

THE MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

VOL. 4.

APRIL, 1891.

No. 1.

FOR THE MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

IS IT WORTH WHILE TO GO ON PREACHING?

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THE question I have written at the head of this paper may be supposed to be one of those which are often said to answer themselves; that is to say, they suggest alternative answers which are either too obviously true or too obviously absurd to need stating. Thus: Is it worth while to go on preaching? might elicit the retort, "When the Christian religion, both doctrinal and practical, is acknowledged to be an obsolete delusion!" Or again, "When our preachers are so stupid and incompetent that they neither know what to say nor how to say it!" Or again, "When 'faith cometh by hearing,' and without faith men must perish everlastingly!" Or the question might be simply set aside as having no longer any serious practical interest. Rightly or wrongly, it may be said even Christian people are tired of sermons; they no longer care for theology; it is enough for them if they can achieve religion. Anyhow, a subtle and complex science is best taught, if at all, by books. Business men want Sunday for rest. They can manage to keep awake during an abridged service, the parts of which are judiciously distributed between the solos and choruses and orchestral overtures or marches of a "sacred concert," but they are in no mood for being preached to. In fact, so entirely has the music of these "services of song" superseded the rational worship, the "reasonable service" on certain occasions, of our fashionable, well-to-do congregations, that it seems of no importance that the words sung are in flat contradiction to the doctrinal standards of the people of whose "worship" they form a part. I have before me, for instance, a printed programme, of which the following is the title-page: "Church Choral Society, New York. Third season. Eighteen hundred and ninety-one. Second service, St. George's Church, Stuyvesant Square, Rev. Wm. S. Rainsford, D.D.,

Rector. Thursday evening, Feb. 19th, 1891. At a quarter after eight o'clock." Of this "Second service," ending with "Collect and Benediction," the principal part was that beautiful hymn, the *Stabat Mater*; and lest the plaintive Latin should, to an ordinary Protestant congregation, be unintelligible, lest they should miss the full significance of *Pia mater, fons amoris*, or of *Virgo virginum præclara, mihi jam non sis amara*, or of *per te Virgo sim defensus, in die judicii*, the Latin is translated into English. Nobody can fail to understand the words, *Oh, screen me from the vengeful ire of my great Judge above*. This shows, to be sure, the natural alacrity with which the Christian affections express themselves in the invocation of the *Mater dolorosa*. But what is the use of, at any rate, doctrinal preaching, when all differences of opinion about the objects of worship are rapidly disappearing under the potent solvents of charity and indifference? Why not say our *Hail Mary* morning, noon, and night, with the rest of Christendom?

These are some of the ways in which people are continually talking or writing about preaching, and it is surely worth while to consider them. Remembering the past, we can very safely predict that the removal of so potent a factor as the pulpit from the life both of the Church and the world will very seriously alter the product in *some way*. The problem which confronts us in Christendom is not so much to convert an ignorant world as to re-convert an apostate world, or, at any rate, to convert a world which has become indifferent through familiarity. It is, of course, perfectly conceivable that the method most efficacious for one of these purposes may be powerless for the others; but this cannot be safely taken for granted. Preaching is only a particular mode of employing human language for the purpose of

analysis contained in the table of contents and the exhaustive index at the close.

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GOD INCARNATE. By the Right Rev. HOLLINGSWORTH TULLY KINGDON, D.D. Being the Paddock Lectures for 1890. New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1890. 8vo, pp. 252, cloth, \$1.75.

This volume contains a series of seven lectures, delivered during the past year by the author, who is the assistant bishop of New Brunswick, on the foundation of the *Bishop Paddock Lectureship*. The lectures were addressed to the students of the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and are printed in accordance with the conditions of the Trust. They were designed to concentrate the attention of those candidates for Holy Orders on the fundamental truth of the Incarnation, together with certain related truths in the Christian scheme; and the aim of the author, as he states it, was not to present any original views, but to set forth these familiar doctrines in forms calculated to awaken interest and to deepen conviction.

Two of these lectures are occupied with a preliminary discussion of the Creator and the Creation; two others treat of the Incarnation as a process, and of the characteristics of the incarnate Saviour; one presents a view of the Atonement as the central act of Christ, and the two concluding lectures discuss the Sacraments in their relations to Christian experience, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost as the consummating feature in the development of redemption. This list of topics will make it apparent that the volume is, in fact, a condensed summary of the fundamental doctrines of grace from the standpoint of Christology.

After discoursing upon the existence, personality, and unity of God, and the doctrine of the Trinity, the author presents his view of creation in general, and specifically of the creation of angels and men, giving in his adherence under the last head to the theory of evolution, as affording, in his judgment, "the best solvent of all the phenomena that present themselves." His doctrine of the fall of man, and of the origin and nature of sin, is substantially that of the Thirty-nine Articles. The author inclines, on what we regard as insufficient grounds, to view the Incarnation not as an event rendered necessary by the fall and sin of man, but as a process essential to the personal and complete union of God with man as a moral creature, and, therefore, as provided for from the beginning in the constitution of man and in the nature of things. His subsequent presentation of the composite nature and the peculiar qualities of the Incarnate Deity, is largely, perhaps injuriously, affected by this opinion. Still, the exposition of what is termed the Perfection of Sympathy in Christ in the fourth lecture, is one of the most interesting and suggestive discussions in the volume. The view of the Atonement, which follows, is also interesting, as a terse statement of the orthodox doctrine of a true and satisfying sacrifice, having its source not in the wrath, but in the love of God, yet providing a real propitiation and ransom and reconciliation available for all the spiritual needs of all sinners.

In the lecture on the Sacraments there is much which only those can receive who view the Christian scheme from the sacramentarian standpoint only. While the author adheres mainly to the clear and strong statement of the Articles respecting

baptism and the Eucharist, he is inclined to make far more of the supper as a sacrifice, and of confirmation and absolution, the holy orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, than is consistent with the best teaching of his own Church. We view with extreme distrust every tendency in this direction. The discussion of the person and relations of the Holy Spirit is admirable, until we reach the matter of his residence and work within the Church as a spirit of wisdom and of growth. Here the author rules out all sects except his own as being "bodies that have separated themselves from the Communion of the Church," to whom there is, therefore, no promised indwelling of the Spirit, and only a general hope of salvation. This is an amazing position to take in such an age and such a country as ours, where only one in twenty-seven professing Christians is a communicant in the Episcopal fold.

We need not dwell on certain incidental points that have challenged criticism, such as the alleged preaching of Christ to the dead during his *descentus*, with its corollary of a probable probation after death. These are blemishes in a book which is, in the main, sound and healthful, stimulating in thought, vigorous in expression, and every way worthy of its place in the series of volumes produced through the Paddock Lectureship. The appendices at the close of the book, about forty in number, are very helpful to the reader; and one of them (M M, on the matter of confirmation), is quite valuable as a *résumé* of ancient opinion.

E. D. MORRIS.

LANE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

HAND-COMMENTAR ZUM NEUEN TESTAMENT. Vierter Band. Erste Abtheilung: Johanneisches Evangelium. Bearbeitet von Holtzmann. Pp. viii., 206. 3.00 mk.

HAND-COMMENTAR ZUM NEUEN TESTAMENT. Zweiter Band. Erste Abtheilung. 1-2 Thesalonicherbrief, 1-2 Korintherbrief. Bearbeitet von Schmiedel. 1 Hälfte. Freiburg i. B.: Mohr. (New York: Stechert, 1890.) Pp. 1-112. 1.20 mk.

Holtzmann's views of the origin and character of the Fourth Gospel are known through his introduction to the New Testament published in 1886. These views, firmly held for more than twenty years, appear now, unaltered, in his volume on the Gospel of John. The beloved disciple was not the author of the Fourth Gospel; the apostolic age, or even the first century, was not the period of its composition, and its character, save only in a slight degree, is not historical. John was a preacher of the circumcision; this Gospel is universal in its scope. The theology of the Fourth Gospel is not the primitive and Apostolic, but betrays the influence of Gnosticism. It was apparently produced in Ephesus. The tone of the writing supports tradition in this particular. Its Alexandrian and theological character, its references to Gnosticism, and the fact that it was first recognized in the Asiatic Church, are best accounted for by this hypothesis. Its traces of personal acquaintance with Palestine are consistent with the view that it was composed by a Jew of the Diaspora who had visited the holy places. Its catholic character and its close relation to Greek philosophy make it altogether probable that its author was a Hellenistic Jew. His education was both Jewish and Greek. His dependence upon the Stoic and Platonic philosophy shows that he belonged to those "denationalized, secularized, and spiritualized" Jews who