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SOME NOTES ON PREACHING AND PREACHERS PRIOR TO THE REFORMATION.* §

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Through the ages the pulpit has stood as the foremost teacher of the religious life. Many times its teaching has been weak and warped, but in every age there have been voices, tried and true, calling men back to God. To sketch, simply or exhaustively, the leading preachers through these years would be not only impossible in these limits, but would give scant justice to the thousands of men who have responded freely and effectively to the Lord's command to preach as we go. Many of these noble voices have ceased with the passing of their day. External records have left no trace of them; but in the spring eternal of human experience and struggle their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. God has never left himself without witness,

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*The nature and limits of this article precluded the giving of references as they were used. Besides commentaries, encyclopedias and general Church Histories, I have consulted freely such works as Ker, Broadus, Dargan and Pattison on the History of Preaching; Kirk-rick and others on the Prophets, and many volumes of a more or less popular nature. From many of these I have used quotations.—F.M.P.

and the voice of His messengers has continued, with varying clearness and power, from the beginning till now.

We may well deplore the loss of the records of many faithful men, and can only covet fuller accounts of others of whom we have but a voice crying in the night. "We catch its echoes in the controversies of Christendom; in the ecclesiastical movements of the ages; in the reformations by which religion has been purified and renewed; and the great missionary advances of the church universal." The real preacher has ministered to the individual, social and national life of the race. At times he has gone to extremes in his emphasis—often forgetting that the individual, or society, or the nation, is without meaning except in relation to the others; but in no age except our own has he been very widely indicted for failing to minister to his own generation. "He has dealt with the present duty as well as with the final destiny of men and women about him; with their relation to the life that now is as well as to the life which is to come." He has been accused, many times rightly, of being "other worldly." One might add, however, that the other worldly preacher has been much less a problem than the worldly one.

The preacher, of all men, should be the possessor of all time, past, present and future. While his initial experience lies in the past and his ultimate hope is in the future, yet his only sphere of labor is in the present—and it is always a glorious present, pregnant with obligation and opportunity; peopled with men and women who toil and shirk, who sorrow and rejoice, who lose and win; but always men and women who know how to respond only in terms of their present day life and language. For him, with the only message that can heal the wounded world, to fail or refuse to minister to "his own generation by the council of God" is to invite a continuance of shipwrecked faith which has marked the pathway of Christian progress. It must be a disappointment to Him who sent us to note through all the ages a generation of

preachers who are a generation behind—preachers who have no vital connection with the life forces around them. But this has been offset in every generation by preachers who were presagers of the new day, who have lit the torch of construction and reconstruction.

There has been endless controversy in trying to decide which has influenced the other more, the age or the preacher. But one thing is certain, that the preacher who has not been influenced by his age will have little if any influence upon it. His message will be tested both by its divineness in experience and its fitness to living issues. The truth that has **found** the preacher will find other men. The personal element must always bulk large. Personality is God's method and charm; it must be the preacher's. There is little danger that the preacher of today will be removed from his age; the real danger is that while trying to be of it, he will miss its reality by adopting only the sensational and superficial. These may produce a show of results that yield to mechanical tabulation, but they fail in producing "a spiritual service tested by spiritual measures and motives." Many of the seemingly established things of our day are but symptoms of life's search for the real. To bring a message in keeping with surface manifestations is to bring one which men rarely desire and never need. Men are demanding an instructive pulpit, one that grows from an increasing appreciation of God and men, and eventuates in a life that is stable as well as productive. "If the social consciousness of the age is to develop a finer sense of individuality, and so a nobler responsibility, the preacher must present a gospel that shall arouse and train the conscience, and inspire and direct the new social forces that are trying to realize the Kingdom of God on earth." To do this does not require a combination of all the so-called "gifts." Not many mighty through the ages have been chosen, but the real succession has continued through men who, like Paul, have "come not with excellency of speech but in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power."

To rightly study preaching one must begin with the Hebrew Prophets, for the pulpit is not peculiar to Christianity. The persuasiveness in personal presence and the human voice gives an ease to the spread of spoken truth that could hardly have been overlooked till Christ came. "Its roots lie far back of the Christian era." However far in the past its roots may have struck, one is safe in affirming that beginning with the prophets and continuing till now, men have spoken as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews opens his wonderful appeal by affirming an intimate and vital connection between the Jewish and Christian revelations. In both of them God spoke; as Kirkpatrick has well put it: "God having spoken in the prophets. . . . spoke in a Son." Well might this message at first be in "many fragments and many manners," but in essence it was progressively the same till God began to speak fully in a Son.

One cannot live in the atmosphere of the Hebrew prophets without discovering how thoroughly human they were. Truly they spoke God's words but they spoke them as men to men. The prophet was more of a preparer than a predictor, more of a "forthteller than a foreteller." However, they were vitally concerned with the future. They believed with conviction that they "were the appointed heralds of the divine purpose for Israel, and through Israel, for the world." The wealth of this conception of a world mission, no doubt, had much to do with the predictive element of their prophecy. These mighty men could never have been so far ahead of their times unless they had lived among the very forces and issues which surrounded them. Their message is for all ages because it was a message from God to sinful men of that age.

What a conspicuous figure the prophet has been! "He is by far the most arresting figure in the Old Testament. When he takes the stage all other actors are

dwarfed. Prince and priest alike are insignificant in his presence." What a noble succession of men through whom God has spoken! Even Enoch has a message of judgment. Would we have listened to Noah, the preacher of righteousness? Surely heaven's sanction accompanies Abraham's words: "Let there be no strife between thee and me." Jacob, Joseph and Judah prepared the way for the more gifted Aaron. Yea, the messages of Moses, who claimed to be slow of speech, ring with a divine eloquence of increasing beauty. Joshua continues to speak from God to men. David, the poet, possessed rare charm as a speaker. Nathan's tact and directness will remain as a model for centuries to come.

However, the real preachers of Old Testament times were the prophets, and with them preaching became a separate task for which men were trained. If Samuel is to be called the first of a long line of prophets, preaching as an art could scarcely have been born at a more opportune time. Israel's condition was extremely low. Priest and people were corrupt. The nation must have instruction in spiritual truth. Only the form of their holy religion remained. Through their grasping king he could say to the nation, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." The low spiritual estate of Israel no doubt influenced greatly the rise of the schools of the prophets and Samuel's connection with them.

In Elijah we discover another decided departure. Rugged, like the mountains in which he dwelt, his messages "are flashes of lightning in a dark night revealing to us the whole man and his surroundings." It is little less startling to us than to Ahab as he comes, unannounced, into his presence, just long enough to say: "As Jehovah, the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years but according to my word." The "Troubler of Israel" indeed! Never an Elijah that did not trouble Israel. Perhaps no

picture of him is so true to life as when he stands before the assembled prophets of Baal and defies them in the name of his God.

Not altogether unlike Elijah is Amos, who comes after the lapse of more than a century. He was not of the prophetic schools but he was a keen observer of men and things. His utterances fairly blaze as he thunders against the wrongs of Israel and the nations. These sins, which are to be punished, are such as cruelty, covetousness, injustice and idolatry. Both Israel and Judah were prosperous and the sins which accompany wealth were rife. Luxury, excesses in eating and drinking, violence and robbery, oppression of the poor, injustice in courts, and ceremonialism in religion were the outstanding characteristics. Small wonder then, that his message in epitome is, "Let judgment roll down as the waters and righteousness as a mighty stream."

One hesitates to pass over Hosea, whose sad experiences in domestic life make him tenderly fit for persuading a perverse and adulterous nation to return to a loving Father, who can say, "I can heal their backslidings, I will love them freely for mine anger is turned away from him." Likewise, a Micah, who in recoiling from the social sins of his time can utter, "What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." But the royal line of prophets who spoke God's message during the stormy days before the exile who comforted and inspired God's people during their forced sojourn from their native land, and who were their divine heralds in every reconstruction, must be omitted here.

A word, however, about Isaiah is imperative for he stands at the head—in time and power—of a long line of city preachers, "whose life and work have been given in some metropolis, and whose heart and brain have been taxed to the utmost in the discharge of their delicate but grave responsibilities." He is also, perhaps, the most

cultured man of his day and certainly the most eloquent. In spite of the fall of the Northern Kingdom in the last quarter of the eighth century, and the constantly impending peril of Jerusalem, Isaiah remained as the interpreter of Jehovah's purpose to preserve that city. "The genius of Isaiah is so universal, showing such variety of style, eloquence, brilliancy and music" that he is at once a messenger worthy of any occasion. "Of the other prophets," writes Ewald, "all the more celebrated ones were distinguished by some special excellence and peculiar power, whether of speech or deed; in Isaiah all the powers and all the beauties of prophetic speech and deed combine to form a symmetrical whole; he is distinguished less by any special excellence than by the symmetry and perfection of all his powers." Small wonder that generations after him should conclude that such brilliancy comes from a cluster rather than a single star.

"Isaiah was a kingly man in character and service as well as in genius." His vision of Jehovah, high and lifted up, is the secret of his message for Jew and Gentile. In the very center of the national life he exercised his ministry, not only "as a religious and social reformer, a preacher of righteousness and godliness, but as a keen, far-sighted statesman. He observed the political movements of the day at home and abroad, and criticised them from the divine standpoint." Some one has suggested that Isaiah's ministry was supremely great because it lacked none of the three essential elements, viz.: instruction, rebuke, and comfort. He showed himself mighty in the Scriptures. He fed the flock over which he had been called as overseer. He was indeed a shepherd after God's pattern. No seer of any day has penetrated more deeply into the social wrongs of his day than did Isaiah: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that annex field to field." "The spoil of the poor is in your house." How piercingly he exposed the sins of his day in king, priest or people; how keenly he instructed great

and small in the message of Jehovah; how tenderly he comforted a penitent generation with the reassurance of a loving God; with what insight and foresight he announces God's plan for the salvation of the whole world, and all in language so chaste and elevated, that one doubts not that they came from lips, purified by a coal from heaven's altar.

After Malachi, for nearly four centuries the glow of prophecy almost ceases, just here and there a flash, like an occasional lightning in the twilight. The prophet becomes neutralized in the priest. Persian, Greek, Macca-bean and Roman, have in turn held heavy hands upon the chosen race. Small wonder that an outraged and discouraged people came in multitudes to hear the preaching of John the Baptist "on whom rested the last beams of the sunset and the first flush of the dawn." A brief but pregnant ministry serves his purpose to introduce Jesus, the Messiah, with whom Christian preaching begins.

One would fain linger here to search for the secret of His authority and submission, His simplicity and profundity, His courage and tenderness, His unity and variety; His freshness in His devotion to truth, His faith in men as the potential sons of the Father, His consistent habits of prayer and work, and most of all, His tact and sympathy in dealing with individuals, whether at night or noonday, or in dealing with multitudes of men and women who impressed Him as sheep without a shepherd.

This Son of Man, Son of God, beginning with the Twelve, has continued to send messengers of divine truth, whom He accompanies as they carry out His commission. Out of the thousands of these, God's anointed, we must notice in brief but a few. Through Paul, the most outstanding convert to Christianity, and the peerless missionary to the Gentiles, God laid the foundations upon which the structure of Christianity was to build. After his death, for at least a hundred years, we have scarcely any records of sermons, but without doubt the teaching

and example of the Apostles, "the humble circumstances of the early believers and the heathen philosophies of that age" profoundly affected early preaching. The effect of these influences would of course, vary according the personality of the preacher himself. While preaching was almost universal among the early Christians it was free, informal and almost wholly ethical. "Lay preaching was not the exception, it was the rule."* * * "In these first centuries almost all the Christians preached," not in the way of finished discourses, but as "talks" to the people during which they often asked questions.

In Justin Martyr (120-190) we no doubt have a stalwart preacher, and from him have the earliest account of Christian worship. Clement of Alexandria, the great Greek theologian, was worthily ambitious to win the cultured class—out of which he came—and did telling service in that respect, both as teacher and preacher. "In him, first of the preachers of those early years, we find the powerful influence of the fascinating but perilous use of allegory."

If Clement began the method of allegorizing all Scripture it was left for his pupil, Origen, (c. 185-230) to carry it to its bitter consummation. He was the disciple of Clement, and as often occurs, the pupil outstrips the master. It was Origen who made the Alexandrian School become "the chief seat of Christian learning for generations to come." He was a man of culture and deep piety, a preacher of marked ability, but his exegetical qualities overshadow his powers as a preacher. His untiring zeal and epoch making discourses, (for he was among the very first to preach real discourses) must remain to the eternal shame of the lazy young preacher of today.

In Tertullian (c. 155-225), born and bred in heathenism, and who did not become a Christian till middle life, we find one of the most individual and remarkable personalities of the ancient Church. While he never entirely emancipated himself from his early teaching, and while

there was a mingling of pagan and Christian in his preaching, yet "when brought face to face with danger he was true as steel." A single paragraph from his famous Apology throws floods of light on the preaching of his day: "We continually preach and press the duties of the Gospel with our utmost powers and arguments, we exhort, we reprove, we pass the divine censure of excommunication with solemnity."

In Cyprian (200-258), the intellectual heir of Tertullian, we find possibly, the most eloquent of the early preachers. His teaching is the ripe expression of those tendencies that were developing the Catholic Church. With little thought, perhaps, as to the real outcome, and with an eloquence that spell bound both heathen and Christian, hear him say: "Whoever he may be and whatever he may be, he who is not in the Church of Christ is not a Christian." Again, "He can no longer have God for his father who does not have the church for his mother. * * * There is no salvation out of the church." He was a man of wealth, education, and position, who devoted his splendid powers to the cause of Christ as he understood it.

Three names, prominent in the fourth century, deserve mention here; Athanasius, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, for they belong to that period when "Christian preaching springs into exuberant growth and blossoms into glorious beauty." In the early part of the fourth century persecution dies out, sermons may be freely published, and at the same time young men aspiring to the ministry may have the unmolested advantage of the best learning. However, these three men will be remembered chiefly for their active part in the great Arian controversy which began about 320.

Athanasius (295-373), though not a great speculative theologian, was a giant character and stood like a Gibraltar for his convictions at any cost. We are poorer that we do not possess specimens of his sermons; and we would

consider him a greater preacher if we did not always remember him as controversialist. He rendered an immense service to the Christian faith of his day and of all time by largely fixing the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. Gibbon has fittingly said: "The immortal name of Athanasius will never be separated from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, to whose defence he consecrated every moment and faculty of his being."

Basil, (330-380), a greater preacher than Athanasius, also largely devoted his life to battling Arianism. To him preaching was an art, and he manifests ability in the construction of discourses superior to any preacher who had preceded him. He charmed both rich and poor by his matchless oratory. His eloquence, however, did not preclude his being practical for he really excelled in dealing with the sins of daily life. The culture of his age, familiar with controversy in ecclesiastic and philosopher alike, ranks him with Plato and Demosthenes.

In the same school with Basil, Gregory (330-390) studied an artificial and elaborate system of rhetoric from which he never became free. This did him better service in controversy than in his preaching but his style was extreme even when dealing with the most practical themes. "His sermons, attracting men of all classes and opinions, often winning loud applause and tempting the more thoughtful to take furtive notes, were heard from various motives and produced various effects." He himself pictures "the excited hearer breaking out into audible tokens of approval, the antagonist provoked to contradiction, the earnest seeker after truth absorbed in silent meditation."

Chrysostom (347-407), the golden mouthed, was brought up by a religious-minded mother, and early distinguished himself in scholarship and eloquence. After his baptism, about 370, he practised extreme asceticism while he pursued theological studies. He became a hermit about 375 and so remained for six years until in

broken health he returned to Antioch. With 386, the year of his advancement to the priesthood, begins the happiest and most useful period of his life. For twelve years he was the great preacher of Antioch,—probably the ablest that the Oriental church ever possessed. His sermons were exegetical and practical. He denounced with fearless but sincere insight the sins of clergy, people and court. His themes were eminently social—the Christian conduct of life. He was and is unrivalled in his power of appeal to “the feelings, the fancy and the conscience.” But the same enthusiasts that will force him into the bishopric at Constantinople, will assist in banishing him. Chrysostom never forgot for one moment that he was “dealing with human beings and human life.” His logical and theological qualifications are superior but never supreme with him. He was always more anxious for souls than sermons. Horne has beautifully said: “The people flocked to him and hung upon his lips, not only because of his oratory, but because he knew them so well, loved them so much, and talked to them about those actual, homely facts of daily life which make up the greater part of one’s existence.”

Ambrose has been greatly over-estimated as a preacher by Catholic historians, for his sermons possess small value either in their subject matter or in form. He was merciless in his allegorizing, following the method of Origen, Hippolytus and Philo, whom he diligently studied and from whom he constantly borrowed. However, the title “The Christian Cicero” would hardly have been given to him had he not manifested some rare charms in speech. Unlike many omniverous borrowers, he was a **good** one, and used effectively his imported ideas. Ker is not far from the truth when he says that “the two chief merits of Ambrose are that he gave us church music and helped to give us Augustine.”

Augustine, (354-430) one of the most serviceable preachers before the Reformation, is remembered prim-

arily as a theologian. So formative was his thinking that he is the outstanding theological authority for the middle ages and the Roman church, as well as the "father of the theology of the Reformation." Both his theology and his preaching are colored by his sense of rescue from deep sin and passion. His life was one of constant toil and struggle. His book, "Confessions," should be ranked among the classics of Christian literature. At meetings of the bishops Augustine was always assigned to preach the sermon. He has left nearly 400 sermons and contemporary accounts give glowing reports of his power as a preacher. Passionate in temperament, logical in mind, "he understood how to rank wisdom before rhetoric and truth before its expression." His preaching was brief, pungent, pregnant, and withal so saturated with a warm devotion that it has placed all succeeding preachers in his debt.

But scarcely had the morning breeze of the "Golden age of ancient preaching" cooled the brows so lately fevered by persecution till the chill of twilight was felt. What persecution had utterly failed to do patronage was beginning to effect. To make Christianity a state religion is to rob it of its very essence. Christianity had conquered Rome only to become the slave of its victim. The union of church and state was beginning to destroy the vital, fundamental and essential elements of Christianity, for spirituality has never advanced by mechanical means. It now becomes official and adopts the spirit and method of the Roman government. All this combined to devitalize spiritual religion and to build up an ecclesiasticism whose logical outcome was the Roman Catholic Church. Ceremonialism, the subverter of preaching, soon eventuates into sacerdotalism by which preaching is neutralized if not destroyed. The Greek bishops who succeeded the exiled Gregory and Chrysostom "degenerate into sycophants and time servers." While the throne of the Caesars was crumbling, a more deadly power was

rising in the ancient metropolis which was again to make her mistress of the world—the priest was to take the place of emperor, and by 600 (a pope) as virtual ruler of the world. “There should be only one empire”—such was the dream of the hierarchy—“and there should be only one church,”—that sounds quite modern—“and the church should control the destinies of the empire. This was the culmination of centuries of intrigue, diplomacy and craft. To these arts the church appealed and as for preaching, save as an instrument, she had little use.” Thus, by stripping Christianity of its vitality and by receiving into the church the conquering tribes from the north “en masse,” the preacher’s voice was hushed; and it will take nearly a millenium after Chrysostom for it to recover.

However, there was preaching throughout the middle ages, of the best of which, perhaps, we have no record, because it attacked the clergy. But safely within the fold were pious men striving to purify the increasingly rotten church and to lead the people aright. Among such would come Gregory the Great, a preacher of no mean ability, who did much to stimulate preaching of a type. Many of his sermons are extant. They keep rather close to the Scripture and seek to give a practical application of it. While his style is natural and popular, “his exegesis is often of the most extravagant kind.” A great administrator and ruler, he chafed under the duties that kept him from preaching. He was missionary in spirit and seems to have been dominated by a Christian motive in his endeavors. To him “belongs the deathless distinction of starting the mission which brought Christianity to the southern parts of Britain.” He has left a rather inferior book on preaching, “showing how to deal with different ages and states of mind according to the ideas of the times.”

In passing, one would mention Bede (673-735) because of his missionary zeal and scholarly work in north

England. No man in his generation swayed a mightier influence than he. He is chiefly remembered today for his translations of Scripture, but in his own times "he was teacher, counsellor, and guide to thousands of his countrymen." He was among the most learned men of his day, a scholar in the classics, besides being both poet and musician. His sermons which remain are in Latin, so probably meant for the clergy. These are brief homilies, giving a running exposition of some passage of Scripture. He was among the first to introduce his subject by a description of the time and place of the Scripture passage, which was indeed a decided gain. In all that remains of his works there is no suggestion of anything insincere or impious.

While Bede was doing his monumental work in England, Boniface was developing the same message in Germany and along the Baltic. He was of noble birth and fine scholarship, having every promise of high ecclesiastical honors, but he chose to go out into the darkest night with the light of the Gospel. Wherever he went, Thuringia, Friesland or Saxony, idolatry shattered before him. Sometimes a sacred oak needed cutting, if so, it got it. At last turning back into pagan Friesland, his first love, he went to his known death by the hand of a people for whom he had done so much. His own description of his inspiring vision of glory, should cause him to be remembered by all who are called upon to suffer. "There shall be life with God without the fear of death; there unending light and never darkness; there safety which no sickness disturbs; there eternal glory with angels and archangels, with patriarchs and prophets, with confessors and virgins, who follow Christ whither-so-ever he goeth."

If shadows in preaching began to lengthen the fifth and sixth centuries, and twilight came in the seventh and eighth, without doubt the ninth and tenth centuries mark that "darkest period before the dawn" in the history of

preaching. Here and there a faithful messenger, in a limited district, who counted not his life as dear unto himself, kept alive the voice of the prophet. These, rather than priests, bishops and cardinals, kept Christianity alive as a reckoning power. Here are Anshar, carrying Christianity into Denmark, Sweden and N. Germany. An Adelbert, a century later going through Poland and Prussia "singing and preaching the Gospel until the lance of a heathen transfixed him." No gloomier period in all Christian history can be found than the tenth century. Political insecurity and ecclesiastical degradation sent fear and failure into the hearts of men. "The coming of the end of the world was the burden of sermon and song. Believers everywhere held that the days of the earth were numbered. * * * But daybreak, not destruction was at hand." During all this dark period preaching, long neglected by a degenerate and ignorant clergy, had gained in simplicity and power as it spread in far off heathen lands. These early missionaries, by carrying the simple Gospel to Germany and Britain, were sowing the seed which were to be harvested in the Reformation. Mohammedanism, long since checked in its universal march, had prepared Europe not only for the Renaissance, but largely for the Crusades, and as a partial result great preachers were to come forth; and with a few of these, who because they labored so well before the Reformation are a part of it, we must close these fragments.

Peter the Hermit was a popular preacher of great power. His fiery enthusiasm, coupled with superior eloquence made him a distinguished factor in the first crusade. Unversed in the learning of the schools, ungainly in appearance and past middle life, he returns from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to find conditions ripe for completing a task already begun. Believing that the Lord in person had given him a message, and with tireless energy and dauntless enthusiasm, in any place and before all

classes of people, he proclaims the story of the dishonored sepulchre. Pattison quotes from Milman's Latin Christianity, a valuable summary of the sources of Peter's success. "His preaching appeals to every passion, to valor, to shame, to indignation and pity, to the pride of the warrior, to the compassion of the man. To the religion of the Christian, to the love of the brethren, to the hatred of the unbeliever, aggravated by his insulting tyranny; to reverence for the Redeemer of the saints; to the desire of expiating sins; to the hope of eternal life." With such appeals he stirred the very foundations of national and domestic life. Religious impulses, long stagnant, were evoked and aroused till men, women and children gave themselves with abandon to be led to privation and slaughter.

Nearly a half century later, and connected in our thinking with the second crusade, comes Bernard of Clairvaux, (1091-1153), a devotedly pious monk. He was nobly born, more so, because of his saintly mother who so impressed him religiously that he grew up with an intense love for the Bible and "a passionate devotion to Christ. To follow the footsteps of his Lord was the delight of his quiet hour and the inspiration of his preaching." He was a man of extraordinary powers in style and discourse. His powers of persuasion were well nigh irresistible. His sermons exhibit careful preparation as would be expected, for the scholastic tendencies were now well under way. He was often in controversy with Abelard, a superior dialectic but an inferior soul, who revelled in the joy of conflict. The character of Bernard will always speak louder than his matchless eloquence and his serene temper which is evidenced in his hymns will live on beside the power and devotion to his Lord which inspired his sermons.

We can never place an entirely fair estimate on the preaching of Peter Waldo for the accounts of him are colored by those whom he opposed. However, nothing

bears richer testimony to the remarkable value of the preaching done by him and his "poor men of Lyons" than that the Dominican order—an order of preachers—was established in the beginning of the thirteenth century to meet these "heretics." Dominic was himself a great preacher, gaining sympathy for his plans from the dignitaries even in Rome. His eloquence, added to his organizing powers gave the Order founded by him immense influence in spite of his later attitude of indifference and worldliness.

Thomas Aquinas, (c. 1225-74) a Dominican, was perhaps the greatest medieval theologian. He was also a peerless preacher and loved to preach with all his great soul. While one of the foremost philosophers of his time, yet the common people heard him gladly. He was a prodigious worker, crowding into his short life a staggering amount of labor. He was consulted constantly on important civil and ecclesiastical questions during his years as teacher, and "yet his pen was busy with results as voluminous as they were important." Intellectually he was a giant, clear, logical and broad. Personally, he was a simple, deeply religious, prayerful man.

The Franciscan Order, founded early in the thirteenth century, did much to revive spiritual Christianity among the laity through their zealous preachers at home, as well as doing much foreign mission work among the Mohammedans of Spain and east Africa. Francis himself, a far more pious man than Dominic, labored under the impulse of the definite conviction that he was sent of God. "Indeed his eloquence was felt rather than apprehended."

Antony of Padua, (1195-1231), entered the Franciscan Order when 25 years old and became one of the greatest preachers of his day. He was early noted for his biblical and patriotic learning. When sent by Francis into northern Italy as a "revival preacher" he met with great success. "Shops were closed and thoroughfares deserted

when he came to any town, and as many as thirty thousand persons would sometimes gather to hear him. His appeals must have been effective for as he spoke men who came to attack him dropped their daggers and sought his embrace. Women cast off their ornaments and sold them for the benefit of the poor, and old and hardened sinners were brought to immediate confession." He often made careful divisions of his sermons, a practice for which he had little precedent. He is ranked by some as the most popular preacher that ever lived. But the belief that he possessed supernatural powers, coupled with the fact of his early death, largely account for this overestimate.

Across the English Channel and contemporary with the mystics on the Continent, and in a more fearless voice, comes Wycliffe, (1324-1384), announcing the revival of spiritual religion. He was a scholar, an organizer and a preacher. More than any man before the Reformation he labored by word and pen to bring home to the people in their own tongue the word of God. To the whole subject of preaching he devoted much thought, putting that thought into action by instituting a company of preachers. "Poor preachers" they were called, but not in the sense that the term could apply to many of us today. Convinced that the Bible was the law of God, Wycliffe determined to give it to the people, and he did it. It is doubtful if England had a scholar his equal, and it was to his and his country's misfortune that he left no follower of conspicuous ability to carry on his work in England. However, the work he did and the work of the Lollards continued to grow for nearly twenty years after his death.

Wycliffe's message indeed sounded over seas and was to be echoed by the inimitable Huss, "the great reformer before the reformation." He faithfully preached the doctrines which seem so natural now, but which were considered so dangerous then, till he was excommunicated, then betrayed, and finally burned at the stake, after de-

claring: "God is my witness that I have never taught or preached that which false witnesses have testified against me. He knows that the great object of all my preaching and writing was to convert men from sin."

In this hasty sketch, leaving out names that many would consider more important than those mentioned, I have endeavored to give progressive glimpses of the times, messages and messengers in the Christian era up to the Reformation. Two or three observations seem worth while. Many of these men were not products of the schools, but they were without exception students. They were prodigious workers, and extremely vital in an age when the mechanical and ceremonial were in ascendancy. Almost without exception they were pious men, unselfish in relinquishing comfort, wealth, position, power—**anything**, that might interfere with their work. And finally, and perhaps at the base of all else, they labored under the sense that they were divinely sent.

Back of us are lights and shadows, but if one wishes to discern, he may trace an unbroken light. Ahead of us are the most glorious days of all times. One looks ahead with optimism, hope and courage. One believes that the next five years are to be critical, yea, crucial years. Preachers are to be tried by a new kind of fire. These will be years of elimination. Already the day has passed when a man is accepted just because he is a preacher. It should never have been otherwise. He must now be a man, a man of God, an equipped, energetic, tactful, sympathetic man of God. A largely commercialized world will place its veto on the inefficient preacher, but this same world if it tolerates a preacher at all will support him. His temptation is going to be "efficiency for efficiency's sake" rather than to be a workman approved unto God. What opportunities of courage await him as he stands against the increasing tide of materialism, sometimes alone! What thrills of conquest as he witnesses the victory wrought by his gospel over the world,

the flesh and the devil, what experiences of friendship and fellowship abide him as he advances in his God-given task. He is no longer to be simply the pastor of a certain church, only as that provides him the best opportunity to be a messenger to the four quarters of the globe. His work is not only heaven crowned, it is earth wide. His is the international mind, the racial heart. He is to see as Jesus saw, to love as He loved, to work in the same field that He wrought. Never more true than today that the field is the world. To be uninformed or misinformed about other countries and races will be to the preacher's shame. He of all men must be a citizen of the universe for his citizenship is heavenly. He is a citizen of this **new** world, new, only in the sense of its untouched problems, tasks, and possibilities. New because it is old and weary with sin and misery and suffering which await the transforming power of the everlasting Gospel; new, because it is a vital part of that new heaven and new earth wherein is to dwell righteousness.