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THE
CHURCHMAN

SEPTEMBER, 1902.

ART. I.—THE PASTORATE OF SERVICE: AN
ENTHRONEMENT SERMON (Nov. 1, 1901).

WE preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. iv. 5). Or, to render the apostolic Greek a little more exactly and a little more fully: We proclaim not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for our Jesus' sake.

So speaks, for himself and his fellow-workers, unfolding the inmost and ultimate secrets of his purpose and ambition, the greatest of all pastors, the Apostle Paul. He is writing an Epistle which pre-eminently discloses to us himself, the very man, the human heart beating at the centre of that immense circumference of enterprise, and only quickened into warmer and more manifold sensibilities by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. To the Corinthians, whom he loved, and who loved him well, yet perplexed and grieved him too, he presents his whole self, without even the thinnest artificial veil. Affection, hope, disappointment, indignation, irony, bitter rebuke, tenderest entreaty—all comes out precisely as it is felt, in the utterance of a devotion to them which has nothing to conceal. To be sure, all is dominated by a purpose. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians is no fitful rhapsody of troubled feeling. All bears upon the rescue of the disciples back from misbeliefs to the eternal truth, from confusion to a strong cohesion in the Lord, from themselves to Christ, to holiness, to heaven. But into the line of that great purpose the Apostle pours not his reasonings only, nor even his entreaties, but himself. He spends upon his converts his own innermost being. He gives to them his soul.

In the course of such a message so delivered he comes to the paragraph before us. And here he dilates awhile upon

the great phenomenon of the Christian Ministry—its message, its motives, the divine energies which can alone sustain the minister, the illumination which his own spirit must needs receive if he is to shed the light of Christ around him. Particularly he indicates now the one, the solitary and all-controlling ambition with which he is to labour and to preach. What has he to do? What has he to say? A thousand things, from one aspect; from another and a higher, only two, which fuse themselves after all into one. He has first to present, to proclaim, to magnify to men, a Person, in the splendour of His love and grace, and in the majesty of His claim. He has then to announce himself to his brethren as indeed the commissioned messenger of that Person, sent veritably by that august Sovereign, claiming their loyalty and their love. But he makes that claim, not for himself, but for Him who has sent him. The very last thing he is authorized to do is to assert an autocratic position, to dictate, to terrorize—nay, he is bound expressly not to assert himself as himself at all. His whole and unreserved ambition is to proclaim Christ Jesus, and to proclaim Him Lord. And his entire and unartificial purpose, under that ambition, is to present himself to his brethren, not as lord over the heritage of which he is himself only one ransomed member, but as being, for Jesus' sake, because of that all-beloved name, the servant of the saints.

“Ourselves your bondservants for our Jesus' sake.” Such is this great clergyman's central and ultimate conception of the Christian Ministry. He has much to say about it elsewhere from other sides, about its commission and authority, and about the moral dignity of its idea. But here he lays his hand upon its very heart, and gives us the central glory of the thing. And the words denote the most absolute anti-thesis possible to every thought of an ecclesiastical assumption, to all such self-exaltation of a ministerial class or order as can harden it into that far different thing, for which the Christianity of the Apostles has no place, a hierarchical caste. The words delightfully negative all that is connoted by that term of mournful omen, as of mournful history, “clericalism.” They present to us in short a conception not magisterial, but altogether ministerial. The pastor, teacher, and guide in things Divine has here no ambition outside the glory of his heavenly Master. And within that sacred limit his supreme ambition is to be, in Christ, the bondservant of his brethren. He belongs to them, not they to him. He recognises ever, and with joy, that the Church is greater than the Ministry; the Bride of the Lamb is greater than the bondman of the Bride.

So the man's whole life is at once chastened and dignified by his call to a high ambition, which, by the law of its nature, is altogether pure. To "proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord," that is the hope which animates him every day. He lives to make Christ Jesus great to human hearts. He lives "that Christ may be magnified in his body," that Christ may look out at the windows of his life, and may beckon from its doors, that his word alike and his example may persuade men, with an indefinable but strong attraction, to "taste and see how gracious the Lord is," and never so gracious as when He is most absolutely Lord. To this man all interests are subordinated to these; he rises up with this aim in the morning, and he lies down with it at night. His life is manifold in its contents; he is a man, "a man in Christ," and therefore all the more a man; nothing that is essentially human is alien to his sympathies. He is citizen, neighbour, friend; he is brother, husband, father; he is thinker, he is reader, perhaps over large ranges of the mental realm. But all these many things are governed for him always by the one thing. Christ Jesus is his dominant, unifying interest and ambition, his ruling passion, his track and goal. To himself the Son of God and Man, the Lamb of Calvary, the Prince of Life, the indwelling Master, the longed-for Lord of the Return, is the inward all-in-all. He knows that for himself, in a "sober certainty of waking bliss," Christ Jesus, embraced by faith, has become victory, and law, and hope, and heaven begun. He knows how for himself Christ has given a new significance to all that is most present in human things, a new interest to the common day, a new greatness to the ordinary task, a new sacredness to every man he meets, and to all that makes the life of man. He knows meanwhile that Christ has transformed for him the thought of the unseen and eternal from a pallid cloud into "the beautiful gate of the city," where he will taste the bliss of for ever serving, in an action released at last from friction, the Lord who died for him and rose again. So the man has something to say, and, indeed, he has something to do, for the brethren to whom he is called to minister. He has to give himself up to the enterprise of "making Jesus King" for them also and in them. He lives, not to dictate to them a faith forced upon the soul from without, but to introduce them to the joy of a faith in which repentance and reliance clasp the crucified and living Lord, and welcome Him in to mould the life outward from its depths.

It is to be his to lead them, or rather to win them to go along at his side, in the path which has come to be his own delight, the path of self-surrender to the service of God in the service of others in His name. Slowly, perhaps, but

in measure truly, the man has learnt for himself that great lesson of the Gospel that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." He begins to know for himself that "to be ministered unto" is infinitely less like the regal greatness of the King of Saints than "to minister," to "love and serve." He begins to see what he will experience perfectly in the life of glory, that our finite being can never expand and sun itself fully into the fair ideal of power and beauty for which it was created, and for which now it was redeemed, till it goes out and upward from the bondage of self-seeking into the large and holy freedom of a self-sacrificing love to God, and to man in Him. Therefore, he is bent upon the enterprise of "making Jesus King" in the souls of others too. He knows that it is the absolute right of his Redeemer that He should reign in them wholly and for ever. He knows equally that it is the due of the souls for which He died that they should be invited to find their own amplest development and fullest joy in entire surrender to His will.

To that end the Minister is their bondservant. He exists for them, he belongs to them, he is at command for them, that they may yield themselves to Jesus Christ, for this world and the world to come, and so may live indeed.

My brethren, I have presumed to unfold this apostolic word to you in order that I may, in your presence, here and now, in this day of my induction to my seat among you, impose its message above all upon myself. What to me, now wedded to this great charge till my working life is done, is the meaning of this day, with its moving pomp of ceremony, its choral songs, its majesty of worship in this old and awful house of God? To the man whom you thus solemnly welcome to be no more a stranger it means an unspeakable humbling, and a call, as from heaven itself, to live henceforth for nothing but the service of the Lord and you. He must be unwise indeed who, having reached the verge of threescore, can yet dream that such a day as this is to contribute one atom to the miserable thought of self-esteem. Rather it tremendously contrasts his littleness with the greatness of his charge, and drives him to the dust, and to his God. He presents himself humbly before you, weak, unworthy, a redeemed sinner annexed by Jesus Christ, who hopes that his one conscious ambition is to be somehow used for you, in any path of dutiful service that the Lord shall open to him; to serve you, to be your bondman, daily given over to you anew, not seeking vainly to strain himself into a hopeless rivalry with predecessors who have been great indeed, but to live in lowliness and love, no longer to himself, but to his Saviour, and, under

Him, to you. His deepest longing is to be in some sort the evangelist and the pastor among you, proclaiming, while he can, Christ Jesus his Lord as King, and presenting himself as altogether yours to serve you for Jesus' sake. You will second his purpose with your prayers, as already you have sustained him with them, in your lovingkindness, in the prospect of this hour.

For me, in this ambition, may the eternal First Cause of peace and power be ever the life of life, "the rock of my heart, and my portion for ever." Yet may not a new and unworthy Bishop of this illustrious see thank God that he finds, under that First Cause, a cause second and subsidiary, to move his devotion and desire, as noble in its kind as man can know? To succeed in any sense to a Cuthbert of old, and, of the later time, to a Cosin, to a Butler, to a Baring, to a Lightfoot (Lightfoot remembered with inefaceable love and reverence since those dear distant days when the pupil sought the kindest and wisest of tutors in his Cambridge rooms), to occupy the seat to which a Nicholas Ridley was designated, and intercepted from it only by the martyr's fire—is not this enough to keep the will awake to the glory of pastoral service? And when I muse, in the long line of predecessors, precisely upon two names, the first name and the last in the long procession, the very faces and voices of the Blessed on this All Saints' Day seem to carry to the attentive soul the burthen of our apostolic text. Thirteen centuries away, yet present to us still in God, stands gracious Aidan, the conqueror by sympathetic love, the ruler by service, holy, humble, strong for Christ, because full of Him and void of self. And close beside us, just landed dryshod on the immortal shore, behold a saint as true, a servant of the Lord and of his brethren as memorable, as the great Culdee. With looks of light he points his poor successor to "the love of Christ" for his motive and his power, and to all the human needs of Christ's brethren for his field of service. Admirable master of knowledge and of thought, leader of movements and of men, he was greater yet as the lowly follower of his incarnate Lord, the wholly self-forgetting bondman of his brethren, for Jesus' sake.

HANDLEY DUNELM.

