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— Sermons —

A PRESENT INCARNATION.

BY J. H. VINCENT, D.D. (METHODIST EPISCOPAL), NEW YORK.

Christ liveth in me.—GAL. ii., 20.

GOD deals with man as the wise teacher with his pupils. The teacher constantly asks: How may I reveal enough truth to excite the eager desire of the pupil to know; and how so limit the revelation that the pupil's own powers of investigation may be employed?

It is this very problem that the teacher of man as a spiritual being—belonging to an invisible world—must solve. How bring spiritual things into the limitations of the material, that men with eyes may see just enough to incite them to examine with closed eyes the deeper verities of religion? How reveal enough truth to the senses to awaken man's interior powers to behold the unseen, feel the intangible, and to know the world forever to mere sense unknowable.

That man Jesus, the great teacher, the divine teacher, was, in His incarnate life, a manifestation, an epiphany of God, and of the elements in man which make it possible for him to be God-like and subject to the divine. Jesus Christ came into the flesh to call attention of men in the flesh to that vast world outside of the world of vision and touch and taste; a world of invisible energies; a world that was before the world of sense; a world deeper, vaster, worthier than the world of sense; a world with wider outlooks, more comprehensive wisdoms, mightier potencies, and more resplendent glories than the world of sense; a world that, as it was before, will be after

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Helps in Pastoral Work

Preaching to the Children.

BY JOHN HALL, D.D., NEW YORK.

It is to be lamented that the children of the members of many of our churches are not trained as they ought to be to attend the regular services. Various expedients have been suggested to remedy this evil. Some ministers have attempted to secure their attendance by taking five or ten minutes at the commencement of the sermon to address the children, and then going on and speaking to the older. It seems to me that there are grave objections to this plan. If I were a child and had listened five or ten minutes to my share, I should feel under no obligation to listen any further. It is better for clergymen to shape their sermons throughout with reference to children, putting in something adapted to them. It is better to preach in such a way that the average intelligent child will comprehend a great deal said to the people. I can very well

understand how a man may announce his subject in such a way that, from the beginning, the children conclude that there is nothing for them, and that they may just as well go to sleep. As when a man reads that he is about "to present utilitarianism as examined from a physical standpoint," or when he announces as a subject for the evening, "Solomon as a psychological study." The children would be very much different from the children of my time, if they did give their close attention to a service started in that particular fashion.

We ministers cannot be too simple. As a general rule, we find that what most interests young people also interests a very large number of older people. We escape the risk of being over the heads of a considerable proportion of our hearers. I recall a person in Dublin, Ireland, not a member of the church to which I was attached, who had fallen into the way of attending with great regularity, coming

a long distance and with needless waste of time. I knew that there was a faithful brother clergyman in the same street. I took the liberty to ask her to attend upon his church. She acted upon my advice for a few Sabbaths. To my surprise I saw her back again. I took the first opportunity to ask, "Did you act upon that suggestion I made?" "Yes," said she. "On last Lord's day he preached a sermon, well prepared, to which he had given a great deal of attention, upon the distinction between sublapsarian and supralapsarian. I do not know whether I am a sublapsarian or a supralapsarian." I declare to you that I do not wonder that children do not like to attend such a service.

Is it a Pastor's Duty to Visit ?

By REV. C. H. SPURGEON, LONDON.

I don't know about going from house to house visiting. Some put it down as a duty for all Christian ministers to visit—to be always visiting. I am not alluding to any brother, but I have not observed any thing miraculously good about the preaching of brethren who spend their time in that particular department. Either the brother wears out altogether, or else you hear that he has preached a sermon a third time within two years, which is rather a close shave. But what could he do otherwise? Rev. Mr. Binney was once requested to visit more, and he gave notice at once that he intended to visit all the week. He very discreetly chose his times. To gentlemen in the city he dropped in about twelve or one, when they were in the thick of business; to sisters at home with many children he

called about the time when they were putting the children to bed. When next Sunday morning came, he said that as his time was occupied in visiting, they could not, of course, expect any sermon, so they would be dismissed after prayer. In the evening, I believe, he said that during the afternoon he had been looking up an old sermon preached several years ago, and he would give them that, as it was all he had to give them. The deacons concluded that it was better that he should preach.

With all the force of my being I do say, whatever you do not do, keep your preaching up to the mark. You can do much better by a thoroughly good sermon than by a dropping in here and there and taking a little chit-chat. By all means keep the sermons up. The pulpit is the very Thermopylæ of this war. Hold the pulpit! There is a visitation in the pulpit of a wonderful kind, that comes right home to people's wants and necessities, and makes them think the minister has been in our hearts, if not in our homes; he knows all about us. That is what I mean by getting on with our people. We have wrought in their hearts with a message that God has sent down from heaven. In an hotel the people generally come down to the *table d'hôte*; but you notice that there is always a certain number of dinners sent upstairs to persons who are ill, or too stuck up to join the table. Now, there are to be found in all congregations a number of crotchety people, who don't like the *table d'hôte*. They need something more than the sermon. I would send these a dinner, and send it up hot, too.

❧ Prayer Meeting Service ❧

Who is Responsible for the Interest of the Prayer Meeting ?

The prayer meeting is of primary importance to every Church. It gauges its spiritual temperature. It gives to the Church its life force and its power of leading souls to Jesus. The weekly

meeting for prayer should therefore be deeply interesting to every member. But it is not always so, and it should be remembered that those who attend the meetings are responsible for its interest.

If they are cold and disinterested in the work of God and the Church, it is