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Easter Morning.

FOR THE REVIEW:

Ring out your brightest tones oh! bells,
With every peal the music swells,
Sing on, ye birds, your happiest lays,
Oh! birdlings add your notes of praise.

Awake oh! nature, raise your voice,
With every swelling note, rejoice!
All people, lift your songs on high,
Praise God, and gladly magnify.

This happy morn, our Saviour rose,
He lives to share His peoples' woes.
Oh gloomy "death where is thy sting?"
Let loudest anthems ever ring!

"Oh! grave," thy boasted "victory, where?"
Now shouts of gladness fill the air,
With hymns of praise heavens arches ring,
To Christ our risen Saviour—King.

C. ELIZABETH LAY.

Sermons That Feed.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

DEAN STANLEY preached his first sermon in a little village church near Norwich, and an old woman was heard to say after the service, "Well, I do feel rather empty like." "Yes," replied another venerable dame, "that young man did not give us much to feed on." Those two old saints understood what nutritious preaching is, and they had probably come to church with a good appetite. Their comment on the maiden effort of a man who was yet to become famous, was very different from the remark of a devout Christian who told me that the sermons of his pastor were "roast beef and plum pudding to us for a whole week." That was high praise, and it bespoke honest work and a full larder. What are some of the characteristics of nourishing sermons?

I. They must have a great deal of Bible in them. Not an occasional scrap, or a text introduced to beautify a sentence, or round out a period. The strongest sermon is that which is most saturated with Scripture. The minister who never wears out, or wears out his congregation, is the spiritual miner who digs deepest into the golden ore-beds of divine revelation. It was said of Chalmers that his discourses "held the Bible in solution." The same thing may be said of the sermons of Spurgeon, MacLaren, F. B. Meyer, and Dr. William M. Taylor. All these strong men had a strong faith in the perfect and plenary inspiration of The Book; they felt that when they spoke, the Holy Spirit was speaking in every line of Scripture which they were weaving into their discourses. "Thy words were found," said the ancient prophet, "and I did eat them; and they were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of mine heart."

II. Nutritious sermons have a great deal of prayer over them. It is not only devout Quakers who hold that a person cannot preach aright unless "the Spirit moves him." Prayer is the ladder by which this divine power descends into a Godly minister's study when he

is preparing his beaten oil for the sanctuary. This same power fires his soul in the pulpit. Feeding the intellect is not enough; the conscience and the affections must be quickened, purified, and made strong. A very eminent minister wrote to me forty years ago: "I am convinced that even æsthetically considered, one hour of prayer is a better preparation for sermon writing than a whole day of study." A sermon that will not bear to be prayed over is not worth preaching.

III. The preaching that feeds people has a great deal of what may be called *every-day religion* in it. It is in the best sense practical, for it controls the daily practice, and teaches people how to live. There is a lamentable lack, with many ministers, of knowledge of human nature and of the wants, temptations, and trials of their parishioners. These men are well up in theology, and Biblical criticism and religious literature of all kinds; some of them are walking encyclopedias. But to the living, active, working, laughing, weeping, and sinning world around them, they are well-nigh strangers. During the week their parishioners have been driving a pen or a plough, hammering an anvil, or pleading in a court-room, or up to their eyes in stocks, or sugar-casks, or cotton-bales. The women have been busy with their needles or their nurseries. When the Sabbath comes, they bring their every-day wants with them to church, even though they wear their Sunday clothes. They want preaching that tells them how to live and what to believe. They want plain, portable preaching that they can carry home with them. Doctrinal sermons? Yes, provided that it is stiff, vital, Bible doctrine, not in dry flour-barrels, but baked into Gospel-bread for every-day consumption. Truth, all divine truth they want, but not in hard, scholastic technicalities. Young men sometimes deliver "trial sermons before Presbytery" when they apply for licensure, that smell strongly of the class-room, and are garnished with such words as "predicate," "subjective," and "ratiocination." When they have learned to preach they will do with such fodder what Dr. Edward N. Kirk did with his first "six splendid sermons," they will stick it into the grate.

Sermons for every-day use will not only be Scriptural and spiritual; they will be simple in language. There lay one of the great elements of Spurgeon's world wide popularity and power. A discourse that a minister would not be willing to read to his boy of twelve years old, or to an intelligent servant in his kitchen, is not generally a safe sermon to take into his pulpit. A poor woman in the congregation of old Dr. Ashbel Green, of Philadelphia, once asked her pastor, "Dr. Green, what do you think is the great business of the shepherd?" "To feed the flock, madam," was his reply. "That is my notion, too, sir," said she, "and therefore I think that he should not put the hay up so high that the sheep cannot reach it."