

Pulpit Elocution.

No. 2.

The importance of culture and skill in address, as an indispensable qualification for the right discharge of the public duties of the ministry, is a subject which at present demands the earnest attention of students of theology. The public voice is loud and urgent on this point; the dissatisfaction with the deplorable deficiencies of manner which are so prevalent in the pulpit, is uttered with no sparing tone. Students, if they mingled more at large with the world, would hear expressions on this subject, which might well startle them. It is a general complaint among congregations of every denomination, that the style of pulpit elocution is miserably low and defective. To hear a sermon is not unfrequently spoken of as a matter of endurance, on the score of manner. It is not transcending the strictest limit of truth to say that society has become impatient and clamorous in regard to it.

Speaking of reformation in modes of education, Milton says, "There would then also appear in the pulpit other usages, or gestures, and stuff otherwise wrought than what we now sit under, oftentimes to us great a trial of our patience as any other grace that they preach to us." The desecrating effects of the practice so frequent in American churches of dismissing incumbents from their charge, are, in very many instances, to be traced to an uninteresting and unimpressive manner of preaching as their original source of a hundred dismissals, not one can usually be found to have happened in the case of an earnest and eloquent preacher. Theologians have slumbered over this great question, and the result is just what might be expected. The duties of the pulpit are, for the most part, miserably performed, and the church and the world have to abide the consequences. The practice of elocution seems the power of carrying along the sympathies of a whole audience, and stamping an impression. It enables the speaker to give life and effect to every sentiment which he utters, and to send it home to the heart. It serves also to render the exercise of public speaking a salutary instead of an exhausting process. It invigorates the organs and secures them against injury. It lightens professional labor; it tends to prolong life and protect health, while it secures an entire control of the voice, and makes it a ready and obedient instrument of the will. It insures, in a word, the whole benefit resulting from eloquence in manner.

All that the elocutionist pleads for is that the student after fifteen years, perhaps, of misdirected practice, give but the vigorous and faithful exertions of one, to the reformation of habit. Half an hour diligently employed, twice a day for a year, on the rudiments of the art, would usually suffice for the removal of prominent faults, and for the acquisition of the most important traits of a good elocution.

The student of theology, who has yet the susceptibility of youthful life upon him, and the leisure to cultivate his powers and form his manner, and who, whether from self-sufficiency, or ignorance, or indolence, or diffidence, deliberately prefers to neglect the consecration of his nature in its highest capabilities of excellence, to the function which he means to assume,—the elocutionist may well despair of moving by any argument which he can offer. The passive and lethargic pastor who has given himself to his people "for better, for worse," and to whom the calling, visiting, and miscellaneous jobbing of his vocation are sufficient excuse for neglecting its nobler offices is still farther removed from any influence of persuasion. But to both, the teacher of elocution may be allowed to say, "Look on this picture and on this"—the *uncultivated* and the *cultivated* speaker in the pulpit.

The former may by no very improbable combination of chances happen to exemplify all the following faults. He may have a *bad voice*. The absence of natural and acquired refinement is unequivocally indicated in the hideous tones not unfrequently heard from the pulpit. He may fail in respect of a distinct articulation of syllables and sounds so far as to obscure the sense of whatever he utters. The undisciplined speaker frequently exhibits a displeasing *loudness*, or, on the other hand, a *feeble utterance* which does not allow him to be heard.

The skillful *emphasis* of a good reader which gives to the main points of his expression a sculptured prominence, and striking force of effect, the unpracticed speaker has never observed. He seems usually either to have no power of *inflating his voice*, so that his sentences run on with flat sameness; or, on the other

hand, he twitches and jerks his words with perpetual double slides and circumflexes. The uncultivated speaker fails usually in adequate length of pauses. He allows no opportunity for an impressive thought to "sink down into the ear," and penetrate the heart. Or he is, perhaps, in the habit of using a high, thin and squeaking pitch, which forbids the possibility of grave, deep or solemn emotion on the part of his hearers; while sometimes he falls into the opposite fault of a hollow sepulchral, morbid voice, which bears no relation to this theme.

Of a hundred persons whom you may ask to read a vivid passage from Shakespeare, the most natural of all writers, not one perhaps can give the genuine tones of feeling to what he attempts to render.

The same experiment of reading may be made with the Bible or hymn book. The agonies and ecstasies of the Psalmist will usually be read with the tones of perfect decorum, the seraphic ardor of Watts with the coolest composure.

A few weeks of assiduous culture, however, would remove the impediments which artificial habit has thus accumulated, and convert the awkward, ungainly, and disagreeable manner into one of genuine nature, propriety, freedom, force and grace.

The Rev. Edward Irving was an impressive example of the effect of cultivation. In his early professional labors in Scotland he exhibited a style the most awkward, constrained and unnatural, that perhaps the pulpit ever exhibited. At a subsequent period in London, his attitude and action became by assiduous culture, most strikingly eloquent. While the ordinary preacher may well be excused from the usurping demands on time and labor indispensable to the attainments of a consummate orator, no unreasonable amount of exertion is required to make him an effective and successful speaker, or in other words, to enable him to accomplish all the true objects of oratory, by uttering his thoughts earnestly, appropriately and persuasively.

For the Visitor.
"His Appearing and His Kingdom."
No. 11.

"The night is far spent," wrote the great apostle,—"the day is at hand." If this was true then, how much more true after eighteen centuries of darkness! "Now is our salvation nearer." How near, who can tell? But the darkness will be greatest just before the rising of the Sun. There will be a period of prodigious impiety, and of "trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (Dan. 12: 1), whose history is foretold in a series of appalling pictures in "the Book of the revelation of Jesus Christ." But of this I cannot now speak particularly. Those who wish may read of it in such passages as Luke 21: 25, 26; Ezek. chap. 38: 8 to chap. 39: 29; Rev. chaps. 9, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19; 2 Thess. 2: 3-12; Jer. 30: 3-9; Dan. 7: 19-27, etc.

To the Lord's people, however, the terrors of those days need cause no alarm (2 Thess. 1: 7; 2: 2-8); for they will then be at "rest," having been counted "worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21: 36),—"caught up to meet the Lord in the air," that they may come with Him to the earth, and "with Him be manifested in glory" (Col. 3: 4), when He comes "out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Is. 26: 21), and to establish His own glorious kingdom.

The circumstances of His appearing, with the display of His almighty power in the deliverance of repentant Israel and the discomfiture of their enemies, are detailed in many passages of Scripture, to which the reader can turn for himself. Such are Rev. 1: 7; Matt. 25: 31; Jude 14; Zech. chap. 12: 9 to chap. 14: 15; Mal. 4: 1-3; Rev. 19: 11-21; etc.

It is necessary now to pass to my second topic—

II. THE KINGDOM.

Few subjects, if any, are more frequently mentioned in the Bible than the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Christ, and the Kingdom of Heaven. Strange that upon so prominent a theme there should be such varieties of opinion and such vagueness of thought!

All will agree that "the Kingdom of God" and "the Kingdom of Heaven" are, as Dr. Pusey says, "equivalent terms." But what do they mean? In any other collection of writings, critics have no difficulty in ascertaining the import of any expression that is found constantly recurring in a variety of connections, and especially in the works of various authors. And if the Bible were read as other books are—if we would take it to mean what it says—the difference and obscurity would not exist.

In the sermons and the hymns, the prayers and exhortations of the modern allegorizing school, "the kingdom" is made to signify sometimes one thing and sometimes another. It will be enough to name the three most common "spiritualized" senses of the word, and give one or two illustrations of each.

1. *The Church*. See the 788th Hymn in "The Psalmist":—"I love Thy Kingdom, Lord,—the house of Thine abode,—the Church our blest Redeemer saved with His own precious blood." Also Hymn 793, vs. 3.

2. What is called *the cause of Christ*: See Hymn 879, entitled "Universal extension of Christ's Kingdom." See also almost any religious newspaper, for items concerning "the advancement of the Kingdom of God."

3. *Heaven*. So the expression is commonly understood in Matt. 5: 3; Mark 14: 25; Luke 13: 28; John 3: 3; Gal. 5: 21; etc. I have also heard the words of the penitent robber on the cross interpreted as meaning "Lord, remember me when Thou hast arrived in Heaven and art seated on Thy throne."

Some persons have very vague notions on the subject. For example, a respected Baptist pastor once said in my hearing, when pointing out distinctions between the Kingdom and the Church, "The Kingdom is a kind of a sentiment,—a sort of something invisible and spiritual."

Now the fact is that the word "kingdom," as used in the Scriptures, should have just its ordinary signification, instead of being twisted into some figurative or symbolic sense. This would render all clear and harmonious.

Take up the subject in whatever part of the Bible we will, and we shall be led to the same result. But let us look at one of the prophetic visions of the kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar's famous dream of the great image was a prophecy concerning the kingdoms or empires that were to be (Need one add "on the earth"?). There was the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and then the Roman Empire. Upon this the commentators are, I think, pretty generally agreed. After the strong power of Rome, represented by the iron legs, there was to come a time of division, represented by the composite feet and toes. "In the days of these kings," said Daniel, "shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, but which shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms." This is commonly supposed to refer to the establishment of Christ's spiritual kingdom on earth, some say on the day of Pentecost. Hence the kingdom of Christ is considered to be now in existence, and its purely spiritual character is thought to be demonstrated. But those who take this view (as nearly everybody now does), lose sight of the fact that our Saviour's life and death and the preaching of the apostles took place when the power of Rome was at its height. It was then the period of the legs of iron. The mixture of the clay with the iron (the disintegration of the empire) did not begin till centuries later. We are still, it may be said, in the period of the feet. It will be in the days of the kingdoms of the ten toes (See Dan. 7: 24; Rev. 17: 12;) that "the stone cut out of the mountain" will smite the image upon the feet. Therefore this all-conquering kingdom is yet future.

This kingdom of the stone, though diverse from all others, will yet be just as truly a *kingdom* as those of gold, silver, brass and iron. Its sovereign will be Emmanuel, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Its princes and high dignities will be "the saints of the most High" (Dan. 7: 22, 27), to whom will be given "the dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven." They will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him a thousand years (Rev. 20: 6), sitting with Him in His throne, as He is now sitting with His Father in the heavenly throne (Rev. 3: 21). They with Christ their Head will have authority over the nations, and will rule them with a rod of iron (Rev. 2: 26, 27; 19: 15). The saints will be judges of the world and even of angels (1 Cor. 6: 2, 3),—and the twelve apostles in particular, who will be so highly favored as to eat and drink with the King at His table, will also sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22: 15-18, 30; Matt. 26: 29).

For the chosen race will be the immediate subjects of that glorious kingdom, dwelling in peace and righteousness in their own land, which God promised to Abraham their father. Judah and Israel which became separate kingdoms about 975 years before the Christian era, and have never since been re-united, will then have been gathered from among the peoples and will

be one nation in the land of promise, with Jerusalem "the City of the great King" as their capital city, where the sanctuary of God will be in the midst of them for evermore. See Luke 1: 32, 33; Ezek. 37: 15-28; 34: 22-31 (Figurative: God's flock meaning Israel, but not Israel meaning the church); Jer. 23: 5-8; 33: 14-18; Isa. 2: 1-4; Zech. 2: 12.

Such was "the hope of the promise made by God to the fathers, to which," said Paul, "the twelve tribes hope to attain." (Acts 26: 6; 28: 20; Gal. chap. 3). Such, in all its fulness of glory in the better revelations concerning the true heirs of the promises through faith, was and is the hope of the gospel—the gospel of the kingdom of God.

This gospel of the kingdom was preached by the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples throughout the years of His ministry, and was to be preached in all the world for a testimony to all nations. "When the disciples were as yet blind and ignorant in relation to the sacrificial death of their Master (to which so many Christians now look back as making up almost the whole of the gospel), they at the same time went about preaching the gospel, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is approaching.' In these days it is generally believed that they were wrong in their expectation of Messiah's reign. But when the Lord had been with them for three years, and then for forty days after His resurrection, 'speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God,'—they still had no idea but that He was to restore the kingdom to Israel, and were only desirous of knowing whether the set time had not yet come. Many centuries have passed since then, but the promise still stands secure.

Understand the Bible as it reads, and its pages shine with a new light. Much of the obscurity disappears, the hard passages become plain, the grand purposes of God are seen as displayed from the beginning to the end,—the New Testament is read with fresh interest, and in the Old Testament there are opened up mines of wealth never dreamed of before. May God grant us all to know the truth,—to believe the gospel and obey,—than when Christ comes again, He may receive us to Himself.
Dec. 14, 1879. —LUKE.

The Land Agitation in Ireland.

BY REV. GEORGE W. PEPPER.

The Irish people are, according to all accounts, on the very verge of a death struggle. The excitement and enthusiasm of the vast gatherings are passing away and now the people are standing on the ground calm and stern, as in that awful pause which precedes a storm. The passive state is being exchanged into one of active threatening; the cause is not pleaded by lawyers and crops of orators merely on the stump, but by an incensed and angry people. The means taken by the government, and the reluctant reductions in rent by the landlords, show their terrors. The monster processions and demonstrations have a deeper significance than at first appears. Such mottoes as "God save Ireland," "Remember Emmet," show that the undying aspiration of the downtrodden millions extends much deeper than the reduction of rents. What is the cause of this tremendous agitation and of the famine which now seems imminent?

First, the British government has confiscated every acre on that beautiful Island from the original native owners. At one time out of the 20,000,000 acres of which Ireland is composed there was a confiscation of 12,000,000, so that now, according to the London Times, a violent anti-Irish paper, there are only 8,000 persons, out of over 5,000,000 who are proprietors of land in fee simple. In a population of 5,500,000, with nearly 600,000 tenants, two-thirds of the whole island is in the hands of 742 landlords. There are over 5,000,000 there who do not own even an acre. Again, the registrar-general of England, in his last report, states that there are 94,000 one-roomed houses in Ireland, in which families, from eight to ten, eat, sleep, and die in the presence of each other. Three lords in the county of Mayo, own 254,000 acres—on these broad acres, there are not 100 comfortable houses in which my lord would put his hunting dogs. The eminent George Jacob Holyoake, an English reformer, who is now in this country, says that 12,000 people own all England, and that in Ireland there is a strip of country sixty miles long owned by one man. The Irish laborer is a hapless creature—worse fed, worse clothed, worse housed than the Russian serf before the ukase of emancipation. The children are ragged. To every magistrate, squire, and petty despot the people are expected to doff their hats.

Let such a state of things be fastened

by the bayonet or the sword upon the fairest portion of the United States, and, in three or four generations, there would be about as much squalor, beggary, and wretchedness among the descendants of the present virtuous and industrious inhabitants of Ohio, or of Connecticut, as there has been in Ireland.

Said John Bright, the broad-thoughted English statesman, some time ago, at Birmingham, to an audience of Englishmen: "Will you let me tell you that Ireland was once an independent kingdom; that within the life-time of many here it had an independent parliament; that at this moment, united with Great Britain, it requires about 40,000 men—soldiers and police—to keep the country quiet and to prevent revolution." And, again: "If the Irish landlords oppressed the English as they did their Irish tenants they would be exterminated." The most savage criticisms of England's treatment of her unfortunate sister that we have ever read come from the lips of such English statesmen and publicists as Bright, Gladstone, Goldwin Smith, and John Stuart Mill. The present leader of the Irish movement is Mr. Parnell—an American on his mother's side, and an Englishman on his father's side. He, like his predecessors, is a Protestant and almost adored by the Catholics. The Irish revolutionists of the last one hundred years have been Protestants.

While we are the advocates of freedom and justice to the Irish and to the oppressed multitude everywhere, we are also the antagonists of anarchy, and we sincerely hope that the beautiful land of sorrow and of song—may secure freedom and happiness without bloodshed.—*Christian Advocate*.

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