

whether more or less intended, to the importance of the religious element in our life as individuals or as nations ; and it is commonly regarded as one of the privileges or duties of the chaplain to preach a sermon occasionally, as we are now doing to the Society. Whether it is that the Society desires in this way to recognize the importance of religion, or recognize the prominence that religious teaching has had in our national history in its better days, or whether it is from a liking which the Society has to hear the Gospel preached, I will not venture to inquire : it is at all events a good feature in the character of the society, and the having of a chaplain and the hearing of a sermon as a society is certainly in entire harmony with our training and tradition as a people.

I have chosen these passages of Scripture taken as our text, because they suggest lessons not only profitable for us to reflect on at any time, but appropriate to the present occasion.

The modern spirit—with which there is no use quarrelling—unlike the spirit by which our Fathers were possessed seems to think that a sermon is good in proportion to the shortness of it, and limits our sermons to 30 or 40 minutes, rendering anything like a full exposition of our text impossible. There are, however, two points suggested, which I would briefly bring under your notice, namely, First,

NOBLE NATIONAL ELEMENTS.

1. The duty of holding in remembrance, and endeavoring to perpetuate, the noble elements in a nation's life and the famous events and characters in the nation's history.

I think we find in scripture very ample ground for this position—a position no less sustained by reason itself. We find for example in Scripture that very great care was taken in writing down the more striking events in the history of God's ancient people Israel. This was done for other ends than merely to satisfy the national pride. It was done for the instruction of that nation, and of other nations, in all future ages. But while this was one main end, it was done also for the instruction of each successive generation of Israelites, as we find stated in the simple and once familiar Psalm :

“ His testimony and His law in Israel He did place,  
And charged our fathers it to show to their succeeding race ;  
That so the race which was to come  
Might well them learn and know,  
And sons unborn, who should arise,  
Might to their sons them show.”

It was intended that the account of God's mighty works done on their behalf, and the manner in which these works were recognized, or not recognized by them, should be placed on record, should be kept before the minds of the people, in order that they might remember their high calling as a nation, and that they might be stimulated to walk worthily of it. Hence all along the progress of this people we read not only of the great events which marked their course. We have not only, as it were, the footprints of their covenant God pointed out to us, but also mention made of the noble men and women, whose lives were signalized by devotion to God, and devotion to their country. It is true we have in these writings recounted also, the baser as well as the nobler elements in the <sup>own</sup> national history. Because this history is a true record. There is no exaggeration of the national virtues in it. There is no boasting or glorying in mere earthly resources. *There* are their noble deeds, *there* are their heroisms, their sufferings, their sublime faith in God, their religious fidelity, their loyalty to the interests of their church and nation ; but *there*, also, are their infidelities, their idolatries, their wicked rebellions, their national unrighteousness and their captivities. For there we see God in human history. We see a history in which the law of God is recognized as the final authority. We see a history in which it is demonstrated to all ages that it is not merely human legislation, not merely the regulation of trade, not merely a wide