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→ SERMONS ←

THE ANGELS' SONG.*

BY BISHOP H. W. WARREN, D.D. (METHODIST EPISCOPAL).

Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace and goodwill toward men.—LUKE ii., 14.

It is not often that we take the word of an angel for a text, nor even the outburst of a whole choir of them in the gallery of the sky. It has not enough of authority to command men; not enough breadth of thought to enlarge them to their uttermost; nor any assurance of power that any promise shall be fulfilled. They are not at liberty to swear that heaven and earth shall pass away sooner than one jot or tittle of their word shall fail. When men can have the word of the great God, why should they content themselves with the word of an angel, much less of a man who has not the eternal years nor the universal experience to make his word perfect authority? It is not the word of the angel we consider, but the event which that word commemorated.

That event was new in history. There was once a creation of a solar system, but that had ceased to be unique by the creation of millions more. There has been but one incarnation of the Son of God. So far as we know there will never be another.

It is easy to account for most men. They are born of the influences and tendencies that precede them. The wild robber spirit of the East makes possible an Alexander. The devotion of a nation to the glories of war necessitates a Napoleon. The intellectual activity of the sixteenth century culminates

* Preached at the opening of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Denver, Colorado.

children sit together. And every person who thus carps is a sufferer in his personal character by the evil course in which he indulges; so that his spiritual life is dwindling at the very time, and through the very means, by which he injures the souls of his fellows and gladdens the heart of the devil.

Think of this, every one of you! If you can not be an active officer in the Church; if you can not teach in the Sunday-school; if you can not bear a part in the social prayer-meetings of the

congregation; if you can not give liberally to all the beneficences which are pressed upon your attention from the pulpit, and if you can not enjoy the preaching of your pastor on your own account, see to it that you do not harm your fellows and harm yourself by carping at the preacher. And if, indeed, you do all these good things, see to it that you do not more than neutralize your well doing in them all, and prove a curse instead of a blessing in your congregation, by carping at the preacher.—*Sunday-school Times.*

Christian Edification

Life-Preaching.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

The witty and jovial Lord Peterborough, after visiting at the house of Fenelon, said to him at parting: "If I stay here much longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself." It was not any exhortation from the good archbishop's lips that so impressed him as the beauty of a cheerful and consistent life. Godly living is what this poor, wicked world is dying for want of to-day. Pulpits only give forth their utterances for two or three hours on a single day in the week. They reach the limited number who come within their range. But Jesus Christ calls every converted soul into a ministry of the daily life, and bids them preach on seven days of every week. "Let your light shine;" "As ye go, preach;" "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." These are among His high commissions to every Christian.

Very few people possess the gift of rhetorical eloquence; but it is within the reach of every earnest follower of Jesus to rise to great eloquence in character and conduct. The best preaching, after all, is the preaching of the daily life. No skeptic ever attempts to refute that. It is self-evidencing. Richard Cecil confessed that when he tried in his early life to be a skeptic, his godly mother's life

was too much for him. He afterwards added to this, that "his first feelings of religion were made stronger by seeing that truly pious people had a genuine happiness that the things of this world could not give." Sometimes the pulpit discourse is not clear to the understanding, or impressive to the conscience. But the "living epistle" needs no translation or commentary; every child can understand it.

I have known a poor, sick girl to become a "means of grace" to a whole family by her quiet patience, her serene trust, and her tranquil joy under severe suffering. Jesus Christ shone out through her lovely character, as a night-lamp shines through a transparent porcelain vessel, and fills the apartment with a gentle radiance. A fearless Christian clerk of my acquaintance makes himself felt in the same way among his fellow-clerks in the store. Without any Pharisaic pretensions or assumptions, he gives them some admirable "object teaching" almost every day by his square, manly style of conscientious conduct. John Angell James, the famous Birmingham minister, said in one of his lectures: "If I have a right to consider myself a Christian, if I have attained to any usefulness in the Church of Christ, I owe it, in the way of instrumentality, to the sight of a companion who slept in the same room with me. He bent

his knees every night in prayer, and that roused my slumbering conscience, and sent an arrow to my heart; for, although I had been religiously educated. I had neglected prayer and cast off the fear of God. My conversion followed, and my preparation for the work of the ministry. Nearly half a century has rolled away since then, but that little chamber and that praying youth are still present to my imagination, and will never be forgotten, even amid the splendors of Heaven and through the ages of eternity."

This testimony from the author of the "Anxious Inquirer," and one of the foremost ministers of his day, is most impressive. Observe that it was not what his room-mate *said* to him, but simply what he *did*, that wrought so potent an influence. It was genuine *life-preaching*, the unconscious influence of a Christian act. This style of preaching is within the reach of all ages and all conditions of life. Every redeemed man, woman, and child is called of God to this ministry. What are a few thousand sermons delivered every Sabbath, in comparison with the unanswerable eloquence of millions of lives illustrating Christianity from Monday morning to Saturday night all over the land? And the reason, we fear, why the Sabbath discourses do not make more converts, is that there is such an enormous amount of anti-Christian preaching on the part of inconsistent professors.

What can I do for Christ? is a frequent question raised by young converts. The answer is, first of all, *Live for Him*. Your conscientious observance of the Fourth Commandment is your sermon for the Sabbath; your refusal to touch or to offer the wine-glass is your temperance lecture; your strict honesty in the smallest item is your rebuke of trickery in trade; your open obedience to your Lord and Saviour is as eloquent in its way as Spurgeon's best discourse is of its kind. Do you inquire: "Where is my field?" It is all field, wherever you go. Of course, there are direct Christian activities that may open to you in mission-schools, prayer-meetings, Young Men's Christian Associations, and elsewhere. But do not compound with your Master for a few hours each

week in such special efforts. Preach every day, everywhere, by letting Christ shine out of every chink and crevice of your character; so shall your whole life be full of light. The *sermons in shoes* are the sermons to convert an ungodly world.—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

Christ Life.

BY REV. J. T. WRENFORD.

The chief of all the new experiences of the converted Saul of Tarsus was this—"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The Lord had not only subdued him, and obtained the complete mastery over him; He lived and dwelt in him. Paul's life was now the out-living of the life of the in-living Christ, through and by His servant, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

In the first place, there was complete, unreserved and most willing subjection to Christ. There does not appear to have been the slightest reservation or controversy about anything whatever. "Lord, what wilt Thou—?" began at the spot where the Lord met him; and went on ceaselessly afterwards. "Immediately," he says, "I conferred not with flesh and blood"; nor did he at any time subsequently. This entire and unquestioning subjection to Christ prepared the way for all that followed of blessing and success.

It must be so in every case. The Lord must be absolutely supreme. Controversy will effectually hinder his work. Let there be the subjection, and He will live out His own life, through and by His servant.

The self-life will not cease; and yet it will! St. Paul said, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." We shall still think, and feel, and will, and speak, and act. Yet, in reality, it will be the in-living Christ out-living His own thoughts and feelings and willings and actings, by and through us. He will live out, by means of our faculties (still our own, and yet wholly His), the holy, happy, beneficent life of service to God—in the power of the Holy Ghost. This is the Christian life; that is to say, not merely a life more or less influenced and governed by Christian principles—but the Christ-life—the out-living of the life of the in-living Christ.