

Fearlessness in Preaching.

Every minister of the Gospel can count among his regular hearers a goodly number of the blameless morality type of people. They are honest in business, genial as neighbors, kind and affectionate in the home circle, and universally esteemed. When they die, Christian charity numbers them among the saved. While they live the same charity credits them with an active but unexpressed Christianity. There are too many to be classed with ordinary sinners. The preacher finds it difficult to say: "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." The pastor hesitates to address them as impenitent. Charity may in part account for his reticence, but more frequently timidity. He shrinks from the seeming harshness of addressing such as unrepentant.

Several marked conversions among this class during the past year, in the parish of the writer, have deepened in his mind the conviction that regeneration, with almost no exceptions, results in confession of Christ and a marked change of life. Before conversion these persons remained one of the young men to whom Jesus was drawn in admiration and love, yet who lacked in his soul the vital principle which makes moral godliness. They were in full sympathy with Christian institutions, were regular attendants at church, and were respectful and seemingly reverent worshippers. It was hard to address them as such.

During a revival they were converted and now bear positive and striking testimony to the fact that they were "without God and without hope in the world." They assert that the Bible was to them a sealed book; that the subject of personal religion was distasteful; that the excuses by which they fortified themselves were consciously false; that the effort to know God and approach Him without Christ was absolutely futile; that a year of regenerate life has been richer in joy and all that constitutes true living than all former years together. Notwithstanding their praiseworthy virtue, intelligence and culture, they knew nothing of Christ and His salvation, and so testify with convincing force to the courage of the Master! He could say: "Ye must be born again," as confidently to the scholarly and upright Nicodemus as to the most degraded sinner in Jerusalem. He could denounce the high-livers, rich and apparently righteous Pharisees, in scathing language as hypocrites and full of iniquity. His words, at times, seem severe, bitterly severe, until one sees, with him, into the unclean heart against a whitened sepulcher.

Conversion revolutionizes even the man of blameless morality. He is a "new creature." His spiritual resurrection becomes at once visible and marked. A Christian experience that does not thus become manifest is rarely genuine. The minister of the Gospel should expect this change, and with a courage and love born of assurance, a Christ, preach as plainly to wealth and culture as to poverty and vice. Until we can face the foe with equal faith everywhere, spiritual poverty will abound in our churches. The line between the followers of Christ and the world is not clearly defined in the Gospel. It should be in every presentation of the truth.—Rev. Dwight M. Pratt, in Congregationalist.

The Old the Best in Emergencies. We had the friendship of a young man from Boston some years since, while Dr. Boardman was in the city preaching in Philadelphia. He was a graduate of Harvard University, a rising young attorney, but more of a man of literary culture than of the law. He attended church and was fond of good sermons, generally liberal in his theological ideas, but not always. He was truthful and honest in expressing his convictions, whether they spoiled his theories or not. He often spoke of his admiration for Dr. Boardman in the days of his power. Said he, "He is so dignified, scholarly and so masterful in his arguments, if he would give up that hard Calvinistic theology of his I would rather hear him than any man in the country. But I can not endure being held over the pit until I am smothered. Disagreeable as it is to my feelings there is no trick in it; it comes honestly and logically out of his texts. When he is not on the subject of the torments of sin he is captivating, and I could listen to him by the hour. But he smokes it so hot for me he drives me away until I get cooled off, and where do you go to be refrigerated?" "Oh! I go over to hear Dr. Furness, a splendid specimen of a man and as great in his way, as Dr. Boardman. I like them both, and always bear one or the other every Sunday. It is so comforting to hear a Gospel that soothes and cheers." We replied, "We agree with you, that they are both remarkable men, though a great gulf separates them theologically; but tell us, for we know that you are honest in your religious convictions and won't keep the truth of your conscience subordinated to your speculative ideas, if your physician should announce that you were to die before twelve o'clock to-night, and you would send for a clergyman to talk and pray for you, of course, who would you send for?" He put his forefinger to his temple for a moment, which was his habit when surprised; and said with great gravity, "Oh, in such an event I would send for Dr. Boardman and his hard theology; there is something honest and sincere in it, and he looks as if he would cross the dark river in the hard shell himself, and I think I would rather trust it. It is a strong craft, and when a man comes to die he wants to commit himself only to what will surely bear him up."

With all honest men, who are especially, actively against the evangelical faith, there is this inherent conviction, which will come uppermost in great trials or death. Orthodoxy is popular in such extremities. It is a heroic creed, it is personal and national disaster. It is surprising how popular it is in the hospitals and in the reverses during the late war, and how even profane and wicked soldiers respected the nurses and chaplains who preached and lived according to the old doctrines. The most beloved chaplains were the men who not only comforted the troubled, but warned to escape the wrath to come. The same trend appears even in the wig of the times. A story is going the rounds of a student who asked his professor in a Medical University, "What are your views concerning the schools of medicine

and theology?" "Well," said the professor, "that depends upon circumstances. When I am slightly ill I incline to homeopathy and in religion am a Universalist, but when I am awfully sick I am an alchemist in medicine and a Calvinist in theology."—Advance.

Just Once.

The temptation to step aside "just once" from the straight and narrow way comes not infrequently to the young Christian. If Satan can but gain your consent to one departure, he knows that succeeding steps in the wrong direction will easily follow. The following extract from the recently published life of Dr. Judson, by his son, may come as a timely word to some tempted and hesitating soul.

"A native Christian woman told me that she was about to engage in something which Dr. Judson considered not conducive to her spiritual good. He sent for her and remonstrated; but she would not give up her darling project. 'Look here!' said he, eagerly snatching a ruler from the table, and tracing not a very straight line upon the floor, 'Here is where you have been walking. You have made a crooked track to be sure; one of the path half the time; but then you have kept near it, and not taken to new roads, and you have—no such much as you might have done, mind but still to a certain extent—grown in grace; and now, with all its growth upon your heart and head, in the maturity of your years, with ripened understanding and an every-day deepening sense of the goodness of God—here, bringing down the ruler with emphasis to indicate a certain position, 'here you stand. You know where this path leads. You know what is before you. Some struggles, some honors, and finally eternal life and a crown of glory. But to the left branches off another very pleasant road, and along the air floats, rather temptingly, a pretty bubble. You do not mean to leave the path you have walked in fifteen years—fifteen long years altogether; you only want to step aside and catch the bubble, and think you will come back again, but you never will. Woman, think! Dare you deliberately leave this straight and narrow path, drawn by the Savior's fingers, and go away for one moment into that of your enemy? Will you? Will you?'"

"I was sobbing so," said the woman, "that I could not speak a word; but he knew, as he always did, what I meant; for he knew I was praying that God would preserve me in my determination. I have made a great many crooked tracks since," she added, tearfully, "but when I am unusually tempted, I see the teacher as he looked that day, bending over in his chair, the ruler placed upon the floor to repress me. He is pointing along the path of eternal life, his eye looking so strangely over his shoulder, and that terrible, 'Will you?' coming from the lips as though it was the voice of God; and I pray just as Peter did, for I am frightened.—Christian at Work.

Prayer and Breakfast. Some years ago, when the country around Cincinnati was never then it is now, a pious farmer was busy clearing his lands. He had a number of hands employed, and was anxious to accomplish a large amount of work while the weather was favorable. He called them early, and went out with them before breakfast was ready. A horn was blown, and they came and ate, and returned again to their work. The farmer had been accustomed to have prayers every morning in his family. But to keep so many men from chopping and logging while he read and prayed was more than he could afford; so Satan suggested, and the good man yielded. He called his wife and said that the family altar was neglected, and her husband, in haste to get rich, was departing from God. She talked with him, she pleaded with him, but in vain. At last, she determined to try another experiment.

The next morning the farmer and his men went out, as usual, to their work. The sun began to climb up the sky, but no breakfast horn was heard. They grew hungry, and looked anxiously toward the house; they listened, but still the expected summons did not come. After waiting an hour or two beyond the usual time, they went into the house. No table was set, no coffee boiling on the fire, no cook over or before it. The good wife was knitting quietly, with the Bible on her lap.

"What does this mean?" cried the husband; "why isn't our breakfast ready?" "I thought you were in such a hurry about your work that you hadn't time to eat it."

"Have time to eat it! Do you think we can live without eating?" "You can live without eating as well as without praying. The spirit needs the bread of heaven as much as the body needs the bread of earth."

"Well, well," said the farmer, "get us some breakfast, and we will have prayers every morning, no matter how busy we are or how many workmen I have."

She got the breakfast, and he kept his word. The lesson was a good one, and never forgotten.—Selected.

The Cross. BY REV. THEODORE L. CYLER. Good Christianity means cross bearing. Good preaching means cross lifting. From the manger of Bethlehem every footstep of Jesus moves straight towards the cross. His whole life converges there. After the Spirit's descent the only gospel that was preached was the gospel of atoning blood. It was Paul's keynote. Whatever else he omitted, he never omitted the "faithful saying." The preaching of these days, the only preaching that can silence skepticism, and convict sinners, end save the penitent, is the preaching which lifts up the crucified Son of God.

Nothing moves and melts the heart like the love-story of Calvary. Good old Gilbert Tennent was missed one Sabbath after his morning service. His family went in search of him. They found him in a woods near the church, lying on the ground and weeping like a child. They inquired the cause of his emotion. He

told them that after preaching on the love of the dying Saviour he had gone out into the woods to meditate. He got such views of the wondrous love of God in sending His Son into the world to die for sinners that he was completely overwhelmed. The glory of the cross seemed to smite him down and break his very heart as it had the heart of Paul. He saw no one save Jesus only.

A clear, distinct look at Jesus is what every sinner also needs to convict him of guilt and break him down. The preaching which melts hard hearts is Christ-preaching—cross-preaching. It wounds, and it heals. It kills sin, and brings to the penitent sinner a new life. Moses had nothing else to do but to lift up the brazen serpent before the bitten, dying multitude in the camp. We ministers find our foremost duty and our holiest delight in simply lifting up the atoning Lamb of God before the eyes of our congregations. Nothing else can touch and fire the true believer like the vision of his bleeding Lord. Brethren, let us lift up the cross! Let us rally to that as the last hope of a sin-cursed world—as the only breaker against the floods of error and iniquity. The cross of our Saviour cannot save the world—it is gone! But it will! God has hung the destiny of the race on that cross. Our duty begins and ends in setting that one beacon of salvation full before the eye of every immortal soul.

"O Slow of Heart." "O slow of heart!" exclaimed our Lord to His disciples in severe reproof. Not slow of understanding. That may be neither bright nor quick; but if the heart loves goodness, if it chooses to believe into righteousness, joining itself to the Personal Good which in its infinitude comprehends all lesser virtues, as the waters under the earth include the springs that are on the earth, it finds favor with God. The poet Cowper had not always his reason; but he maintained an humble, contrite heart, and longed for closer union with his Lord, in the periods of the eclipse of his intellect. There is a science of the heart, as well as a psychology of the mind. The former teaches among other things the tendency of the affections may be changed from things desperately wicked to things good and excellent; how the whole range of vices and miseries may be dislodged and superseded by graces and felicities beyond the count of the senses. The final character of that part of the nature which is composed of the will and the affections, in connection with its extended power for good or evil, has been expounded by many a student of soul-science.

My God, what is a heart? Silver, or gold, or precious stone, or star, or rainbow, or a part of all these things, or all of them in one? My God, what is a heart? That Thou shouldst eye it so, and woo, Poring upon it all Thy art, As if that thou hadst nothing else to do!

My God, what is a heart? The key-note of the whole being, The enlightened heart doth shine like the sun into every corner of the individual sphere. The painful processes of conversion, the gradual processes of education, the strivings and labors of sinners, the soul's progress, the final character of that part of the nature which is composed of the will and the affections, in connection with its extended power for good or evil, has been expounded by many a student of soul-science.

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as they sat down at the table, "I'm to have work to-day; and if I'm worth it I'm to have three dollars a week, and that'll be enough for us to live on."

"He is not yet eight o'clock, and he had ample time to reach the village before the appointed hour. The most direct way was down the railroad track, and he hurriedly tripped over the ties, as happy as a boy of will be."

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"Let us make up a purse for the lad. Here are five dollars toward it." A hat was passed among the gentlemen, and a few minutes later the gentleman announced: "We have got a hundred dollars. Now where is the boy?"

"He could not be found, but a brakeman finally said: 'I saw him go off towards the village with the man the conductor sent down there.'"

"He'll be back this way by-and-by, likely as not," said the conductor; "if not it can be left at Scottville depot for him."

"It was true Bennie had hastened off to the village, being he might even yet reach the store before some one else was engaged. But in this he was disappointed. For as he entered Mr. Swinburne's office, that gentleman looked up at him and curiously said: 'You are not yet eight o'clock, and you had ample time to reach the village before the appointed hour. Learn next time to be punctual at the appointed hour.'"

"Poor Bennie! Without offering a word of explanation he left the store and hurried off home. He had no more to look elsewhere for that day at least. He knew he had done right—that his mother would approve his course—still he could not get over the great disappointment that had come to him. What in the world should they now do for their poor boy?"

"As he reached the cutaway he found the men busy blasting the boulder to pieces, and paused to watch them. While he stood there the conductor caught sight of him. 'Look here, youngster,' he said, 'aren't you the boy that stopped the train?'"

"Yes, sir," promptly responded Bennie. "Well," he went on, "there is a gentleman up at the cars that wishes to see you."

"Wondering what could be wanted of him, Bennie went up to the train, clambered into the parlor car and asked: 'Is there a man here who wants to see me?'"

"Yes, sir!" exclaimed a gentleman, dropping his paper, and springing to his feet. "We all want to see you. We want to thank you for your unselfish conduct this morning, and give you this roll of bills, as a token of our appreciation of your act," and he handed Bennie the money.

"I didn't expect nothing," said Bennie, modestly, and ungrammatically. "I didn't just like to see the train busted up."

"We can well afford to give this money to you," replied the gentleman kindly, "for some of us would have doubtless lost our lives but for you; and had the overturned cars taken fire in that cut, none of us could have escaped."

"With joyful heart Bennie now hastened home. Nor was his joy any less when his mother, after listening to his story, said: 'I had rather a son of mine should do his duty, even if it forced us to beg, than to have secured the best position in the world by a dishonorable act.'"

"He thought that the gentleman who had given him the money from Bennie's unselfish act did not end there. The very next morning, as he was cutting wood at the door, a gentleman rode up and asked: 'Are you Mr. Bennie Waters?'"

"Yes, sir," replied the astonished boy. "Well, here's a letter I was asked to leave here," said the man, handing it to him.

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