

THREE GREAT PREACHERS.

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(Concluded.)

NEWMAN

poration separate from the borough, also returns two members. The town owes its existence mainly to the University, which overshadows it in importance. In this respect Cambridge and Oxford differ from all other universities, which are generally absorbed in the town in which they are situated. Cambridge, like Oxford, is of a singularly unique character, and affords examples of architecture from the drawings of authentic history to the more modern structures designed to meet the wants of our own day.

OLD BUILDINGS.

The oldest building at present standing in Cambridge is undoubtedly St. Benedict's Church, whose tower and nave are supposed to date at least from the time of the Conquest. The hand of the restorer has been heavily laid upon this venerable structure; but the quaint tower arch, with its squinting lions, and the clumsy, baluster-like column, which supports the window in the tower, with its characteristic "long and short" work, are still to be seen; although the interior was pitilessly scraped a few years ago.

St. Peter's Church, picturesquely perched upon a spur of Castle Hill, contains a fine front. Another very curious building is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, commonly known as the "Round Church." The upper part of this church is modern—the Cambridge Camden Society, in its zeal for antiquity, having destroyed a perpendicular clere-story and replaced it by the present somewhat uninteresting Norman one. This church is one of four similar churches in England (the Temple Church being one) modelled after the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. Great St. Mary's, like St. Mary's, Oxford, is the church of the University. An ancient building, which deserves mention, although but few visitors to Cambridge, and possibly not all the residents, are aware of its existence, is the so-called "School of Pythagoras," which stands in an out-of-the-way corner in an inn-yard, at the back of the picturesque old house known as Merton Hall. The structure, which still retains some of its original Norman windows, is now used as a barn, but was once a hall for lectures and disputations, and may have been the "barn" used by Odo and his colleagues for their lectures in the early days of the University, before the comparatively modern system was introduced. Originally the students hired halls of the townspeople for their "disputations," and were boarded and lodged in the townsmen's houses. This practice soon led to the establishment of hostels, where the students were kept under some sort of discipline, and this in its turn to that of the College, the first of which seems to have been built in the reign of Henry III. It was a momentous epoch in the history of the University when, in the year 1257, Hugo de Balsham, sub-prior of Ely, purchased two halls or hostels near St. Peter's Church in Trumpington Street, which he united, and gave to a certain number of scholars for their exercises and studies. Being advanced to the See of Ely in 1248, he obtained a charter of incorporation for his college, familiarly known as Peterhouse, which now stands next to the grand facade of the Fitz-William Museum in Trumpington Street. On the same side of the way as Peterhouse is the Pitt press, a building generally mistaken by freshmen for a church, which contains the office of the registry, while behind it are the University printing works. Next comes on one side the college or Hall of St. Catharine of Alexandria, Virgin and Martyr, a title commonly abbreviated into "Cats," and on the other Corpus College, formerly called Bene't. This college is interesting to antiquarians as having been founded by two local guilds, named respectively after the Virgin Mary and the "Benedictum Corpus," from the latter of which it receives its name. This guild doubtless was associated with St. Bene't's Church, which is joined to Corpus by a curious passage leading into the vestry.

At Corpus is Archbishop Parker's rich collection of MSS. and a cup bequeathed by him. Among the college plate is a curious drinking-horn, the gift of one John Goldcorne to the college, and intended no doubt as a pun upon his name. This horn, which rests upon two feet, appears at all the college feasts, and few strangers are able to drink from it without spilling the contents. Leaving on our right the ancient tower of St. Bene't Church, we now reach King's Parade. Opposite is the great court of King's College, separated from the street by a modern perpendicular screen. On the north side stands the unrivalled chapel, the chief glory of Cambridge. King's College Chapel is one vast long-drawn nave. It is the latest and most sumptuous example of the perpendicular order of Gothic architecture. The fretted roof, unsustained by a single pillar, is vaulted into twelve divisions. The centre of each is a pendant keystone, terminating alternately in floriated ornamentation, each keystone weighing more than a ton. Over the stone roof is the timber roof. An organ separates between chapel and ante-chapel. The painted glass is the most remarkable that has been bequeathed to us by the age of Henry VII. and Henry VIII., and belongs to a time when the art of painting had attained its highest excellence. There are five-and-twenty windows, with more than a hundred subjects. Description can give but a poor idea of

Those lofty pillars . . . that branched roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousands cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells,
Lingering and wandering on as loath to die.

The splendid series of stained-glass windows has lately been completed by a modern composition in the great west window, which, though somewhat yellow in tone, bears comparison singularly well with the old glass.

(To be continued.)

Newman as a preacher is chiefly known to those of the present day through eight volumes of "Parochial and Plain Sermons" delivered by him while still a minister in the Church of England. It is usual to speak of him as a great preacher, and if the greatness of the preacher is to be measured by the effect produced by his sermons, he must be held to be a very great one. It has been said of them by one well qualified to form a correct judgment, they "have done more than any one thing to mould and quicken and brace the religious temper of our time; they have acted with equal force on those who were nearest and on those who were furthest from him in theological opinion." It is certain they have entered as a quite appreciable force into the intellectual and spiritual life of the nation. They may be said even to have accomplished little less than a revolution in the prevailing style of preaching, making it much less conventional and much more direct and practical. And their influence has been confined to no one branch of the Christian Church. It has probably been even more felt in the Nonconformist Churches than in that body to which, as all Protestants will regret, their author deemed it dutiful to transfer his allegiance. Yet it is easy to read these sermons without having forced on one's attention any single excellence or any combination of excellences, so unusual as to account for this wide and deep influence. They do not often startle the reader by the boldness and originality of the thought, as do those of Frederick Robertson. They have not the tender pathos and exquisite beauty of the discourses of John Ker, and they are still farther removed from the elaborate word-painting of Guthrie. Nor does the preacher, like Chalmers, carry his audience along on a flood of impassioned speech. All these legitimate and natural means of impression, Newman seems as if on set purpose to avoid. He does not once step aside from the direct path in which his theme leads him to lay hold of a striking thought or to cull a flower of rhetoric. His imagery is throughout of the simplest kind and is such as serves merely to display the thought, never to attract attention to itself. He shuns sedulously not only exaggeration but even vehement emotion, as if it were not a strength but a weakness. His speech is for the most part as calm and unimpassioned, as it is precise and clear. The usual qualities of the orator are conspicuously absent, and indeed his warmest admirer declares "he was utterly unlike an orator in all outward ways." What then was the secret of his great power? What lent such a commanding and persistent influence to those sermons preached during the second quarter of the century from the pulpit of St. Mary's Church, Oxford? I mention just three considerations.

First, The profound spiritual insight of the preacher. The most cursory reader cannot fail to be struck by the subtle and penetrating analysis of human character and action on the religious side, which these sermons display. They are not, indeed, purely subjective. The great facts of redemption have their full place accorded to them and the leading Scripture characters are made to pass in succession before us. But they are predominantly subjective. It is mainly religion in human action, the truth as honoured or dishonoured in the life, the workings of sin and of grace in the heart, of which they treat; and the treatment is of the most searching kind. The strange complexity of motive at work in lives at least partially Christian is unravelled fearlessly and with apparent ease. The wiles and feints of the deceitful heart are laid bare. The disguises with which self-love seeks to cover up departures from truth and righteousness are stripped off with pitiless hand. Often the sermon in its calm and severe arraignment of human conduct seems a kind of rehearsal of the judgment; only the preacher passes sentence on himself as well as on others and is careful to unfold the grace which is still within reach. Newman's preaching is thus at once intensely spiritual and intensely practical. The spiritual good of the hearer is not once lost sight of and the character under which that good is sought is of the very highest kind. Such sermons, for example, as those entitled "Knowledge of God's will without obedience," "Promising without doing," "Obedience the remedy for religious perplexity" are models of calm, sober, instructive statement, and of solemn and earnest appeal. The preacher is far advanced in his art who cannot learn from their study to preach still better and the private Christian is not to be envied who can rise from their perusal without profit.

Second, There is the great excellence of their style—the marvellous clearness, precision and simplicity of the expression—as a farther explanation of the power exerted by these sermons. It is true, the preacher seems to have concerned himself little, if indeed at all, with the form his thought was to assume. He was too intent on the thought itself to allow of this. There is no discernible effort on his part after force or beauty of expression; no long-drawn metaphor, no elaborate antithesis to suggest that the form in which the thought is clothed is the result of much care and work; but such mastery does he possess over the instrument which he wields in the English tongue, that the thought takes at once and without effort the fitting form; the allusive metaphor, the ornament, when there is any, comes naturally, spontaneously, and not as having been sought. The language is always precise and clear, often beautiful, but the hearer no more thinks of the simplicity and beauty of the terms in which the thought

is couched, until attention is called to it, than the spectator charmed with the distant landscape thinks of the purity of the atmosphere through which it is seen. There the rugged mountain peak or the river gleaming in the sunlight is everything; here the supernatural fact or the spiritual truth. This I need scarcely say is the very perfection of style. And it does not only possess a great charm, in the sermon at least it possesses high ethical value. It betokens a mind too serious, too strongly seized of the truth, too much in earnest concerning the ends to be served by it, to lend itself to rhetorical ornamentation. It betokens the preacher's confidence in the power, his sense of the majesty, of the truth which it has been given him to proclaim. Any studied beauty of expression in a sermon, any beauty of form which detains the mind is at once a rhetorical mistake and a moral fault, and the latter is the worse blemish—the more injurious—of the two. Let us be thankful, then, at a time when frequent recourse to rhetorical artifice, laboured ornamentation of the thought and accompaniments still less defensible, seem to proclaim in so many quarters the speaker's distrust in the ability of the thought itself to hold men, for preachers like Newman who have the courage to stake all upon the naked truth—who are too reverent, too much in earnest, to furbish with the trappings of rhetoric that sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

Third, Once more, and more important than all else, as explaining the great influence undeniably exerted by these sermons, there is the obvious and unmistakable sincerity of the preacher; a something in his method of presenting truth, which gives to his statements, even when most directly spiritual, a distinct note of reality. For one thing there is the entire absence of exaggeration—of the swollen phrases, which are born of the craving for immediate impression, as distinct from the desire for lasting good. There is the absence also of conventionalism—of modes of expression that belong to the pulpit only and are not heard at all in common life. All is simple and natural. The preacher speaks about God and Christ and sin and salvation and heaven, always with reverence indeed, never with the vulgar familiarity and still less with the buffoonery which are too often employed and which are at war both with religious feeling and good taste, but he speaks of them at the same time with a directness and a circumstantiality such as we might employ in speaking about the friend who visited us yesterday or about the business we are going to transact to-morrow; or in writing to a person regarding a country with which we are familiar and which he is about to visit. There is as the result an air of realness given to the subjects of which he treats, which in the measure of it is very rare, but which is at the same time most helpful to the hearer. Evidently the world of spiritual things is a very real world to him. He has looked it in the face. He has scrutinized it closely, and he speaks of it with a simplicity and a directness and withal a confidence that must go far to make it real to others also. This is indeed about the most original and distinctive characteristic of the sermons of this great preacher; as it is one of their highest merits, if not indeed their very highest. For there is scarcely any service which a Christian man can render to his fellow-men more important at least in our age than to invest the spiritual world with realness to them, not to divest it of its mystery, for if that were possible it would be a loss and not a gain, but to take it out of the region of cloudland and dream and give to it the air of definite, undeniable reality, which we must believe belongs to it. To do this, it must be altogether real to the man himself. His speech regarding it must be obviously and entirely sincere. It must be impossible for even the most sensitive hearer to detect in it the false and therefore the disenchanting note. This was in a high degree, and with all his faults the service which Newman rendered to our common Christianity and by it he made not simply the Oxford of his day, but the pulpit of England and of America in ours, his debtor.

I have thus passed in review, at undue length I fear, these distinguished preachers, all of whom "now rest from their labours." As the result, I trust, they stand out before you in their distinct individuality: Vinet, the calm, philosophic enquirer, the representative of reason in relation to religion, original in thought, graceful in speech, lofty in character, sweet and gentle in spirit, looking with wistful and tender sorrow even on those who hesitate to enter, or who actually turn away from the great temple of truth and love within which he worships. Liddon, the princely preacher, the representative of authority, of dogma in religion, cultured, stately, eloquent, witnessing with a power which in our age has not been surpassed, if indeed it has been equalled, for the supernatural facts of redemption, and the bitterly assailed but indestructible verities of the Christian faith; and Newman, the subtle, severe, devout analyst of Christian character and action, keen in thought, clear and musical in expression, confident in belief and practical in aim, the representative in the years in which alone we are concerned with him—probably his happiest and most useful—of the revived piety of the Church, of which he was so great an ornament, and to which his withdrawal from the ministry was so great a loss.

In conclusion, gentlemen of the theological classes, I extend to you in the name of the senate and in my own name, a cordial welcome to the institution, whether you are returning to it to resume, in some cases to complete your studies, or whether you are entering it for the first time. Whatever the lecture of the evening has done for others, or has failed to do, I hope it has deepened in you the sense of the importance and dignity of the work of preaching. I shall regard it as the highest service which I can render you, as your teacher in homiletics, much more important even than any instruction in the principles of the science, if I can help you to feel the grandeur of the preacher's office, inspire you with the ardent desire to excel in it, and lead you to regard all gifts, whether natural or acquired, whether of vigorous thought or of graceful speech, as having their very highest value in the power with which they clothe you, to expound, to apply, and above all to proclaim Christ's message of love, "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God."