

SPIRITUAL PREACHING FOR OUR TIMES.

IN his address to the divinity students of Cambridge, Mr. Emerson says that Christianity has given us "two inestimable advantages." These are, "First, the Sabbath, the jubilee of the whole world; whose light dawns welcome alike into the closet of the philosopher, into the garret of toil, and into prison cells, and everywhere suggests, even to the vile, the dignity of spiritual being"; "and secondly, the institution of preaching,—the speech of man to men,—essentially the most flexible of all organs, of all forms."

These two institutions will stand or fall together. If the Christian Sabbath continues to suggest to all conditions of men "the dignity of spiritual being" instead of mere physical indulgence, it will be because the church and the pulpit, so associated in our minds with the Sabbath, have power to hold men to a sense of that dignity. The Christian pulpit and the Christian Sabbath will preach the same thing. To the minds of men the one will be what the other is. The heritage of a spiritual Sabbath cannot be long preserved after the pulpit has lost spiritual power. There are those who think that this day has already come. Mr. Emerson thought so forty-seven years ago. He was mistaken then; others are mistaken now. The truth is, that "the most flexible of all organs" shows, on the whole, great power of adaptation. The pulpit is, in the main, sensitive to popular needs, and it is not so very slow to respond to them. Now and then there will be such a man as Mr. Emerson saw standing in the pulpit one Sunday with the snowflakes falling past the windows behind him, and the snowflakes more real than he. But there has been any amount of reality in the pulpits for the past forty-seven years, and there is more and more of it instead of less and less. I suspect there have always been those to complain that the pulpit has lost, or is just about to lose, its hold on the people; but it never quite loses it. It always manages to begin to say the right thing before the last of the hearers has made up his mind to go to church no more. It may be seriously questioned whether, taking the people as they run, there was ever a time when popular interest in preaching, at least in this country, was greater than now. There is and always has been a large non-church-going element. But any one who watches the doors of our churches on Sunday, in city or village, will make up his mind that neither churches nor

pulpits have lost their attractions for the great "middle class" of society.

And any one who comes much in contact with these church-goers will observe that there has been among them, in the last ten or fifteen years, an increasing demand for preaching which befits and promotes a spiritual Sabbath and a spiritual faith. If, especially here in America, church-goers, at one period of this generation, have been, to a considerable extent, captivated by a preaching which lowered its tone, and thought to catch men with oddities and tricks of sensationalism, that day has gone by. You hear little of such things in these later years. For some reason taste has changed. Men are less in the mood for trifling. Congregations are more serious. There is a call for earnest work. There is a larger sense of the "dignity of spiritual being." There is a demand for a more spiritual preaching. It is rather felt than expressed in words; but it only needs defining and cultivating in order to open the way for the highest order of pulpit work. This demand corresponds to widespread intellectual and social conditions, involving problems over which men grow earnest. These conditions make the work of the pulpit more than usually attractive to the preacher, while the quality which preaching is to assume, in the face of such problems, becomes a matter of popular interest.

What then is Spiritual Preaching? It is not preaching with what, in many quarters, passes for unction. There is an unction without which a man had as well not preach. The preacher must come, as Jesus came from the Jordan, having the consciousness so transfused by a sense of spirit and spiritual relations, that he will speak out of soul-depths so profound that they seem to touch the sources of being. This is unction, though it does not always pass for it. What often goes current under the name is nothing more than an acquired manner and tone, belonging to the department of elocution, and equally available, if one please, for themes spiritual or secular.

It is well also not to confound spiritual preaching with revival preaching, to which belongs such discourse as is mainly intended to move men to sudden conversion, rather than to educate them into a large understanding of themselves and of their spiritual relations. Revival preaching has its function, but, as a main dependence, it cannot answer the

demand of any times. A good deal of it is materialistic and lacking in educational power. Spiritual preaching is reviving; it is not necessarily revivalistic. It aims to develop in man a sense of his spiritual nature and of the wants and possibilities of that nature. It would lift man into an ennobling conception of himself by revealing him to his own consciousness as a being of high origin, born for great enterprise in the triple realm of thought and feeling and action. It labors, broadly, to put man into spiritual relation to all his surroundings; to the universe of nature, to humanity as represented in the family, the community, the nation, and the race. Crowning all this is the revelation of man in his relation to an infinite spirit. This last the preacher must apprehend and set forth in the style of Jesus, as an exalting and saving relation. Here is the center at which spiritual preaching aims: to get man to know God, to bring him into contact with the Infinite, and bind him so close to it that the divine life shall throb through him, stimulate his growth, and shape it into the sympathy and manliness of Jesus.

This kind of preaching is spiritual. It deals with man as spirit, possessing, over and above all other relations, spiritual contacts with the world about him and above him; belonging to a great spiritual community under a heavenly Father. It lifts man out of mere earth and flesh in order to establish up and down the universe spiritual relations in which he finds his life.

Such preaching can scarcely fail to be cheerful and hopeful. He who engages in it will be in earnest because he deals with the deepest problems of humanity. He will warn men; but there will be a glow of heaven in his speech, since it is born out of a gospel which is lustrous with the glory from the midst of which it comes.

Now it is true that preaching of this kind is demanded at all times. The wants of the ages are more nearly the same than we are inclined to think. But, under a general persistence of the same needs, there are special developments of life in centuries, and even in decades, which have to be checked or stimulated or molded by forces at the preacher's command. For these purposes he must emphasize now one side and now another of gospel truth. As he does this he may become more or less spiritual in his emphasis. The doctrinal preaching of forty or more years ago was distinctively intellectual. When it dealt with spiritual things it sought to compass them with definitions and syllogisms. It subordinated them to system. Perhaps it needed to do so. It is well not to judge the past. We shall soon belong to it. The preaching of the early part of the century

must have had its antecedent conditions, which made it largely speculative and dogmatic. A man may deliver from his pulpit a system of theology, and though it lack spiritual flavor, it may meet a need of his time.

There are also periods which call for special emphasis on the ethical side of religion. The foundations of morality being already laid, for reasons arising out of widely existing conditions, the pulpits far and near may ring out the call to virtue and honesty. Conduct is the theme of discourse. Such a period was introduced in this country by the corruptions following in the wake of the late war. It is never safe to lose sight of ethical truth. It covers so much of human action that some mistake it for the whole of life. It is the manifestation of a life which roots deeper than conduct and of which conduct is the fruit.

Then too there is an unspiritual and secular preaching which easily degenerates into sensationalism, in the bad sense, and has had its day among us or is, in a lesser degree, still having its day. Such preaching may originate in a demand of the times not altogether unhealthy; as when men have come to feel that religion is a thing apart from life and alienated from the world's movements. Then the preacher may have to emphasize the sympathy of religion and the pulpit with the current affairs of the world. But woe to the man who, himself unspiritual, undertakes to do this. For out of this rational demand has come some very irrational preaching on topics of the times.

Now, in distinction from preaching emphatically doctrinal or ethical or secular or of whatever other sort, it is the object of this essay to present to the minds of both people and preachers the demand, arising out of present aspects of life, for a preaching emphatically spiritual; dealing with man on the side of his relations to a spiritual humanity and to a whole wide realm of spirit and of spirit-revealing nature.

The times present on the one hand a preparation and on the other a peculiar and growing need of this kind of preaching. Not that the people call for it with any distinct utterance. The wants of the masses of men are often unconscious. But those who sit in the pews are in a state of mind to listen to such truth, and they will encourage its proclamation. They will also go away from listening to it with responses in their hearts, forced by their experiences of a world-life in which they are taking part, but the bearings of which they do not perfectly comprehend. Some of the conditions of that life we must review.

Science, philosophy, theology, politics, in-

dustry are all offering just now marked phases. In science and philosophy we have reached the close of a period wherein great movements have made a preparation for spiritual preaching. In theology, politics, and industry powerful movements are rising to their flood which create a demand for such preaching.

The last forty years have witnessed rapid advancement in all departments of science, on the basis of wide and profound researches, culminating in generalizations which are mightily influencing all provinces of thought. These advances have covered a period of activity on which is following a period of relative rest from scientific speculation, though not from investigation. Those acquainted with Whewell's writings will recognize this as one of his periods of review, involving certification or rejection of speculative results.

Now, what here specially concerns us is the manifest spiritual tendency of all this scientific work. There never was a grosser mistake than that which any of us have committed, if we have stood trembling in our bats' corners, protesting against the boldness of scientific investigation or against the attempts of men of science to form comprehensive theories of nature, as though the universe might preach a gospel of materialism. For, now that the heats of controversy are being dissipated, it is plain that the whole drift of science for the last thirty or forty years has been toward a spiritual unity. This is indicated by multitudinous directions of discovery which point to one force center; as a thousand needles at a thousand different stations on this northern hemisphere point toward a pole whence all magnetic forces emanate. Moreover, as the mind expands its range of vision on the ever widening circle of generalization, it recognizes in the world of nature numerous thought-relations which point to spirit as that primal unity.

It was to be expected that along with the movements of science would come the revival of those philosophical problems which the human race is ever discussing in view of itself and the phenomena of nature. Once more, and with tremendous popular appeals, the questions of being and becoming, of whence and how and whither, have been brought forward. This discussion never ends. But we may discern here, also, just now, a period of relative repose, wherein results are garnered to the reassurance of man's belief in himself as spirit and in God as spirit, and in a community of spirit life around and above us. In the discussions of philosophy, positivism has been met by the necessary conception of causal power; materialism, in man and in the world external to man, has been met by

a philosophy of spirit; agnosticism has been met by reasserting the foundations of a true diagnosis, of knowledge grounded in the sure facts of human consciousness out of which, as from firm data, man rises to rational beliefs, and so the way is opened for the loftiest flights of a spiritual faith.

As a result of this readjustment, through a sound philosophy, of the questions started afresh by science, the preacher will find, in the coming years, not only among the common people, but among the learned, a stronger basis for his appeals to man as a spiritual being, living in spiritual relations. If, in the wrecks of faith, caused by the boldness of the questions and denials which have been pushed to the front in the last few decades, there has been, in certain classes of society, a drifting away from the sense of spiritual things, there are indications that the cyclone is past. Through a sweeter and serener atmosphere heaven is opened again to human vision, and on its floor of sapphire is erected the throne of God. There has been no time in the last twenty or thirty years when the preacher could speak of spiritual things with so much boldness or with so great promise of a ready response. After such periods of questioning, men turn with hungry hearts to those realities which make life worth living.

On the other hand, tendencies of thought and life are rapidly developing, on a large scale, which make insistence upon the spiritual in religion a commanding necessity.

However opinions may differ as to the value of present tendencies in the theological world, no one will deny that there is a determined push in the direction of a larger freedom. Call it looseness or license or liberty, the fact is there, indisputable. With it we have to deal. The forces which have held men, whether of human authority backed by a persecuting ecclesiasticism, or of ignorance, or of both combined, are no longer sufficient to hold them. In the face of protests men go on asserting the liberty to inquire into all foundations of belief, whether in science, philosophy, or revelation. The nature and sources of authority are inspected. The claims of Scripture, theories of inspiration, former interpretations of Scripture, the historic foundations of Christianity, the life of Jesus and his work and their relation to individual destiny and race destiny, the innermost meaning of salvation, its scope and reach,—all are reviewed and discussed with intense interest, and with the enthusiasm and hope of a fresh liberty. It is useless to attempt the arrest of this. It is part of the life of the age. He is happiest who most clearly sees that freedom of inquiry is the condition of truth.

On the other hand, such freedom is not without its dangers; and the salvation of our present religious thought can only be assured, and healthful results reached, by baptizing that thought in the spirit. The more it feels the pulse of freedom the more thoroughly must it be pervaded by the sense of the invisible. If such movements are not intensely spiritual they become rationalistic and skeptical. A rank intellectualism is only a grade higher than materialism. It is the spirit that quickeneth. The Christian church is passing through great transitions. This is not a sign of decadence, but of an intense life. But change involves crises. Transition periods are critical periods. In guiding the great body of the church through such transitions, and, in order to land the people on a surer basis of faith, the preacher must keep to those spiritual heights where all things are seen in their divinely constituted relations.

If we pass over to the political conditions of our country and the world we shall find them joining in the demand for such preaching. The political emancipation of the masses, under whatever form of government; the recognition of manhood; the allotment to each of his share of privilege and responsibility; in a word, the doctrine of political equality is bearing the fruit of an intense individualism. Men easily confound political equality with equality of attainment; equal rights with equal worth. In political striving and climbing that grace of humility, which enjoins man "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think," vanishes. In cultivating manhood we develop selfhood. Individualism, in the root idea of which lies great promise for character, becomes a rampant self-assertion, a hankering after an unattainable independence. It grows impatient of all superiority, whether in knowledge and refinement or in wealth and power. It runs into irreverence, disregard of authority, lawlessness, communism, nihilism, political iconoclasm joined to oicoclasm, the destruction of home. These are the thistles which grow in the rich but rank soil of political equality; and precisely here is to be cast in the good seed of a spiritual kingdom. Against these crude growths simple ethical teaching does not avail, least of all a materialistic ethics. Here he who aims to correct by laying the main emphasis upon ethics fails because the foundations of morality are swept away. The spiritual kingdom must first be made regnant, and out of it must grow a spiritual ethics. Into this whirl and swelter of political agitation the preacher must come charged with the sense of God and of the possibilities of a spiritual manhood. Individualism is to learn dependence on an infinite Father. Abnegation

of all authority is to be met by the authority of love in God's son. Irreverence is to be overcome by the spirit of worship, of which some of our churches are making too little. Oicoclasm is to yield before the spiritual unity of the home. Socialism must be supplanted by a more rational Christian communism, under the names of communion, fellowship, brotherhood.

Looking once more at industry, in its various departments of production and trade, we find here our third demand for emphasizing the spiritual side of life and for holding its activity in closer contact with the heavenly and divine.

Science has grandly stimulated industry by increasing its rewards. The prizes of enterprising labor are great, often glittering. The power of wealth is fascinating. The successful producer or dealer of to-day is a prince. The industrious laborer is rich. And the result of all this is that laziness is ceasing to be fashionable;—the nobility of England are learning to make themselves useful. Science sets the world astir. The goal of its motion is gain. The race is eager. Hence mammon-worship. Hence mercantilism, the inordinate estimate of wealth; the grading of all things at a value in cash; society graded on a cash basis; ideality sacrificed to material good; virtue, patriotism, heroism, manhood counting for less, money counting for more; votes, offices, justice having their price. This is mercantilism, the great danger to society; greater because more subtle than nihilism. It creeps into literature, science, art, politics, the state, the church; and here arises the demand for that spiritual teaching which fell from the lips of Jesus, the antidote for inordinate worldly care and worldly striving; the lofty view of a life which is more than meat; God coming in among the elements of this world, clothing lilies, feeding birds, summoning man to the glory of an ideal kingdom and to the attainment first and foremost of *character*, rooted in God and God's righteousness. The cure for the mercantile spirit is not ethics, but faith. It is not a moral code but the divine Fatherhood. It is not even the golden rule, except as the golden rule is formulated out of the spirit of Christian Brotherhood.

In bringing the discussion to this point I may seem only to have prepared the way for a demand that the contents of spiritual preaching should be given with some particularity; but it is only possible to touch such a matter in its roots. Details must develop themselves out of personal and local conditions.

We cannot, however, place too much emphasis on the requirement that the contents of

such a spiritual gospel be made up under the direct influence of the life and teaching of Jesus. His spirituality is preëminent. In others, even of the sacred writers, this quality is weighted with earthly admixtures. In him it is unalloyed, ethereal, and transparent. He lives in at once the richest and the most delicate relations to his environment. In contact with him all nature seems permeated with spirit. His intense spirituality transfigures his fleshly body, lifts him over waves, transports him into the clouds. It envelops his personality and gives it its singular radiance; it pervades his action and fills his speech. His discourse is neither secular nor ethical nor theological; it is spiritual. And what especially helps us in making up the root-contents of our preaching is the fact that this spirituality expresses itself in three fundamental conceptions, which shaped his life and formed the

substance of his doctrine. These are Fatherhood, Sonship, Brotherhood. Here are the relations in which he lived and of which he spoke. In unfolding them and in applying them to the needs of our times, the pulpit will develop its highest spiritual power. The golden future, too, of which men dream, is prophesied in these conceptions. No theology which is permeated with the truth of a divine Fatherhood as set forth by Jesus can become coldly rationalistic. Individualism cannot hold sway and develop its destructive social fruits among peoples that have caught the deeper meaning of Sonship and Brotherhood. The same conceptions, in their free development, are the antidote for mercantilism in its various forms, supplanting it by higher views of life, laying the foundation for ideal worth, for unselfish patriotism and philanthropic heroism.

Edward Hungerford.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF BULL RUN.*



PICKETING THE RAPIDAN.

uated I went to St. Louis on a short leave of absence from my command, and while there I received a telegram from Mr. Stanton, Secretary of War, requesting me to come to Washington immediately. I at once communicated the fact to General Halleck by telegraph, and received a reply from him strongly objecting to my leaving the army under his command. I quite concurred with him both as to his objections to my going to Washington for public reasons and as to the unadvisability of such a step on personal considerations. I was obliged, however, to go, and I went accordingly, but with great reluctance and against the urgent protests of my friends in St. Louis, and subse-

quently of many friends in the Army of the West.

When I reached Washington, the President was absent at West Point, but I reported in person to Secretary Stanton. I had never seen him before, and his peculiar appearance and manners made a vivid impression on me. He was short and stout. His long beard, which hung over his breast, was slightly tinged with gray even at that time, and he had the appearance of a man who had lost much sleep and was tired both in body and mind. Certainly, with his large eye-glasses and rather disheveled appearance, his presence was not imposing. Although he was very kind and civil to me, his manner was abrupt and his speech short and rather dictatorial. He entered at once on the business in hand, seemingly without the least idea that any one should object to, or be reluctant to agree to, his views and purposes. He was surprised, and it seemed to me not well pleased, that I did not assent to his plans with effusion; but went on to unfold them in the seeming certainty that they must be submitted to. He informed me that the purpose was to unite the armies under McDowell, Frémont, and Banks, all three of whom were my seniors in rank, and to place me in general command. These armies were scattered over the northern part of Virginia, with little or no

* General Longstreet will contribute to the February CENTURY a paper on this subject, with illustrations.

Accompanying General Beauregard's paper on the

First Battle of Bull Run, or "Manassas" (see THE CENTURY for November, 1884), were maps and many pictures which will be found of interest with reference to the second battle.—EDITOR.