

THE Presbyterian Quarterly.

NO. 54--OCTOBER, 1900.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING THE ETHICS OF CHRISTIANITY.

Shortly after the writer of this paper entered on his first pastorate, he preached a sermon from the third chapter of the Epistle of James on "Sins of the Tongue." At the close of the service a visiting minister came forward, introduced himself, expressed his interest in what he had heard, and also remarked that ethical sermons were both quite unusual and would be very useful in Presbyterian churches. This remark impressed him at the time, and during the nineteen years that have passed since then it has often recurred to him. In either one of its assertions it would seem to be true and important.

I. Directly ethical teaching does appear to be uncommon in our pulpits. In some quarters there is even a prejudice against it. There are places where, were a minister to expound duty at considerable length, it would be broadly hinted that his views of righteousness were becoming legal.

Where this prejudice against ethical teaching does not exist, the latter is still widely neglected. One of the worst features of the present state of religion among us is the frequent failure to receive the Bible as the infallible rule of practice as truly as of faith. Many who regard it absolutely authoritative in the latter sphere ignore it in the former. Not a few of those who are most earnest in their demand for Biblical theology seem unconscious that there

even could be Biblical ethics. This way of thinking prevails among the rank and file of our church members. As a rule, they feel that their creed ought to embrace what the Bible teaches and because it teaches it; but do we very often find one who regards it a sin to go in debt because Paul says, (Rom. xiii : 8): "Owe no man anything, save to love one another;" or one who considers himself bound in matters of dress to consult the principles of the New Testament more than the fashions of the day, or even one who holds that the Word of God is really a higher authority than the divorce courts? Now this can point in only one direction. It must indicate neglect of ethical teaching. It must show that the Bible has not been unfolded as the supreme rule of life. Were this not the case, the Scriptures would be regarded as decisive for the Christian in these and other like matters just as we are thankful to believe that it is regarded as the only way of salvation. God's Word has but to be faithfully preached to make itself felt as being what it is. His promise is that "it shall not return unto him void."

Where ethical teaching is not thus generally neglected in our pulpits, what we may call distinctive of the ethics of the Gospel is often passed over. That is, while the life of duty is insisted on and on Christian grounds, it is seldom presented as it has been transfigured and glorified in the new light of the Gospel of the grace of God. Take, for example, the duty of love. How Christ exalted it when he gave his "new commandment" that "ye love one another even as I have loved you." Yet do we often hear this command so characteristic of the Gospel expressly proclaimed and explained and applied? Is not the duty of love usually represented as fulfilled if one loves his neighbor as himself? Is not the higher ethical teaching frequently ignored, that we ought to love ourselves and so our neighbors even as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us?

Of course, there are reasons for this neglect and also for the more aggravated forms of it already noticed. It results

from the very nature of the case. The emphasis should be put on the more important, and what is repeatedly emphasized comes to be regarded as alone important. Thus what we are to believe concerning God is more important than the duty which God requires of man. At least, the latter presupposes the former and is determined by it. Christian ethics rests on Christian theology—we have to admit that. So, too, What must I do to be saved? is a more important question than, How ought a saved man to live? Unless one is saved, he cannot live; and if he is saved, will he not continue to live somehow? It is not strange, therefore, that the Gospel should often be preached as if it were only a plan of salvation. It is thus fundamentally, and so it is this aspect of it that ought to be made most prominent.

The tendency to make it exclusively so was, no doubt developed and intensified by the moral Deism and the ethical Rationalism that prevailed generally during the last century. Regarded as the one thing then, it is only by a natural reaction, if even Christian ethics has sometimes come to be looked on as next to nothing now. Thus we can account for the prejudice against ethical preaching already alluded to. Indeed, we can sympathize with it. That must arouse distrust which has been used to hide the cross of Christ. Especially will this be so, if it is still so used. Hence, when we find the New Theology of our day substituting moral influence for atonement by the blood of Christ and preaching an ethical Gospel rather than the Gospel of the grace of God, it does not surprise us that our own pulpits should often leave the ethics of the Gospel in the background. It is its message of grace that most needs to be proclaimed; and it is not strange that we should be suspicious even of its ethical teaching, if others are striving with it to veil the sacrifice for us of our Lord.

II. And yet, while all this is so, and just because it is so, it would seem to be highly important for us still to preach and to emphasize the ethics of the Gospel. For this position the following reasons are offered:

1. We cannot otherwise be true to God himself. He is essentially and, if we may so speak, fundamentally ethical. The distinction and glory of each one of his attributes is that it is all that it ought to be and nothing that it ought not to be. The characteristic of his grace is that it both is righteous and vindicative of righteousness. He is described as the only holy one and as absolutely holy. Abraham feels that he would not be God, if he could swerve from the right. All this becomes specially clear when he reveals himself in Christ. As another has said, "The supreme glory of Christ for us, the highest which we are permitted to discern as distinct from that in which we can only believe, is his abiding consciousness of God and of oneness with him, his entire devotion to God's will even when that disclosed to him the cross with its shame and pain." In a word, I may add, his ethical excellence. And all this holds good of Christ's work. How it illustrates the importance of the ethical. Its great aim is to deliver men from sin, to restore them to righteousness, to make them what they ought to be. "Sanctify them through the truth," he prays; and the Spirit whom he sends to carry on his work is both himself the Holy Spirit and he who alone and always is the author of holiness. Nay, more, all this must be so. God cannot become our life through the indwelling in us of his Spirit, and his law not become the rule of our beings; for his law is the expression of his nature, the manifestation of his life. Though by no external restraint, yet by what Augustine calls *felix necessitas boni*, God must be and must require the ethical. He constitutes it and he cannot but constitute it as it is, for it is the essence of his essence. Unless, therefore, we emphasize it in our preaching we misrepresent him. How can we call on men to "be perfect as their Heavenly Father is perfect," if we do not show them what they ought to be and insist on their becoming what they ought to be. God is both the living and the supreme Ought. He himself is the essence and the norm of the ethical. It is the deepest meaning of his life.

2. Not to make the ethical thus prominent in our preaching is to be untrue to the Bible. As might be supposed, it is as characteristically ethical as we have just seen him to be whose Word it is. Indeed, it is on ethics that the New Testament, which is commonly regarded as in a special sense the revelation of divine grace, puts the emphasis. This is true of the Gospels themselves. They are the good tidings of the grace of God, but their evident purpose in this is that they may lay broad and deep the foundation of a new because Christian ethics, and may afford a motive adequate for its realization. Thus Christ came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; not merely to deliver men from punishment, but to save them from sin; not simply to render them strong and wise and happy, but to give us his Spirit and so make us able to become "partakers" morally of the divine nature. If his teaching was often theological or spiritual in its character, it was always ethical in its aim. He revealed the love of God that it might constrain us to be like God and see what we ought to be. His death on the cross was the supreme exhibition of divine grace, but a large part of its design was that God might be just or ethical and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. He emphasized faith in himself rather than works of righteousness; but then we should remember that "this is the work of God that we should believe on him whom he hath sent," and that in view of the facts of Christianity, faith is the first requirement of ethics and the essential condition of the life of duty. Indeed, faith is itself and in its deepest nature ethical. One must be ready to do God's will, if he would know the doctrine to be believed, whether it is of him. More need not be said to show that the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour is distinctly ethical in end and at heart.

Nor is apostolic teaching otherwise. Always one in spirit with that of Christ, it is specially so in this case. James holds the doctrine of faith; but it is, that by works is faith evinced and made perfect, that faith without works is dead, and that the works, bound to appear as the fruits

of a living faith are such as "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." In a word, the whole epistle of James is a treatise on applied Christian ethics. Now this fact derives peculiar significance from the date of this book. The first to be composed of the New Testament writings, their introduction as it were, we should see in its characteristically ethical and practical trend the announcement of the distinctly practical and ethical purpose of "the New Covenant." In James' conception dogma is directly in order to ethics; and we may not doubt that he was inspired to write the first book of the New Testament to show that its immediate design was to set forth and to realize among men the ethical glory of "the life hid with Christ in God." To take any other view than this is to suppose that less intelligence entered into the composition of the New Testament than into that of books of merely human authorship. Nor are the epistles of Paul and of Peter less conspicuously ethical than we have just seen to be that of James. Take First Peter for example. We may not doubt that it exhibits what, according to the Apostle's view, is "best for Christians in the world and best for the world through Christians." Not a little significant, therefore, is it that it is really a directory of duties. Indeed, the directory occupies the central place in the epistle. What goes before the directory is declaratory, first, of the source of the new heavenly life of Christians, with its principles of conscientious fear of God and regard to man; and second, of the distinctive position of Christians in the world as a community, the temple, the priesthood, the nation, of God among men, visibly manifesting his being in the glory of redeeming love upon earth. What follows the directory is in its nature general and occasional. The main body of the epistle is the directory itself, in which the Apostle sets forth the kind of life which they ought to live in the world who here are but "strangers and pilgrims."

Nor is the kind of life which he portrays less significant than is the fact that its portrayal is the purpose of this

epistle. There is little said of duty in connection with the church or the propagation of Christianity. The duties enforced are political, social, domestic. As Dr. McGregor has said in his "Apology of the Christian Religion," "Peter's directory includes only those common duties which are natural to man so that they would have been duties of man as man through the church had never existed." The Apostle's conception would seem to have been that of Keble :

"The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily near to God."

His idea would appear to have been that in no way could the Gospel be preached so effectively as by the disciples "having their conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they spoke evil against them as evil doers, they might by their good works which they should behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." Could greater emphasis be laid on Christian ethics? The inspired apostle regarded the knowledge and practice of it as that which would tend most to the divine glory.

As has been remarked, Paul's attitude toward the ethics of Christianity is the same. It is true that the directory of duties does not in his epistles, as in First Peter, occupy the central place. It does, however, hold the last place, and this in Paul's writings is evidently that of importance, for it is that up to which all that goes before designedly leads. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, for example, if it is the purpose of the first part to set forth the glory of the Church of Christ, and if it is the purpose of the second part to exhibit the spirit ruling in the Church of Christ; the common purpose of both would seem to be to afford a rational basis for that statement of general Christian duties which forms the third part and which opens with the words, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind," etc., and the consequence, if not the pur-

pose, of this summary of general Christian duties would appear to be the specification in the fourth part of those common duties in which, as husband or wife, parent or child, master or servant, we see the Christian go about the ordinary business of a human being upon earth. All this is as conspicuous, if not more so, in the other epistles of Paul. Is not the main design of First Corinthians the correction of immorality in the Church of Corinth? And, as President Patton has recently said, "is there not in this one letter more important ethical teaching than in any or all of the writers on ethics from Aristotle to the present day?" Is not the magnificent development of the doctrines of grace in the Epistle to the Romans in order that Paul may introduce that exhortation to Christian duty which occupies the last four chapters, with the irresistible appeal, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," the mercies which the epistle thus far has been unfolding? What could evince more clearly the ethical purpose of this the most dogmatic of the epistles than this unique exhibition of the doctrines of grace in order to the enforcement of the ethics of the life of Christ?

Nor is even John's attitude essentially different. The apostle of love, no one insists so strongly on the manifestation of love for God in the performance of the ordinary duties of social life. "Who so hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God loveth his brother also." This is John's view of the relation of religion to morality, of Christian dogmatics to Christian ethics. We cannot feel as we ought toward God save as we act as we ought toward men. The latter is the necessary fruit of the former. If we are "born of God," it is that we may "over-

come the world" through the observance of the law of love. Such, then, though it has been presented only in barest outline, is the prominence given by the New Testament to ethical teaching. Evidently it regards such instruction as highly important. It is that toward which the whole volume seems to tend. Can we, therefore, be true to it unless our preaching is largely and often distinctly ethical? Fidelity to the Word of God as well as to God himself requires this.

3. So also and more particularly does truth to what we may call the characteristic ethical teaching of the Gospel. There is an ethical Gospel as truly as there is a Gospel of salvation. That is to say, the New Testament is a revelation of law as well as a revelation of grace. It is the former just because it is the latter. New grace causes new duties and shows itself, perhaps, most of all in its clear revelation of these duties. Even the law of the old dispensation was conceived as given by grace and as revealing a relationship of grace. It was regarded as a crown of rejoicing, even as a matter of boasting. "Blessed is the people that hear the joyful sound of it." "They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." It was the rule whereby the gracious provisions of God's covenant promise were to be realized. Precisely so, only more, the law of Christ is a consequence, nay, an essential part, of the Gospel of Christ. He came to reveal the will of God for our obedience as truly as he came to reveal the grace of God for our salvation. Because he is our redeemer he has given us a commandment, and this is emphatically "a new commandment."

This distinctive character of New Testament ethics appears in relation to natural ethics. It does not supersede this. On the contrary, it sanctions it anew. The duties of man as man it restates and reaffirms. Yet in doing so it asserts its own principle. Every duty to man it regards as also and above all a duty to God. Servants, for example, are to obey in all things their masters according to the flesh, for in this they serve the Lord Christ.

Again, the distinctive character of the ethics of the Gos-

pel may be seen in connection with Old Testament ethics. This is not set aside, Indeed, Christ came to fulfil the law. In fulfilling it, however, he gave to it a hitherto undiscerned spirituality of meaning. To develop this was one main purpose of the Sermon on the Mount. Thus he re-enacted the law against adultery, but in doing so he made this sin consist in the lascivious glance as well as in the impure act.

And then the Gospel reveals entirely new duties and virtues. Having, for example, brought life and immortality to light, it introduces and demands an altogether unique attitude toward death and the grave. Thus we may "not sorrow for our dear ones who have gone before as those who have no hope;" and we ought to "be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord." So, too, what are called the evangelical virtues, faith, hope and love, though foreshadowed in the Old Testament, appear in developed form only in the New. Thus, where do we find Christian hope, or the practical knowledge of God's love as the supreme reality, save in connection with that faith which Christ both revealed and gives, that faith, which appropriates Christ as its own; which then rises to love for him of whose love for us Christ is the highest expression; and which at last, through love, realizes so strongly the present fact of God's love for us and discerns so clearly what is implied in it that it disposes and enables us to feel and to act as if the chief good of the Christian life, in addition to having been received, had been actually consummated? Once more, the originality of New Testament ethics appears, and perhaps most conspicuously, in the treatment which it requires of the offences of our brethren. In this relation it presents us with a crown of five virtues, humility, meekness, moderation, patience, forgiveness, as unique as it is glorious. But enough by way of illustration. It must be evident that Christ's law of love is, indeed, "a new commandment." The Gospel is not only largely an ethical revelation, it is a revelation of a distinct

kind of ethics. Unless, therefore, we teach and emphasize this ; unless we call attention, not merely to the law of God, but especially to those principles of it which are revealed and elucidated in the Gospel specially we must be untrue to what is a characteristic of the Gospel. That is, we must slight what is distinctive of our Lord's final and highest revelation to us. But this is not all.

4. There is a vital relation between the teaching and practice of Christian ethics and the evangelization of the world. We should suppose that there would be. It would seem that if the Gospel was to be effective, what was peculiarly characteristic of it must be presented. We find this to be the case. At least, we find that it has been the case. There can be no doubt that the early centuries of our era were the great missionary age. So general and so earnest was the movement inaugurated when Barnabas and Saul, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed from Antioch on the church's first distinctively foreign mission, that one hundred years afterward we see the church in effective occupation of the civilized world, and in less than three hundred years we behold Christianity on the throne of the empire. Now what was the method of operation, what was the instrumentality, which the Holy Spirit rendered effectual to this stupendous conquest? If we can ascertain it, we may not question that we have found a force which is at least vitally related to the evangelization of the world.

Nor are we left in doubt on this point. We can see clearly what, after the Spirit of truth and the power of the truth as it is in Jesus, was regarded as most important by that pre-eminently missionary church. Nothing could be more instructive in this respect than the celebrated letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan. In it he states the results of his judicial examination into the secret of Christianity. Through the frank confession of the Christians themselves, and through the declarations of informers and of apostates interrogated under torture, he saw into the very heart of what he had supposed was a tremendous mystery. And lo! there was no mystery. He found that after worship by

means of the Word, they went on to what he calls a sacrament. This term had been the common word for a military oath, but it now meant that which bound the Christians together in a solemn league and covenant with God.

What, then, was the supposed tremendous mystery to which they thus devoted themselves anew? Pliny found it to be simply this, that they would be conscientiously careful in relation to the ordinary duties of man to man, or, as we say, to the common duties of the second table of the law. Could anything be more significant? The very time when the church was making the most rapid progress in the evangelization of the world was the time, and probably the only time, when the characteristic feature of her worship was a solemn covenant with God to make the ethics of Christ the rule of every day life. Can we, then, fail to discern a vital relation between the prominence given to it and the coming of the Redeemer's Kingdom? It is only as its gracious law is proclaimed and illustrated that it itself can prevail.

(a) We discover one reason for what has just been affirmed in this, that conviction of sin will be largely in proportion to the emphasis put on the ethics, and particularly on that which is distinctive of the ethics, of the Gospel. This should be self-evident. One purpose of the law was to convict of sin. "It was added because of transgressions." It was intended to show men how sinful they were that they might feel themselves "shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be rewarded." And such is still the function of the law in the case of those who, though "the faith is come," have not embraced it. And if this is a design of the law as law, it is, of course, a design of the law as it has been completed and spiritualized and illustrated by Christ. He fulfilled all righteousness partly in order that we might appreciate our need of his righteousness.

Just here we touch what is exceedingly practical. Conviction of sin is the need of our age. Men do not come to Christ for salvation because they do not feel the need of it ;

and they do not feel the need of it because, whatever they may believe, few of them are oppressed by the guilt and pollution of sin. What, then, could be so timely as the general, and continued, and earnest, and solemn proclamation and exposition, and application of the law of God in all its majesty, and authority and spirituality; that law which is implied in the every constitution of nature, which was directly revealed as to its great principles around the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, and which was spiritualized and completed, illustrated and fulfilled, by him who is himself the law because he is one with him who is himself the right? Indeed, is not the more frequent and faithful presentation of the law in this, its finished and highest forms, of the law of Christ distinctively, of the ethics of the Gospel—is not just this the most urgent need of the present hour? Owing to centuries of Christian influence the majority of those who are reached by our churches are outwardly moral. They do not have other gods, they do not bow down to images, they do not blaspheme, they do not do business on the Lord's Day. They treat their parents fairly well. They do not murder. They do not commit adultery. They do not steal. They do not tell black lies. They try not to be grossly covetous. Judged by an external though high standard, they are pretty good people. How, then, can they be convicted of the sins of which they are guilty, and from which they need to be saved as really as though, in the most flagrant sense, they were murderous or adulterous; unless they are confronted with those more spiritual aspects of the law which are often foreshadowed in the Old Testament prophets, in the Psalms and even in the Pentateuch, and which are clearly revealed in the sermon on the Mount. Preach that the sixth commandment is broken, not only by him who kills his brother, but also by him who is angry with him without a cause, and you will convict of sin many who otherwise would have remained at ease. That is, you will proclaim just the truth which is appropriate to existing conditions, and which, therefore, the Holy Spirit may

be expected to use in the works of conviction. Set forth in all its spirituality and beauty, the character and life which the work of Christ for us, and in us has taught us and rendered obligatory on us ; the faith, hope, and love, which the Gospel has revealed and requires, in all their manifestations and applications, the new view of this world as well as of the next which the New Testament's fuller revelation of the Kingdom of God has made it our duty to hold and to act on—let these things be the burden of much of our preaching, and we shall at least preach truth specially adapted to existing conditions, truth fitted to convict those whom a law less distinctively Christian would not disturb. Might it not be that if our revivals of religion were systematically prepared for by such ethical preaching, they would not, as they so often do, issue only in large gatherings, interesting meetings, and wonder and perplexity as to what it has all amounted to ?

6. We discover a further reason for this vital relation between Christian ethics and the evangelization of the world in this, that the life of Christ cannot be reproduced unless the ethics of his Gospel is appreciated. A word or two, and this will be evident. It is true that knowledge is not virtue even though Plato thought that it was. One might understand the law of Christ as perfectly as Christ himself understands it, but he could not keep it, he could not even seriously desire to keep it, unless he were given by the spirit of regeneration the new heart, and the faith which proceeds only from it ; and he could not become the subject of this divine internal work but for the meritorious life and sacrificial death for him of his substitute, the Son of God. All this is true. It is the truth of supreme as it is the truth of first importance. But just because of this, do we perceive the immense practical importance of the ethics of Christ. That we could not become holy unless he had died to make us so, is the reason why we should strive to understand, and appreciate his law. For unless we do this, we can not keep it. It is not more true that knowledge alone can not make a man holy than it is true that even grace in the

heart cannot make him so without knowledge. If we are to be "conformed to the image of God's Son," the Holy Spirit must teach us what his image involves as well as give us the power to realize it.

Now the Holy Spirit teaches us out of the truth of the Divine Word and by it. Hence, we can become what Christ died to make us only as the life and character set forth in the Gospel are so presented to us that the Holy Spirit may interpret them to our minds and apply them to our hearts. Otherwise, in an important sense, Christ has "died in vain." Though we be "saved as by fire," we can not become the large saints that his life and death were fitted to make us. And this is not all. He has "died in vain" also because we cannot, if small saints, be the witnesses for him that he would have us be. Christianity is bound to be estimated according to the character and lives of its professors. It is in them that the world confessed Christ's power. If, then, there do not appear in them those virtues, those graces, which only he could reveal or effect, how can we expect the world to acknowledge Christianity as the one way of life? In a word, Christians must be thoroughly taught the ethics of the Gospel, if they are to follow Christ truly, and unless they truly follow him, his Gospel will not have its due power over the world. May it not be that many a real work of grace in our churches ceases prematurely and is far less influential than the power with which it began led us to hope that it would be for this reason, that the invitation of Christ is not followed up by the law of Christ? Those who come to Jesus need to be shown just what he would have them be and just how he would have them live. They can become like him only as they keep his "new commandment," and they can witness effectively for him only in so far as they are like him.

5. One other reason why it is of the utmost importance that the ethics of the Gospel should be preached systematically and fully must be mentioned as I close, but it can be only mentioned. It is this: Even natural ethics, if it is to be maintained in its integrity, requires to be explained

and conformed and supplemented by the law of Christ. That this is so, the history of ethics has proved abundantly. There never has been a truly natural ethical development even as regards theory apart from Christianity. Confucius thought, perhaps, as pure an ethics as the wisdom of this world could conceive and his teaching was the most exclusively ethical that the world has heard. What has been the result? The eternal principles of right were founded even by Confucius with the politic and the expedient; and the vast empire that he may be said to have established, the greatest empire of the world, has become a prize to be striven for by more virile nations whom the law of Christ has made, even though they do often violate and even ignore it. Observation in our own community affords the same lesson. When left to themselves, men can recognize duty and appreciate virtue; for the law of God is both implied in the constitution of things and written on the heart. But do we find men by themselves either doing their whole duty or realizing true virtue? Are not their natures impure or their efforts misdirected? When they do not err by defect, do they not err by excess? Do they not need to be stimulated here? Do they not need to be checked there? They require a more exact statement of duty, a more precise representation of virtue, than their own reason, finite and sinfully perverted as it is, can give them. They must know the law of Christ, if they are to read aright the law of nature.

We can see at once why this is. The law of Christ is no after thought. Sinai prepared for it. Creation was in order to it. God himself, who is the essence and norm of right and so the supreme standard of law, made the fullest revelation of himself in it. He who taught and alone fully obeyed and perfectly illustrated it was himself the "mediator of the old covenant;" he was himself the creator of the world and so of the ethical laws involved in their constitution. He is himself "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his substance." In a word, in the ethics of the Gospel we have the crowning manifesta-

tion of eternal right. It must be, therefore, that righteousness which does not tend to the law of Christ and develop into it and by it and for it can not continue right. It must become dead and corrupt just as the whole palmetto palm is sure to die when once you cut off its crown. Ought we not, then, to preach the law of Christ, systematically, constantly, fully, solemnly, and yet joyfully? As ministers of the grace of God, may we do less? The grace of Christ has its end in his ethics, and the grace of Christ comes with power for salvation largely in proportion as his ethics is taught and practiced.

Since writing this paper it has seemed best to the author to add, in view of recent events, and specially of manifest tendencies in some branches of the Presbyterian Church, that zeal for orthodoxy, unless it be "zeal without knowledge," will put fresh emphasis on ethical preaching. Only thus can we silence the taunt of our adversaries, that we make a fetish of what we call Christian dogma and quite ignore Christian life. Only thus can we illustrate the doctrines of our creed; every one of them has relation to conduct, and cannot be understood and appreciated save as it is exhibited in its practical requirements. Indeed, only thus can we be loyal to our Confession of Faith, our symbol of orthodoxy; it has no clearer or more characteristic teaching than that "truth is in order to holiness." It may not be doubted that the widely diffused desire for a shorter and less explicit creed has found a part of its occasion, not in too much doctrinal preaching, but in too little ethical preaching. Neither the world nor the Church will appreciate or ought to appreciate the importance of doctrines unless they are presented as in living relation to actual life. If they are not so presented, the inference is bound to be drawn at last that they are not of God. And we may not complain. Does not St. Paul say? "Every Scripture is inspired of God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

WILLIAM BRENTON GREENE, JR.

Princeton, New Jersey.