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Dr. Parker's Lecture to Preachers.

There could be no misjudging the congregation which assembled on Thursday morning last at the City Temple. Dr. Parker began a series of six lectures on "Christ's Preaching, the model for Christ's Preachers," and it drew together a large audience, composed in unusual proportion of ministers and students. Even the singing showed that; for a measured dignity, with a tenderness to sedate slowness, dominated this part of the service, which neither the organist's skill, nor the clear voice of the chief lady-singer could counterbalance. The ministers had the service of song all their own way, and so it moved on with sonorous steadiness—as befits ministerial gravity.

The Doctor's reading was brief: Christ's parable of the wise and foolish builders, at the end of His Sermon on the Mount; his prayer was equally terse, yet full of expressive application. A few explanatory words preceded the lecture:—this was the 10th year of the continuance of these Thursday morning sermons—the offerings taken at these services are solely for the maintenance of worship in the Temple, and for general charities—the preacher himself secures no gain therefrom. It was needful for Dr. Parker to forwarn his audience not to read his sermon, which was already printed in the *Fountain*, while he preached; many were preparing to do so. It would have been a mistake: the spoken message differed much in substance, and was in every sentence an improvement upon the printed discourse; it moreover became a living force as it fell from the preacher's lips. Surely, however, it is a mistake to let sermons thus prematurely get into print. The text was "His Doctrine."

We are told that in his Sermon on the Mount, Christ was eminently the Logos, the spoken Word of Deity. As we hear Him we feel we listen to God. For a sermon to be mighty for good, consent is needed in the hearer. The hearer determines the preacher. If one of you were to come in here and cry "Sir, what must I do to be saved?" you would instantly make a preacher of me. The great apostolic sermons were delivered under such inspiration when the people cried: "Men and brethren what must we do?" If the people who come to hear were earnest they would create earnest preachers.

There was about Christ that which His hearers could not understand. They asked, "Whence have this Man this wisdom?" He was unknown to them. It is better for hearers not to pry about with curiosity in order to know all about their minister; he should be God's messenger to them: a "voice," a weird man, "without beginning of days or end of life," coming among them from the mysteries, and breaking the great silence of the hearers and the universe into the articulations of speech.

The preacher must speak God's Word God's way. Will he, therefore, be heavy? Was Christ dull? Look at this Sermon on the Mount watering the very roots of life from the river of God. What a sermon! With what image shall we compare it? A Ganges, a wondrous, deep,

broad flowing river of truth—a Sky, immense, immeasurable, itself filled with worlds.

Jesus Christ was doctrinal; He had something distinct and definite to say to mankind. He was not one speaker amongst many, but alone: "I say unto you." So the preacher must stand out from and above all mere speakers. They say now that the pulpit is a platform, and the preacher a lecturer. But I would not be a lecturer. Not so; he is a preacher. The lecturer may excel the preacher in oratory and didactics, but what is his excelling? A flutter against a mud ceiling, and a fluttering again down to the floor. But the preacher—whom do I hear? God. "Thou shalt be to him as God." The preacher is an errand boy, a messenger; he runs in to say, "My Father has something to speak to you." If the preacher is a mere lecturer, then we can criticize, controvert, and contradict him. The preacher has to deliver revelations; not to propound suggestions for debate. It seems now that preacher and hearer are all getting on a level, and the hearers come and listens, and then goes out and asks another, "What do you think of the preacher this morning?" Of course, if that spirit of hearing rules him, then he will complain that "There was no food for his soul." Said Dr. Parker forcefully, "There is no soul for the food!"

Some people would call the Sermon on the Mount, dogmatic. It is a good word, though it has got into bad company, and that makes us shrink from it. We have heard of the dogma of Papal Infallibility, and the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and so on. I dislike it. Oh, but, you say, it is a very good word. So this piece of rope may be a very good piece of rope, but, then, somebody has been hanged on it. Never mind that, you urge, it is a capital piece of rope (an unintentional pun which excited the irrepressible laughter of all). So it may be, it may be superstitious; but I don't like it.

Yet if a man came to me from God, I want him to be dogmatic; let him not come with controversy but with revelation. Preachers have to declare not to discuss. "The voice said cry, and I said what shall I cry?" "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

As this sermon is a model it justifies us in laying down a definite doctrine. I say to my preacher, what is it God has told you to tell me? And he replies, "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation," etc. "God so loved the world," etc. That is dogma—definite, positive, clear substantial. We do not, therefore, assemble to make a Bible, but to read one. We are hearers. Wait a minute over that word! Isaac Newton said that the only difference between himself and other people was that he seemed to pay more attention to his subject than other people. Pay more attention! Why, there are men who all through the sermon have bought and sold, gone over their accounts, and settled bargains with customers, and then go out and say, "What did you think of him? I did not get on much this morning." Hearers, do you think you can just throw off your shop-aprons, and run into the sanctuary, and say, "Now then, what is it?" To be hearers we must pray.

It also justifies us in being practical in our preaching. Some men do not like practical preaching. When I was a young man I used to preach on "False Balances," and such topics; and a man of my congregation complained that he did not like that sort of preaching; it might do very well for Wednesday evening—when he was not there. Then the Doctor showed that since sorrow was as great a reality as sin, the preaching which comforted the bereaved or cheered the failing heart was in the truest sense practical. He is right as a practical preacher to denounce—to speak thunder and look lightning; but he is also practical if he bind up the broken heart.

Some people complain of their ministers that they want "pastoral visitation." They want nothing of the kind cried the preacher; they want personal gossip, pastoral smoking, pastoral nonsense, pastoral rubbish. What if a minister were to enter the house of one of his people and say, "I have come pastorally; now then, let me

examine your scales." They would be indignant, and say, "You insult me!" and instantly leave his ministry, and take sittings in the next church. Christ's preaching was practical; but such preaching would empty the church; yet it would assuredly fill it again.

A reference was made, in conclusion, by the Doctor to his having received a letter from Canon Liddon, describing how he—"one of the greatest preachers of the day," as Dr. Parker called him—had gained preparation for pulpit work. The hymn

Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live,

was then sung, the benediction pronounced, and thus ended one of the most suggestive and stimulating services which we have attended. Ministers seemed all of one as they left the City Temple, for we heard many a word of hearty admiration, and equally hearty declarations of the enjoyment occasioned by the clever sallies of wit with which the lecture bristled and sparkled throughout.

L. B. GRAPPELUS.

Letter From Ottawa.

Among the incidental advantages of being at Ottawa during the session of Parliament, is that one has an opportunity to hear the great men who are brought here to lecture at such times. Last Saturday evening we had a lecture from Joseph Cook at the Dominion Methodist Church. The fame of the lecturer and the subject, "Does death end all?" brought out a fine audience of 1,500 people. Sir John Macdonald presided.

Mr. Cook appears about 45 years of age, of stout build, would weigh probably 200 pounds, and carries a head on his shoulders, which, even on such a support, looks almost immense. If Joseph Cook has not great intellectual power then the cranioscopic observer would have to pronounce phrenology a lie. He is not an orator; his elocution is exceedingly faulty, his manner abrupt and ungraceful. But the listener feels from the first that he has the grasp of a giant. His logic is irresistible, and his conclusions are driven home with all the force of sledge hammer blows. In his intense moods, when his great brain is under full pressure, the gleaming of his eye from under his overhanging brows has something terrible in it.

The first part of his argument, founded on correlation, was the plainest if not the best. Nature makes no half joints, nothing incomplete. She has made the eye, but there is also light for its use, as there is flavor for the taste, sound for the ear, and beauty to gratify the sense of the beautiful. The fish spawned in the river, prompted by instinct sets out for the ocean and there is an ocean for it just as there is a south country for the waterfowl of Labrador, and whose instinct prompts it to fly thither. With the Bible closed, he proved from Shakespeare, Confucius, the Koran, the Buddhist and Greenland writers from Socrates and others, that in all ages and races of men in the world, a conscience and belief in a future state existed. Then, unless this all-prevailing opinion or belief is a lie, there must be a future for men beyond the grave.

The second part of Mr. Cook's address was drawn from the structure of the human body, was illustrated by plates giving microscopic views in support of his very elaborate and highly scientific argument. He met the Scientist and Materialist on their own ground and largely with their own weapons, admitting the accuracy of their observations in nature, but denying their conclusions. Having demolished their theories, he gives his own, which many may take exception to, that the soul as the life principle exists before the body, builds the body about itself, and of necessity survives the body when it dies. The doctrine of pre-existence in some shape, of the human life principle, and also that there is a future in another state for the lower grade of animals of this world was also implied.

He concluded, of course, that death does not end all, and having reached this conclusion by arguments drawn wholly from reason, science and nature, he said, "I

have given you the starlight and the moonlight on this question. Here," lifting the bible solemnly above his head, "is the sunlight!"

Yesterday afternoon Mr. Cook (he is not ordained,) preached in the same house to a still larger audience, from Mark iii. 29, which he rendered thus: "But he that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal sin." The last two words, eternal sin, were the subject of his discourse which was an answer to Canon Farrar's discourse on "Eternal Hope." He closed the Bible as in his lecture, asked his hearers in imagination to close the church doors, remove the roof, and under the open sky, with God and the judgment above them, reason out the case, each for themselves. He argued and proved from experience and literature the tendency of character to become permanently good or bad, and that frequent sinning was always followed by a deadening of the moral sense and general blindness. Even a heathen had written that "frequent sinning impairs the judgment and when the judgment is impaired man sins more frequently." That the laws of the other world are brothers to the laws of this, and moral law must in its nature be the same throughout the universe. If so, those who have lapsed into fixed sinful character in this world, go into eternal sin beyond the grave, and feel the consequence in the eternal punishment which must attend eternal sin. He asked, "Would Canon Farrar himself trust his chance of eternal salvation on repentance in the intermediate state? And if not, should we follow him where he dared not lead the way?" There was a terrible force to Mr. Cook's denunciation as he closed this passage with the words: "Canon Farrar my master? I wouldn't own him for my slave!"

Mr. Cook is not in general a man of happy phrases, such as abound in many lecturers, but I remember that he spoke of the seducer as "a creature so mean that his soul was not worth saving." He gave his impression of the number of the saved as proportionate to the lost, taking in all the worlds, and those who died in infancy, to be as the proportion of the citizens of this country, compared with those who are in its penitentiaries. He gave a graphic picture of how right predominated over wrong, and light over darkness in the moral and material universe. "True there is a shadow behind each planet, but it dwindles to a point, while in the immense space between and around an ocean of light is billowing."

I am not sure that Joseph Cook's belief in detail would prove to be that held by any of the churches, I am inclined to think it would not, but to the great central truths of the Christian faith he is undoubtedly loyal, and these truths have not, perhaps, in our age, an abler champion.

M.

March 23rd, 1879.

Acadia College.

Prof. McDonald of Dalhousie College delivered a lecture before the Athenaeum on the 21st, subject "The unknown world." The design of the lecture was to exhibit in popular language some of the processes of cognition and to show that we knew nothing of the essence of matter or mind. This was the unknown world, revealed to us by some of its qualities but in the main hidden from us. The lecture was very well received.

A new bell for the College has been put into the tower. The money for this, we learn, was wholly contributed by the students. The bell weighs about 800 weight, heavier by some 300 pounds than the old one. "Its tone is good," was the verdict of those who listened to its first performance on Wednesday. The bell has on it the following inscription: "Ad veritatem ad jus. A gift of the students of 1879." May its mellow tones for many years to come ring out the liberality of its donors.

C.

\$2,708,584 worth of whiskey was manufactured in the distilleries of Ontario last year. A million and a half bushels of grain were used in Canada last year for distillation purposes.

Items of Interest.

"A. B. cum laude," is to be a Harvard degree for a certain degree of scholarship.

Boston University has more than twenty-five per cent of women among the students.

There are four schools of theology in or near Chicago. Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist. Their students annually hold a social and religious gathering with the most cordial good fellowship. This year the Methodists entertained the others.

An interesting revival is in progress in Hamilton College, at Clinton, N. Y., and twenty-five converts are counted and as many more backsliders recovered.

Dr. Moffat, father-in-law of Dr. Livingstone, said, at a recent meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, South London, that he had been engaged in Missionary work sixty years. He had a hard time of it. He had to cut logs into planks, to quarry, thatch and use the anvil as well as the pen. Four of the languages of Africa have been reduced to writing, the Scriptures have been translated into them, and there were now 50,000 church members. The church members in all the different missions and churches of Africa are estimated at 100,000.

The cremation society of Great Britain is making arrangements to erect a large and costly crematorium near London.

A delicate matter is thus delicately announced: "Victoria will soon be the first Queen of England who ever saw her own great-grandchild."

Up to the year 1865 Russia possessed 8,000 elementary public schools with 280,000 pupils. The number has now increased to 24,000 (inclusive of municipal schools,) with nearly 1,000,000 pupils, but the number of children in Russia between the age of 7 and 13, is about 12,000,000, so that upwards of 90 per cent of Russian children remain uneducated.

John Welsh, of Philadelphia, United States Minister to Great Britain, has written Secretary Evarts that his salary of \$17,500 a year is not sufficient to sustain the dignity of his office. Secretary Evarts has sent Mr. Welsh's letter to the House which has referred it to the Committee on appropriations, and that will probably be the last of it.

Much unpleasant excitement has been occasioned in the Vatican, by the result of the pope's inquiries respecting sundry large sums mentioned in the will of Pius IX. as provided for various objects. Large amounts believed to have been invested abroad, have entirely or in great part, disappeared, leaving no trace.

A New York steamboat captain has invented an apparatus for steering steam vessels by a simple lever. A boy can handle the largest ship with the utmost ease. The captain predicts that his discovery will revolutionize the art of guiding steam vessels.

News from Athens comes that M. Angelinos, minister of Education, has offered Madame Sakalarius, the wife of a Baptist missionary, permission to re-open her school there, on condition that either a picture of the Virgin is hung in it or a Greek priest is permitted to teach the children the Catechism daily. The offer was refused. The school, largely attended by poor children, was closed by the Government three years ago, because Madame Sakalarius refused to teach the Greek Catechism in it. The Protestant missionaries point to this as an instance of the liberal spirit of the Government towards them. They further declare that there was more religious liberty when the country was under Turkish rule than there is at present.

A. L. O. E., the gifted English author, now a missionary in the Punjab, India, mentions that now they have quite a little flock of professing Christians at their station, where, two years ago, there was but one noble Brahmin convert. The establishment of a school for native Christian boys, has transformed the former stronghold of bigotry.