

hear him. Imagine the sensation I had when, after years of anticipation, I sat in a pew about midway up the aisle of the Oxford Street Chapel and saw Dr. MacLaren walk up into his pulpit. The congregation was not a large one, only comfortably filling the body of the church, but this was easily accounted for by the fact that it was just in the midst of the summer, and that, the following day being a bank-holiday, many people had left town for a brief outing. The preacher's appearance would have probably been a great surprise to me, had not his picture, which has a conspicuous place in my study, made me familiar with his features and prepared me for the first impression. He has a thin, wiry, wrinkled face, with a receding mouth and a rather prominent nose and chin, and wears a sprinkle of whiskers under his chin which help to make his countenance unusually weird and homely. His voice, as he began, was high and thin and somewhat shrill, though this soon lost its unpleasantness, partly because it grew softer and more flexible, but principally because the hearer was given higher things to contemplate, and became charmed by the speaker's personality.

The text was the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the 24th and 27th verses inclusive, and it was not once lost sight of from the opening of the introduction to the close of the peroration. The sermon, therefore, was strictly textual and, as one familiar with the preacher's style would expect, analytical and expository.

The introduction was brief, clear-cut, and scriptural, the simple unfolding of the basic element of Moses' faith as described by the author of the Hebrews. Dr. MacLaren interpreted this as being a two-fold vision: "seeing Him who is invisible," and "looking away to (having respect unto) the recompense of the reward." The discourse was divided into two main heads—(1) What Moses saw, and (2) What the vision did for Moses—and a happier combination of the practical and scholarly

one could scarcely imagine. The thought was lofty, the style faultless, the illustrations apt, fresh, and beautiful, the delivery easy and effective. One fairly hung upon the speaker's words, and when he had concluded no such exhaustion was felt as often results from the giving of close attention to a magnetic speaker, but a wholesome, buoyant vigor and inspiration which proved itself neither artificial nor evanescent. The regular worshipers at the Oxford Street Chapel ought to be saints, and if they are not, it is not in the least degree the fault of the preaching.

One thing which interested me as much as anything was the speaker's extemporaneous delivery. Not a note was used, and yet every word was as carefully chosen and every sentence as perfectly formed as if it had been read from a manuscript. It was evidently *memoriter* preaching, and, as is the invariable result in such cases, the speaker had some marked mannerisms which, while they did not detract from his delivery, were plainly noticeable to a stranger. One of these was a fixed gaze at the opposite cornice of the auditorium, a gaze which apparently came from an effort to recall with precision the words that had been written, and which was interrupted only when the speaker was about to make the transition from one point to another. I afterward bought *The Freeman*, which publishes Dr. MacLaren's weekly sermons, and found that the discourse had been preached exactly as it had been written, without a single break or change. Such an example of pulpit memory coupled with pulpit ease and power is the rarest exception.

The rest of the service was equally well conducted, the reading of the Scriptures being reverent and pleasing, and the prayers most spiritual and uplifting. Taking everything into consideration, I regard that first Sunday in August spent in Manchester one of the brightest, happiest, and most helpful I have ever enjoyed.