

The smoking-room is an institution in the ship. We often heard of the pleasantries which were exchanged and of the puns and jokes which were sometimes visited with the usual penalties.

OUR VOYAGE.

How shall I describe it? Well, it was just like the average one, except a little more social and interesting. With a fair wind and clear sky we left Halifax for Liverpool on the 18th of April in the steamship *Parisian*. The passengers were respectable and intelligent, among whom we had Rev. Drs. Burns and Macrae, Rev. Messrs. Munro, Robertson and Professor Seath, of Halifax, besides two Episcopalian clergymen.

The first Sabbath the morning service was conducted by one of the Episcopal ministers and in the evening by Rev. Messrs. Munro, of Antigonish, and Robertson, of New Glasgow, Mr. Munro giving an address which was highly instructive and interesting.

The following Sunday the services were conducted by Rev. Dr. Macrae, who preached in his usual forcible and impressive manner. Dr. Macrae was travelling with Mr. Thompson and his family, who are members of St. Stephen's Church, in St. John, N. B. Rev. Dr. Burns declined to take any part of the services as he was enjoined by the members of his congregation to abstain from work of any kind. Dr. Burns was my room-mate, and although I have had the pleasure of his acquaintance for many years, yet when brought into such close acquaintance with him I felt as if I had never known him before. Although suffering from a recent illness, his large heart and wide sympathies, his Christian spirit and deep piety were such as to call forth my warmest admiration.

A sea voyage always winds up with "the concert," and ours was no exception to the general rule. The entertainment, which was most successful, consisted of vocal and instrumental music, readings and recitations. Mr. Thompson, of St. John, was chairman. The duties of his position he discharged to the satisfaction of all present, and during the voyage he made himself very agreeable to everyone.

The proceeds of concert and Sunday services amounted to over \$50, which were devoted to the Sailors' Widows and Orphans' Fund. On the Monday evening we reached Liverpool all in good health and without any accident to any one.

The passengers were loud in their complaints about the tender which conveyed us from the bar to the dock in Liverpool. Many of the passengers had on light clothing, and the cold and rain bore heavily on ladies and others who had scarcely recovered from the shock of sea-sickness during the passage. The contrast seemed so great on leaving such a fine ship as the *Parisian* and going into a craft where there was scarcely a seat to sit on or any covering from the wind and rain.

Toronto, June, 1891.

(To be continued)

Pastor and People.

GRANDMOTHER'S BIBLE.

So you've brought me this costly Bible,
With its covers so grand and gay;
You thought I must need a new one
On my eighty-first birthday, you say;
Yes, mine is a worn-out volume
Grown ragged and yellow with age,
With finger prints thick on the margin—
But there's never a missing page.

And the finger-prints call back my wee ones,
Just learning a verse to repeat:
And again, in the twilight, their faces
Look up to me, eagerly sweet.
It has pencil marks pointing in silence
To words I have hid in my heart;
And the lessons so hard in the learning,
Once learned, can never depart.

There's the verse your grandfather spoke of
The very night that he died;
"When I shall wake in His likeness,
I, too, shall be satisfied."
And here, inside the old cover,
Is a date—it is faded and dim.
For I wrote it the day the good pastor
Baptized me—I've an old woman's whim.

That beside the pearl gates he is waiting,
And when by and by I shall go,
That he will lead me into that kingdom,
As into this one below.
And under that date, little Mary,
Write another one when I die;
Then keep both Bibles and read them—
God bless you, child, why should you cry?

Your gift is a beauty, my dearie,
With its wonderful clasps of gold.
Put it carefully into that drawer;
I shall keep it till death; but the old—
Just leave it close by on the table;
And then you may bring me a light,
And I'll read a sweet psalm from its pages
To think of, if wakeful to-night.

—London Christian.

ON PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

NO. XIII.—BIBLICAL PREACHING.

The minister is nothing if he is not a preacher of the Word of God. His commission, if he have a commission at all, binds him down to that. It does not give him liberty to roam at large, at his own sweet will, regardless of the principal object that is set before him. It is to-day, as it was centuries ago, with God's servants, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. viii. 20. How much there is in these words of the Lord bearing on this point! "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." Their primary reference is to Jesus Himself, but what is true of Him is true of all His ambassadors. And when the minister speaks it is because, as of yore, the word of the Lord has come to him. Come to him in power; come to him with its revelation; come to him so as to constitute his message to his fellows for the time present. And it is as he comes to men with the word of the living God that he is able to speak with authority. Apart from it he has none. He may be charged with philosophy, with history, with science, with poetry and the sum of human knowledge outside the Bible revelation, but these are all of little import to the hearts and consciences of men. Man's thoughts may be thrown aside with impunity. God's thoughts cannot. Whenever that is done there is a violation of the constitution of our nature, for we are made for the reception and enjoyment of the words of God. Between them and our nature there are living affinities and beautiful correspondencies. As the soul sits in the ear and drinks in the rich strains of classical music, so the heart hungrily appropriates the truth of the Scriptures. As the eye is made for the light, so the spiritual nature of man is made for the Word of God. That word has been fashioned in human hearts, under the fires of passion, in the glowing colours of imagination, under the deep and strong impress of conscience and in the moulds of the intellect, in all conceivable human conditions, so that it has a special fitness for all men. It is musical with the tones of a brother's voice, and it is mellow with the affection of a kindred spirit; and in its inner fold it carries the deep things of God. What marvels and surprises it hides! Externally it is like the rough husk of the seed, but let it put forth its life and what a comely shaft it shoots into the air, and what a bloom it opens to the light, and with what fragrance it loads the atmosphere. It changes the desert into a paradise. It is a living and divine spirit in the soul of man. It, and it alone, gives to men a satisfying revelation of God. It, and it alone, meets all the great questions that lie in the depths or spring to the surface of the human soul. It, and it alone, shows how sin is put away and sinful men saved. It, and it alone, breathes in the heart the mighty hopes that make us men. It, and it alone, unveils the future and declares what we are to expect in the hereafter. It, and it alone, gives a trustworthy account of the great and eternal realities. What a wondrous book it is! Who ever mastered it? Who ever took it all in? Ah! There are more things in these two small volumes of the Old and New Testaments than are dreamt of in the very best interpreter's philosophy. The bold outline of it may be got hold of, but who has ever taken up into his mind anything in it? Luther asks the question: "Who will venture to affirm that any one has thoroughly understood a single psalm?" He also says: "I discover meanings that were overlooked by St. Augustine; others who come after me will, I am aware, perceive much that has escaped me." In John Robinson's famous letter to the Pilgrim Fathers who crossed in the *Mayflower* in 1620, and laid the foundations of the United States with Plymouth Rock, he asks them to remember that God hath yet more light to break forth out of His Word.

How many advantages there are in preaching it! It is the utterance of God, who is of one mind. There is no clashing in it, no contradiction. It throbs with the same spiritual and moral feeling throughout; a moral feeling coming through the ages into clearer, fuller, nobler manifestation. It has a system of truth in it which must be recognized; which is laid in the ruin of man, and rises in the love of God and the redemption by Christ Jesus, and is carried on in the applicatory work of the Holy Spirit to the hearts and consciences of men, and is at length crowned with eternal salvation. It is given to the theologian just as the plants are given to the botanist, and by his scientific skill he places its separate truths in their logical order and proper place. It is not to him a sand-heap, nor yet a disorderly conglomerate; it is an orderly expression of divine thought, of living truth. It has truth for the sinner in all the phases of his ungodliness, truth for the saint in all the diverse states of his heart and conditions of his life, and truth for all kinds of unbelief, pride, scepticism, indifference. It is an armoury of spiritual weapons for the soldier of the Lord. One thing that startles the reader of Professor Drummond's recent tracts is that while he is an acknowledged scientist, there is in these tracts no appreciation of the scientific character of the Bible as an expression of a divine plan. "Pax Vobiscum" is the worst piece of exegesis we ever read from a man of such standing. What is to be said of a man who contradicts flatly the Lord Himself? Listen! "When Christ said He would give men rest, He meant simply that He would put

them in the way of it. By no act of conveyance would, or could, He make over His own rest to them. He could give them His receipt for it. That was all." And after a sentence or two he goes on to say: "That this is the meaning becomes obvious from the wording of the second sentence: 'Learn of Me, and ye shall find rest.'" In this way not only does Professor Drummond contradict our Lord when He says: "I will give you rest," but he confounds things that differ when he interprets this clause by the one that follows. They refer to different stages of experience. The first touches the rest of justification—the rest Christ gives to the poor, lost, sin-burdened soul as it casts Himself on Him. The second is the rest of sanctification, which is a rest found in doing Christ's will. They are both realities. The first is peace with God, the second is the peace of God keeping the heart. Dr. Drummond's "Science" has darkened his mind to the simplicity and beauty of the truth. At the beginning of the "Pax Vobiscum" he gives us an experience of his own which he effectually repeats in not giving any advice which will help us to find the thing itself of which he speaks. And when he complacently adds: "The whole popular religion is in the twilight here," he is certainly looking at things through his own smoked-glass spectacles. And as he proceeds: "The want of connection between the great words of religion and everyday life has bewildered and discouraged all of us." Who are embraced in the "us"? We hope not many ministers in Scotland; nor yet many godly elders. We trust that this bewilderment and discouragement belongs only to one solitary professor, who was found not long ago in a public ceremony with Dr. Martineau Stopford Brooke and Mrs. Ward, the author of "Robert Elsmere," opening a hall where a Christless service was to be held every Lord's Day.

Dr. Drummond may be an excellent scientist, but he is certainly not a biblical preacher. He is an exceedingly unsafe guide in the exposition of God's Word. The man who loves to read John Owen or Richard Baxter or Thomas Boston or Samuel Rutherford, whose deep spiritual experiences touch responsive chords in every exercised soul, will, while recognizing the smartness and the charm of Professor Drummond's style, at the same time take note of his shallowness in religious experience.

Duncan Matheson, the honoured evangelist, said at a Conference on the Revival of 1860, in the Free Church, Aberdeen: "I have always seen the work produce the greatest fruits under the soundest teaching. An old Highland minister said: 'It is a dangerous thing for a child to get bad milk,' and you generally see where there is not sound teaching they are like the young thrushes, ready to eat mud if given to them. They have no discernment. But where there is sound teaching they grow up live calves in the stall; the grace of God is in them, and we see it shining. There is just this in it—the good old doctrines will stand the test for they are built upon the Rock of Ages." Wherein does their strength lie? In their true biblicalness. Read Boston's "Fourfold State," or Philip Henry's "Christ, All in All," or any of the works of the Puritan period, or the grand old Scottish preachers, and you will find them structures built up with beautiful Bible stones. Moody's best sermons are purely biblical. John Brown, of Haddington, says of himself: "I was led generally to preach as if I had never read a book but the Bible. And the older I grew I more and more aimed at this (an observation which I had made in the days of my youth, that what touched my conscience or heart was not any airy flights or well-turned phrases, but either express scriptural expressions, or what came near to them), and led me to deal much in Scriptural language, or what was near it." The most enduringly powerful preachers are those who honour the Word of God. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Then he shall have unspeakable advantages!

1. He will find a way to all hearts. The Bible is a common book, and its truths are the heritage of the people. He who works along its lines has a prepared way in which to run. He can take hold of many through this means.

2. He will have constant variety. The Bible is rich in thought, and so prolific in themes. Many of its truths are many-sided too, or are presented under changing lights. There is an historical progress and a development of doctrine he may seize.

3. He will be well proportioned in his presentation of truth. Each truth has its place and its sufficiency. It is a prime principle of preaching to give each truth its true proportion. And this he will do if he keeps close to the revelation God has given. And so he will by these means build up a symmetrical and a well-rounded character—one of massive solidity and of impressive nobleness and power. He will be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

LIGHTED TO CHRIST.

The light of a candle is an insignificant thing when compared with the light of the sun, yet it may be sufficient to enable one to read a document which shows that he is heir to an estate, or a letter that brings good news; so even a single verse of Scripture is enough, when believed, to bring to sin-burdened hearts pardon and peace, and to show that they are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" to "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."—2 Pet. i. 19; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.—*The Olive Leaf.*