

THE PULPIT.

AN ELOQUENT SUNDAY SERMON BY DR. NEHEMIAH BOYNTON.

Subject: The Will and the Work.

Brooklyn, N. Y.—Dr. Nehemiah Boynton, pastor of the Clinton Avenue Congregational Church, having returned from his European trip, was in his pulpit Sunday. In the morning, greeted by a large audience, he preached on "The Will and the Work." The text was from John 4:34: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work." Among other things, Dr. Boynton said:

The very essence of a rational faith in Jesus is dependent upon His being permitted to make His own impression upon one's soul as a being who uses and masters life in normal relations. If you permit your fancy to dress Him in the light of fancy and ethereal garments of an airy mysticism you add to your imagination but subtract from His reality. If you array Him in the blue and sometimes navy blue bonapartian of a provincial theology your philosophy aspires to do the task of sympathy takes away half His brightness. He recedes from the heart and mind of the world. But if you allow Him to be an actual resident in life and to live in the world to which He came, to work, to wonder, to minister, to suffer, to joy and to love, you restore Him to men. Again He lives in power, and by His very manner of life indicates His claim to be the chiefest among ten thousand.

The supreme divinity of Christ, His individual and unique relation to the Father are best apprehended by setting His life in its ordinary and usual human relations, permitting it to tell its own story and make its own impression. Whether you compare Christ with the Samaritan woman or with the astonished disciples His own transcendent greatness is in distinct evidence.

Here is a travel-stained, weary and thirsty pilgrim sitting by a well; there a common water carrier comes to fill his pitcher. Their interview shows at once that they are not upon the same level; they do not see life from the same angle. The traveler is evidently in full possession of something for which the Samaritan woman has only heart hunger, something very high, noble, soul-satisfying.

The disciples who come as the leaves are not much above her level, so far as appreciating Christ is concerned. They wonder that He is willing to stoop to speak to such a person. They offer Him food. Hospitality is the only grace they can at present afford. "Master, eat!" How might an appreciation they have of the really nutritive force of life? "I have eaten, I have been refreshed," says Christ. "Can it be that anyone has offered me lunch in my absence?" they inquire.

"My meal," says Christ, "is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work."

Here is strong meat indeed! Here is spiritual manna, indeed! The will and the work are the staples of that perpetual feast which alone will satisfy the higher soul-life of mankind.

A great teaching of this incident is the personal nature of real religion. One of the pathetic visions of our own day is that of multitudes trying to find a place to trust their souls. Religious which the world has outgrown are valiantly into life again and are made the depositories of restless spirits. New forms of religion have for many mighty attractions and for a time seem to satisfy the soul's desire. There must be some one thing about the faith of Jesus which gives it pre-eminence over all other forms of faith, however much of fragmentary trust they embrace. And that one thing is the personal relation with God. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me!" This is the great Christian contribution to religion. God is Father of all spirits. To connect with His will is to relate oneself with Him and satisfy the longings of one's deepest soul. "I know Jesus Christ," said Bushnell, "better than I know any man in the city of Hartford, and if He should be walking along the street and see me, He would say, 'There goes a friend of mine.'"

The joy, the assurance, the certainty of a Christian faith, root themselves in the sense of personal relation between the soul and God, which affords the comfort, security and inspiration of His life.

Jesus again is insistent in His teaching that a loyal will always expresses itself in work. "To finish His work." A personal relation with God expresses itself through a social appreciation of His efforts. Nobody can travel to Heaven alone. Everybody must help carry somebody else who would mount the shining pinnales of the city of our God. The greatest work in the world is to get one's will in play—to establish good-will among men.

There is the race question, for example. How are men of different races to be treated in free America?

It is no longer a question of the colored man alone, but of the Indian, the Japanese, the Chinese as well. Indeed, it is no longer a mere American question. It is an international question, found to become more and more imperative and vital in coming days. What is the solution? Is it in institutions of social equality like clubs and settlements? Is it in laws drastic and enforced? There can do something, but the real solution waits upon the will of the people, upon disposition and attitude. The deeper recognition is in order. "A man's a man for a' that." The nobler fellowships are due. The will of God is waiting for a larger expression over against passion, pride and prejudice. If Jesus could find in an ordinary Samaritan water carrier a soul worthy of His kindly disposition, His sympathy, His solicitude, then His followers are bound to find in every human being a spiritual relative and maintain toward all made in the image of God a brother's regard and care.

Doing the will of God will always express itself in some form of social service.

You will solve social problems only by kneeling into them the loaves of the Christian spirit, and there will be a rise in every social scale as the will of Christ is by His disciples given adequate expression.

A third and final teaching of the Master in this incident concerns spiritual accomplishments.

What we want, says the impatient disciple, is results! Indeed, here is a great truth, but what kind of results, pray? Are apparent returns always the indices of a true Christian progress? Is it not possible "to make a showing" which by its very largeness is only a blind to a really deplorable state of affairs?

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR NOTES

DECEMBER FIFTEENTH.

Confident testimony for Christ. Luke 12: 11-12; Acts 4: 13-35.

Testimony through the Spirit. 1 Cor. 12: 1-3.

A test of sainthood. 1 John 4: 1-6 Union with God. 1 John 4: 13-16 Confession and salvation. Rom 10: 8-11

Confession and courage. Mark 8: 34-38.

A good confession. Acts 7: 51-60.

Notice that Christ's promise of words of power without preparation extends only over the time when there is no opportunity for preparation.

Whoever trusts God to guide his preparation, and trusts Him to guide his tongue when there is no time for preparation, will always speak well (Luke 12: 12).

If we speak boldly and well for Christ, our ignorance and weakness are only a proof of Christ's wisdom and power (Acts 4: 13).

Confident speech is born of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and that presence is born of prayer (Acts 4: 21).

If we have no confidence in testimony, may it not be that we are seeking to speak for ourselves more than for Christ?

The Greek word for "witness" is the same as our English word "martyr." No true witnessing is free from martyrdom.

Whoever would rely upon Christ to guide his speech must rely upon Him to guide the rest of his life also.

Confident testimony for Christ at trials, but combative testimony repels.

The conduct can best testify for the lake by keeping itself free from everything but the lake.

The best evidence is unprepared speech, as the best proof of a good cook is a hastily prepared meal.

Lead is heavy and inert; if it were otherwise, it would not give so good testimony in the bullet of the powder behind it.

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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR DEC. 15 BY THE REV. I. W. HENDERSON.

Subject: The Boy Samuel, I. Sam. 8: 1-21—Golden Text, I. Sam. 8: 19—Memory Verses, 8: 10—Read I. Samuel 1-4.

The prophet Samuel, says Rev. W. G. Blakie, D. D., in his commentary on Samuel, like the book which bears his name, comes in as a connecting link between the Judges and the Kings of Israel. He belonged to a transition period. He was appointed to him to pilot the nation between two stages of its history, from a republic to a monarchy, from a condition of somewhat casual and indefinite arrangements to one of more systematic and orderly government.

The great object of his life was to secure that this change should be made in the way most beneficial for the nation, and especially most beneficial for its spiritual interests. Care must be taken that while becoming like the nations in having a king, Israel shall not become like them in religion, and shall continue to stand out in hearty and unswerving allegiance to the law and covenant of their father's God.

Samuel was the last of the judges, and in a sense the first of the prophets. The last of the judges, but not a military judge, not ruling like Samson by physical strength, but by high spiritual ties and prayer; not so much wrestling against flesh and blood as against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness in high places, but respecting his function as judge blended with his work as a prophet. Before him, the prophetic office was but a casual illumination; under him it becomes a more steady and systematic light. He was the first of a succession of prophets to whom God placed side by side with the kings and priests of Israel to supply that fresh moral and spiritual force which the prevailing worldliness of the one and formalism of the other rendered so necessary for the great ends for which Israel was chosen. With some fine exceptions, the kings and priests would have allowed the seed of Abraham to drift away from the noble mission for which God had called them; conformity to the world in spirit if not in form was the prevailing tendency; the prophets were raised up to hold the nation firmly to the covenant, to vindicate the claims of its heavenly King, to thunder judgments against idolatry and all rebellion, and pour words of comfort into the hearts of all who were faithful to their God, and who looked for redemption in Israel. Of this order of God's servants Samuel was the first. And called as he was to this office at a transition period, the importance of it was all the greater.

The first thing that engages our special attention in this chapter is the singular way in which Samuel was called to receive God's message in the temple.

The word of God was rare in those days; there was no open vision, or rather no vision that came abroad, that was promulgated to the nation as the expression of God's will. From the time in which this is referred to, it was evidently looked upon as a want, as placing the nation in a less desirable position than in days when God was constantly communicating His will. Now, however, God is to come into closer contact with the people, and for this purpose He is to employ a new instrument as the medium of His messages. For God is never at a loss for suitable instruments—they are always ready when peculiar work has to be done. In the selection of the boy Samuel as His prophet there is something painful, but likewise something very interesting. It is painful to find the old high priest passed over, his venerable years and venerable office would naturally have pointed to him; but in spite of many good qualities, in one point he is grossly unfaithful, and the very purpose of the vision now to be made is to declare the outcome of his faithlessness. But it is interesting to find that already the child of Hannah is marked out for this distinguished service. Even in his case there is opportunity for verifying the rule, "Them that honor Me I will honor." His entire devotion to God's service, so beautiful in one of such tender years, is the sign of a character well adapted to become the medium of God's habitual communications with His people. Young though he is, his very youth in one sense will prove an advantage. It will show that what he speaks is not the mere fruit of his own thinking, but is the message of God. It will show that the spiritual power that goes forth with his words is not his own native force, but the force of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. It will thus be made apparent to all that God has not forsaken His people, corrupt and lamentably wicked though the young priests are.

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OF INTEREST TO WOMEN

New York City.—Happily for the rising generation, the full importance of systematic exercise has come to be realized and every school girl includes an exercise suit in her outfit. This one shows several novel and altogether desirable features and allows a choice of long or elbow sleeves. It is made with the comfortable round collar finishing the neck and is finished at the front with a regulation shirt waist box pleat. In

White Harness Belts. A modish belt is of white harness leather in natural color, which is made of narrow strips stitched together.

Silks and Feathers. Planted and fringed silks decorate many fall hats, frequently in conjunction with some of the varieties of fancy feathers.

Gauntlet Glove. The gauntlet glove has taken a hold on the fancy of the fastidious and is seen with almost any street costume. This form of glove was once confined to the proper fustia for the riding costume, but it has broken bonds and now covers the coat of the pedestrian suite.

Quaintest of Wraps. The quaintest wrap to be introduced this season is the shawl of chiffon, thin silk or crepe de chine edged with thin flounces headed with baby velvet ribbon and draped with the same ribbon. They are drawn down the middle of the back with the ribbon.

Scarfs Should Harmonize. Scarfs which are worn with afternoon as well as with evening gowns should match or harmonize with the frock. For afternoon wear silks and