It is beautiful to witness the sweetness of the spirit of this man, although he lives, and must always live, in total darkness, yet he is a cheerful and happy-hearted Christian. The following touching words from his pen ought to strengthen the Christian patience of God's afflicted children :—

"My God, I have never thanked Thee for my thorn. I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my roses, but not once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross, but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory. Thou divine love, whose human path has been perfected through sufferings, teach me the glory of my cross ; teach me the value of my thorn. Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow. Reveal to me that my strength was the product of the hour when I wrestled until the break of day. Then shall I know that my thorn was blessed by Thee ; then shall I know that my cross was a gift from Thee, and I shall raise a monument to the hour of my sorrow, and the words which I shall write upon it will be these : 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.'"—*Cumberland Presbyterian*.