

of many by which he was influenced. (See also Heb. xii: 2.)

2. They contribute to the glory of God, and advance the Redeemer's kingdom throughout the world.

3. They promote the best interests of mankind, both for time and for eternity.

4. They enlarge individual capacity for doing and getting good. Exercise strengthens faculties.

III. What is the nature of this reward?

1. It is luminous. How appropriate, that the reward of those who carry light shall be to "shine as the stars forever and ever."

2. It is enduring.

3. It is commensurate with individual faithfulness. (Rev. ii: 28; 1 Cor. xv: 41; Matt. xxv: 21.)

IV. Present incitements.

1. "To study wisdom."

2. "To study usefulness."

3. "To be encouraged by the prospect of a vast reward."

CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF CERTAIN PREACHERS.

NO IV.

BY JOHN A. BROADUS, D.D.

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON.

[CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON was born in 1834, his father and grandfather being Independent preachers. Converted at the age of sixteen at a Primitive Methodist church, he soon began lay-preaching near Cambridge. (The second volume of "Lectures to My Students" gives valuable instruction as to off-hand preaching.) He had then only a plain English education, with some knowledge of Latin. At eighteen he was pastor of a little Baptist church, and at nineteen was called to the New Park Street Church, in the South of London, where Dr. Gill, the commentator, was pastor for fifty-four years, followed by Dr. Rippon, the hymn-book maker, for sixty-three years. Here the house in a few years ran over, and he had to preach in immense public halls, until, in 1861, the Metropolitan Tabernacle was completed. In the thirty years' pastorate he has received about 15,000 persons into his church, which now has between 5,000 and 6,000 members. A critical estimate is a peculiarly difficult task where one has a valued personal acquaintance, and has been a guest in the house. Yet it may have greater hope of being useful where the subject is familiar both to the writer and to every reader.]

I. The main thing in a preacher, as in every man who attempts to influence others, is his character.

1. Mr. Spurgeon is a man of strong faith, deep religious experience, and intense earnestness. He has that thorough union of self-reliance and reliance on God which is often observable in eminently useful Christians. A man may be conscious of power, and determine to impress himself upon others, while yet he is conscious of weakness and humbly leans on the grace of God. The apparently paradoxical combination is seen in many little-known Christian workers, as well as in men like Luther, Calvin and Wesley.

2. He has strong doctrinal convictions, and has through life expressed them without the least hesitation or reserve. It seems, indeed, a wonderful thing that for thirty years of an age so passionately devoted to novelty, a man should have commanded such unflagging interest on the part of hearers and readers numerous beyond parallel, while never preaching about anything but the old-fashioned Gospel, and that in one of the sternest types. Some preachers of no mean gifts have thought it necessary, in order to keep up the interest, to diverge often into topics not properly religious. But, apart from other considerations, is this really good policy? A highly cultivated infidel once remarked to a friend, after hearing a sermon which treated of merely natural ethics: "I always prefer to hear a gentleman upon his specialty; and so, when I listen to a Christian preacher, I had rather he should speak about Christianity." Even those who personally care more for other subjects, see clearly enough that this is the class of subjects which a preacher ought to treat, and often know well enough that they ought to be interested in the Gospel, even if they are not. No doubt Mr. Spurgeon's example in this respect has insensibly affected thousands of other preachers; but thoughtful reflection would give it a still more powerful and wholesome influence.