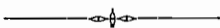


the prophetic office entirely to this duty, and to eliminate altogether its predictive function. There were among them men of great eminence, in whom dwelt the Holy Spirit in very large measure. These men were the direct organs of communication between Jehovah and His people—the advisers or the strong rebukers of their rulers. They lived and taught in the most critical periods of their nation's history, and shall it be said that men like these, filled, as we have said, with the Spirit of God, and endowed with the higher degrees of inspiration, should not from time to time be gifted with visions of God's future purposes? Or shall it be said that in them the gift of foresight was "but a poor gift, which they might share with the witch or the wizard; that it is not always divine—it may be devilish, and its possession may turn men into devils"?

(To be continued.)



ART. III.—MODERN PREACHING.

THE universal extension of the art of printing has universally modified the influence of the pulpit. Much of what was formerly wont to come to man by hearing, now comes to him by reading. The journal and the book have, in the modern age, largely covered the space of public attention previously occupied by the harangue and the sermon. The newspaper has a daily congregation of tens of thousands; the preacher has a weekly audience rarely exceeding a few hundreds. For every thirty persons who habitually read journals and books, probably less than five habitually listen to speeches or sermons—so completely, in the modern age, has the written word usurped the throne once occupied by the spoken utterance.

It is, moreover, very noteworthy that this usurpation affects not sermons alone, but all spoken dissertations in general. In several towns rough calculations have been made of the numbers of persons attending the places of worship in those towns, and the aggregate of these numbers seldom amounts to one-third of the entire population. But if, in those self-same towns, a calculation were made, during a municipal or parliamentary election, of the number of persons attending the places of political meeting, the aggregate of these numbers would be still less imposing. Of course, upon great occasions, when the Prime Minister or some important political personage is announced to address a meeting, the concourse of listeners is multitudinous; but so is it also at Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral when any famous divine is announced to

preach. From a census taken a few years ago in London, it was computed that no fewer than six hundred thousand persons attend the various churches and chapels every Sunday. And although this aggregate number is equal to only one-tenth of the population of the Metropolis, yet, on the other hand, it shows that congregations equivalent in number to at least one hundred great and rare political meetings, assemble in London alone for the ordinary purposes of religion every Sunday throughout the year. The scanty attendance at sermons is not, therefore, of itself a convincing evidence that the public interest in religion is on the decline, any more than the even greater scantiness of attendance at political meetings is a proof of the decadence of patriotism. In both cases alike the scantiness of attendance is only an evidence that, in the modern age, the sceptre of influence, once wielded by uttered speech, has passed into the hands of the printed page.

There are unmistakable and abundant signs in every direction that the hold which Christianity still retains, at the close of the nineteenth century, upon the intelligence and emotions of men, is intensely strong—indeed, altogether measureless. When, *e.g.*, in all the annals of publishing, has there been witnessed a scene comparable to that enacted in the year A.D. 1881, on the day of the issue of the Revised Version of the New Testament? For months beforehand the printers' presses wrought incessantly to provide a number of copies equal to the anticipated demand. Among all the English-speaking peoples of the world expectation rose to something like fever height, and on the day of publication the rush upon booksellers was a rush unparalleled in the history of literature. Four years later, on the publication of the Revised Version of the Old Testament, in May, 1885, the *Times* newspaper declared that "Christians have become more intent than ever on understanding the real meaning of the revelation upon which their religion rests. There is a craving for a renewed knowledge of the Scriptures. Never was there a period when English Christians were more eager for light on the lessons of the Bible."

Nor was this rushing interest a mere evanescent phase of ephemeral curiosity, due to the publication of a long-expected revision of the Holy Scriptures. The copies of the sacred volume annually circulated by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, and by the British and Foreign Bible Society, are reckoned by hundreds of thousands. There is no department of literature so busy and flourishing as the department dealing with religion. The number of religious books and religious tracts sold every year exceeds the number of all other books and tracts put together. A Life of Christ goes

through fifteen editions in three or four years. Even journals and magazines which make no profession of being specifically religious, usually assign a prominent place to articles bearing upon religion. The notoriety of many a scientific man is due less to his researches in science than to his controversies with religion.

Even the growing antagonism to Christianity is a symptom of Christianity's growing power. Few persons become ardent in whipping a dead horse. There is no zest in such a recreation. A strong athlete requires a robust antagonist to put him on his mettle and to stir his blood. The fire and zeal of the giants who oppose themselves to Christianity could not be kindled by any adversary less gigantic than Christianity itself. The oppositions to Christianity, far from being a cause of despondency or dread, are a source of encouragement and hope. They unite with the fairer and more friendly tokens in attesting the strength of the grip which Christianity has fastened upon the heart and mind of the modern age.

If, then, as is alleged, the power of the pulpit is decaying, the decay is not due to any decadence in men's interest in religion. The very nature of the case is contrary to such a supposition. For man is essentially a religious being. He is as manifestly a creature of spirit as a creature of sense. His interest in spiritual phenomena is insatiable. The very falsities and monstrosities of the spiritual world wake him into a mood of examination. The Psychical Society, largely composed of men of learning, is ever ready to expend much patient and intense effort upon the investigation even of a ghost. Why should the prospect of the great wide sea please the beholder, and fill him with a sense of pensiveness, if he were not gifted with the eminently spiritual faculty of imagination? Why should the measureless dome of space, and the myriad lamps hung therein, have been to man in all ages an object of admiring, frequently of adoring, solicitude, if man were not intuitively religious? The fictions, the poetry, the sculpture, the music, the paintings, the philosophies, the creeds, the martyrs, the saints of successive ages of mankind, all combine in attesting the inextinguishableness of man's interest in spiritual phenomena, and man's endless anxiety concerning his own eternal destiny.

For practical purposes it counts but little that a few speculators either doubt or deny the essential religiousness of man. There have also been philosophic speculators who have asserted that the material world is a pure idea, and that the supposed perceptions of sense are all mere illusions. Yet in the latter instance not even the speculators themselves act on their speculations. Despite their speculations, these speculators.

act as if the world were material, and as if they themselves were gifted with faculties of veritable sense. In like manner speculations menacing to religion are practically impracticable. They are soon perceived to do violence to the essential constitution of man. They leave a void in his nature. For a while the ardour of perversion and the keenness of conflict may hold at bay the impulses of man's spirit; but at length, if man denies to his spirit the wheat of religion, he is ultimately compelled to feed it on the husks of superstition. Thus he who might have been a believer becomes a mesmerist, and he who might have been a saint becomes a spiritualistic medium. Even in its perversions and revenges, the unconquerable religiousness of man's nature asserts and vindicates itself. Violence may degrade, but cannot destroy, the indestructible spiritual element in man. The men of to-day are, by the obligations of their spiritual constitution, as naturally religious as were the men of the apostolic or reformation periods of the Church's history. They cannot help themselves. Either favourably or unfavourably religion *must* interest them. The human nature to which the modern preacher addresses his sermons is composed fundamentally of the self-same elements as the human nature to which St. Paul or St. Chrysostom, Luther or Whitefield, addressed their sermons. And consequently, if the modern sermon does not exercise an influence equal to the sermons of the former days, the cause is not to be found in any diminution of the religiousness, native and necessary to man.

Neither is the cause to be found in the monotony with which the lapse of ages is said to have dulled and encrusted theological and spiritual truth. The charge is sometimes brought against Christianity that it is unprogressive, and that there is about it an unexciting sameness. But about air-breathing and wheat-growing and bread-baking there is a similar sameness. Things vital and necessary are usually unprogressive. Not all the science of all the ages has changed one single element in the fundamental constitution of man's nature. The needs, the hopes, the fears, the difficulties, the aspirations of man are at this moment characteristically identical with what they were thousands of years ago. *It is not man himself, but merely man's environment, which has been modified by the inventions and discoveries of successive generations.* The chemical constituents of wholesome food, the physiological conditions of jocund health, the utilitarian requirements of social felicity, the basis of virtue, the consequences of vice, the spectre of dread ever haunting the guilty, the rainbow of hope ever encircling the good—none of these things are changed by the lapse of time, and the

advances of thought, and the achievements of enterprise. They are each and all stationary, unprogressive, fixed. To say, then, that Christianity is beset with sameness is only to place Christianity upon a footing similar to that which food and health, felicity and virtue, occupy. The very unprogressiveness of Christianity is one of the notes that it holds rank not among things optional, but among things vital. The accidentals and environments of life may vary, but its essentials and foundation continue ever unvaryingly the same. And it is because religion belongs to the foundation of man's nature, and is not a mere accidental of his environment, that it remains as stationary and unalterable as the essence of that nature itself.

The neglect of observing this cardinal distinction between the unchangeable foundation of man's nature and the ever-changing features of man's environment has largely contributed to the weakness of the pulpit in modern times. The modern preacher occupies himself too frequently with disquisitions upon the varying phenomena of man's environment, instead of concentrating his primary study upon the unvarying principles lying at the foundation of man's nature. The preacher looks around and sees mankind travelling at the rate of sixty miles an hour, telegraphing all over the world, printing newspapers by the million every day, and he rushes to the conclusion that everything is different from what it was in the days of the curfew bell, and the stage-coach, and the mutton candle. Thereupon he changes his Gospel to suit what he thinks are the changed circumstances of the case and the time. No opinion could be less philosophical, no course of conduct less profound. The spinning-jenny of to-day is different from the distaff of the ancient time, but the staple of the wool is just the same. The English ocean-liner is faster than the Greek trireme, but the waves of the many-voiced Mediterranean are not altered. The ideas of Aristotle printed on a copious page are identical with the ideas of Aristotle written on a crowded palimpsest. It makes no difference in the constitution of flour whether the wheat is ground by hand or by steam. Neither does it make any difference to the essential constitution of man whether he lived before or after the invention of the electric-light. *Cælum non animum mutant.* The inventions of science change the environment, not the essence of man. In kind, though not in surroundings, man is born just the same as if physical science were still unknown. His ideals of holiness are not altered from those of the earliest Christian age; the waves of his temptations and his difficulties remain as many-voiced as ever; the staple of his spirit changes not.

Not, indeed, that changes of environment work no corresponding change upon the habits and wishes and tastes of mankind. On the contrary, environment is a powerful factor in the shaping and colouring of human life. And in preaching it is just as necessary to take note of the changing aspects of man's environment, as it is to avoid confounding man's ever-changing environment with his never-changing constitution. As no preaching is powerful which neglects the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, so all preaching is enfeebled which arrays those doctrines in an archaic and out-of-date costume. What the modern age desiderates is not a new-made, Christless Gospel, but a Christ-full Gospel in a new-made dress.

Faith in the justice and mercy of God, and dependence upon the gifts of the Holy Ghost, are just as necessary to the salvation of man in a scientific age as they were before either of the great Bacons was born. Printing and steam and electricity have wrought no change in the facts of the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Intercession of Christ, or of the redeeming virtue of faith in those facts. It is at least quite as hard to be righteous and holy in an age of science as it was in an age of miracle. The evil within man's heart, and about his path, is not diminished by any amount of invention or progress in the material world. On the contrary, it is even possible that the successes of science may augment the difficulties of being religious. For scientific successes multiply the commodities and the luxuries of life: and luxuries are not conducive to saintliness, or the abundance of commodities to the growth of heavenly-mindedness. The hardness of Christ is seldom found amid the softness of superfluities. The greater the ease with which the progress of science surrounds the life of man, the greater also is his danger of becoming slothful in spirit, slack in self-sacrifice, impatient of restraint, and forgetful of the Judgment to come.

An enervated age thus stands in need of a stimulating Gospel. But the modern pulpit is in danger of enervating its Gospel to suit the enervation of the age. Half the world's dose of weekly sermons consists either of diluted disquisitions on charity, or of unscientific attempts to reconcile the eternal revelation of God with the ephemeral theories of man, or of unphilosophic platitudes benevolently intended to obliterate punishment from the world. Hence the pulpit has no power. A Gospel of mere amiability is an impotent Gospel. The very people whom it intends to please despise its ineptitude. The pride of our age is great, its self-indulgence is great, its doubts are great, its reliance upon visible things is great; but greatest of all is its unacknowledged sense of inward need and inward weakness. And nothing is great enough to cope with these great charac-

teristics of the age, except the truths of Scriptural religion. Far from being an age unsuited for definite doctrines, it would seem as if there never had been an age in which definite doctrine was more needful and more acceptable. The pride of the age needs the corrective of the Nativity; its self-indulgence needs the corrective of the Cross; its doubts need the corrective of the historic Resurrection; its reliance upon visible things needs the corrective inculcation of death and eternity and the throne of God. Even in its enervation the modern age will give neither respect nor confidence to a pulpit whose teachings are as enervated as itself.

All the phenomena of the Christian world combine to attest the verity of this opinion. Why does the Roman Church hold sway over so large a part of Christendom? Among other causes may be placed the positiveness of its doctrines and the assurance with which they are preached. No half-persuaded preacher has a fully-persuaded congregation. To convince others a man must be first convinced himself. Soulless doctrines, soullessly expressed, do not inspire men with devotedness and zeal. Eliminate from the New Testament the historic doctrines upon which the creeds are built, and the New Testament will differ little, either in character or force, from the maxims of Aurelius. Christ Himself, be it reverently said, did not attempt a revival of religion, apart from the announcement of definite doctrines of eternal moment. Why were St. Paul, St. Chrysostom, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose powerful preachers? Not only because they were eloquent, but because their eloquence, as their writings prove, was instinct with positive Scriptural truth. Archimedes is reported to have said that, if only "he had a fulcrum," he could by a single lever move the world. It was upon the fulcrum of a single doctrine—the doctrine of justification by faith—that Luther succeeded in moving the world of his day. The power of Wesley and Whitefield lay in arousing, by the instrumentality of doctrine, the conscience of their auditors to a sense of accountableness, and in bringing individual souls into personal communion with the personal God. Wonder is sometimes expressed at the strength and vitality of the Oxford Movement of nearly fifty years ago—the movement connected with the honoured names of Newman and Keble, and Davison and Pusey. But in reality the movement was less strange than necessary—necessary according to the fundamental needs of the soul of man. Part of the English Church of the time had fallen into a state of slovenliness and semi-scepticism and sloth. Neither in fabric nor furniture did Church buildings minister to man's instinct of reverence. The sermon was in many instances a species of ethical or courtly or mundane discourse. The entire spiritual

nature of large numbers of men was starving with hunger, and in the eagerness of famine it began to devour unwonted kinds of food. What evidence could be stronger of the craving of man's nature—the best nature of the most intellectual men—for clear and definite doctrine than the havoc which the dearth of it played in our Universities fifty years ago? Strong, persuasive, definite preaching in Oxford in the first half of our century might have delivered us from much sorrow and loss in the century's second half.

Among all sorts and conditions of men, in all ages of the world, human nature and human needs are fundamentally the same; and the power of a sermon consists in its capacity for dealing with that nature and satisfying those needs. The first business of the preacher is, therefore, to study to understand that nature with all its taints, its passions, its weaknesses, its powers, its aspirations, its mysterious majesty, its divine similitudes; and then to study to apply the means which have been provided for the cleansing of those taints, the ennobling of those passions, the strengthening of those weaknesses, the development of those powers, the spiritualizing of those aspirations, the unfolding of that majesty, the perfecting of that similitude. No pulpit whose aims fall below this standard will succeed in being a pulpit of abiding power. By devotion to these two branches of study—the nature of man and the means supplied for the rescuing and uplifting of that nature—Mr. Spurgeon contrived for more than a quarter of a century to make his single pulpit an energy, not in London only, but throughout the whole of Christendom.

But while the fundamental nature and the profoundest needs of man are unchangeable—and the means for redeeming that nature, together with the truths for satisfying those needs, are unchangeable also—yet the environment of man, particularly his physical and intellectual environment, is incessantly changing; and the problem before the modern pulpit is the adaptation of the ever-varying mutations of environment to the never-varying foundations of doctrine. The preacher who has respect to both these elements is strong; he who neglects either of them is weak. Essential doctrine is ever necessarily the same, but the manner of expressing that doctrine may from age to age be prudently and effectively modified. The reigning controversies, the general interests, the directing line of thought, the *calculus* of each succeeding age is peculiar to that age. An epoch of œcumenic councils for defining creeds is distinct from an epoch of world-embracing associations for discussing science. An audience maddened to crusading zeal by tales of Moham-medan aggression is different, in temper, from an audience friendly to Foreign Missions out of peaceable devotion to the

Cross. An age insulted by the vending of Indulgences needs different treatment from an age palsied by irreverence and indifference. Even in the self-same age the vesture of the sermon, its diction, its illustrations, its method of delivery may be wisely fitted to suit the different understandings of the different audiences to which it is addressed. Upon Good Friday or Easter Day the central topic of all sermons is probably identical; but who would think of treating the topic at a Church Army gathering in the same style or fashion as at Westminster Abbey or the Temple Church?

Great preaching consists not in metaphysical profundities, or scientific disquisitions, or controversial philippics, or political orations. "Our Creator," says Cardinal Newman, "has stamped great truths on our minds, and there they remain in spite of the Fall." And it ought to be the first object of preaching to bring out these intuitive truths, and awaken them to practical life. "One thing," said Mr. Gladstone in a recent interview, "I have against the clergy. They are not severe enough on their congregations. They do not sufficiently lay upon the souls and the consciences of their hearers their moral obligations, and probe their hearts and bring up their whole lives and action to the bar of conscience. The kind of preaching which men need most is also the kind of which they get least. The clergy are afraid of dealing faithfully with their hearers. There is not enough of searching preaching in any of our pulpits." Searching preaching is, of course, very different from scolding preaching. The preacher should never sink into a mere scolder. Scolding is commonly a symptom of vanity and ill temper; it is heat and bitterness of tongue. Of scolding preaching every age has had more than enough. But searching preaching is deep and spiritual and calm. It first probes the preacher himself, and then his hearers. The great lack of modern preaching is that it is not deep enough. It does not search; it is not spiritual.

No doubt all preaching, like all piety, should affect the concerns of common daily life. But the surest way of reaching conduct runs always through the conscience and the spirit. Even worldly persons are best influenced by spirit-kindling sermons. Moreover, the preacher will do well to remember that he is speaking to those within his church, not to those outside. And he may reasonably assume that those who come to church, whatever be their social or intellectual rank, are, for the time at least, chiefly interested in their spiritual relationships and concerns. The business man probably knows more of business, the scientific man more of science, the politician more of politics than the preacher can be expected to know. But the one theme upon which the preacher may be rightly

supposed, by reason of his studies, his addictions, and the consecration of his life, to have superior knowledge, and for the sake of which single superiority alone, those who are his betters in every other way are contented and grateful to sit at his feet and to hear his words, is the commanding and all-hallowed theme of revealed and spiritual knowledge. It is a source of weakness to the modern pulpit that it fails to give due weight to this important consideration. Instead of striving to lift their congregations up, preachers seem too often bent upon levelling their pulpits down. They sell the ordination right of their ministerial office for a lecturer's mess of secular pottage—pottage which they seldom have the least idea how to cook. Instead of copying the sermons of apostles and prophets, and fathers and saints, preachers too often imitate the style of essayists and investigators, of magazine-writers and journalists.

In every age the best preaching is the preaching which best ministers to the changeless needs of the human heart—needs which neither the advance of secular knowledge nor the developments of science can either obliterate or satisfy. Whatever changes may be effected in man's surroundings, man himself remains practically the same. The savage in the forest is more gross than the doctor in the schools; but seminally they are most near akin. By cultivation the savage, in a few generations, may be refined into the doctor; by neglect the doctor will speedily revert into the savage. There is no impassable gulf of generic difference between the two. And if the distance between the extreme poles of human nature be so small, how little is the essential difference which degrees of income, or degrees of knowledge, make among the different grades of civilized men. Neither the brain-power nor the spiritual discernment of the men of the modern age is appreciably different from that of the men to whom Christ and His Apostles so powerfully preached. The modern age has, indeed, its own methods of criticism—methods which are being rigorously applied both to the sacred documents of Christianity and to the dogmatic formation of Christian opinions. But methods of criticism, however greatly they may affect the scaffolding of Christianity, can no more affect those unchangeable laws of religion which govern man's conscious relationships towards God than the methods of criticism, which have from age to age modified the doctrines of physical science, can affect the unchangeable laws of the material universe.

The essential characteristics of modern preaching, therefore, should in nowise differ from the essential characteristics of Apostolic preaching, seeing that man is in nowise fundamentally different in the modern age from what he was in the age of the Apostles. And as the aim of the Apostles was to kindle

in men a spiritual sense of present personal communion with God, and present individual contact with the unseen universe, and after-death accountability before the judgment-seat of Christ, so should a like quickening of the spiritual sense in man be the principal aim of the modern preacher. But while in fundamental purpose and essential aim modern preaching should be practically identical with the preaching of Apostolic times, yet, in outward appearance, in phraseology, in illustration, modern preaching may wisely strike out new paths of its own. It should present old truths in new lights, and cast a glow of fresh, modern interest around ancient and eternal truths. For as all preaching is weak which overshadows the momentous and abiding issues of eternity with the fleeting topics of the transient age; so all preaching is strong which illuminates the current topics of the age with the light which beams down from the abiding suns of eternal truth.

JOHN WILLIAM DIGGLE.

ART. IV.—CHOLERA.

Notes of "Lectures on Cholera" delivered at Gresham College.

BY E. SYMES THOMPSON, M.D., F.R.C.P.

II. AN EPIDEMIC OF CHOLERA.

IN the first article was given a *résumé* of the history of cholera, and it was shown how, starting in Lower Bengal, where it is endemic, the disease spreads with more or less rapidity westwards along the lines of commerce and of congregations of human beings. In the present article we must consider an epidemic of cholera in more detail, showing more exactly the mode of its spread and the effects that it produces in the regions that it attacks, while at the same time a few words will be said about the ultimate cause of the disease, and a brief description will be given of the symptoms in a patient. As, of course, THE CHURCHMAN is not a medical journal, this last, as well as the medicinal treatment, will not by any means be given in full, but in a later article the most important form of treatment, viz., the preventive, we shall consider at some length, inasmuch as not only is prevention better than cure, but it is also a great deal easier. For our purpose we shall confine our attention principally to epidemics that have occurred in our own country, and especially to those of 1854 and 1866, for not only are these epidemics of more interest to us as Englishmen, but also better and more detailed information is available. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to travel beyond the confines of the British Isles in order to gain a con-