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of the Western Church whilst it was still a whole, or upon some speculative theory of what a Christian society should be. We may persuade ourselves that the will of God has for us buried itself in the tradition or the theory. But the living will of our God has never abdicated its sovereignty—not with regard to the Church any more than with regard to the State and the individual soul. If we defer in Church matters to its authority as supreme, the past will become full of importance and interest to us, as we see in it, not a casual sequence of events or the clashing of competitive appetites, but a revelation more or less discernible of the guidance and the purposes of God; and all that we learn from the past will help us to understand and appreciate the present; but we shall look forward to the future also in pious dependence upon the same living will, hoping to be guided and impelled by it, and seeking courage to make any changes by which we may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

J. Ll. Davies.

Art. III.—A PLEA FOR PRACTICAL PREACHING.

THE relation between doctrine and ethics, religion and morals, or, to speak more definitely, between Christian faith and Christian character—this is a subject never out of place, and which has now a special importance from certain conditions of our time. If I may use the graceful language in which His Majesty's inspectors have been accustomed to note the defects which would bring loss and danger to our schools, it is "a subject which requires attention." That there are reasons for this suggestion in the thought and habit of the day will be more or less acknowledged if the following observations are held to be correct.

On the side of faith, the subjects which have long preoccupied the mind of the Church do not, in the first place, concern themselves with the individual life. The prevalent discussions inaugurated by the Oxford Movement, bearing on sacraments and ministry and corporate and historic Christianity, have in their effect largely superseded the practical teachings on personal character and conduct. These, again, are placed at a still greater disadvantage in presence of that line of scriptural study which consists in a detailed criticism of the documents, a revaluation of their truth and worth, and a reconstruction of their historic contents. Such religious interests (if they may be so described) have but a remote

bearing on personal religion—on what we are and do. If on the religious and scriptural side the thought of our time is little favourable to the practical education of spiritual life, so on the secular there are influences which tend to dispense with its foundations. This is largely due to an unacknowledged effect of Christianity itself. Its spirit has so far leavened modern society that its principles come to be left out of sight as unnecessary adjuncts; enlightened public opinion is taken as sufficient authority and guide without the Word of God, and the private virtues and honourable record of eminent persons known to be unbelievers are held to show that the faith has no very close connection with life and character.

The prevalence of these three conditions of mind has distinctly affected teaching in the Church. In some quarters subjects connected with corporate life, sacramental, sacerdotal, confessional, ritual, and the like, seen in permanent possession of the pulpit; and if other topics are taken in hand, they are soon turned to account in the interest of the same doctrines. These predominantly and habitually hold the field. In other cases, less numerous, the shadow of the critics has fallen on the pulpit, and gone far to take the heart out of the preacher. Recorded facts seem suspected as fictions, inspired sentences lose their inspiration, and Scriptures most illustrative of human nature and personal character are slighted as untrustworthy, and dropped out of use. The effect on the pulpit in Germany, as recently described by a German writer, has in smaller measure its counterpart among ourselves. "The love for the Old Testament is at present well-nigh extinguished. Consider how seldom the Old Testament is preached on to-day. It will not be very different in the instruction of youth. But if our people are not constantly referred to the Old Testament as the basis of the New, the New Testament must become unintelligible to them, and the person of Christ a puzzle. The Old Testament is made disagreeable to students of theology, and the congregation suffers" (Möller, "Are the Critics Right?"). With the effect of the other influence mentioned, that of the ethics of the world, we are much more familiar. In many sermons, notably those on public occasions and those addressed to the young, the standard proposed and the motives appealed to are just those of the natural man. Good things are said of the need of high ideals, the inspiration of great examples, and the excellency of truthfulness and charity, of manliness and self-control, of public spirit and social virtues; but the governance of life and the building of character appear to have no need for their basis and support of the Word of God, the faith in Christ, and the grace of the Spirit.

These are the reasons in the circumstances of the time which give fresh cause to say that practical preaching in the Christian sense is "a subject which requires attention." Preaching in the Christian sense is more than giving good advice in a loud voice, as Dean Stanley's saying defined it. It is proclamation of a truth, publication of a message, which we call the Gospel, comprehensive in its contents and manifold in its consequences. It is just in the connection between the truth and its consequences that the essential character of Christian preaching lies. Those consequences are practical, wrought in the mind, the conduct, the life, in what a man becomes, and does, and is; they go to make character. If not, the claim on attention fails. There is nothing more felt by men in general than that the ethical effects of a religion are the tests of its worth; and certainly the preacher of the Gospel has in this respect, not only a supreme obligation laid upon him, but almost infinite resources for its fulfilment. The obligation consists, not in mere command, but in the very nature of the religion, as one that not merely regulates the surface, but enters into the springs of life, constituting motive, claiming the whole man, and riveting that claim by the prospect of eternal judgment. The resources are in all the lessons, examples, and experiences of the past, but chiefly in those enshrined for ever in the Holy Scriptures. There the ways of man are laid out before us in the clear light of heaven. Where shall we find such true knowledge of the world and of the heart, such disclosures of character, and consequently such instructions, admonitions, suggestions, as in the statutes, histories, psalms, proverbs, prophecyings, of the Old Testament? Where else do we find that marvellous elevation and at the same time discrimination of the moral life which meets us in the Sermon on the Mount, in the penetrating and pregnant sayings of Him who knew what was in men, and then in the close dealing with heart and conscience by Apostles speaking in the Spirit? Truly we have in the written Word an inexhaustible mine of "teaching, correction, reproof, education in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished for every good work" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

Is this mine worked as it should be? Are these resources utilized for the practical purposes for which they are said to be provided? In a measure, no doubt, they are, and in many a congregation more or less adequately. Yet, by common report and regretful complaints, there is in the Church on the whole a noticeable defect in this matter; and this is to be traced, not only to such causes as those above mentioned, but still more to a weak apprehension of the Christian life in its nature and history, and an insufficient

sense of the difficulties which beset the realization of the Christian character. Yet this is the work which it is a main business of the Church to conduct and assist, and for which, as a perpetual need, its normal and systematic ministry is carried on. Special evangelistic efforts have a distinctive character in their methods and topics for conversion and revival, but sometimes their insistence on the first principles of salvation is such as to leave the impression that the future is secured by the change of an hour, and that the whole Christian life will necessarily follow on a conscious reception of Christ; so that the work which remains for the believer is rather a testimony to others than a government of himself.

In some cases this kind of mission-preaching becomes the ordinary ministry of the Word, urging in general terms the necessity of holiness and a consistent walk, but giving little help for its details and exigencies. It is just this help that ever-recurring sermons ought to give, and the virtual reliance on the automatic effects of faith is a grave mistake. It is a mistake which habitual self-observation would prevent, and against which there is obvious warning in the ways and characters of many presumably good people. It is one which implies ignorance of human nature, of the power of the world, and of the normal action of Divine grace. Our first teachers were under no such mistake, and their successors will not fall into it if they take Apostolic preaching for their model and guide.

These writings are not, indeed, specimens of pastoral teaching in the congregation, but they give sufficient light upon it. The letters to churches on special questions or occasions show a wakeful attention to what is passing in men's minds and lives, and when the particular purpose is fulfilled, the great doctrines are seen as foundations of practical life, with charges and admonitions, necessarily rapid, but both ample and definite. Brief words touch in succession on separate points in character and conduct, and sometimes combine them for completeness in a comprehensive sentence. So St. Paul: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are reverend, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 3). So also St. Peter, enumerating the necessary qualities of the Christian, as if involved one with another and all evolved from faith, yet needing all diligence for their realization: "Adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue, and in your virtue knowledge, and in your knowledge temperance, and in your temperance patience, and in your

patience godliness, and in your godliness love of brethren, and in your love of brethren charity. For if these things are in you and abound, they make you to be not idle or unfruitful to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i. 5). This is a preaching which insists on the completeness of the Christian character, which distinguishes its constituent features, which makes faith its originative source, and insists on its condition in the man's own purpose and endeavour. It is what St. Jude expresses as "building up yourselves on your most holy faith"—admirable words, containing the pith of the matter. It is this process of building up, not of a fortune or a family, or some cherished scheme, but of a man's self, for which the preaching of the Word is needed, to give stimulus and support, instruction and counsel, caution and warning; to raise the dropped hands and confirm the feeble knees, to keep the lame from turning out of the way, to discover roots of bitterness, to restore the consolations of God, and to dissolve complications of error and self-deceit; for such power belongs to "the Word of God, which is quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12).

This Apostolic guidance in practical preaching is likely to be more worthily followed if the preachers come to understand that "the subject requires attention," and to understand it in the meaning which it has in its technical use—viz., that on neglect of the warning loss and danger follow. And have not loss and danger followed already? Is not a defect in this respect one cause of that loss of interest in Church services and that popular abstention which is so often discussed and deplored? The proper effect of the sermon is usefulness and helpfulness. If this be wanting, other attractions will be no compensation to the common mind. Our present clerical training gives little help in this direction. The principles and methods of such a ministry are not learned in our theological colleges. Men pass from them into Holy Orders equipped rather for propounding adopted ideas or carrying out ritual systems than for the cure of souls, which has to deal with the duties and difficulties, the trials and temptations, the conflicts and sorrows, of actual life. No doubt the necessary qualifications are to be acquired afterwards in the pastoral office itself; but there might be some more help than there is in the day of preparation. Our parochial system, besides its direct advantages, is a scheme of education for the minister. Placing him in the midst of the life around him and in a special relation to it, making the preacher and the pastor one, it provides opportunity and

obligation for perfecting the twofold ministry by the influence that the one kind of service has upon the other. The intercourse of pastoral visitation has a natural tendency to bring the teaching in the congregation into touch with the life of the people, and to make the preaching practical. So it will, if the ministry has its true spiritual foundation in the supreme and dominating purpose "to seek for Christ's sheep, which are dispersed abroad, and for His children that are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever." Then the ultimate aim pervades the whole work, and gives vitality to all its parts, in commencing, promoting, and perfecting this salvation, in the edification of the individual and the edification of the Church.

Then, in building up others on the most holy faith, the minister has to see that he is building up himself. If it be not so, there is a note of falsehood in his work, which is felt in his ministry and echoes in his conscience. If it be so, there is harmony between the one and the other, and his honest self-observation becomes a source of power. It reveals to him secrets in human nature, which the outside study of it would not have shown him, and he knows better what takes place in other men by what is passing in the man he knows best. In this respect, as in some others, "a man's soul is often wont to tell him more than seven watchmen who sit above in a high tower" (Eccles. xxxvii. 14). But the watchmen in the tower are not to be disregarded. Those who survey mankind from special posts of observation and with a larger sweep of view—the historians, the biographers, the metaphysicians, and moral philosophers—are great assistants to the preacher. Such general reading and the habits of thought which it creates qualify for practical teaching on the larger scale and in the more cultured congregations; and the present diffusion of education among the people makes upon the privileged teachers an increased demand, which they on their part are bound to recognise.

In what has been said upon one kind of preaching there is no forgetfulness that there are other kinds which have their claims and their occasions. There is preaching which has in some other way its own definite character, doctrinal or expository, evangelistic or controversial, besides that which may be described as having no character at all, which (as it has been said) aims at nothing, and hits it. But it is reasonable to urge that the practical character belongs more especially to the ever-recurring sermon, and is also one that naturally attaches itself to the other lines of teaching as their consequence and completion. So we see it in the sacred pages, wherein the Apostles ever add to their high arguments and

expositions of the truth of the Gospel the needful words, which teach us "what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

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ART. IV.—THE CHALDEANS OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

THE use of the word *Kasdim*, "Chaldeans," in the Book of Daniel, to denote a certain class of the "wise men" of Babylon, has been looked upon by some authorities as an evidence of the late date of that book. Professor Schrader remarks: "The signification 'wise men' that we meet with in the Book of Daniel is foreign to Assyrio-Babylonian usage, and did not arise till after the fall of the Babylonian Empire. This is in itself a clear indication of the post-exilic date of the Book of Daniel."[1] Still stronger are the following statements from Professor Sayce in his interesting work on "The Higher Criticism": "Besides the proper names, there is another evidence of late date. The 'Chaldeans' are coupled with the 'magicians,' the 'astrologers,' and the 'sorcerers,' just as they are in Horace or other classical writers of a similar age."[2] Again: "After the fall of the Babylonian Empire the word 'Chaldean' gradually assumed a new meaning. The people of the West ceased to be acquainted with the Babylonians through their political power or their commercial relations. The only 'Chaldeans' known to them were the wandering astrologers and fortune-tellers, who professed to predict the future, or practise magic by the help of ancient 'Chaldean books.' 'Chaldeans' consequently became synonymous with fortune-tellers; and fortune-tellers, moreover, who —like the gipsies or 'Egyptians' of to-day—were not considered of a very respectable character. The term lost its national or territorial signification, and became the equivalent of 'sorcerer' and 'magician.' It is in this sense that the term *Kasdim* is used in the Book of Daniel. It is a sense which was unknown in the age of Nebuchadnezzar or of Cyrus." . . . "In the eyes of the Assyriologist, the use of the word *Kasdim* in the Book of Daniel would alone be sufficient to indicate the date of the work with unerring certainty."[3] The above opinions are endorsed by Professor Driver in the Cambridge Bible for schools and colleges.[4]

[1] "The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament," vol. ii., p. 125.
[2] "The Higher Criticism," p. 533. Horace is a slip for Juvenal.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 534, 535.
[4] See The Introduction to Daniel, pp. xlix, l.