

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

### TELL THE PEOPLE THEIR SINS.

Plain preaching is demanded. Wise observers are saying that the crying sin of the times is covetousness. Alas! who has not seen professors of the religion of Jesus sitting complacently under the Gospel, and rejoicing in the free grace of the Lord Jesus, while their hands were stained with ill gotten gain? "Covetousness, which is idolatry," says the Scripture. And of all sins idolatry is the most odious to God, and is the most certain to be overtaken with His swift judgments. It debases the Christian, and makes him as hard and unfeeling as the gold he worships. Those who heap up treasures for themselves, even when honestly acquired, are condemned by Scripture. How much severer judgment is theirs who defraud the widow and the fatherless for the sake of gain. The following is an example of the plain dealing which ought to be exercised on this point. Who shall say that it is one whit too plain?

Dr. William Anderson, for more than fifty years pastor of a church in Glasgow, had a somewhat pointed way of "putting things," as the following incident, related in the "Weekly Review," will show:

"He was once expounding the fifteenth Psalm, and had come to the word usury—"He that putteth not out his money to usury." "Does that mean," he asked, "taking ten per cent. or more? Not entirely. It means also the spirit in which the ten per cent. is taken. There was once in this church a poor widow, and she wanted twenty pounds to begin a small shop. Having no friends she came to me, her minister. And I happened to know a man—not of this church—who could advance the money to the poor widow. So we went to this man—the widow and I—and the man said he would be happy to help the widow. And he drew out a bill for £20, and the widow signed it, and I signed it, too. Then he put the signed paper in his desk, and took out the money and gave it to the widow. But the widow, counting it, said: 'Sir, there are only £15 here.' 'It is all right,' said the man; 'that is the interest I charge.' And as we had no redress, we came away. But the widow prospered; and she brought the twenty pounds to me, and I took it myself to the office of the man who had lent it, and I said to him: 'Sir, there are the £20 from the widow.' And he said: 'Here is the paper you signed, and if you know any other poor widow, I will be happy to help her in the same way.' I said to him: 'You help the widow! Sir, you have robbed this widow, and you will be damned!' And, my friends, I kept my eye upon that man; and before six months were over God smote him and he died. That's your usury. God's curse upon it!" We can still recall after many years the creep of soul with which we listened to the closing sentences, and the vivid glimpse we got of a divine retribution falling suddenly on a bad man.

Hear the solemn warning of James speaking by the Holy Ghost: "Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."—*United Presbyterian, (Pittsburgh.)*

### OBSCURE PREACHING.

There is nothing against which a young minister should guard himself, especially in the first years of his ministry, more constantly and carefully than the habit of dressing up his thoughts in high-sounding words. Our best thoughts may sometimes fail to impress an audience by being arrayed in an excess of tawdry finery. Profound thoughts are apt to seek the simplest forms of expression. Originality cannot afford to be bombastic. "Who is this," said the Lord to Job, "that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" Words are intended to make knowledge plain, not to obscure it. Mr. Baxter had a saying to this effect: "It takes all our learning to make things plain." The grandest book in many important respects, that had been written in five hundred years, the "Pilgrim's Progress," has perhaps more monosyllable words in it than any other book extant, and yet a great critic has said that no man ever excelled Bunyan in expressing just exactly what he aimed to say, no more and no less. We suppose we have all heard occasional

sermons, the purport of which would have puzzled any living man to comprehend. In such cases we doubt if the preacher himself knew what he was aiming at, unless it was to occupy the hour.

It "Suddards's British Pulpit," published nearly half a century ago, the following story appears: A worthy gentleman on coming out of his church one day, accosted his friend P., a distinguished and pious lawyer, as to how he liked the sermon of Dr. B. "I think sir," said he, "that it comes under the third head." "How so?" said the inquirer. "A certain French preacher," he replied, "after a long and pompous introduction, said, 'I shall now proceed, my hearers, to divided my subjects in to three parts. 1st. I shall tell you about that which I know, and you do not know. 2nd. I shall tell you about that which you know and I do not know. 3rd. And lastly, I shall tell you about that which neither you nor I know.'" It is too sad a truth, that a good deal of preaching "comes under the third head." How often does Paul supply the text, and Plato or Shakspeare the teaching. How long will it take some of our preachers to find out that the choicest extracts, drawn from our most gifted poets and philosophers, fall infinitely below, both in power and grandeur, the words of the Lord as they came from the pens of inspired men. What we need is earnest, plain preaching to the conscience, not an ostentatious display of learning to regale the fancy.—*Christian Inaex.*

### SUNDAY NIGHT.

Rest him, O Father! Thou didst send him forth  
With great and gracious messages of love;  
But Thy ambassador is weary now,  
Worn with the weight of his high embassy.  
Now care for him as Thou hast cared for us  
In sending him; and cause him to lie down  
In Thy fresh pastures, by Thy streams of peace.  
Let Thy left hand be now beneath his head,  
And Thine upholding right encircle him;  
And underneath, the Everlasting Arms,  
Be felt in full support. So let him rest,  
Hushed, like a little child, without one care;  
And so give Thy beloved sleep to-night.

Rest him, dear Master! He hath poured for us  
The wine of joy, and we have been refreshed.  
Of life and love with Thine own hand; now fill  
His chalice, give him sweet, new draughts; be Thou  
His ministrant to-night; draw very near  
In all Thy tenderness and all Thy power.  
Oh, speak to him! Thou knowest how to speak  
A word in season to Thy weary ones,  
And he is weary now. Thou lovest him,  
Let Thy disciple lean upon Thy breast;  
And, leaning, gain new strength to "rise and shine."

Rest him, O loving Spirit. Let Thy calm  
Fall on his soul to-night. Oh, holy Dove,  
Spread Thy bright wing above him; let him rest  
Beneath its shadow; let him know afresh  
The infinite truth and might of Thy dear Name,  
"Our Comforter!" As gentlest touch will stay  
The strong vibrations of a jarring chord,  
So lay Thy hand upon his heart, and still  
Each overstraining throb, each pulsing pain;  
Then, in the stillness, breathe upon the strings,  
And let Thy holy music overflow,  
With soothing power, his listening resting soul.

—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

### HOPELESS.

*Thy kingdom come.*—Matt. vi. 10.

There are many reasons for this prayer. The good of the Church requires it. The state of the heathen demands it. It is a hopeless state. Not that there is no hope of their conversion if the Gospel is sent them, but while ignorant of the Gospel there is no hope of their salvation. If they do not come into the kingdom of Christ in this world, there is no hope of their happiness in the world to come. If they die ignorant of Christ they must perish, for there is no other name under heaven among men whereby any man can be saved.

That the state of the heathen without the Gospel is hopeless is plain from the command of Christ to teach all nations and to preach the Gospel to every creature. He knew the present state and future prospects of the heathen world. Yet he thought it necessary that the Gospel should be preached to them—to every creature. If any can be saved without the knowledge of Christ, then to preach the Gospel to them is unnecessary.

The example of the apostles and primitive Christians shows that they understood the command of Christ as requiring the Gospel to be preached to the heathen, and hence that they were in a hopeless and perishing state while ignorant of it. They went everywhere preaching the Word. Cornelius was directed to

send for Peter, who should speak words to him whereby he and his house should be saved, implying that he could not be saved without the knowledge of the Gospel which Peter preached.

The declarations of Scripture are conclusive. Paul says of the heathen, "They are without excuse, and are worthy of death"—dead in trespasses and sins—children of wrath—without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world—no hope—hopeless, can such be saved? From the very nature of the case the condition of the heathen must be hopeless while ignorant of the Gospel. There is but one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus. There is but one way of reconciliation with God, one way to heaven. That way is Jesus Christ—through His atoning blood. No man cometh, or can come to the Father but by Him. He is the door. If any man enters by Him he shall be saved. To try to enter in any other way is to perish. How much need, then, have we to pray, "Thy kingdom come!" And with what zeal and earnestness we strive to send the Gospel to the perishing nations! This is the one thing which the whole Church should hasten to do without delay.—*Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

### DIVERSITY OF SERVICE.

No one follower of Christ should condemn another because the other's spiritual life is not of the same stamp as his own. Let not Martha, busied with her much serving, running everywhere to missionary meetings, or to visit the sick and the poor, find fault with Mary in her quiet devotion, peaceful, thoughtful, gentle, loving, because she does not abound in the same activities. Nor let Mary in her turn judge Martha, and call her pious superficial. Let each of these follow the Master closely, see as much as possible of the infinite loveliness of His character, and copy all she can see into her own life; but let her not imagine that she has seen or copied all of Christ, and let her look at every other believer's life with reverence, as bearing another little fragment of the same divine likeness. Let every man do earnestly and well the particular work which he is fitted and called to do, but let him not imagine that he is doing the only kind of work which Christ wants to have done in this world; rather let him look upon every other faithful servant who does a different work as doing a part equally important and equally acceptable to the Master.

The bird praises God by singing. The flower pays its tribute in fragrant incense as its censer swings in the breeze. The tree shakes down fruit from its bending boughs. The star pours out its silver beams to gladden the earth. The clouds give their blessing in gentle rain. Yet all with equal faithfulness fulfil their mission. So among Christ's redeemed servants one serves by incessant toil in the home, caring for a large family; another by silent example as a sufferer, patient and uncomplaining; another with the pen, sending forth words that inspire, help, cheer and bless; another by the living voice, whose eloquence moves men and starts impulses to better, grander living; another by the ministry of sweet song; another by sitting in quiet peace at Jesus' feet, drinking in his spirit, and then shining as a gentle and silent light, or pouring out the fragrance of love like a lowly and unconscious flower. Yet each and all of these may be serving Christ acceptably, hearing at the close of each day the whispered word, "Well done."—*Primitive Christian.*

### A DEFINITION OF FAITH.

Faith may be defined in three simple words, viz.: Belief without sight. We believe there once lived a man named George Washington and yet we never saw him. We believe there is such a city as Peking, China, and yet many of us have never seen it. The sweet English poet Tennyson says:

"We have but faith; we cannot know;  
For knowledge is of things we see.  
And yet we trust it comes from Thee,  
A beam in darkness. Let it grow."

A blind man being led along the street has faith, that is belief without sight, in his leader. He believes that he is walking on the proper road and in the right direction. When we receive a despatch from another town or city we believe that it came from the person whose name is signed to it, though we cannot see that person and cannot recognize the handwriting.