A History of Lay Preaching in the Christian Church

J. Telford
B.A.

BOOKS FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

Edited by the

REV. ARTHUR E. GREGORY

A HISTORY OF LAY PREACHING

IN

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

BY

JOHN TELFORD, B.A.

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AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY," ETC.

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INTRODUCTION

SO far as can be discovered, this little volume is the first attempt to write a history of lay preaching. It is a fascinating subject. Some of the purest and most saintly Christian workers of both sexes have been lay preachers, and so have some of the wildest fanatics. The interest of the study, however, is not merely historical. It is a living subject full of suggestions for the Christian propaganda of our own times. Earnest men are anxiously inquiring how the multiplied calls for service are to be met. Village evangelism is the oldest and not the least fruitful field of labour for the lay preacher, but the masses of our great cities, and the multitudes who are in darkness in the heathen world, will not be reached without some vast extension of lay agency. This is an old problem, but its

greatness and its significance were never understood as they are understood to-day. The old Calvinism, though still so strong in many places, has generally given way to a noble zeal for evangelistic work. The Church seems to realise its responsibility. The gospel must be brought to every man's heart and conscience, so that all may claim its blessings for themselves.

The whole world is opening its doors to the Christian Church. Mr. Gladstone has recently shown that one-third of the population of the globe are professing Christians, and at every point of the circuit the question is not one of losing ground, but of gaining it. Nor does he take his stand on numbers merely. The material force, moral influence, art, literature, and civilisation of the world are almost wholly Christian.

The Churches are awake to the greatness of their opportunity. It is also generally recognised that no body of clerical workers can overtake the openings for service. Lay agency of all kinds, and especially lay preaching, is growing more essential every day. The moment, therefore, seems opportune for a study of the subject

dealt with in this short history. To trace the development of the movement from generation to generation, and study the lives of some of the prominent lay preachers of the past, cannot fail to supply counsels for the present. If this volume should direct more careful attention to one of the most hopeful aspects of present-day evangelism, and should lead the various Churches with wise sympathy to foster and guide the movement, it will not fail of its purpose.

The writer has availed himself of every means of information within reach, but the ground is new, and suggestions of any kind that may be made use of in a later edition will be welcomed.

JOHN TELFORD.

32 CAMBRIDGE STREET,
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INTRODUCTION

LAY PREACHING IN THE JEWISH CHURCH

ANY attempt to deal with the subject of lay preaching would be incomplete if it did not take account of the germs of such work in the Jewish Church. The New Testament not only lies hidden in the Old, but as God's purposes unfold, we discover how truly the later revelation completes and perfects that which preceded it. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that in the Old Testament the whole subject of lay preaching may be studied in outline.

Isaac Taylor in his suggestive essay on "Lay Theologians,"[1] whilst holding that the Christian ministry is a divinely established institution, asks whether there are not "functions to be

[1] "Ultimate Civilization," and other essays.

discharged and services to be rendered which are highly important to the religious well-being of a Christian community, but which, in the very nature of the case, could not be previously defined or subjected to control, as belonging to an established order or a recognised ministry? . . . The ways of heaven are above rule; gifts are conferred in a sovereign manner from on high." And the lay function has received its authentication by clear inference from the fact that under the ancient theocracy and throughout the whole period of the Hebrew monarchy the most noted of the holy men of old by whom God spoke to Israel were called from those who did not belong to the priestly order. Mr. Taylor draws up an imposing list in which Moses, Job, David, Solomon, Daniel, Nehemiah and most of the great prophets appear. Effective provision was thus made for counteracting the undue prevalence of sacerdotal influence and checking its insidious encroachments at the outset. Mr. Taylor claims "as a layman any one who, discharging a function of a religious kind, whether or not he might be of sacerdotal parentage, did not exercise the priestly office; but, in addicting himself to sacred literature and philosophy, was moved to do so by his individual taste and the religious turn of his mind."

It is in these last days, since the re-animation of philosophy and literature, and since the religious emancipation of the European mind, that the lay function has grown more important. "Throughout these three-and-a-half centuries, these irregular auxiliaries, the non-authorised, the unsent, the uncalled for, and (for the most part) the undesired, are so many, that they bear a large proportion to the entire number of Christian authors; and some who stand upon the list are names of the very brightest lustre. We briefly adduce the instances, and, while they pass in review, let the question be considered whether lay intrusion upon the field of theology and of Christian thought should not be regarded with indulgence, or even approval, or, at least, allowed to stand exempt from serious blame; perhaps be welcomed, as a tacitly authenticated office in the Christian commonwealth."

Mr. Taylor lays stress on the fact that a well-informed layman with a religious turn of mind, coming forward as a volunteer in the field of Christian literature, has certain advantages as one unfettered by professional obligations or by direct personal interest. This argument is stronger for the lay preacher than for the lay theologian. How absurd to permit laymen to write on the subject of religion, but forbid them

to preach on it.[1] Lay preachers do indeed "bring up the array of those who, unappointed, unsent, uncalled for, often ill-spoken of, and often indeed unrecompensed, have, from age to age, imparted freshness, vigour, animation, to the languid religious thought of their times."

We find some anticipations of coming days in the patriarchal age. St. Jude's words almost entitle us to describe Enoch as the first lay preacher. His message told of coming judgement for ungodly deeds and ungodly, blasphemous words. The Lord should appear with ten thousands of His saints to vindicate truth and show the world that His face was against sin (Jude vv. 13. 14). Enoch's name is still surrounded by a halo of sanctity and of mystery. He walked with God, his divine Friend. His life gave force to his message, whilst his strange departure from the scenes of his witness-bearing must have given it abiding emphasis.

When the hour of visitation was drawing near, another preacher of righteousness arose. Noah's words were rendered supremely impressive by his daily work. "While the ark was a-preparing," for one hundred and twenty years he continued to plead with his neighbours. His conduct "condemned the world" (Heb. 11 7),

[1] Daniel Isaac's *Ecclesiastical Claims*, p. 31.

but it bore little fruit in that wicked generation.

The word prophet must not be narrowed down to include only those who foretold future events. The prophet was a teacher who declared God's will. He was Jehovah's messenger and representative. God Himself told Abimelech in a dream to restore Abraham's wife, "for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live" (Gen. 20 7). Abraham had in his own tents a great congregation. As we read of three hundred and eighteen trained servants born in his own house, we understand his field of usefulness as in some sense a lay preacher. God could reckon with confidence on his fidelity: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18 19).

Moses was a layman who had been called from a shepherd's life in the desert to lead the chosen race out of Egypt, but he was a prophet who towers above even the first high priest as a daysman between God and Israel. "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (Hosea 12 13). The position thus held by the great law-

giver prepared the way for later developments of the prophetic office.

It was Moses who taught the Jewish Church how greatly God needed witnesses. He had complained to his Master that he was not equal to the burden laid upon him. "Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that Thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?" (Num. 11 12). God instructed Moses to bring seventy of the elders, who should receive a portion of the Spirit which rested so richly on himself, and should share with him the toils of administration. When the chosen men assembled round the tent of meeting the Spirit rested upon them, so that "they prophesied, and did not cease." Two of the seventy had remained behind, but on them also the Spirit fell, and they prophesied in the camp. The news was quickly brought to Moses. Joshua would have silenced Eldad and Medad. "My lord Moses," he burst out, "forbid them." But Moses was wiser than his "young man." "Enviest thou for my sake?" was the answer; "would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" That lesson has an abiding sig-

nificance. The greatest prophet of Israel rebukes the jealousy which would in any way limit the gifts of the Spirit. He will not allow any supposed sense of personal privilege or dignity to interfere with God's right to send "out His seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases." The work is so vast, the need of witnesses is so great, that we are constrained to give thanks for every tongue that is unloosed to declare God's message. The ideal towards which the Christian Church moves is, that every member should be a witness and a messenger. No man needed the lesson Moses taught Joshua more than John Wesley when he would have silenced Thomas Maxfield, who had presumed to preach at the Foundery in London. It was a happy thing for Methodism that Charles Wesley had learned to look on such an incident with the eyes of the Jewish lawgiver. Charles Wesley[1] deals with the abiding significance of that scene in the camp of Israel:—

Moses the minister of God
Rebukes our partial love,
Who envy at the gifts bestowed
On those *we* disapprove;

[1] *Short Hymns on Select Passages of Scripture.*

We do not our own spirit know,
Who wish to see suppressed
The men that Jesu's spirit show,
The men whom God hath blessed.

Shall we the Spirit's course restrain,
Or quench the heavenly fire?
Let God His messengers ordain,
And whom He will inspire.
Blow as He list, the Spirit's choice
Of instruments we bless;
We will, if Christ be preached, rejoice,
And wish the word success.

The Old Testament breathes a large catholicity in regard to those admitted to the prophetic office. No man might presume to usurp the place of the sons of Levi as priests of the altar and the sanctuary; but if the priesthood was fenced round, the door was never closed against any divinely called preacher or teacher. New recruits were always welcome. During the dark days of the Judges, when the priesthood lost its moral and spiritual force, the prophetic order assumed new importance in Israel. Samuel gave the prophets a definite place in the Jewish Church. He reformed the order and set it on new lines. Its members were carefully trained for their work in the schools of the prophets. Saul met a company of them "coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them" (1 Sam. 10 5).

It was, as they prophesied, that the Spirit fell on him who had been anointed king, and he also prophesied. A still more instructive glimpse of the Jewish college for lay preachers is given in the same book (1 Sam. 19 18). Michal had let David down through a window and he had escaped to Ramah. Samuel went with him to Naioth. Thither Saul sent messengers to seize his rival. As they stepped in, "they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them." The divine influence fired their hearts, so that they also prophesied. A second and third company were likewise drawn into the circle. Saul himself appeared, but before he reached the place the same Spirit fell upon him. "He went on and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night." There are few pictures more impressive than this glimpse of Saul and his young rival, of Samuel, the great Jewish king-maker, and all the company of prophets, moved by one divine finger, whose touch none of them can resist.

The prophetic schools furnished much helpful training in the Law and its interpretation; they gave instruction in music and sacred song, and

sent forth a band of teachers who are enshrined as "the goodly fellowship of the prophets." On new moons and Sabbaths people came to them for counsel (2 Kings 4 23). Their faithful witness-bearing is one of the abiding glories of the religious life of Judaism. "We are not expressly told how a man entered this prophetic order; probably, as is implied in the case of Saul, a capacity for ecstasy was one qualification; also a man might be acknowledged as a prophet when he claimed, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, to have received a divine call. Moreover, the history of Elisha shows that the prophet sometimes received his call from another prophet, whose disciple and assistant he became. Women also, like Deborah, might be prophetesses."[1] "The regular ritual was fixed, and might be learned from the priests; but Jehovah had commands and counsel for all the unforeseen contingencies of national and individual life. Jehovah's organ for such commands and counsel was the prophet. Accordingly all the new departures of national life are authorised by prophets. Therefore Abraham (Gen. 20 7), Moses (Deut. 18 18), Samuel, David (Acts 2 30), are all recognised as prophets."[2] The great spiritual revelations are announced by the prophets.

[1] Bennett's *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 135. [2] *Ibid.* 113.

Some of the greatest of these divine witnesses never sat in any prophetic school. Amos, the earliest in that noble succession of teachers whose words are still preserved to us in the Jewish Scriptures, was led straight from Tekoah to his work in the licentious and luxurious cities of Samaria.

After preaching there for some time, he made his appearance at a great religious festival. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, regarded him as an interloper, and bade him seek a crust in the land of Judah. The priest fell back on the invariable resource of a barren and empty sacerdotalism, and accused Amos of speaking against Cæsar.[1] But he little knew his man. A far grander scene than the Genius of Poetry appearing to Burns at the plough unfolds before us as we listen to the reply of Amos: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel" (7 14. 15). His little prophecy, bearing the stamp of consecrated genius in every line, is an abiding vindication of God's choice of that lowly "farm labourer" as His lay preacher to the princes and priests of "the king's chapel" and "the king's court."

[1] G. A. Smith's *Minor Prophets*.

The prophecy of Joel furnishes what may be called the Magna Charta of the lay preacher: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (2 28. 29). That prophecy shows that the blessing which Moses coveted was to be the crowning glory of the Christian Church. All the Lord's people were to be prophets, and each of them was to enjoy a perpetual Pentecost. Such is the ideal Church mighty for the conquest of the world. St. Augustine's words faithfully represent the case: "Tempore Veteris Testamenti Novum Testamentum occultatum ibi erat tanquam fructus in radice" (Comment. on Ps. 62). We are now to see what splendid developments sprang from these early principles.

CHAPTER I

LAY PREACHING IN THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CENTURIES

THE Jewish Church was bold and sagacious enough to open the door to every presumably competent teacher. There was no ordained or recognised ministry in the synagogues, which were completely under lay government. Readers of the Gospel cannot forget that to this peculiarity of Jewish life our Lord Himself owed many an opportunity of declaring His message. Professor Bruce[1] gives a singularly interesting account of Christ's synagogue ministry. The summary notices of the evangelists make little impression on an ordinary reader. But Professor Bruce shows that there was "a deliberately planned, persistent, extensive effort to bring to the ears of the men of Galilee, through the convenient medium of the synagogue, the good news of the kingdom of God." St. Mark tells us that, after the wonderful cures wrought in the streets

[1] *Expositor*, April 1896.

of Capernaum, our Lord said, "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth. And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out devils" (1 38. 39). "He has addressed a Sabbath audience in one synagogue, and He desires to do the same elsewhere. The manner of His departure lends emphasis to the purpose. It was hasty, because He feared that the time of His Galilean ministry might be cut short, and His preaching mission interrupted, by the enmity of the Scribes. A synagogue ministry, as distinct from a street ministry, depended on the goodwill of others, and Jesus understood that it must begin at once if it were to be at all. The departure was secret, before the dawn, while men slept, because He feared detention by a people valuing His presence for the healing power displayed on so splendid a scale on the previous Sabbath evening. Evidently Jesus is very much in earnest about that preaching tour. It is not an after-thought, or a pretext, but a fixed purpose; one of the main lines along which He means to conduct His work as the Light of Galilee."

That province, if we may trust Josephus, had two hundred and four towns large enough to have at least one synagogue. Even if advantage were

taken of the week-day meetings as well as the Sabbath assemblies, this portion of the ministry must have covered a considerable time. Jesus made a tour of the province, joining the multitude that kept holy day, and everywhere filling the minds of His hearers with new views of truth. "He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." St. Luke has described one synagogue service in colours that never fade. We see the Christ stand up among His townsmen to read Isaiah's prophecy. We watch the strained attention of that congregation as He begins to speak. It was what all regarded as a lay sermon, and no one could deny its charm or its power. St. Luke speaks of the "words of grace." Dr. Bruce says, "I believe we shall not go far wrong if we take that phrase as applicable not merely to that particular discourse, but to the synagogue discourses generally, and view it as referring not chiefly to graceful diction, but rather to gracious thought—to matter rather than to manner. Gracious thought concerning the loving-kindness of God, sweetly and winsomely spoken, that in Nazareth and elsewhere was the burden of Christ's synagogue sermons."

Judaism kept the door open for the Messiah when it allowed freedom of exhortation in the synagogue. Almost every page of apostolic his-

tory also bears witness to the significance of this feature in the religious life of Israel. The window was ready for the light to stream in, though, when it came, passion and prejudice blinded many of those old synagogue worshippers to the shining of the Sun of Righteousness. Stephen found his opportunity as the Church's champion in the synagogue of the Libertines. In later days St. Paul constantly turned to the Jewish synagogue, assured that he would there find a congregation and an opportunity to declare his message. When he and Barnabas entered the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia the rulers sent them a courteous invitation: "Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." At Iconium, Thessalonica, Berea, in Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Paul found his first congregations in the synagogue. We are apt to overlook the fact that the synagogue attracted all that was best in many a heathen city, and brought those who were "seekers after God" the offer of eternal life in Christ. Such was the effect of the Jewish attitude towards lay preaching on the early history of Christianity.

Our Lord Himself pressed all His disciples into the service of the gospel. He Himself sent forth the seventy as well as the twelve (Luke 10). Into their lips, as they started on their

errand, He put that prayer: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest." Christ rebuked all attempts to limit the number of workers. He who was greater than Moses preached a more impressive sermon on the bounds of tolerance. John reported a scene in which he and his fellows had taken part: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9 49. 50). Our Lord could not allow any witness to be turned aside, for all nations were to be brought into His school as disciples. Every one who could help forward that result found favour in the eyes of Him who longed to save the world.

The Apostolic Church was loyal to its Founder's principle. Each disciple was a witness. St. Peter was quick to see in the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. Every page of the subsequent history supplies new illustrations of its significance. Joses, the Cyprus Levite, whom the apostles, because of his tender and comforting manner of address, surnamed Bar-

nabas (the son of consolation), is the first lay preacher of the apostolic age. That layman's generosity provided relief for many saints at Jerusalem who had suffered the loss of all things for Christ. He introduced to the apostles the new convert of whom all were afraid—Saul the Persecutor. The high esteem and confidence he enjoyed in the mother Church marked him out as the man most fitted to report on the development of the work at Antioch, which was itself the direct result of lay preaching. The impression made on him in that heathen city may still be traced in his own words. He "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord." Seeing the possibilities of the work at Antioch, Barnabas hastened to Tarsus to find Saul. He had seen what powers for usefulness the new convert possessed, and the result justified his action. Through the labours of himself and Saul of Tarsus the disciples of Christ won their proudest title. Barnabas afterwards held rank as an apostle, but he proved his gifts first as a lay preacher.

Another lay preacher towers even above the man of Cyprus. Stephen is perhaps the most illustrious lay preacher that Christendom has seen. He held the first place among the Seven

who had been entrusted with the care of the widows of the Hellenist Jews. Even in recording his appointment St. Luke describes him as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." He is expressly said to have wrought "great wonders and miracles among the people." In controversy he was irresistible. His opponents were helpless in the hands of such an antagonist. "They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." His memorable speech before the Sanhedrin is our most luminous review of Jewish history, revealing the hand of God in every stage of events, and the increasing purpose which ushers in at last a divine Saviour for the world. Stephen's address produced an overwhelming effect. Nothing remained for such a witness save to seal his message with his blood. St. Stephen, one of the Church's greatest lay preachers, is also its first martyr, the man who died, like Christ, with a prayer for the forgiveness of his murderers upon his lips.

His colleague Philip, who also was a lay preacher, succeeded in breaking down the prejudices of the Samaritans. No mission in the early days of Christianity was more wonderful than his. "The people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did."

The whole city was filled with joy. Philip afterwards led the Ethiopian eunuch into the light. This conversion ante-dated Peter's visit to Cornelius. He fixed his quarters at last in Cæsarea, where St. Paul and St. Luke were his guests. His four unmarried daughters, "which did prophesy," had caught their father's spirit and helped him in his labours. Every page of the Acts of the Apostles shows us how strong the Primitive Church was in its lay evangelists.

Through their testimony many a town and village first heard of Jesus and the resurrection. Persecution drove them out of Jerusalem, but it only enlarged their sphere of labour. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8 4). Every Christian was a witness, and the providence of God scattered the preachers in order that the seed of the kingdom might be sown in every place. Lay preaching needs no vindication as we turn those early pages in the first volume of Church history. The seal of God manifestly rests on all the witnesses. Had they been silent, the Church would have lost some of its most memorable victories.

Apollos became the most popular evangelist of the early Church (Acts 18 24). Born in the great city of Alexandria, he possessed rare gifts

of eloquence and a power of handling Scripture which made him a mighty advocate. We gain a strange glimpse of the times, when we see that, though more than a quarter of a century had passed since the ascension of our Lord, he knew only the baptism of John. After he removed to Ephesus he quickly found his way to the synagogue and declared his message. St. Luke shows us his qualifications. "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." In his congregation sat those tried friends of St. Paul, Aquila and Priscilla. They recognised his gifts and led him into the fuller light of gospel truth. Apollos proved an apt scholar, and when he crossed the sea to Corinth this Jewish layman became a stalwart champion of Christianity. In his presence opposition was silenced. "For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."

There is no doubt that the liberty of prophesying did much to promote Christianity in the early ages. "The practice of confining the work of religious instruction to a distinct order of men has been more injurious to the interests of Christianity than anything else. In the

primitive times, when almost every Christian understood his religion, and could teach it to others, believers were rapidly multiplied. Every member of the Church felt interested in its prosperity, and exerted himself to serve it. Some laboured privately and from house to house, among their relations, friends, and acquaintances; if they could give but little instruction, they invited them to the public meetings to be taught the way of the Lord more perfectly; others added to their private labours a word of consolation, of advice, of reproof, in the assemblies of the faithful; and others, of superior acquirements, went out into the streets and lanes of the city, and preached to listening and inquiring multitudes the unsearchable riches of Christ. . . . If an unbeliever came into the public assembly at Corinth, the gifted brethren were almost sure to *catch him.* 'He was convinced of all, judged of all, the secrets of his heart were made manifest,' and he lost all power of resistance; 'and so, falling down on his face, he worshipped God, and reported that God was among them of a truth.' And in the synagogues, the temples, and other places of public resort, the rustic eloquence of untutored plebeians converted thousands to the faith of Christ." [1]

[1] Isaac's *Ecclesiastical Claims*, 1816, p. 125.

We have seen how the Primitive Church used the gifts of its members. "It is equally clear," says Dr. Hatch,[1] "that liberty of prophesying existed after the apostolic age. In the first place, one of the most interesting monuments of the second century consists of a sermon or homily which was preached, probably by a layman at Rome, a fragment of which has long been known as the Second Epistle of St. Clement, and the remainder of which has come to light in two forms—a Greek MS. and a Syriac translation—within the last five years. In the second place, the Apostolical Constitutions, which are of even later date, expressly contemplate the existence of preaching by laymen: 'Even if a teacher be a layman, still, if he be skilled in the word and reverent in habit, let him teach, for the Scripture says, "They shall all be taught of God"'" (8$_{31}$). Dr. Hatch concludes, from its tone and manner of address, that the Second Epistle of Clement was a homily and not a letter: "So then, my brethren and sisters, after the God of Truth I am reading to you an entreaty to pay heed to that which is written" (c. 19$_1$; c. 20$_2$). The antithesis which he makes between himself and his hearers on the one hand, and the presbyters on the other, leads to the conclusion that Clement

[1] *Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, p. 114.

was a layman. "Let us not appear only just at the time to pay attention and believe in the admonition given to us by the presbyters, but when we are gone away home also" (c. 175). The Apostolical Constitutions are deeply tinged with the hierarchical spirit, and have been compiled from time to time out of the most heterogeneous elements; but they furnish the most valuable evidence we possess as to the internal life of the Eastern Churches from the third to the fifth century. The ordinance we have quoted is assigned to St. Paul, and shows that a layman had free scope for his powers as a preacher. Hilary the deacon, in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (4 11. 12), says that "at first all taught and baptized on whatever days and seasons occasion required. . . . That the people might grow and multiply, it was at the beginning permitted to all to preach the gospel, and to baptize, and to explain the Scriptures in church; but when the Church embraced all places, houses of assembly were constituted, and rulers (rectors) and other offices in the Church were constituted. Hence it is that now neither do deacons preach in the congregation, nor clerks nor laymen baptize." The new order and plan by which the Church began to be governed was manifestly due to the conviction

that if every one aimed to do everything, the whole system of church government would be brought into contempt. Ignatius, who died as a martyr in Rome about the year 115 A.D., is regarded by some as "over-earnest in insisting upon the prerogatives of the clergy, especially of the bishops." He objects to the performance of other official duties by laymen, but he has nothing to say against their preaching.

JUSTIN MARTYR is perhaps the most illustrious layman of the second century. His early years were spent among the Roman colonists whom Vespasian had planted at Flavia Neapolis, the Sichem of Bible history. His father was a wealthy Greek, and his son travelled much in his youth, studying carefully the received systems of philosophy, in order to discover some truth which would satisfy his intellect and heart. His good sense revolted against the myths and superstitions of the heathen, whilst the philosophers of various schools failed to give him the light he craved. At last he became familiar with Plato's doctrine of ideas, and fancied that he himself might gain "the intuition of God." "Under the influence of this notion," he says, "it occurred to me that I would withdraw to some solitary place, far from the turmoil of the world, and there, in perfect self-collection, give

myself to my own contemplations. I chose a spot by the seaside." One day, as he paced the shore wrapped in thought, a grave and venerable man met him. An earnest conversation followed. Justin declared his hope that some day the Vision of God would be vouchsafed to him; but the old man, who was a Christian, showed him that he was on the wrong road. "You are a mere dealer in words, but no lover of action and truth; your aim is not to be a practiser of good, but a clever disputant, a cunning sophist." He was urged to search the Scriptures, and to pray that the gates of light might be opened to him, "for none can perceive and comprehend these things except God and His Christ grant them understanding."

The young inquirer was deeply impressed. He had frequently admired the constancy of the Christian martyrs, and believed them innocent of the crimes laid to their charge. The Platonists of the time had tried to imbue him with their own prejudices against the disciples of Jesus; but now he saw that theirs was the "only safe and useful philosophy." He thus became a Christian, retaining the cloak or mantle usually worn by the Greek philosophers. This gave him peculiar opportunities for engaging in conversation with those whom he met in

the street or market, or other public place. Eusebius says in his history (4 11) that "in the guise of a philosopher he preached the divine word, and contended for the faith in his writings." He visited Rome twice, and seems to have suffered martyrdom there about the year 165 A.D. In his *Apology* addressed to Antoninus Pius, Justin asserts that he had found out the ignorance of his old opponent Crescens—the cynic philosopher—and is ready, if Antoninus does not already know the result of the controversy, to discuss the evidence for Christianity in the Emperor's presence. "And this, indeed, would be an act worthy of an emperor. But if my questions and his answers have been made known to you, it is obvious to you that he knows nothing of our affairs; or, if he knows, but does not dare to speak because of those who hear him, he shows himself to be, as I have already said, not a philosopher, but a vain-glorious man, who indeed does not regard that most admirable saying of Socrates." We can learn the nature of Justin's line of defence from his *Apology*. He appeals to the justice of rulers, and shows how unfairly Christians were treated; he refutes the charges of atheism, immorality, and disloyalty brought against them; he exhibits the force of the argument from miracles and prophecy, and

exposes with much vigour the absurdities of heathenism. He brought many gifts of training and natural ability to bear on his work as a lay preacher and apologist. Dr. Schaff says[1] his works "everywhere attest his honesty and earnestness, his enthusiastic love for Christianity, and his fearlessness in its defence against all assaults from without and perversions from within. Justin was a man of very extensive reading, enormous memory, inquiring spirit, and many profound ideas, but wanting in critical discernment." He had an ingenious, though sometimes fanciful style of reasoning, and was the first apologist who brought classical scholarship and Platonic philosophy into contact with Christian theology. Justin Martyr says: "Every one who can preach the truth, and does not preach it, incurs the judgement of God." In his day, as he himself tells us, congregations met in town and country every Sunday to hear readings in the Apostles and Prophets. The president preached, then prayer was offered, and the Lord's Supper followed, with a collection for the poor. A guild of priests was alien to the spirit of Christianity and a departure from its early custom, for Hilary, who was a deacon at Rome, says that, in order to the spread of our religion,

[1] *Church History*, II. 484.

all were allowed to evangelize, baptize, and expound the Scriptures.

A famous page in the history of lay preaching is found in the life of ORIGEN. That most learned of all the Church Fathers was born at Alexandria in 185 A.D., and proved his Christian constancy as a youth during the terrible persecution under Severus. His vast learning and his rigid asceticism won him enormous influence in Alexandria both among scholars and the common people. Crowds flocked to his lectures, and he won a multitude of converts from heathenism. About 211 A.D. he visited Rome to study the doctrines, practices, and general character of that Church. On his return his lectures became still more popular. But Alexandria was a city of many factions, and a scholar like Origen saw little hope of peaceful work whilst he remained there. He therefore retired secretly to Palestine. His bishop, Demetrius, who had shown him great friendship, was bitterly incensed that the most brilliant teacher of the day should have left Alexandria. He soon found an opportunity to express his displeasure. Eusebius says (6 16) that while Origen was at Cæsarea, "the bishops of the church in that country requested him to preach and expound the Scriptures publicly, although he had not yet been ordained as pres-

byter." When Demetrius heard of this proceeding he addressed a vigorous protest to the two bishops. The offence was not that a layman should preach, but that he should do so in the presence of bishops. But Alexander of Jerusalem and Theoctistus of Cæsarea were quite able to defend their own conduct. They replied, "He (Demetrius) had stated in his letter that such a thing was never heard of before, neither has hitherto taken place, that laymen should preach in the presence of bishops. We know not how he comes to say what is plainly untrue. For whenever persons able to instruct the brethren are found, they are exhorted by the holy bishops to preach to the people. Thus, in Laranda, Euelpis was asked to preach by Neon; and in Iconium, Paulinus by Celsus; and in Synada, Theodorus by Atticus, our blessed brethren. And probably this has been done in other places unknown to us." This is really a conclusive answer so far as Palestine is concerned. The two bishops knew their own dioceses and the customs prevailing there. Theoctistus especially was one of the most influential bishops of the East, and he remained a firm friend of Origen probably until the great scholar's death. In Alexandria it was evidently the custom that only bishops and presbyters should preach. "But in Palestine no such rule was

recognised as binding. At the same time, it is clear enough that it was exceptional even there for laymen to preach (in the presence of their bishops), for Alexander in his epistle, instead of saying that laymen preach everywhere and of right, cites particular instances of their preaching, and says that when they are qualified they are especially requested by the bishops to use their gifts; so that the theory that the prerogative belonged of right to the bishop existed there just as truly as in Alexandria. Origen of course knew that he was acting contrary to the custom (if not the canon) of his own Church in thus preaching publicly, and yet undoubtedly he took it for granted that he was perfectly right in doing what these bishops requested him to do in their own dioceses. They were supreme in their own churches, and he knew of nothing apparently which should hinder him from doing what they approved of while in those churches. Demetrius, however, thought otherwise, and considered the public preaching of an unordained man irregular in any place and at any time."[1]

Origen was afterwards ordained presbyter, but, as Isaac Taylor says, he was "a layman until late in his course, and never other than in form a presbyter." He is often called "the father of

[1] *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. i. 267.

preaching." He held that it was the business of the preacher not to fight with pagan philosophers, or to plunge with the Gnostics into unfathomable mysteries, but to dig wells in the field of Scripture, and thence to draw water, not only for the family of Abraham, but even for the camels also; that is, for the ignorant and perverse. He sought to make all his teaching clear and profitable.

Two laymen, Frumentius and Ædesius, laid the foundations of the Church of Abyssinia, and baptized the king and his chief courtiers. Socrates[1] also speaks of a Christian captive who led the Iberian colonists by the Euxine into the fold of Christ. Her virtuous life of fasting and prayer made a great impression on the heathen around her, which in due time, of course, culminated in some wonderful miracles. She is said to have restored the queen and her infant child to health, and to have asked no reward save that the king and queen would accept Christianity. According to Socrates, both were made preachers of Christ, "the one addressing their male, and the other their female subjects." Whatever the authenticity of this story may be, it forms a good illustration of the way preachers are made. In the infancy of the work, every Christian, whether male or female, was almost bound to be

[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, I. c. 20.

a witness, and therefore a preacher of the gospel. As the services of the early Church became more formal and stereotyped, a stated address by the president of the meeting formed a regular part of the service.[1] We thus see how deacons and laymen, who seldom presided over such gatherings, gradually lost the right to speak or preach in many places.

The most gorgeous page in the history of lay preaching takes us into the palace of the Emperor CONSTANTINE at Rome. Eusebius, the court chaplain, ascribes to his royal master a direct inspiration from heaven: "We do not instruct thee, who hast been made wise by God. We do not disclose to thee the sacred mysteries, which long before any discourses of men God Himself revealed, not of men, nor by men, but through our common Saviour and the divine Vision of Himself which has often shined upon thee."[2] Eusebius says the Emperor turned his very palace into a church of God, and himself set a pattern of zeal to all who came there. He would take the Scriptures into his hands, devote himself to their study, and then offer up regular prayers with all the members of his court. The old historian must himself describe the Emperor's "discourses and declama-

[1] See Justin Martyr's *Apology*, i. 67.

[2] *Oration in Praise of Constantine*, c. 11.

tions." He says: "For himself, he sometimes passed sleepless nights in furnishing his mind with divine knowledge; and much of his time was spent in composing discourses, many of which he delivered in public; for he conceived it to be incumbent on him to govern his subjects by appealing to their reason, and to secure in all respects a rational obedience to his authority. Hence, he would sometimes himself evoke an assembly, on which occasion vast multitudes attended, in the hope of hearing an emperor sustain the part of a philosopher. And if in the course of his speech any occasion offered of touching on sacred topics, he immediately stood erect, and with a grave aspect and subdued tone of voice seemed reverently to be initiating his auditors in the mysteries of the divine doctrine. And when they greeted him with shouts of acclamation, he would direct them by his gestures to raise their eyes to heaven, and reserve their admiration for the Supreme King alone, and honour Him with adoration and praise. He usually divided the subjects of his address, first thoroughly exposing the error of polytheism, and proving the superstition of the Gentiles to be mere fraud, and a cloak for impiety. He then would assert the sole sovereignty of God; passing thence to His providence, both general and

particular. Proceeding next to the dispensation of salvation, he would demonstrate its necessity and adaptation to the nature of the case; entering next in order on the doctrine of the divine judgement. And here especially he appealed most powerfully to the consciences of his hearers, while he denounced the rapacious and violent, and those who were slaves to an inordinate thirst of gain. Nay, he caused some of his own acquaintance who were present to feel the severe lash of his words, and to stand with downcast eyes in the consciousness of guilt, while he testified against them in the clearest and most impressive terms that they would have an account to render of their deeds to God." The Emperor reminded them that just as he put men in trust as governors, and required an account in due season, so God also would summon all to His bar. His hearers received his words with loud applause, but honoured them by little real obedience. Once he singled out a courtier and asked how far man's inordinate desires were to be allowed free sway. Taking a lance, he traced the figure of a man on the ground. "Though thou could'st obtain the whole wealth of this world, yea, the whole world itself, thou wilt carry with thee at last no more than this little spot which I have marked out, if indeed even that be thine."

Preaching was a great power in the fourth and fifth centuries. St. Jerome describes himself applauding with hands and feet a sermon preached by Vigilantius on the resurrection. He actually leaped to the preacher's side and shouted "Orthodox." St. Chrysostom's sermon at Constantinople so roused the people that some waved their garments or handkerchiefs, crying, "Thou art worthy of the priesthood! Thou art the thirteenth apostle! Christ hath sent thee to save souls."

Constantine was an emperor, and might pose both as preacher and bishop of bishops, but ordinary laymen were quickly losing their privileges as workers. "At first," Hatch says,[1] "a layman might not preach if a bishop were present, and then not if any church officer was present; and finally, not at all." The Council at Carthage, in 398 A.D. felt it sufficient to forbid laymen to preach in the presence of clerics unless the clerics gave them an invitation. Fear of heresy made the leaders of the Church careful as to the preaching of laymen in the fifth century. Leo the Great urges Maximus, Patriarch of Antioch in 453, in view of the constant dangers arising from the subtle Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, to give orders that no

[1] *Organization*, p. 124.

one should presume to claim the right to teach or preach, whether he were monk or layman. Only presbyters were to be allowed to preach. It was not, however, till 691 A.D. that the Council *in Trullo*,[1] at Constantinople, declared that "a layman ought not to dispute or teach publicly, thence arrogating to himself the right to teach."

As the Church became less pure and spiritually minded, preaching grew out of favour. In its place we find much elaborate ritual. Laymen were, of course, forbidden to preach, but even presbyters themselves might not presume to deliver a sermon unless authorised to do so by their bishops. The bishops were sole masters of the pulpit. When a man like Ambrose was raised to power, we see how enormous an influence he wielded in such a centre as the city of Milan. Hurried by the voice of the people from the magistrate's chair to the archbishop's throne, Ambrose addressed himself to his new work with an enthusiasm which fully justified his choice. Preaching was then a rare art in Italy; but Ambrose turned his pulpit into a mighty moral force. His weekly sermons cast a lurid light on the society in which he moved. Men flocked to church to hear him, and, like the young African

[1] Held in the Trullan hall of the Imperial Palace.

teacher of rhetoric, Augustine, they confessed: "When I went to hear how well he spake, unexpectedly my heart opened to feel how truly he spake." Under the preaching of Ambrose St. Augustine was thus led into the light. But every bishop was not so zealous or so fully awake to his opportunities as the great prelate of Milan. Sozomen the historian, who was born about the time that Ambrose was elected archbishop, says that in his day the people of Rome were "not taught by the bishop, nor by any one in the Church." At Alexandria, he adds, "the bishop of the city alone teaches the people, and it is said that this custom has prevailed there even since the days of Arius, who, though but a presbyter, broached a new doctrine" (7 19). Ignorance and indolence made the bishops, who had claimed the exclusive right to preach, neglect that part of their duty. After Sozomen's day, Leo the Great revived the lost art, but it soon dropped into disuse. Bingham says: "There was a time when the bishops of Rome were not known to preach for five hundred years together! insomuch that, when Pius Quintus made a sermon, it was looked upon as a prodigy, and, indeed, was a greater rarity than the *sæculares ludi* were in old Rome" (*Orig. Eccl.* ii. iii. § 4).

CHAPTER II

LAY PREACHING IN THE CHURCH OF ROME

IT is among the monks and friars that we must look for the preachers of the Middle Ages. These were the wandering evangelists who left Great Britain and Ireland to labour on the continent of Europe. St. Willibrod, the apostle of the Frisians, sailed on his mission in 690 with eleven or twelve disciples. The next century was an age of missions.

Monks were at first regarded as laymen, and even if a monk were himself ordained he was classed with the laymen because he did not hold any ecclesiastical appointment. The division between monks and clergy became less strongly marked after the fourth century. The monastery often served as a training ground for the clergy, and sent out its members to assist in missionary work. "The illiterate clergy looked naturally to the nearest monastery for help in the composition of sermons. Deacons, although

forbidden to preach, were allowed to read homilies in church; and these were furnished in case of need by the monks (according to a custom not peculiar to any age or country), who were, sometimes at least, learned in comparison with the country clergy. And they, who were thus assisting the clergy in their work, affected not unreasonably a clerical costume."[1] The bishop sent a priest at stated times to perform mass in the monastery; sometimes a resident priest was appointed, or one of the monks was ordained. On festivals the monks attended their parish church. The rival claims of monks and clergy gave some anxious hours to successive popes, and the great monasteries waged long struggles for independence with the bishops. We need not go far to recall these controversies. We know how the abbots of Westminster succeeded about 1220 in establishing their claim to independence of the bishops of London. The struggle had been raging ever since the days of the Confessor, but the abbot was now pronounced subject only to the pope's authority. The dean of to-day inherits that exemption. He enjoys sole jurisdiction over the Abbey, subject only to the sovereign as royal visitor.

Before the thirteenth century opened the

[1] J. G. Smith's *Christian Monasticism*, p. 96.

monastic orders had become corrupt and worldly. They had long ceased to act as the salt of society. The age was ripe for the advent of a great preacher. Dr. Jessopp gives an appalling picture of the times in his *Coming of the Friars.* "The *sediment* of the town population in the Middle Ages was a dense slough of stagnant misery, squalor, famine, loathsome disease, and dull despair, such as the worst slums of London, Paris, or Liverpool know nothing of." The parochial system had broken down, the monk hid himself in his solitude, and left the world to its misery and sin. "By the suicidal methods of excommunication and interdict, all ranks were schooled into doing without the rites of religion, the baptism of their children, or the blessing upon the marriage union." Sunday was almost universally neglected; sermons had become so rare, that when Eustace, Abbot of Flai, preached in various parts of England in 1200, "miracles were said to have ensued as the ordinary effects of his eloquence. Earnestness in such an age seemed in itself miraculous."

It was lay preaching that breathed a new spirit into Christendom. ST. FRANCIS, the itinerant evangelist of Italy, had received no clerical training, and up to 1207 had no licence to preach. He was afterwards ordained as a deacon,

but the whole movement was moral, not ecclesiastical. Dr. Jessopp writes: "The absence of anything like dogma in the sermons of the early Minorites was their characteristic. One is tempted to say it was a mere accident that these men were not sectaries, so little in common had they with the ecclesiastics of the time, so entirely did they live and labour among the laity, of whom they were and with whom they so profoundly sympathised." M. Sabatier, in his *Vie de S. François D'Assise* (p. 7), shows how the priest of those days was separated from the people. He was like an idol before whom common people could only bow with trembling. A new sacerdotal race, that of the saints, sprang up —real, laic, resting purely on natural right. Nothing in his vestments proclaimed his mission, but his life and his words appealed to the hearts and consciences of all. The saint had no cure of souls committed to him by the Church, but was impelled to raise his voice against the vice and carelessness of the time. He was a child of the people, who knew all their material and moral sorrows, and heard in his own heart the mysterious echo. Like the old prophet of Israel, he heard that imperious voice cry to him, "Go, speak to the children of my people."

St. Francis was a great preacher. He began

his work during the pontificate of Innocent III., who had risen to be the supreme arbiter of the world. Innocent was a man of soaring ambition, unbounded activity, vast erudition, and irreproachable morals, who gradually brought all Europe beneath his feet. But the humble labours of St. Francis, whom Innocent at first slighted and ignored, opened men's hearts to the influence of religion as nothing had done for centuries. He found his vocation whilst listening to that passage in the Gospels: "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Hard wrestling with his own heart, profound dissatisfaction and weariness with the world, bitter persecution, and yearning sympathy with all sorrow, had already prepared him for his life-work. Boundless love of Christ, and never-ceasing wonder at His grace, inspired him to proclaim redeeming mercy to all. Everywhere he began his preaching with the salutation, 'The peace of God be with you.' A few disciples soon gathered round him. One of these, Brother Egidio, was his companion on a tour into the march of Ancona. The master and his disciple went along the pleasant roads in the

early summer singing hymns of praise. Francis had not yet begun to preach set sermons, but in simple words exhorted all he met: 'Love and serve God, and do worthy penance for your sins.' Egidio chimed in with the pleasant refrain: 'Do what my spiritual father says to you, because what he says is the best.' Thus they marched on from village to village, filling all hearts with wonder and with blessed thoughts."[1]

As his followers increased, Francis sent them out by pairs. "Go," said he, "proclaiming peace to men; preach repentance by the remission of sins." When workers grew more numerous, care was taken that only those specially fitted for such service were sent out to preach. Cardinal Ugolina, the patron of the order, introduced Francis to the notice of Pope Honorius in November 1223. He felt sure that if the pontiff once heard his friend all would be well. He therefore gained permission for Francis to deliver a sermon before Honorius. He set himself to prepare the preacher. Francis was induced to compose and commit to memory an elaborate sermon. When the friar rose in the pulpit he felt sorely embarrassed. He hesitated, and moved restlessly from side to side. The cardinal was in dismay. But just when he

[1] *London Quarterly Review*, new series, vol. viii. p. 33.

seemed about to break down, Francis threw aside his prepared discourse, and spoke as he had been wont to do in the castles and market-places of Italy. His very simplicity added weight and freshness to his appeals. The pope's prejudices melted, and henceforth he became the stalwart patron and friend of the order. The times sorely needed an evangelical preacher like St. Francis. Milman says:[1] "The Church might still seem to preach to all, but it preached in a tone of lofty condescension; it dictated, rather than persuaded; but, in general, actual preaching had fallen into disuse; it was in theory the special privilege of the bishops, and the bishops were but few who had either the gift, the inclination, or the leisure from their secular, judicial, or war-like occupations to preach even in their cathedral cities; in the rest of their dioceses their presence was but occasional; a progress or visitation of power and form, rather than of popular instruction."

Francis proved himself the preacher for the age. He had that boundless gift of sympathy which unlocks all hearts. Peace and gentleness ruled his own spirit, and gave him tact and wisdom in dealing with others. "Among a crowd the preacher was as self-possessed as

[1] *Latin Christianity*, vi. 1.

though he was talking with a single friend. He spoke to one as to a multitude, and to a multitude as to one." His preaching ranged over those vital truths of which men never weary. "The Lord's Prayer, the death of the sinner, the story of the cross. These were his never-failing themes. His oratory was both dramatic and pathetic. He wept, and filled the eyes of his hearers with tears; he bounded with joy or clapped his hands in an ecstasy of delight." Many a passing incident supplied the itinerant preacher with a theme. Once as he passed the lordly castle of Montefeltro he met streams of people hastening to a feast. Francis and his companion joined them. Standing on some rising ground the friar quoted a simple rhyme:—

> So great is the good I hope for,
> That every pain delights.

From that text he gave the people a homily which left them standing entranced as though he had been an angel of God. In the midst of dangerous feuds at Bologna in August 1220 he suddenly appeared on the scene and made his way to the palace square. He took for his text three words: "Angels, men, devils." He spoke with the might of love, with the authority of a divine conviction. Turbulent nobles put away their angry thoughts, learned men marvelled at

the force and beauty of the unlettered speaker's sermon, whilst the people thronged about him with expressions of love and devotion, which must have been sweet incense to the man who yearned over every living thing, and was restless for the salvation of all.

A fragment of one of his talks to the people is given by Dr. Jessopp: "Oh, ye miserable, helpless, and despairing; ye who find yourselves so utterly forlorn—so very, very far astray; ye lost souls whom Satan has bound through the long weary years; ye of the broken hearts, bowed down and crushed; ye with your wasted bodies loathsome to every sense, to whom life is torture and whom death will not deliver; ye whose very nearness by the wayside makes the traveller as he passes shudder with uncontrollable horror lest your breath should light upon his garments, look! I am as poor as you—I am one of yourselves. Christ, the very Christ of God, has sent me with a message to you. Listen!"

A very different figure from St. Francis is his stern contemporary, St. Dominic. He was a priest, but he was the founder of another great band of lay preachers. He knew the value of such work. He himself had won little fruit among the Albigenses. In his farewell address

at Prouille, in 1217, he says: "Now for many years past I sounded the truths of the gospel in your ears, by my preaching, my entreaties, and my prayers, and with tears in my eyes. But, as they are wont to say in my country, the stick must be used when blessings are of no avail." But St. Dominic did not renounce his preaching, though the Albigenses refused to be charmed. He is said to have visited Rome, where St. Peter and St. Paul appeared to him. Peter gave him a staff, Paul handed him a book, with the words: "Go and preach, for to this ministry thou are called." As the apostles passed from view, Dominic seemed to watch a long procession of his brethren setting out to evangelise the world. "The seed," he said, "will fructify if it is sown; it will but moulder if you hoard it up." He exhorted the brethren to pay special attention to music and to the study of the Bible. As they went forth to their appointed scenes of labour, Dominic gave them a fiery exhortation, which aroused all hearts to enthusiasm. The founder of the order himself set out on a preaching tour. In his hands was a stout staff, a bundle hung over his shoulder. Thus wrapt in meditation he bore joyfully the burdens of the way. In Bologna his popularity was so great that he had to preach several times a day in the largest

churches, or out of doors in one of the public piazzas. People had to secure places long before the sermon began. Two columns, one surmounted by a figure of the Virgin, the other by that of Dominic himself, still mark the scene of his open-air discourses. During the last years of his life, he made short preaching tours as strength would permit. Sometimes fever prostrated him, but as soon as possible he started on his round again. His friend, Gregory IX., thus describes Dominic's sermons: "When he exercised the functions of an apostolic preacher, it was as though the thunder of heaven broke the hearts of the wicked; he seemed like a bow discharging a thousand sharp arrows against the delights of the flesh; and while the sects of the heretics trembled at his words, the hearts of the faithful were filled with joy unspeakable." His voice was powerful and musical, like the sound of a silver trumpet.

The followers of St. Francis, the Fratres Minores, and St. Dominic's Fratres Predicatores, despite all the wild eccentricities into which some of them ran, revived the languid faith, and rekindled the pious ardour of the Middle Ages. They were itinerant evangelists, moving from place to place with a message of grace, and valiant in their defence of the poor

and oppressed. There was no doubt much in the sermons of those preaching friars which awakes a smile not untinged with scorn, but the story told about Bonaventura shows the nobler side. When Thomas Aquinas asked him where he gained the force and unction, so manifest in all his works, the friar pointed to a crucifix hanging on the wall. "It is that image," he said, "which dictates all my words to me." The presence of Christ in his lonely cell moved him to constant zeal and sacrifice.

When Francis secured the papal sanction for his rule the work of the new evangelists was set on a sure footing. "The new apostles of poverty, of pity, of an all-embracing love, went forth by two and two to build up the ruined Church of God." They were ignorant of theology, but they had mastered every word and phrase of the Gospels, and "to each and all of them Christ was simply *everything*. If ever men have preached Christ, these men did; Christ, nothing but Christ—the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. They had no system, they had no views, they combated no opinions, they took no side. Let the dialecticians dispute about this nice distinction or that; there *could* be no doubt that Christ had died and risen, and was alive for evermore. There

was no place for controversy or opinions when here was a mere simple, indisputable, but most awful fact."[1]

The message itself was like light from heaven to those dark ages, but the preachers lent force and reality to it by their heroic self-sacrifice, and by that enthusiasm for humanity which took them among the outcasts and lepers as brothers and friends. The Dominicans aimed at turning out trained preachers furnished with all tricks of dialectical fence, and practised to extempore speaking on the most momentous subjects. They came to England in 1221, and the first band of Franciscans followed in 1224. Five of them were laymen, four were clerics, though only one had been ordained priest. All England was stirred by these preachers, and some of the best scholars and most devout men in the country joined their order.

Francis had formed his third order to make provision for those who could not leave the world, but were anxious to live pure lives and save their own souls. The Tertiaries sprang up wherever the preachers came. Thousands of people, rich and poor, hastened to join an order which gave to its humblest member a status in the Church which no prince or potentate had

[1] Jessopp's *Coming of the Friars.*

ever enjoyed before. A jealous critic says: "There was scarcely a soul in Christendom whose name was not upon its muster-roll." The Tertiaries have been well described as the Puritans or Methodists of the thirteenth century, who sought to bring religion into all the details of busy lives. They were the direct result of the lay preaching of the Middle Ages.

Dr. Jessopp describes St. Francis as "the John Wesley of the thirteenth century, whom the Church did not cast out." "Rome has never been afraid of fanaticism. She has always known how to utilise her enthusiasts fired by a new idea." The friars were a body of lay preachers who appeared at the moment when the poor town clergy were almost in despair, and set themselves to seek and save the outcasts of society. Gradually they became the most important religious order in England. "The friars, though always stationed in the towns, and by this time occupying large establishments which were built for them in Lynn, Yarmouth, Norwich, and elsewhere, were always acting the part of itinerant preachers, and travelled their circuits on foot, supported by alms. Sometimes the parson lent them the church, sometimes they held a camp meeting in spite of him, and just as often they left behind them a feeling of great

soreness, irritation, and discontent; but six hundred years ago the preaching of the friars was an immense and incalculable blessing to the country, and if it had not been for the wonderful reformation wrought by their activity and burning enthusiasm, it is difficult to see what we should have come to or what corruption might have prevailed in Church and State."[1] There were no pulpits in the churches of those days, and a man might even hold a cure for fifty years without preaching a sermon. It will be manifest what influence the gospel would produce on the minds of those who listened to it almost for the first time in their lives.

In the preface to *Monumenta Franciscana*, Mr. Brewer shows that monasteries had provided for the spiritual rule and welfare of the country, but there was no such provision for the towns. It was fortunate that the effort to carry Christianity to the masses of the towns proceeded from one who was not an ecclesiastic, and had received no ecclesiastical education. Francis "had to strip Christianity, in the first instance, of the regal robe in which popes and prelates had invested it; to preach it as the gospel of the poor and oppressed. His followers are to visit the town two and two; in just so much

[1] Jessopp's *Village Life Six Hundred Years Ago*, p. 85.

clothing as the commonest mendicant could purchase. They are to sleep at nights under arches, or in the porches of desolate and deserted churches, among idiots, lepers, and outcasts; to beg their bread from door to door; to set an example of piety and submission." The Franciscan was the missionary of the town; the apostle, as we might say, of the slums. If he was "an interloper, he was an interloper in a province which nobody except himself had cared to occupy, and for a reward which none valued but himself." The friars fixed their convents in low, swampy, undrained quarters of the large towns, among the poorest and most neglected people, and lived under the same conditions as those to whom they ministered. "At Cambridge their chapel was erected by a single carpenter in one day. At Shrewsbury, where, owing to the liberality of the townsmen, the dormitory walls had been built of stone, the minister of the order had them removed and replaced with mud. Decorations and ornaments of all kinds were zealously excluded. At Gloucester, a friar was deprived of his hood for painting his pulpit, and the warden of the same place suffered similar punishment for tolerating pictures." Francis, less enlightened than Wesley, did his utmost to counteract the growing passion for books, and to

turn the attention of the friars to meditation. "Many friars," he said, "who bestow all their time and thought on the acquisition of philosophy, forsaking their proper vocation, and wandering in mind and body from the way of prayer and humility, when they have preached to the people, and have turned some to repentance, are inflated and conceited at the result, as if it were their own and not another's work. Whereas it happens not unfrequently that they have really done nothing; they have been no more than the instruments of those by whom the Lord has truly reaped the fruit." He predicted that the day would come when men would throw their books out of the window as useless. But if in this respect Francis showed himself a man of prejudices, he taught his disciples to speak to the hearts of the unlearned, and sent them into the midst of those whom they were to teach that they might study their hearts and lives. Preaching became the great object of the friar's life, but it was a new style of preaching. A body of laymen, bound by certain religious vows, had come forward to the help of the Church. Their preaching was popular and dramatic, appealing directly to the feelings, and abounding in pithy stories and racy anecdotes. Sometimes a popular tradition or

legend was introduced, sometimes a moral was drawn from some fable or allegory. They became famous as story-tellers throughout Christendom, and the most pithy apothegms were associated with their names. It will be easily understood how this great gift degenerated in not a few cases into grotesque extravagance. The monkish sermons degenerated as time went on, till they became frivolous and ridiculous nonsense.

"Legendary tales concerning the founder of some religious order, the miracles he performed, his combats with the devil, his watchings, fastings, flagellations; the virtues of holy water, chrism, crossing, and exorcism; the horrors of purgatory, and the numbers released from it by the intercessions of some powerful saint—these, with low jests, table-talk, and fireside scandal, formed the favourite topics of the preachers, and were served up to the people instead of the pure, salutary, and sublime doctrines of the Bible."

Despite all their grievous faults, the friars brought the Church into touch with the masses, from whom it had stood aloof. It had long been cold and distant, absorbed in theological subtleties, but now it became humane and tender, the friend and helper of the meanest and the most degraded.

The friars were often the only preachers whom the common people had. In many English parishes in pre-Reformation times preaching was utterly neglected or only practised at rare intervals. Archbishop Peckham, a man of rare zeal and energy, "felt that he could not require of his diocesan clergy more than four sermons a year. Here and there, though, were conscientious priests striving to teach men their duty, in whose parishes the preaching friars had not all their own way." Bundles of old homilies which long lay in dusty libraries have been published in recent years. These homilies are sometimes almost as racy and as pungent in their applications as those of Latimer himself. One of the preachers warns his hearers against the women of fashion, who wore saffron-coloured dresses, powdered their faces, and set themselves to lead astray the unwary. "These women," says the preacher, "are the devil's mouse-traps; for when a man will bait his mouse-trap he binds thereupon the treacherous cheese, and roasteth it, so that it should smell sweetly, and so entice many a mouse into the trap. Even so do many of these women; they smear themselves with blaunchet (fine wheat flour)—that is the devil's soap; and clothe themselves with yellow clothes—that is the devil's covert; and afterwards they look in

the mirror—that is the devil's hiding-place. Now, dear men, for God's love, keep yourselves from the devil's mouse-trap." Much of the teaching in these old homilies is richly evangelical. There is no attempt to exalt the priesthood unduly. "Dear men, the priest is not able to forgive any man's sins, not even his own, but he is ordained between God Almighty and thee to instruct thee how thou shalt have forgiveness of thy sins from God." It is probable, however, that such teaching was exceptional, or Stephen Langton and Hugh Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, 1235–53, would not have welcomed the preaching friars so eagerly, nor would Wyclif have felt it necessary to employ his "Poor Priests."[1]

ST. ANTONY, who died in 1221, was one of the most popular street preachers of St. Francis' Order. He was working in the kitchen of a monastic house at Bologna. None dreamed that he had any talent or learning. One day, however, there was no one to preach, and Antony was urged to take the duty. He replied that his work was to wash dishes and scrub floors; but at last he was persuaded to enter the pulpit. He had a rich voice of great compass and flexibility, graceful action, choice language, and a most

[1] W. H. Beckett's *English Reformation*, R. T. S., 1890.

attractive face. St. Francis heard of his fame and gave him his blessing. Churches proved too small for the crowds that wished to hear him, so that he had to preach in churchyards and market-places. Shops were closed, and people sometimes remained all night in a church to secure their seats. "Crowds pressed on him as he went to the place appointed, and begged to kiss his hand and touch his garment. He swayed the congregations as he pleased; sobs of the hardened sinners sometimes drowned all sounds; his clear bell-like voice was heard in all the neighbouring streets, and the excitement of the population was intense. His memory was so good that he knew the Scriptures by heart. He once addressed a ferocious tyrant who used to shed innocent blood, calling on the sword of the Lord to smite him. The congregation was worked to the highest pitch of excitement, when the tyrant fell on his knees and promised amendment. Antony's exertions under this high pressure brought on paralysis, and he died at the age of thirty-six."[1] Many other stories might be told as to the effect produced by the friar-preachers. John Capistran, the Franciscan, preached at Nuremberg in 1452 from a pulpit set up in the middle of the great square. His

[1] James's *Curiosities of Christian History*, p. 257.

sermons led the people to make a pile of their cards and dice, to which they set fire. Next year similar scenes were witnessed under his preaching at Breslau, in Silesia.

THOMAS CONECTE the Carmelite, who was born in Brittany in 1434, was regarded as the greatest preacher of his time. In Flanders enormous crowds gathered round him whilst he denounced the vices of the clergy and the luxury and extravagance of the head-gear worn by the fashionable women of the day. These hennins were broad horns an ell long, with ears at each side so large that the lady who wore them could not get through a door. Brother Thomas, not content with denouncing the hennin, gave presents to little children to cry and hoot, and even to throw stones at those who wore them. This odd way of dealing with the follies of the time proved effectual for the moment, but Paradin says: "After Thomas's departure the ladies lifted their horns again, and did like the snails, which, when they hear any noise, pull in their horns, but when the noise is over suddenly lift them higher than before." Bonfires of ornaments, dice, and cards marked the friar's progress through the Netherlands; but his success in Italy proved his ruin. The pope, moved by the jealous ecclesiastics, put Thomas on his trial. He was

condemned to the flames for his outspoken words, but refused to recant, and met his death with the quiet heroism worthy of a true and fearless reformer.

Professor Stokes [1] says: "The introduction of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders into England and Ireland alike had been in the thirteenth century the salvation of religion. The Franciscans especially came, like the Methodists of the eighteenth century, preaching to the poor and neglected classes." The rude chapels of the Franciscans were always placed in the poorest quarters, for they lived among the people, and sought to bring them into the fold of Christ.

The subject of preaching gave rise to some stormy debates at the Council of Trent in 1546. Under the papacy, priests were consecrated not to preach but to perform mass. The bishops themselves had scant qualifications for the office of public teachers, but at Trent they claimed the sole prerogative of providing preachers for the Church, and complained bitterly of the usurpations of the Regulars, and especially of the mendicant orders. The pope sympathised with the friars, who were his devoted adherents, but he saw that the bishops had law on their side. The subject raised such a storm in the Council

[1] *Ireland and the Anglo-Norman Church*, p. 331.

that the legates were compelled to postpone the discussion. Meetings were held to consider the question of "Lectureships and Preaching." The clergy and the mendicant orders had long been bitterly opposed to each other. The itinerants wandered about with papal licences, preaching where and what they pleased. All the bad blood of three centuries now showed itself. The debates were marked by much violence and disorder. "The Bishop of Fiesoli exhorted his brethren to be mindful of the duties of their office; he complained of the intrusion of the Regulars into the dioceses, and of the liberty they had to preach in the monasteries, and even ventured to describe them as wolves who had entered into the sheepfold, but not by the door." He urged the assembly not to suffer such abuses to exist any longer. The Spanish bishops were especially urgent for reform. They maintained that the work of preaching had been snatched out of their hands by the religious orders, whose end they even ventured to affirm was lucre, not edification. They demanded the abolition of such privilege, and the restoration of their own authority. The friars had a strong case. They showed that the bishops had no reason to find fault with what was really the consequence of their own neglect. Their ignorance and idleness

had brought about the present state of things, for if the work of teaching had been properly done, the Regulars would have been content to employ themselves in the more private offices of religion. They pointed out that they had done this work for three hundred years under papal sanction and with godly zeal. Without them no Christianity would have been left in Europe.[1] Nor had the bishops reason to complain, for the monks bore the burden of the ministry, while they themselves retained its emoluments and honours. Monks would cease to preach when the bishops ceased to strut about in fine clothes and learned to preach themselves. The Bishop of Fiesoli returned to the charge with such intemperate zeal that the legate took umbrage at his remarks. Fiesoli was charged with heresy, and with exciting discord and sedition. "A man cannot hold his tongue," he answered, "when he sees that he is robbed." Cardinal De Monte, one of the three legates, sent the speech to Rome, and at the next meeting inveighed most angrily against it as calumnious, insulting, seditious and schismatical. Fiesoli was compelled to ask forgiveness. The legates found it wise to seek special instruction from the pope. He replied that the mendicant orders must at all costs be supported, though

[1] See Froude's *Trent*, pp. 192–204.

with special care not to arouse episcopal prejudice. The bishops, he said, wished to be popes in their own sees, but if the orders were placed under them, the papal power would be gone.

At last, with much difficulty, a resolution was arrived at. The Regulars were forbidden to preach in churches not belonging to their order without a bishop's licence; in their own churches, the licence of their superiors would suffice; but this was to be presented to the bishop, whose blessing they were to ask. He had power to proceed against them if they preached heresy or acted in a disorderly manner. These powers were assigned to the bishops not as bishops, but as "delegates of the Holy Chair." They were exhorted to use their new powers with prudence and charity, and instructed to preach themselves on Sundays and holy days. The Generals of the Orders murmured; but they were told that the friars had brought this trouble upon themselves, and must submit to some restraint. The friars had ceased to be popular. Mr. Froude says they "had to obtain special privileges from the popes which had superseded the parochial organization. The bishops had no authority over them. They preached what they pleased. They claimed, and they obtained a universal right of hearing con-

fessions. They went from house to house. They demanded entertainment, which no one dared to refuse them. They were hated. Erasmus says that when a mendicant friar was seen approaching, men shrank from him as from some noxious animal."[1]

About eighteen years before the Council of Trent met, a strange student appeared at the University of Alcala, recently founded by Cardinal Ximenes. He was a Spanish grandee, who had won great distinction by his bravery at the siege of Pampeluna. He had now renounced the world, and was seeking to prepare himself by quiet study for a great mission. LOYOLA was not a very successful student, but he was a wonderful evangelist. He taught the Catechism in the streets to the children and all who cared to listen. He visited schools and hospitals, made himself useful among the students of the university, and gathered many eager inquirers round him in his lodgings. The ecclesiastics became suspicious of this layman, who had gathered a band of four disciples, and donned a peculiar dress. The Inquisition at Toledo made an inquiry into the matter; but this proved favourable to Loyola and his companions, who were instructed not to wear garments like those

[1] Froude's *Trent*, p. 13.

of a religious order. Loyola was soon to taste the bitterness of persecution. The charges against him were renewed; he was thrown into the dungeons of the Inquisition; and, when he was released, he and his friends were ordered to lay aside the long robe, wear the ordinary student's dress, and hold no public or private meetings until they had finished their four years' course of theological study. Ignatius turned his back on Alcala, and removed with his little cluster of disciples to the city of Salamanca. But here also they found themselves in trouble. The Dominicans grew jealous, and Loyola and his disciple Calixto were cast into prison. After three weeks' imprisonment the lay preachers were set free, but were forbidden to preach. Loyola set out for Paris, where he gained great influence among the students, and was able, in 1534, to launch his society at Montmartre. Francis Xavier was the second disciple whom he won in Paris. Loyola now gave himself to preaching, but he was not ordained till 1537. He and his companions preached in the piazzas and open squares of Italy with great effect, dwelling chiefly on the rewards of virtue and the punishment of vice. A rich member of the papal household set a large building at the service of the Society in Rome. The brethren preached

in the churches of that city with great effect, and Loyola's brief sermons attracted hearers of all classes. His Italian was very faulty, but his energy and earnestness made a profound impression. In 1541 he was appointed General of the Order, and for fifteen years presided over the Society, which spread by leaps and bounds with a rapidity rarely equalled even in the history of the monastic orders.

CHAPTER III

LAY PREACHING AMONG THE SECTARIES AND NONCONFORMISTS

ONE of the most enlightened and evangelical lay preachers of the Middle Ages was NICHOLAS OF BASLE. He was the son of a wealthy merchant in that city, and was born in 1308. Nicholas belonged to the interesting community of "brethren" who traced their origin to the days of Constantine, when the Church became fashionable and lost its power. There was scarcely a country in which these people were not known, under such names as Waldenses, Lollards, or Good Men. We meet with them in the twelfth century at Cologne, Frankfort, Nuremberg, Lyons, Metz. They are to be found in Spain also. Five hundred of these Waldenses were seized at Strasburg in 1212, and eighty of them, including twelve priests and twenty-three women, were burnt alive.[1] The brethren

[1] See Bevan's *Three Friends of God*, p. 25.

were noted preachers, who sent out itinerant evangelists in pairs, generally consisting of one older and one younger member. They travelled as pedlars, and received eggs, cheese, or small articles of clothing in exchange for their wares. Some were able to give medical help to the poor. Wherever they found an open door, whether in stately castle or in cowherd's cottage, they preached and taught the simple gospel message. They held services in the open air, prayer meetings and Bible readings in private houses. Those who could not make these rounds sent letters to the brethren in other places. Where it was possible, they built simple houses of prayer, with refuges for the poor adjoining.

NICHOLAS OF BERNE struggled into the light after years of painful austerities. He became an itinerant evangelist, who wandered about Germany propagating his opinions in a quiet, unostentatious manner. He held an independent position between the Roman Church and the sects which, in some cases, had become pantheistic and even licentious. His most famous convert was Dr. Tauler. Nicholas taught that renowned doctor that God's illuminating grace was not confined to the Church of Rome or her clergy, but was given to every one direct from Christ Himself. A Society of Christian people

grew up around Nicholas, whom they loved and honoured as their spiritual father. They lived holy lives amid the profligacy of the times, and were known as "Friends of God." Dominicans and Franciscans were among them. One of their members was a Strasburg banker; another was Grand Master of the Knights of St. John in Germany. Queen Anne of Hungary and a host of ladies belonged to the Society. Nicholas was renowned both as a preacher and a writer. He visited Rome, where he boldly reproved Gregory XI. for his own sins and those of the Church. When nearly ninety years old, he was burned to death at Vienne.

Wyclif, who was a few years younger than Nicholas of Basle, expressly intended his poor priests to counteract the influence of the friars. If they strolled over the country preaching the legends of the saints and the history of the Trojan War, he resolved to form a vast itinerant evangelization which should lead souls to Christ. He said to the most pious of his disciples: "Go and preach; it is the sublimest work. But imitate not the priests, whom we see after the sermon sitting in the alehouses, or at the gaming-table, or wasting their time in hunting. After your sermon is ended, do you visit the sick, the aged, the poor, the blind, and the lame, and succour

them according to your ability." The "poor priests," some of whom were lay preachers, set out in their coarse robe, barefoot, staff in hand, living on alms. They preached in the fields, the market-place, the churchyard; sometimes in the church itself. They spoke with an earnestness and simplicity that soon won the hearts of the people. John Ashton was one of the most beloved of Wyclif's poor priests. He wandered over the country preaching, and sat at the cottage fireside instructing the humble folk in the love of Christ.

The priests became alarmed at the influence of these itinerants. They watched the evangelist from the windows of their monastery, and set the officers of justice on his track. But when the constables arrived, a body of stalwart friends generally surrounded the preacher and kept him safe from attack. The missionaries returned to Wyclif, who gave them counsel and comfort and sent them forth again on their rounds. Every day saw the truth spreading more widely over England.

GEORGE WISHART, the martyr, was a layman who preached in the churches of his time. He had been educated at Cambridge, and was a teacher of Greek at Montrose. Though he was not a cleric, exception was taken not to his preach-

ing in the churches, but to the doctrine he taught. Seyers says in his *Memorials of Bristol*: "On the 15th May 1539, George Wisard, or Wisehart, a Scottish preacher, set forth his lecture in St. Nicholas' Church in Bristol, of the most blasphemous heresie that ever was heard. He was confronted on this heresie, and had to bear a faggot in St. Nicholas' Church." We are told that "he then went and preached in many other places, where, entrance to the churches being denied him, he preached in the fields. He would not suffer the people to open the church doors with violence, for that, he said, became not the gospel which he preached." After a sojourn on the Continent he returned to this country and began to teach the reformed doctrines. Great crowds assembled to hear him in Dundee, and the people were so much roused that the magistrates interdicted his preaching. He then made an evangelistic tour through the western counties, where he publicly taught the people. The outbreak of the plague in Dundee brought him back to that place, where he visited the sick with great devotion. "Courteous, lowly, lovely, glad to teach, desirous to learn." Such is the portrait of Wishart left us by one of his pupils.

He was burned at the stake at St. Andrews in 1546, praying thrice as he knelt: "O Thou

Saviour of the world, have mercy upon me! Father of heaven, into Thy hands I commit my spirit."

The Reformation was marked by a great revival of preaching. The influence of such masters of the art as Latimer, Knox, Ridley, Hooper, and a host of others, can scarcely be over-estimated. Latimer, in his famous "Sermon of the Plough," urges the prelates to look well to their office: "Therefore preach and teach, and let your plough be doing." He speaks of the old times of apathy. "But this much I dare say, that since lording and loitering hath come up, preaching hath come down, contrary to the apostles' times; for they preached and lorded not, and now they lord and preach not. For they that be lords will ill go to plough: it is not meet office for them; it is not seeming for their station. Thus came up lording loiterers; thus crept in unpreaching prelates; and so have they long continued." John Skelton, poet-laureate and Rector of Diss, wrote in the reign of Henry VIII. a racy sketch of the country clergy, in which he dwells on their neglect of preaching:—

> For if ye wolde take payne
> To preache a worde or twayne,
> Though it were never so playne,
> With clauses two or three,
> So as they might be

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... many a church and ... the revived interest in ... there was little lay preaching. ... Henry VIII. the principle ... lay preaching was indeed ...

... fanaticism has scarcely any ... which relate the excesses ... Reformation times. The ... Zwickau in 1520, and quickly ... Germany and the Netherlands. ... and teachers went everywhere ... their blasphemous doctrines. Münster ... the hands of the fanatics, and there, in ... Bockhold established himself as king ... He lived in princely luxury, and ... reign of terror, which was

... Swiss Reformation, p. 371.

brought to an end by the capture of the city in 1535. His twenty-six apostles had meanwhile been spreading the new doctrines, and other teachers arose who rejected many of the wildest tenets of Bockhold. David Joris was one of the most noted of these lay preachers. He was a glass painter of Delft, and gathered round him a large body of disciples who belonged to the more moderate school of Anabaptists. Many suffered death for their opinions, and Joris himself was compelled to wander from place to place in order to escape persecution. He finally settled in Switzerland, where he lived for twelve years in Basle under the name of John of Bruges, a peaceable citizen and member of the Reformed Church, much esteemed by the people. No one suspected that the noted Anabaptist leader was in their midst, and he died peacefully in 1556. He was the personal friend of Henry Nicholas, a native of Münster, who came to this country in the reign of Edward VI. and established a sect called the Family of Love, who laid great stress on mystic contemplation, and held that through love man could be absorbed in God.

In the first years of Henry VIII. it was a capital offence to teach children the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, or the Apostles' Creed in their mother tongue. Six men and a

Compendiously conveyed,
Those wordes should be more weid
And better perceived,
And thankfully receyved,
And better should remayne
Among the people playne,
That wolde your wordes retayne,
And reherse them agayne,
Than a thousand thousand other,
The blaber, barke and blother,
And make a Walshman's hose
Of the text and the glose.[1]

St. Paul's Cross, and many a church and cathedral, bore witness to the revived interest in preaching. But there was little lay preaching, though in the days of Henry VIII. the principle both of lay agency and lay preaching was indeed recognised.

The history of fanaticism has scarcely any wilder pages than those which relate the excesses of the Anabaptists of Reformation times. The sect sprang up at Zwickau in 1520, and quickly spread through Germany and the Netherlands. Itinerant prophets and teachers went everywhere preaching their blasphemous doctrines. Münster fell into the hands of the fanatics, and there, in 1534, John Bockhold established himself as king of New Zion. He lived in princely luxury, and established a veritable reign of terror, which was

[1] Worsley's *Dawn of the English Reformation*, p. 371.

brought to an end by the capture of the city in 1535. His twenty-six apostles had meanwhile been spreading the new doctrines, and other teachers arose who rejected many of the wildest tenets of Bockhold. David Joris was one of the most noted of these lay preachers. He was a glass painter of Delft, and gathered round him a large body of disciples who belonged to the more moderate school of Anabaptists. Many suffered death for their opinions, and Joris himself was compelled to wander from place to place in order to escape persecution. He finally settled in Switzerland, where he lived for twelve years in Basle under the name of John of Bruges, a peaceable citizen and member of the Reformed Church, much esteemed by the people. No one suspected that the noted Anabaptist leader was in their midst, and he died peacefully in 1556. He was the personal friend of Henry Nicholas, a native of Münster, who came to this country in the reign of Edward VI. and established a sect called the Family of Love, who laid great stress on mystic contemplation, and held that through love man could be absorbed in God.

In the first years of Henry VIII. it was a capital offence to teach children the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, or the Apostles' Creed in their mother tongue. Six men and a

woman were burnt for this offence at Coventry on April 4, 1519. In 1541 a Bible had, by royal decree, to be provided for every parish and laid in the church for general use. Six copies were chained to pillars in St. Paul's Cathedral, but Bishop Bonner forbade any one to read the Scriptures aloud, or draw crowds about him to hear him explain or expound it. Many had their children taught expressly that they might hear the words of life from their lips. Greatly did the common people rejoice when they met some one who could read the Scriptures to them distinctly and with a loud voice, and when no objection was made to his so doing.

Queen Elizabeth issued a mandate through Archbishop Whitgift to the effect that "none be allowed to preach but such as had been regularly ordained." Regularity was everything. If the incumbents had only been episcopally ordained, no further question was asked. Parker confessed in 1561 that most of the beneficed clergy of his diocese were either ignorant mechanics or disguised papists, that many churches were shut up, and that, in several counties, not a sermon had been preached, or even a homily read, within twenty miles for months. In the Convocation of the next year many clergymen could not sign their own names. In Cornwall alone there were

one hundred and forty incumbents, not one of whom could preach a sermon.

Pope Alexander VI. (1492-1503) had given the University of Cambridge liberty to appoint twelve ministers yearly to preach anywhere in England without licence from the bishops. Archbishop Parker urged Mr. Secretary Cecil, as chancellor of the university, to take away this privilege, but the vice-chancellor successfully defended the right of the university. Parker was struggling to bring every clergyman into exact obedience to all the Queen's injunctions and letters patent. The yoke was so galling that numbers of the most able and popular preachers were unable to consent, and Bishop Sandys said in one of his sermons preached before Her Majesty, that many of her people, especially in the north, perished for want of saving food. He added that many did not hear a sermon in seven, or, as he might safely add, in seventeen years.

Several colleges in both universities required masters of arts, whether ordained or not, to take a text and preach a sermon in their chapels. Fuller describes a lay preacher in the reign of Queen Elizabeth: "Mr. Tavernour of Water-Eaton, in Oxfordshire, high sheriff of the county, came in pure charity, not ostentation, and gave the scholars a sermon in St. Mary's, with his gold

chain about his neck and his sword by his side, beginning with these words: 'Arriving at the Mount of St. Mary's, in the stony-stage (a stone pulpit), where I now stand, I have brought you some fine biscuits baked in the oven of charity, and carefully conserved for the chickens of the Church, the sparrows of the Spirit, and the sweet swallows of salvation.'"[1]

In 1603 the Brownists and other sectaries of the time presented a petition to James I., in which they stated the difference between themselves and the Church of England. They held that laymen, "discreet, faithful, and able men, though not in the office of the ministry," may be appointed to preach the gospel. The times were marked by a great outburst of lay preaching, and in this the strength of the Independent and Baptist Churches was seen as opposed to the Presbyterians, who did not approve of lay preachers. It was a rule among the general Baptists "that it shall be lawful for any person to improve their gifts in the presence of the congregation." They "prophesied by turns," says Daniel Featley, and, like the preachers of the Society of Friends, defiled our pulpits "with their false prophesies and phanatical enthusiasms." Featley's soul was stirred within him

[1] *Church History of Britain*, bk. ix. p. 65.

as he watched this "clergy of laics." "The apostle," he exclaims, "cries out, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' but now we may say, 'Who is *not* sufficient for these things?' Not the meanest artizan, not the illiteratest day labourer, but holds himself sufficient to be a master builder in Christ's Church. But now, in the noontide of the gospel, such owls and bats should fly abroad everywhere, and flutter in our churches. . . . and not either be caught and confined to their nests in barns or rotten trees, or put in cages fit for such night birds." [1]

The first edition of Daniel Featley's book appeared three years before George Fox began to preach, so that it supplies interesting material for a study of the lay preaching which prepared the way for the early Quakers. The lay preacher was indeed abroad. Barclay's *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, a singularly able book packed with the fruits of wide study and research, abounds in details as to the progress of the movement both on the Continent and in our own country.

The exile churches in Amsterdam and other continental centres conceded the fullest liberty of prophesying or preaching to members not in

[1] Daniel Featley's *Dippers Dipt.*

office, and some time was reserved for these exercises after the pastor and teacher had delivered their message. There was also a meeting in the week, when those who did not belong to the church might prophesy or preach. John Robinson of Leyden wrote a treatise in 1618 called "The people's plea for the exercise of prophecy against Mr. John Yates, his monopoly." Yates was a preacher in Norwich who had written to prove "ordinary prophecy out of office unlawful." Robinson argues that so far from it being a disgrace to the officers of a church for another church member to prophesy after them, it was only since those who ought to be the servants of the Church had become her masters that "one alone in the Church must be heard all his life long, others better able than he sitting at his feet continually." He says that in his own church at Leyden those who had any gift to speak to the edification of the hearers were exhorted to use it after the precedent in the Acts of the Apostles (13 14). This custom was followed not only in the exiled Independent churches, but in the Belgic churches. The Synod at Emden in 1571 declared that it was to be observed in all churches. The Synod of Wesel in 1568 maintained that the order of prophets who might explain a text in the public

services ought to be maintained in every thriving church. "In this college of prophets shall be admitted, not only the elders, but also the ministers and deacons, yea, all particular members who desire to receive the gift of prophecy from the Lord, and to employ it for the benefit of the Church." The Mennonite sect, called the Collegianten, which was formed in 1619, held that all spiritually-minded Christians were at liberty to prophesy. Robinson thought the custom conduced to familiarity and goodwill between pastors and people, fitted men for the ministry, and tended to the conversion of souls.

The exile churches bequeathed this legacy of lay preaching to the first Congregational and Baptist churches in England. It had been proved and rooted in their system during the days of exile. John Smyth of Amsterdam, one of the founders of the English General Baptists, published a book in 1609, in which he held that "although it is lawful to pray, preach, and sing out of a book for all penitent persons, yet a man regenerate is above all books and scriptures whatsoever, seeing he hath the Spirit of God within him, which teacheth him the true meaning of the Scriptures, without which Spirit the Scriptures are but a dead letter which is perverted and misconstrued, as we see this day, to contrary ends and senses,

and that to bind a regenerate man to a book in prayer, preaching, or singing, is to set the Holy Ghost to school in the one as well as the other." Two members of Smyth's church have left the following description of their worship: "We begin by a prayer, after read one or two chapters of the Bible, give the sense thereof and confer on the same. That done, we lay aside our books, and after a solemn prayer made by the first speaker, he propoundeth some text out of the Scripture, and prophesieth out of the same by the space of one hour, or three quarters of an hour. After him standeth up a second speaker, and prophesieth out of the same text. After him the third, the fourth, the fifth, or as many as the time will give leave. Then the first speaker concludeth with prayer, with an exhortation to contribution to the poor. This morning exercise begins at eight of the clock and continueth till twelve of the clock. The like courses and exercises are observed in the afternoon, from two of the clock unto five or six of the clock. Last of all the execution of the government of the church is handled."

About the year 1640 the various sects of Baptists and Independents in this country began to attract general attention. A great controversy arose as to the propriety of lay

preaching, and the new prophets were vigorously assailed in satirical pamphlets. One of them introduces us to the Brownist synagogue, where "Green the feltmaker, Marlin the buttonmaker, Spencer the coachman, Rodgers the glover," and others do commonly preach. In 1641 the House of Commons gave permission to any parish to set up a lecture, and maintain an orthodox minister at its own charge, "to preach every Lord's day when there is no preaching, and to preach one day a week when there is no lecture." The Independents and Baptists naturally availed themselves of any opportunity thus presented to supply a vacancy. At St. Ann's, Aldersgate, on Sunday, August 8, 1641, the minister was absent, and "many desired their friends to go into the pulpit." A contest arose whether a stranger who was once a Jesuit should preach, or Marlin the buttonmaker. Marlin won the day, and delivered a lengthy Protestant sermon. The churchwarden at last interrupted him and pulled him down from the pulpit. The same year "prophet Hunt" preached in St. Sepulchre's Church, "making another combustion." Lay preaching spread so rapidly through the army and through the whole nation, that in 1645 Parliament passed a resolution to silence every preacher who was "not ordained

a minister in this or some other reformed church, except such as intending the ministry were allowed for the trial of their gifts by those who shall be appointed thereto by both Houses of Parliament." The extreme Presbyterians thus aimed a blow at Independency. The ordinance was sent to Sir Thomas Fairfax to be observed by the army, but little attention was paid to it. Captains and soldiers were sent out to preach everywhere, and "tickets of the time and place" were distributed. Cromwell's porter preached on a grass plot opposite his house. Even where the Independents and Presbyterians were not so sharply divided, the Presbyterians were compelled to allow the occasional preaching of gifted brethren in their pulpits. The vote in Parliament soon proved itself a dead letter.

In the troubles of the Civil War the country sorely needed religious teachers. Thirty-two parish churches in London were without pastors in 1646. The Mayor of Sunderland sent a petition to Parliament: "We are a people who have been destitute of a preaching minister, yea, ever since any of us now breathing were born, to our souls' grief and dreadful hazard of destruction; neither is it our case alone, but also ten or twelve parishes all adjoining are in like manner void of the means of salvation." It was

estimated in 1646 that out of 9200 parish churches, nearly 4000 were unappropriated. Many parishes had been twenty to forty years without a preaching ministry. The liberty of prophesying was, however, freely exercised. Neal says in his *History of the Puritans* (chap. 16), that at the end of 1645, when the old regiments were disbanded by order of the House of Commons, and a new army formed under Fairfax and Cromwell, the chaplains of the old regiments returned to their cures. As new regiments were formed, the officers applied to Parliament and the Assembly for chaplains, "but the Presbyterian ministers, being possessed of warm benefices, were unwilling to undergo the fatigues of another campaign, or it may be to serve with men of such desperate measures. This fatal accident proved the ruin of the cause in which the Parliament were engaged; for the army being destitute of chaplains, who might have restrained the irregularities of their zeal, the officers set up for preachers in their several regiments, depending upon a kind of miraculous assistance of the divine Spirit, without any study or preparation, and when their imaginations were heated, they gave vent to the most crude and undigested absurdities. Nor did the evil rest there, for from preaching at the head of their

regiments, they took possession of the country pulpits where they were quartered, till at length they spread the infection over the whole nation, and brought the regular ministry into contempt. Most of the common soldiers were religious and orderly, and when released from duty spent their time in prayer and religious conferences, like men who carried their lives in their hands; but for want of prudent and regular instruction, were swallowed up in the depths of enthusiasm."

On December 31, 1646, after a year of such teaching, the House of Commons issued a declaration "wherein they express their dislike of lay preachers, and their resolutions to proceed against all such as shall take upon them to preach or expound the Scriptures in any church or chapel, or any other public place, except they be ordained either here, or in some other reformed churches." It was time for such a declaration. The tide had spread not only over all the country, but into London itself. "It was first pleaded in excuse for this practice, that a gifted brother had better preach and pray to the people than nobody; but now learning, good sense, and the rational interpretation of Scripture began to be cried down, and every bold pretender to inspiration was preferred to the most grave and sober divines of the age; some advanced

themselves into the rank of prophets, and others uttered all such crude and undigested absurdities as came first into their minds, calling them the dictates of the Spirit within them, by which the public peace was frequently disturbed, and great numbers of ignorant people led into the belief of the most dangerous errors."[1] The long interruption of work in the universities caused by the Civil War had produced a great scarcity of learned and orthodox ministers. Some had been silenced for refusing the Covenant, others had been dispersed or killed in the war. "Many pulpits also were vacant by reason of the scandal or insufficiency of the incumbents, which was one occasion of the increase of lay preachers, for the country people would go to hear anybody rather than have no sermons; besides, the Presbyterian clergy would authorise none to preach, except such as would take covenant, and consent to their discipline. . . . The Independents, who were less zealous about clerical orders, encouraged, or at least connived at the lay preachers, apprehending that in cases of necessity, pious men of good natural parts might exercise their gifts publicly to the edification of the Church; till under this cover they saw every bold enthusiast almost begin to usurp the office of a teacher."[2]

[1] Neal, chap. 17. [2] Neal, chap. 19.

Such is Neal's record. The wits of the Royal party vied with each other in heaping scorn on the lay preachers of the Parliamentary army. Butler thus describes one of them:—

> This zealot
> Is of a mongrel, diverse kind,
> Cleric before, and lay behind;
> A lawless, linsey woolsey brother,
> Half of one order, half another;
> A creature of amphibious nature,
> On land a beast, a fish in water;
> That always preys on grace, or sin;
> A sheep without, a wolf within.
> This fierce inquisitor has chief
> Dominion over men's belief
> And manners.

But, despite Butler's tirade, and making due allowance for the excesses of the time, it is well known that the morals and discipline of the army owed not a little to lay preaching. The England of the Commonwealth was a place where drunkenness, profane swearing, unchastity, and debauchery were out of fashion. Lay preaching must be allowed its full share in producing this happy state of things. There were, no doubt, sins against prudence and propriety; but the lay preachers did much to quicken zeal for religion and turn men afresh to the study of the Word of God.

Macaulay has caught the spirit of the times in those stirring lines in "The Battle of Naseby," which he puts into the mouth of "Obadiah Bind-their-kings-in-chains-and-their-nobles-with-links-of-iron, Sergeant in Ireton's regiment."

> **Like a servant of the Lord, with his Bible and his sword,**
> **The general rode along us to form us to the fight.**

A soldier's sermon is preserved in the British Museum. "Orders given out, the word 'Stand fast,'" as it was lately delivered in a farewell sermon by Major-General Samuel Kem to the officers and soldiers of his regiment in Bristol, November 6, 1646: "Stand fast! that's the word. Faith in the heart, not the head, is the signal. Labour to have a stubborn and stout will in relation to what is known to be the truth of God." Edwards tells us in his *Gangræna* that a young man in scarlet spoke to him as he came out of the pulpit at Christ Church, and told him that if the soldiers may not have leave to preach, they will not fight. In November 1646 Colonel Hewson came into Aston Church, contemned the ordinance of Parliament read that day against lay preaching, and did preach whether the minister would or no. Lieutenant Chillenden asserts, "Many thousand souls besides me can testify that Christ hath been preached, and that

effectually, and to the comfort of many hearts; and I bid defiance to the devil to produce that even those whom they call sectaries, in the preaching of the Lord Jesus, did by that even open a gap to profaneness." Baxter held a discussion with the soldiers at Kidderminster: "I took the reading pew, and Pitchford's cornet and the troopers the gallery, and I alone disputed against them from morning to night; for I knew their trick, that if I had gone out first they would have prated what boastful words they listed when I was gone, and made the people believe that they had baffled me."

Baxter was a stout opponent of lay preaching, and had many sharp encounters with Fox and his early preachers. He regarded these preachers as fanatical and incompetent. In his *Cure of Church Divisions* (1670) he also describes the preaching of the Independents and Baptists as "a pitiful, raw, and ignorant, affectionate manner of expression, and loudness of preacher's voice." There is not much cause for wonder at Baxter's attitude when we remember the mad fanaticism of the times. Less devout men than Baxter express their dislike for the lay preacher in far stronger terms.

When Daniel Featley was lying prisoner in Peter-House, in January 1645, he says:—

I wonder that our doors, posts, and walls sweat not, upon which such notes as these have of late been affixed. On such a day such a brewer's clerk exerciseth, such a tailor expoundeth, such a waterman teacheth. If we have crow-poets, and pye-poetesses; if turners turn Bezaleels and Aholiabs, to mend the polished works of the temple; if cooks, with Demosthenes, deservedly reproved by St. Basil, instead of mincing of their meat, fall upon dividing of the Word; if tailors leap up from the shop-board to the pulpit, and patch up sermons out of stolen shreds; if not only of the lowest of the people, as in Jeroboam's time, priests are consecrated to the Most High God, but if, like as Novatus consecrated himself a bishop, so these ordain themselves priests and deacons; if they enter not into the Church, but break into it; if they take not holy orders, but snatch them to themselves; do we marvel to see such confusion in the Church as there is? . . . Now, if any man desires to know from whence this clergy of laics come, that he may not think that their russet rabbis, and mechanic enthusiasts, and profound watermen, and sublime coachmen, and illuminated tradesmen of almost all sorts are dropt from the clouds, let him peruse the catalogue of heretics written by Alonsius A Castro, Pontanus, Slussenbergius . . . and he shall find that they all proceeded doctors out of the school of one stock, the Anabaptist.[1]

Featley in another work[2] speaks of John Matthias, who commanded that none should keep any book in his house except the Bible, and had a great bonfire made of all other works:—

[1] *Epistle Dedicatory to Dippers dipt.*

[2] A warning for England, especially for London, in the famous history of the frantic Anabaptists.

But better all these obstinate sectaries were burnt at a stake, then such a bone-fire made in this kingdom; after which would follow the ruin of all schools and universities, and more than Egyptian darkness through the wide kingdom. Since the extraordinary gifts of prophecy and languages have ceased in the Church, secular learning hath been as the day-star appearing in the firmament of the Church before the sun; and where no day-star going before, no sun-rising after. As to rude mechanics and unlettered artificers, to choose them for our guides to the Celestial Canaan, is all one as if an army, to march by night over narrow bridges and by fearful precipices, should, by common consent, elect purblind men to lead the way; or a fleet at sea, after they have cut the line and sail under an unknown climate in a rough sea and tempestuous weather, should among all the mariners choose the unskilfulest pilotes to steer their course.

Cromwell was a consistent defender of lay preaching. He writes on September 12, 1650, to the governor of Edinburgh Castle, who had complained that men of mere civil place and employment should usurp the calling and employment of the ministry:—

You say you have just cause to regret that men of civil employments should usurp the calling and employment of the ministry, to the scandal of the reformed kirks. Are you troubled that Christ is preached? Is preaching so exclusively your function? Doth it scandalise the reformed kirks, and Scotland in particular? Is it against the Covenant? Away with the Covenant, if this be so! I thought the Covenant and these "professors

of it" could have been willing that any should speak good of the name of Christ; if not, it is no Covenant of God's approving; nor are these kirks you mention insomuch the spouse of Christ. Where do you find in the Scripture a ground to warrant such an assertion, that preaching is exclusively your function? Though an approbation from man hath order in it, and may do well, yet he that hath no better warrant than that hath none at all. I hope He that ascended up on high may give His gifts to whom He pleases; and if those gifts be the seal of mission, be not "you" envious though Eldad and Medad prophesy. You know who bids us "covet earnestly the best gifts," but chiefly that we may prophesy; which the apostle explains there to be a speaking to instruction and edification and comfort—which speaking, the instructed, the edified, and comforted can best tell the energy and effect of "and say whether it be genuine." If such evidence be, I say again, take heed you envy not for your own sakes, lest you be guilty of a greater fault than Moses reproved in Joshua for envying for his sake.

Indeed, you err through mistaking of the Scriptures. Approbation is an act of conveniency in respect of order, not of necessity, to give faculty to preach the gospel. Your pretended fear lest error should step in is like the man who would keep all the wine out of the country lest men should be drunk. It will be found an unjust and unwise jealousy to deprive a man of his natural liberty upon a supposition he may abuse it. When he doth abuse it, judge. If a man speak foolishly, ye suffer him gladly because ye are wise; if erroneously, the truth more appears by your conviction "of him." Stop such a man's mouth by sound words which cannot be gainsayed. If he speak blasphemously, or to the disturbance of the public peace, let the civil magistrate punish him; if truly, rejoice in the truth.

On the following Christmas Day, Cromwell writes to Colonel Hacker at Peebles about a captain in the Scotch army: "But, indeed, I was not satisfied with your last speech to me about Empson. That he was a better preacher than fighter or soldier, or words to that effect. Truly, I think that he that prays and preaches best will fight best. I know nothing that will give like courage and confidence as the knowledge of God in Christ will; and I bless God to see any in this army able and willing to impart the knowledge they have for the good of others. And I expect to be encouraged by all the chief officers in this army especially; and I hope you will do so."

In his speech at the opening of his first Parliament, September 4, 1654, Cromwell reviews the past. "So likewise the axe was laid to the root of the ministry. It was Anti-christian, it was Babylonish, said they. It suffered under such a judgement, that the truth is, as the extremity was great, according to the former system,[1] I wish it prove not as great according to this. The former extremity we suffered under was: That no man, though he had never so good a testimony, though he had received gifts from Christ, might preach, unless

[1] *The Presbyterian.*

ordained. So now, I think, we are at the other extremity, which many affirm, that he who is ordained hath a nullity, or Antichristianism, stamped 'thereby' upon his calling; so that he ought not to preach, or not be heard."

Before the Committee of Ninety-Nine on April 21, 1657, Cromwell dealt with the measures taken to prevent ministers from sitting in Parliament. He says: "I must say to you, on behalf of our army, in the next place to their fighting, they have been very good 'preachers'; and I should be sorry they should be excluded from serving the Commonwealth because they have been accustomed to 'preach' to their troops, companies, and regiments—which I think has been one of the blessings upon them to the carrying on of the great work."

Readers of Sir Walter Scott will remember the opening scene in Woodstock, which is laid in the parish church. It was the autumn of 1652, and a goodly congregation had gathered to hold a solemn thanksgiving service for the victory at Worcester. As Mr. Holdenough, in his blue Geneva cloak, began to ascend the pulpit stairs, a strong hand seized his robe, and a man of warlike mien intimated that it was his own intention to preach to the people. The minister suddenly unfastened his cloak, so that

the soldier fell backwards down the steps, whilst the triumphant divine skipped into the pulpit and gave out his psalm of victory. The peace-making mayor was cowed by the soldiers, who stepped forth to protect their comrade; and the Presbyterian orator had to make way for his Independent rival, who mounted the pulpit, pulled his Bible from his pocket, and discoursed with much gusto from the text, "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty; and in Thy majesty ride prosperously." Scott's picture is true to the life. Many such scenes were witnessed during the stormy days that followed the execution of Charles I., when the soldiers saw "not why men of gifts should not be heard within these citadels of superstition (the churches), as well as the voice of the men of crape of old, and the men of cloak now."

In the *Broadmead Records*, we find a note from the pastor, Thomas Hardcastle, to Mr. EDWARD TERRILL, one of his ruling elders, a schoolmaster in Corn Street, Bristol, asking him to preach at a neighbouring village:—

7th of 4 Mo. 1673.

DEAR BROTHER,—It is much upon my spirit to desire you to go to Shirehampton to-morrow; there is a door open, and the people very desirous of help. Of this the

bearer can inform you. Lay aside all doubts and disputes, and resolve to go. You may make but one meeting of it, and begin between ten and eleven. This is all at present. —From yours, as you know, T. H.

I know not a more open door in the country, the place being altogether destitute, and the chapel open, where all sorts will freely come.[1]

Ten years before, the Mayor of Bristol issued a warrant for the arrest of Brother Terrell, who was preaching to the people in the absence of their pastor, Mr. Ewins, who had just been thrown into prison. The elders received timely warning of the approach of the sergeants, and desired Terrell "to forbear speaking, and sit down. So he did. And when the officers came in, he went through the people, that the officers found him not." He was apprehended next day, and, after being kept in prison for a fortnight, was bound over to appear at the next Sessions. It was well for the Baptists of Broadmead that they had such a lay preacher as Mr. Terrell, for they were often left without a pastor. In February 1675 Mr. Hardcastle and Mr. Weeks, the Presbyterian minister, were sent to Newgate prison in Bristol. Mr. Weeks had been vicar of Buckland Newton in Dorset, and, after his ejection, had gathered a congregation of fifteen

[1] *Broadmead Records*, p. 209.

hundred persons. The Bristol Nonconformists met in consultation. Mr. Terrell says: "Now, three of our ministers being imprisoned, some of each congregation of the brethren met together to consult how to carry on our meetings, that we might keep to our duty, and edify one another now our pastors were gone. Some even were ready of thinking to give off, namely, of the Presbyterians; that they could not carry it on, because of their principle, [which] was not to hear a man not bred up at the university, and not ordained. But the Lord appeared, and helped us to prevail with them to hold on, and keep up their meetings. And for the first, and for some time, we concluded this: to come and assemble together, and for one to pray and read a chapter, and then sing a Psalm, and after conclude with prayer; and so two brethren to carry on the meeting one day and two another: for a while, to try what they would do with us." Only one door of the meeting-house was left open, and here a youth or two stood as sentinels to give notice of the approach of any officer. "Also, some of the hearers, women and sisters, would sit and crowd in the stairs, when we did begin the meeting with any exercise, that so the informers might not too suddenly come in upon us; by reason of which, they were prevented divers times."

Mr. Terrell adds: "For our parts, at our meeting, we presently made use of our ministering gifts in the church, as we did in former persecutions, contenting ourselves with mean gifts and coarse fare in the want of better."

To defeat the spies who might come in, a curtain was hung up, behind which a select company sat. Among these was the preacher for the day. Those outside the curtain could hear, but could not tell who was the speaker. Brethren were stationed outside the curtain to prevent any going within who were not known to be trusty friends. If an officer appeared in sight, news was passed inside, and the preacher sat down. All began to sing, and, when the danger was past, the preacher resumed his sermon. Mr. Weeks's church put up a wainscot board, behind which the lay preacher stood, whilst "Brother Gifford's people took this course: a company of tall brethren stand about him that speaks, and, having near his feet made a trap-door in the floor, when the informers come, they let down the brother that spake into a room under." Mr. Terrell's gifts as a lay preacher were of unspeakable service to his church at this critical time.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, we find that the Association of Independent Churches, meeting at Kimbolton in 1708, con-

sidered "the best method for encouraging and accomplishment of young men for the work of the ministry, who are *gracious*, and, in some measure, gifted and inclined that way."[1] Their parents were requested to find them books, if they could afford to do so; if not, these were to be provided by the churches. Teachers were also appointed who might set apart a day or two every month to examine and instruct such men in the principles of the Christian religion. Richard Davis, pastor of the Independent Church at Rowell from 1689 to 1714, formed a group of seven congregations, and had a band of twenty-eight lay preachers working under him. He was summoned to London to explain his conduct in setting up twenty-nine different stations in various counties, several of which were in or near places where Dissenting ministers had their stated congregations. Mr. Davis soon turned the tables by asking his brethren why they did not "thrust out some of that great swarm they have at London (that eat the fat and drink the sweet) to offer the grace of Christ to the poor country people." The spirit of Wesley glowed in this noble-hearted man, whose zeal for those destitute of religious teaching made him send out his band of lay-preachers.

[1] Dr. Waddington's *Congregational History*, ii. 163.

CHAPTER IV

LAY PREACHING AMONG THE QUAKERS

GEORGE FOX'S journals contain no pages more interesting than those that describe his own early religious struggles. He tells us that "in my very young days I had a gravity and stayedness of mind and spirit not usual in children." His father, Christopher Fox, was called by his neighbours "Righteous Christer," and his mother was a woman of character and true piety. Both were "great zealots for the Presbyterian cause." Their boy was apprenticed to a grazier and cattle dealer, who trusted him with much of his property. Fox says, "I never wronged man or woman in all that time; for the Lord's power was with me, and over me, to preserve me. While I was in that service I used in my dealings the word 'verily,' and it was a common saying among people that knew me, 'If George says "verily," there is no altering him.'" When he was seeking for some one to

guide him in his spiritual perplexities, Fox fell into the hands of a divine at Mansetter in Warwickshire, who advised him to smoke and sing psalms. Fox was not much helped by such counsel. "Tobacco was a thing I did not love, and psalms I was not in an estate to sing; I could not sing." He found his way to Barnet in June 1644 labouring under strong temptation to despair. Sometimes he hid himself in his chamber, often he "walked solitary in the Chase there, to wait upon the Lord." One Sunday morning as he was walking in a field light seemed to break in on his mind as to the question of ministerial status. "The Lord opened unto me, that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ, and I strayed at it, because it was the common belief of the people."

He jumped to the conclusion that a paid ministry was opposed to gospel truth, and denounced the salaried "priests" as "hirelings"; "steeple-houses" were "idol-temples," the sound of church bells "struck at his life," for he regarded them as market bells calling the people to see the priest expose his wares for sale. When he received the assurance that his name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life, he soon felt it to be his mission to "bring people off"

from their man-made churches. He began to preach in 1648, and soon became one of the best-known men in England. Within eight years he had "travelled over most part of the nation." He visited Wales, Ireland, Barbadoes, Jamaica, North America, Holland, Germany, preaching and holding meetings. No friar of the Middle Ages was so faithful or so fearless as "the man with the leather breeches," who ventured into churches to denounce what he regarded as superstition, and became conspicuous in market-places and courts of justice all over England.

At Sedbergh, in Yorkshire, the whole of the two Independent congregations joined Fox. After preaching there at Firbank Chapel one morning, more than a thousand people flocked to hear him in the afternoon. He stood on a huge rock and spoke for three hours. Both ministers and people were won. It is said that more than a thousand people were convinced of the truth which Fox proclaimed. Wherever he went the same results were seen. Conversions among all classes began to be counted by hundreds. At one place in the West Riding the constable had a warrant in his pocket for Fox's arrest, but he told the preacher of it, and quietly waited to hear his sermon. Fox preached everywhere—in town halls, market-places, churchyards, under yew trees, on the top

of hay ricks. Sometimes thousands of people flocked to hear him. Mr. Barclay [1] says that it is a mistake to suppose that Fox and his followers systematically interrupted the worship of other Christian people. There is no doubt that they did this sometimes, but in many cases they were requested to speak in the churches. In some districts the people rang the bell for Fox to preach in the churches, and in several instances they would have broken open the doors when the churchwardens refused the keys. An unpublished manuscript of Fox records one instance in which the priest and four chief constables were convinced. He adds, this old priest went up and down with him "to many steeple-houses, and the people would ring the bells when we came to a town, thinking I would speak; and the truth spread, and I spoke in many steeple-houses, but I did not come into their pulpits; and some places where the priests were afraid they fled away from the town whenas I came to it; and the people would break open the doors if I would go into the steeple-house, if the churchwardens would not open it; but I would not let them, but spoke to them in the yard or anywhere the truth of God, and in love it was received, and

[1] *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 275.

many justices were living in Yorkshire, and the truth spread." Another Sunday we find Fox at a village three miles from Beverley. He went into the church, and, after the clergyman had finished his sermon, Fox spoke to him and the people "largely, and they were moderate, and many heard the truth gladly and desired me to give them another meeting, and so the truth had its passage." In 1652 he says: "I passed to Ramside, where was a chapel in which Thomas Lawson used to preach, who was an eminent priest. He lovingly acquainted his people in the morning of my coming in the afternoon, by which means many were gathered together. When I came I saw there was no place so convenient as the chapel, wherefore I went up into the chapel, and all was quiet. Thomas Lawson went not up into his pulpit, but left the time to me." At Boutle the same year the clergyman quoted many passages about deceivers and antichrists which he "threw down upon us." Fox waited till he was done; then he began to speak. The priest and the people were rude, but the constable stood up and demanded peace in the name of the Commonwealth. Fox says: "I took his scriptures that he spoke of, false prophets and antichrists and deceivers, and threw them back upon him, and let him see that he was in the very

steps of them; and he began to oppose me. I told him his (hour) glass was gone, his time was out, the place was as free for me as for him, and he accused me that I had broke the law in speaking to him in his time in the morning."

Similar instances might be multiplied to show how much freedom Fox and his preachers enjoyed during Commonwealth times. Edward Burough frequently preached in the London churches in 1654. He spoke for an hour at a church in Lombard Street, "where most of the high notionists in the city come." The Friends had clear legal right to preach after the Presbyterian minister had finished his sermon, and this was not regarded as an interruption of public worship. The churches were regarded as public buildings, and the Sessions were occasionally held in them. After the Restoration, when the Church of England resumed its position, the Quaker preachers rarely attempted to preach after the minister had finished. A great number of the Baptist churches were also thrown open to Fox and his first preachers, but in course of time the relations between Friends and Dissenters generally became less friendly. The Calvinistic Baptists were hostile from the first.

Fox was not only a restless evangelist, but he gathered round him a band of zealous preachers

who carried the doctrines of the New Light into all parts of the kingdom. In 1653 no fewer than thirty travelling preachers had joined him; before another twelvemonth the number had doubled. The first female preacher among Fox's converts began to preach in 1650. At one period he had seventy-three under his control. He kept a list of these preachers and guided all their work. They reported their proceedings to head-quarters at Swarthmore Hall, and consulted Fox in all matters of importance. They applied to him for permission to leave their post and asked him to appoint a successor. We find Thomas Goodyear writing in 1653: "I desire thee (if thou in thy wisdom find it meet so to do) to send up some Friend who is in the life and power of Truth, about two weeks hence, up to Swannington, then the day after the day called Christmas Day, that I may have the liberty of returning, if but for a time; to thy discretion I leave it." The same year Thomas Holmes wrote to Margaret Fell: "George hath sent for me to pass among Friends where he hath been in Leicestershire and Warwickshire." Another preacher also writes to Fox: "Tender and careful brother, according to the charge thou laid upon me, I have been at Coventry upon a lecture day, and I went to the steeple-house and

was moved to speak to the priests." Preachers were sent to stay awhile with infant churches for quietism, and the doctrine of silence had not yet begun to sap the sources of strength. Edward Burough was very anxious that more care should be taken in the selection of preachers, and told Fox: "I lie it upon thee that none go forth but when the life is manifested and wisdom is grown to discern and order. For some hath been here, and we hear of some in our passage in Lancashire, which gives great occasion, and makes the truth evil spoken of, and we have the worse passage." Some had given occasion of stumbling, and he urges, "Call them in when they come out of prison."

Fox stoutly maintained that women had an equal position with men in all matters connected with preaching, worship, or daily life. The early Quakers abundantly justified his confidence, for men and women were alike zealous in spreading the truth, and alike patient in suffering for it. Some women preachers, it is true, did not altogether reflect credit on the Society, but these were soon dealt with. We find one of the ablest of the early Friends, Edward Burough, in 1656, sending a woman preacher to Fox with this note: "This little short maid that comes to thee, she has been this long while abroad, and in her there

is little or no service as in the ministry. It were well to be laid on her to be a servant somewhere. That is more her place. I leave it to thee. Friends where she has been have been burdened by her." Another noted brother severely rebuked a female preacher, and bid her "return to her place in the outward (her home) and wait." The same man writes from Leith asking Margaret Fell to send a horse and man for Sara Knowles. "The truth is under suffering until she be in her family again"!

Fox did his utmost to organize lay preaching. The ministers met to form arrangements very much as Wesleyan ministers used to meet the lay preachers of their circuits on a Sunday morning and settle the appointments for each Sunday. In March 1675 we find a minute of the London ministers' meeting to this effect: "It is desired that all Friends in and about the city that have a public testimony for God do meet with the brethren on every first-day and second-day mornings when they can." If unable to come they are "to send a note to the meetings signifying what meetings they intend to be at on first-days." The Monday morning meeting apparently made arrangements, and on Sunday at eight the finishing touches were added. After it they dispersed. Horses stood in readiness in the

yard for those who visited the more distant meetings. Fox had arranged this gathering in order that ministers might not "go in heaps" to one meeting and leave others uncared for. John Harwood complained that Fox ordered the preachers to go to such and such a place, and "in his absence leaves one of his most eminent servants" to order the rest, or give them a piece of paper, which probably contained instructions to attend a certain meeting. Mr. Barclay regards this arrangement as the secret of the vast energy and success which attended the new Society. "We have thus presented to our view a ministry of 'lay' preachers, meeting together and arranging among themselves both the home missionary and the regular church work, apportioning it among themselves in accordance with the various gifts of grace possessed by the officers of this working Church. They welcomed any voluntary labourers who, without being ministers, were generally approved by the Church, and considered on trial." The travelling evangelists were supplied with Bibles, which seem to have cost about three shillings and sixpence. Fox and the early ministers often preached Bible in hand, and it is thought that towards the end of Fox's life he intended to introduce a large Bible into the gallery for the use of ministers. It is

evident that he was fully awake to the need of a more regular and teaching ministry. He wished to develop lay preaching to the fullest extent, but to organize and distribute it with care. His efforts in this direction were attended with considerable suspicion and heart-burning by those who fancied there was some analogy between "a purely lay ministry and a State-supported hierarchy." This spirit robbed the Society of its strength, and goes far to explain its decadence. In Ireland in 1820 there were only two men and twelve or fourteen women ministers, whilst the Dublin Society, with nearly eight hundred members, did not produce one regular male minister for nearly a century.

Women were not admitted to the second-day morning meeting. It had been found necessary in 1700 to caution them against taking up too much time in the public gatherings. When they set up a kind of a lady-preachers' meeting of their own the brethren expressed their judgement that this was unnecessary. They might leave their names for insertion on the plan, and if they were careful not to interfere with the brethren, they were told that they might possibly have an opportunity of speaking. In 1706 a stand was erected for the women preachers to speak from at Devonshire House.

It is interesting in this connection to find that John Locke, the philosopher, once went with William III. to a Quaker meeting in London, where he heard Rebecca Collins speak with such power that his objections to lady-preachers melted away. He sent her some sweetmeats with a note from Gray's Inn, dated November 21, 1696: "My sweet Friend,—A paper of sweetmeats by the bearer to attend your journey comes to testify the sweetness I found in your society. I admire no converse like that of Christian freedom, and fear no bondage like that of pride and prejudice. . . . Woman, indeed, had the honour first to publish the resurrection of the Lord of Love—why not again the resurrection of the Spirit of Love? And let all the disciples rejoice therein, as doth your partner, JOHN LOCKE."

There is something inspiring about the enthusiasm for souls which burned in the hearts of these Quaker apostles. George Robinson preached in Jerusalem; Mary Fisher actually delivered her message to "Mahomet IV. in full divan, encompassed with his army, girt with glittering adoring courtiers." There was no doubt much danger of fanaticism. James Nayler, one of the finest of Fox's men, "run out into imaginations, and a great company with him; and they raised

up a great darkness in the nation. Nayler afterwards bitterly repented of his excesses, but such fanaticism added fuel to the fires of persecution. In 1656 there were seldom less than a thousand Quakers in prison, and they suffered horribly from the damp and filthy dungeons of the day. It is significant to read Fox's statement that in this very year "the Lord's truth was firmly planted over the nation."

In America the Friends have a noble record of work and of heroic suffering. The Puritans imprisoned and barbarously used the visitors, and even shipped them back to England. Four men and a woman called Mary Dyer, of remarkable refinement and piety, were actually hanged on Boston Common. Fox himself visited America in order to remove all just cause of offence, and Quakerism soon found a soil in which it flourished exceedingly.

STEPHEN GRELLET was one of the noblest lay preachers of the Society. He belonged to an old French family, and during the Revolution was sentenced to be shot. He and his brother escaped to America. They spent their first winter at Newtown. Grellet was recommended to study the works of William Penn, and was greatly moved by his *No Cross, no Crown*. The visit of two English ladies, who were Friends,

completed the work which Penn's book had begun. At the close of 1796, when in his twenty-fourth year, he was received into the Society. His biographer (Mr. Guest) says that times have happily changed since Grellet's day, and laymen are now the most powerful preachers on behalf of the gospel, but "in no other communion could he at that time have exercised his gifts as a layman, or been introduced to circles of usefulness so wide and varied." In March 1798 he was duly recorded as a minister. During the terrible outbreak of yellow fever at Philadelphia in that year, he devoted himself to the care of the sick, and himself caught the fever. He afterwards prospered greatly in business, and his career became one of ever-broadening influence. He visited Europe four times on philanthropic and evangelistic services. In 1812 he went with William Forster to see Newgate, and gave such an account of the misery of the prisoners to Mrs. Fry that she at once set to work to provide garments for the naked children. Grellet thus enlisted her sympathy in a work which was to bear such great fruit. His visit to Russia in 1819, and his confidential relations with the Czar, who became his warm friend, and through his advice introduced many reforms into his empire, form a bright page in the

story of Quaker evangelism. Grellet penetrated into the secret archives of the Inquisition at Rome, and preached boldly to the Pope as a fellow-sinner. An eminent Presbyterian minister who knew him well says that "his gospel preaching was of a character rarely equalled, and probably nowhere surpassed. Its chief characteristic was its wonderful vitality. Perfectly free from every trace of egotism, he preached 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' The sufferings of his Lord for the sake of sinful man deeply and abidingly affected his soul. His sermons manifested an extraordinary originality, scope of thought, and spiritual wealth."

Mr. W. E. Forster, then a schoolboy near Bristol, describes a visit paid by Grellet to Frenchay meeting in March 1832: "What a good, sweet man he is. I should so like to have been at home when he came to have waited upon him. He gave us a very good sermon indeed, chiefly upon the text of 'Halt not between two opinions,' on which he spoke of the necessity of making a good choice, and that we should not be wavering. I thought that in the latter part of his sermon he addressed himself to us, but soon after he had sat down he rose up again, and spoke to us in particular, in a very sweet and striking manner. But he spoke as if

he knew everything about us. At one time he said that our parents had no greater delight than in our being good, or words to that effect. After meeting he spoke to every one of the boys. He knew me, and said he saw both father and mother in me. The Tricketts were so kind as to have me and Lucas and Fry to dinner with him. What warm shakes of the hand he gives one!" In labours he was more abundant. During his last journey to Europe he travelled about twenty-eight thousand miles. He returned home in 1834, and spent the last twenty years of his life at Burlington, New Jersey. He died in 1855.

William E. Forster used to tell a good story of his childhood.[1] He was travelling by stage-coach with his nurse, when a benevolent old gentleman asked, "Where is your papa, my dear?" "Papa is preaching in America," was the reply. "And where is your mamma?" "Mamma is preaching in Ireland," was his rejoinder to the astonished stranger. Forster's father was a revivalist and philanthropist of rare powers. He was naturally shy and lethargic, but when moved to speak, the tall, clumsily-formed man, with a somewhat heavy countenance, seemed to be under a kind of prophetic inspiration.

[1] *W. E. Forster's Life*, i. 37.

All his natural shyness and timidity vanished. He forgot himself, and seemed as though he were talking to his children gathered around him in his own house. His words were full of persuasive love, and his face seemed to grow almost heavenly. His voice was one of peculiar pathos, and tears sprang to the eyes of young and old as they listened to his words. When he set out on a preaching tour, he shook off his usual inertia, and was resolute, clear-sighted, and active. He would travel for days and nights together, cheerfully bearing all the fatigues and perils of the road, and devoting every spare moment to the prosecution of his work. During his five years' visit to America after his marriage, he had been at all the meetings of Friends in the United States, and at some more than once. He paid two other visits, and in labours was more abundant. His preaching had a special charm for the young, who responded eagerly to the tender fervour of his appeals. Wherever he went, there was a great growth of religious enthusiasm among the younger members of the Society. Joseph John Gurney's attachment to the principles of the Friends was confirmed by a journey he made with William Forster through Lincolnshire and other counties. "His ministry and example profoundly impressed me; and I

soon found that, beneath the veil of his modesty, there lay a rich treasure of intellectual power." William Forster said, in later life, that, had he been faithful to his own impressions of duty, he should have come forth as a minister when he was about sixteen years old. He first spoke in public when he was twenty, and two years later he was duly received as a minister. His gifts were soon recognised. The manifest depth of the influence under which he spoke, and the greatness of the themes which he selected, made his ministry a mighty power. He said: "Of all other things, I love to be driven to the Saviour, and to have my need of Him brought home to my soul."[1] People often said: "That man's preaching goes to the very root of the matter, and to the very hearts of his hearers."

An interesting little note from his son, the future statesman, deserves record as a word of encouragement to a drooping lay preacher from a boy of thirteen:—

"My very, very dear father, thy letter has been a very great comfort to me. The text, which I have found in the fifth verse of the fourth chapter of 2nd Corinthians, I thought the first part was particularly applicable to thee,

[1] *W. E. Forster's Life*, ii. 128.

when thou art so low about thy own preaching, when I am sure there is no reason for it. Pray, my dear father, do consider that, if thy preaching has been of no other use (which, I am sure, it has been to many other people), it has been of very great use to me, and has tended more to my good than that of any other person that I have ever heard. I hope this will be some comfort to thee, and may encourage thee to think that thou art nearly of as much use to others as to me."

Forster's mother was the sister of Thomas Fowell Buxton. ANNA BUXTON was a beauty and a wit—one of the gayest and most sprightly of girls; but she forsook the fashionable world to become a strict Quakeress and a preacher among the Friends. In the spring of 1818, shortly before the birth of her son, Mrs. Forster spent three months in evangelistic work in Ireland in company with Priscilla Gurney. The beauty, the sweet serenity, and the manifest consecration of these two ladies bore much fruit during this tour.

A great revival of Quakerism may be traced to the influence of ELIZABETH FRY and her brother, Joseph John Gurney. It was through the visit of an American Friend, William Savery, that Bessie Gurney, who had sorely chafed

against going to meeting, was led to consecrate her life to Christ. Eleven years later she came from London to attend her father's funeral. Nearly all the family were present in the old Quaker burial-ground at Norwich, the Gildencroft. "Just before the first earth was thrown into the grave, Mrs. Fry threw herself forward in the attitude of prayer, and, supported by her husband and sister, and almost choked by emotion, loudly prayed to be endued with thankfulness under affliction." This was the beginning of Mrs. Fry's ministry. Two years later, at a Bible Society's meeting at Earlham, she knelt down and offered prayer. She speaks of this as "awful to her nature, terrible to her as a timid and delicate woman," but she rejoiced that she was thus owned of God. Her voice was often heard in the Friends' meeting-house in Gracechurch Street, which she regularly attended, and where, as she says, "way was often made for her to declare publicly the goodness of our gracious and holy Helper." Sometimes she preached at the Devonshire House Meeting in Bishopsgate Street in a wonderfully touching and persuasive manner. She was not always at her ease, for she says on one occasion: "In prayer I was in a few words much helped, and, when first engaged in testi-

mony, for a short time all did well; then the enemy came in like a flood to overwhelm me, and, without any apparent want of sense or clearness, I sat down." The silver tones of her voice, and the majestic mien with which she delivered God's message, made a profound impression among the women at Newgate. She had what one of her sisters called a "witchery" of manner, which never failed to affect these degraded creatures. A minister, who went with her to visit the prisoners, heard her read the fifty-third of Isaiah. "Never till then," he says, "and never since then, have I heard any one read as Elizabeth Fry read that chapter—the solemn reverence of her manner, the articulation so exquisitely modulated, so distinct, that not a word of that sweet and touching voice could fail to be heard." Mr. Tayler said he had heard many eloquent preachers, but had "never before or since listened to one who had so thoroughly imbibed the Master's spirit, or been taught by Him the persuasive power of pleading with sinners for the life of their own souls."

As years went on, Mrs. Fry became a frequent visitor at Friends' meeting-houses in England and on the Continent. To the crowned heads of Europe she was almost a private chaplain. Thomas Cooper, who visited W. E. Forster in

1846, says the change in his face was radiant when he described Elizabeth Fry's stately form, the sweetness and thrilling power of her voice, and the vastness of influence she had over every human being with whom she spoke, from the King of Prussia to the vilest criminals in Newgate.[1]

Her brother, JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY, was a singularly gifted student. As a young man busily engaged in the bank at Norwich, he spent his leisure moments in reading Hebrew and Greek. After his marriage, in 1817, he became a minister among the Friends. He and Mrs. Fry often undertook preaching tours together, and she describes him as "my prophet, priest, and sympathiser, and often the upholder of my soul." He spent three years in America, moving from place to place, and gathering people of all classes together for religious and philanthropic objects. Bishop Stanley bore witness that his "peaceful life was one unwearied comment on evangelical charity in its fullest and most expanded sense." We may add his sister Richenda's tribute to him and Mrs. Fry: "All the world will acknowledge that the like of them has hardly been known upon this earth. They became polished instruments in the hands

[1] *W. E. Forster's Life*, i. 168.

of the Lord. They adorned the gospel which they preached. The loveliness of their characters beamed upon their countenances, and the mind that was in Christ dwelt largely in them. Their speech was always grace seasoned with salt. It was evident to all who knew them that they had been with Jesus, and the loveliness of His countenance was reflected upon them. To the Lord they all lived, and in the Lord they all died."

Mr. Hare's *Gurneys of Earlham* is really a picture gallery of lay preachers. Here is PRISCILLA HANNAH GURNEY, cousin to John Gurney of Earlham: "Small in person, beautiful in countenance, elegant in manner, dressed in the old-fashioned black silk hood then still retained by Friends, delicate in health, and, notwithstanding her having become a plain Friend and a minister, almost fastidiously refined in habit." Mrs. Schimmelpenninck is enthusiastic: "How well I remember her coarse stuff gown, contrasted with the exquisite beauty and delicacy of her arms and hands, her snow-white handkerchief, and her little grey shawl; her dark brown hair divided after the manner of a Gothic arch over her fair forehead. Then she wore a black silk hood over her cap, and over all a black beaver bonnet, in the shape of a pewter plate, which

was then esteemed the official dress of (acknowledged ministers in) the gallery. Her voice was most musical and enchanting; sweetness and flexibility was its characteristic. Her words descended like dew on the soul, penetrating and abiding there, and after many days bringing forth fruit."

Mrs. Fry's younger sister, Priscilla, was also a preacher. Her public life only lasted for six years, for in 1819 she fell into consumption. "The frail frame was worn out by the 'travail of spirit' in which she had lived. She had a rare capacity for entering into the feelings of others, and used sometimes to say, with a smile, that one of the things which had been most instructive to her was 'the biography of the irreligious.' She died in 1821 in perfect peace." Fowell Buxton, her brother-in-law, said that he had seldom known a person of such sterling ability. "I have listened," said the great philanthropist, "to many eminent preachers and many speakers also, but I deem her as perfect a speaker as I ever heard. The tone of her voice, her beauty, the singular clearness of her conceptions, and, above all, her own strong conviction that she was urging the truth, and truth of the utmost importance—the whole constituted a species of ministry which no one

could hear, and which, I am persuaded, no one ever *did* hear, without a deep impression."

We must not omit her sister Richenda's words: "Then, the exquisite saint Priscilla, small, delicate, brilliant in colouring, with her golden-auburn hair, little, slim, but beautifully-formed figure, hazel eyes, and a countenance of benignity and devotion; having turned away her eyes from following vanity and the world, she offered herself a willing and complete sacrifice to the Lord, holiness unto Him being from an early age written on her forehead. My heart glows at the remembrance of her loveliness of person and spirit."

If the Society of Friends had done nothing beside producing such a band of evangelists as these, it would still have claimed a foremost place in the history of lay preaching.

A modern Friend[1] gives a clear statement of the Quaker views as to preaching. "The ministers are, as is well known, not appointed or set apart by any human ordination, nor are any of them ever paid or liable to be called upon by any human authority for any ministerial services. By the word 'ministers' we mean simply those, be they men or women, who have received a gift and call to minister, that is, to offer vocal

[1] Caroline E. Stephen, *Quaker Strongholds.*

service in meetings for worship. When any Friend has exercised such a gift for a considerable time in a manner which is recognised by the other members as evincing a true vocation, the monthly meeting proceeds to record the fact on the books of the meeting. This acknowledgment is made merely for the sake of 'good order,' and is not supposed to confer any additional power or authority on the minister 'recorded.' The ministers are perfectly free to continue their ordinary occupations, and many of them are, in fact, engaged in earning their own living in trades, business, or professions."

If a minister feels called to visit any distant place, the monthly meeting is consulted, and if it should be an important or distant "concern," the quarterly, or even the yearly meeting may be consulted. Its minute or certificate serves as an introduction or guarantee for the minister. In such cases travelling expenses are paid, and it is usual for the visitor to be entertained in some Friend's house where he goes to preach. "The extent to which Friends do thus travel, both in England and abroad, 'in the service of the Truth,' is something of which few people outside the Society have any idea. Between England and America there is a continual interchange of such visits, and the very copious bio-

graphical literature of the Society teems with the records of journeys undertaken 'under an impression of religious duty,' and lasting sometimes for months, or even years, before the Friend could 'feel clear' of the work. No limit is ever set beforehand to such work. It is felt to be work in which the daily unfolding of the Divine ordering must be watched and waited for."[1]

The ministry of Friends is open to all; its exercise is subject to no pre-arrangement. No distinction is recognised between clergy and laity. They hold that the priestly office of all believers is greatly obscured by the appointment of one man, or one class of men, to conduct the devotions of a congregation. Miss Stephen admits that serious difficulties undoubtedly arise in the practical application of this fundamental principle of Quakerism. The Society's fidelity to it is being seriously tested by modern conditions. A child's feelings may be gathered from Mary Howitt's dreary experiences as a girl in the meeting-house at Uttoxeter, where the nearest approach to good which she remembered in the silent meetings was to see the side windows reflected at times in a large window above the gallery. The horror which the young Gurneys

[1] *Quaker Strongholds*, p. 16.

of Earlham felt of the Goat's Lane meeting-house at Norwich is another case in point. But though Miss Stephen sees the difficulty, she adds: "Unless we have faith and patience enough to maintain the freedom of our ministry, even at the cost of some sacrifice of popularity, I believe that our light must inevitably be extinguished just when it is most urgently needed."

The yearly meeting of 1882 appointed a committee on "Home Missions," but many have been afraid lest, through giving pecuniary assistance to some workers, a separate class of supported ministers might be set up; and this point has been very carefully guarded.

CHAPTER V

REVIVAL OF LAY PREACHING IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

IT was reserved for the Evangelical Revival of the last century to exalt lay preaching into an institution under definite rules and regulations. Doors of usefulness were opening on every hand. It was impossible to provide duly equipped ministers for every eager congregation. It was equally impossible to allow those who were longing for salvation to perish from lack of knowledge. John Wesley says: "Joseph Humphreys was the first lay preacher that assisted me in England, in the year 1738." John Cennick, who was afterwards schoolmaster in Wesley's school at Kingswood, began to preach there in June 1739. He had gone out from Bristol to hear a young man read a sermon under a sycamore tree in Kingswood. The reader did not come, and Cennick reluctantly took his place. Wesley was urged to

forbid his preaching, but he encouraged him to proceed.

It is THOMAS MAXFIELD, however, who fills the chief place in the history of lay preaching under the Wesleys. He had travelled for some time with Charles Wesley as companion and servant. Once when John Wesley was absent from London, he left Maxfield to meet the members at the Foundery. He passed almost insensibly from prayer and exhortation to preaching sermons. Many were convinced of sin and brought to Christ under his appeals. When Wesley heard of this irregularity, he returned in haste to London. His mother, who was living at the Foundery, asked the reason for his evident dissatisfaction. "Thomas Maxfield has turned preacher," was the reply. His mother reminded him of her own objections to lay preaching, and added: "John, take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him yourself." The Countess of Huntingdon wrote: "Maxfield is one of the greatest instances of God's peculiar favour that I know. He is my astonishment. The first time I made him expound, I expected little from him; but before he had gone over one-fifth part

of his discourse my attention was riveted, and I was immovable. His power in prayer, also, is very extraordinary." Wesley was not the man to nurse his prejudices after such testimony as this. He heard Maxwell himself, and was compelled to exclaim: "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good." Henry Moore says that Wesley intended to silence Thomas Westall, who had also begun to preach, but Mrs. Canning, a pious old lady at Evesham, said: "Stop him at your peril! He preaches the truth, and the Lord owns him as truly as he does you or your brother."

Wesley writes to his brother Charles, under date April 21, 1741:[1] "I am not clear that Brother Maxfield should not expound at Greyhound Lane. Nor can I as yet do without him. Our clergymen have miscarried full as much as the laymen; and that the Moravians are other than laymen I know not." In his *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, which he wrote in 1745, Wesley justifies his own conduct in employing laymen, and pays a splendid tribute to these early helpers. He refers to the way in which God gave these unlettered men power from above, so that they were enabled to turn many to righteousness. The use of such workers had never been foreseen. "Nay, we had

[1] *Works*, xii. 109.

the deepest prejudices against it, until we could not but own that God gave 'wisdom from above' to these ignorant and unlearned men, so that the work of God prospered in their hand, and sinners were daily converted to God. Indeed, in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the university (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love), are able to do." He then deals with the objection that they were laymen. No one had felt the force of that objection more than he. "I was conscious to myself that, some years since, to touch this point, was to touch the apple of my eye; and this makes me almost unwilling to speak now, lest I should shock the prejudices I cannot remove. Suffer me, however, just to intimate to you some things which I would leave to your farther consideration. The scribes of old, who were the ordinary preachers among the Jews, were not priests, they were not better than laymen. Yea, many of them were incapable of the priesthood, being of the tribe of Simeon, not of Levi. Hence, probably, it was that the Jews themselves never urged it as an

objection to our Lord's teaching (even those who did not acknowledge or believe that He was sent of God in an extraordinary character), that He was no priest after the order of Aaron: nor, indeed, could be; seeing He was of the tribe of Judah." He points out that no objection was taken to the preaching of the apostles, who were freely invited to speak in the Jewish synagogues which they visited. Then he brings the argument down to later times. "Was Mr. Calvin ordained? Was he either priest or deacon? And were not some of those whom it pleased God to employ in promoting the Reformation abroad, laymen also? Could that great work have been promoted at all in many places, if laymen had not preached? And yet how seldom do the very papists urge this as an objection against the Reformation! Nay, as rigorous as they are in things of this kind, they themselves appoint, even in some of their strictest orders, that 'if any lay brother believes himself called of God to preach as a missionary, the superior of the order, being informed thereof, shall immediately send him away.'" He refers to the fact that in Sweden, Germany, Holland, and in almost every reformed Church in Europe, before anyone is ordained he must publicly preach a year or more *ad probandum facultatem.*

Having dwelt on the history of lay preaching, Wesley points out that even the Church of England, which permitted the parish-clerk to read one of the lessons, and had its "singing-man at Christ Church," Oxford, really made laymen preachers. When no clergyman would assist himself and his brother to reap their great harvest of souls, God had raised up lay helpers. "No clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was to find some one among themselves who was upright of heart, and of sound judgement in the things of God; and to desire him to meet the rest as often as he could, in order to confirm them, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them, or by prayer, or by exhortation. God immediately gave a blessing hereto. In several places, by means of these plain men, not only those who had already begun to run well were hindered from drawing back to perdition, but other sinners also, from time to time, were converted from the error of their ways. This plain account of the whole proceeding I take to be the best defence of it. I know no scripture which forbids making use of such help in a case of such necessity." Wesley's "lay assistants" had to expound the Scripture every morning and evening, to meet the Societies, visit the Classes, and

take general oversight of the work. Wesley's *Twelve Rules of a Helper* are still cherished as the guiding principles of every Methodist preacher. The preachers have ceased to be regarded as laymen, and have long held full ministerial status and done full ministerial duty, but they rejoice to walk by Wesley's rule: "Observe, it is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that Society; but to save as many souls as you can: to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord."

In a letter to the Rev. Mr. Fleury of Waterford, a young clergyman who had publicly attacked the Methodists in the cathedral, Wesley fully defends his position in employing lay preachers. The letter bears date May 18, 1771. Mr. Fleury had asserted, "Another fundamental error of the Methodists is, the asserting that laymen may preach; yea, the most ignorant and illiterate of them, provided they have the inward call of the Spirit." Wesley shows that it was a total mistake to suppose that his laymen were ignorant men. They were true evangelical ministers, who had the authority given to every Christian to save souls, and were greatly used of God in that work.

In his sermon on Bigotry,[1] Wesley answers the question whether a man who casts out devils ought to be forbidden to do so because he is only a layman. He refers to the practice of the apostolic age, which, so far from inclining him to think that it was deemed *unlawful* for a man to preach before he was ordained, gave him reason to think it was accounted *necessary* to do so. St. Paul said: "Let these first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon." "*Proved.* How? By setting them to construe a sentence of Greek, and asking them a few commonplace questions? O amazing proof of a minister of Christ! Nay; but by making a clear, open trial (as is still done by most of the Protestant Churches of Europe), not only whether their lives be holy and unblameable, but whether they have such gifts as are absolutely and indispensably necessary in order to edify the Church of Christ." He urges those who feared God not to "forbid" such preachers by denying, despising, or making little account of the work which God had put into their hands.

Wise and good men like Samuel Walker of Truro stoutly set their faces against lay preaching. On August 16, 1756, he wrote to Charles Wesley: "Lay preachers, being contrary to the

[1] *Works*, v. 487.

constitution of the Church of England, are, as far as that point goes, a separation from it. . . . The thing is plainly inconsistent with the discipline of the Church of England; and so, in one essential point, setting up a Church within her, which cannot be of her." He proposed a scheme which was the outcome of long and careful thought. "My scheme is this: (1) That as many of the lay preachers as are fit for, and can be procured, ordination, be ordained. (2) That those who remain be not allowed to preach, but set as inspectors over the Societies, and assistants to them. (3) That they be not moved from place to place, to the end that they may be personally acquainted with all the members of such Societies. (4) That their business be to purge and edify the Societies under their care, to the end that no person be continued a member whose conversation is not orderly and of good report. If this should be made an objection, that hereby lay preachers would be prevented from preaching abroad, and so much good be put a stop to, I would suggest it to be inquired into, whether this lay preaching hath been so much to the honour or interest of religion or Methodism as may be supposed? I remember, when it first began, I said and thought lay preaching would be the ruin of Methodism." Charles

Wesley agreed with this singularly inaccurate critic and prophet; but his brother, in his reply to Mr. Walker, makes short work of the scheme. He says: "So great a blessing has, from the beginning, attended the labour of these itinerants, that we have been more and more convinced every year of the more than lawfulness of this proceeding. And the inconveniences, most of which we foresaw from the very first, have been both fewer and smaller than were expected." He shows how unpractical Mr. Walker's scheme was, and is evidently prepared to stand by his lay preachers and their work.[1]

In April 1747 Wesley notes in his journal that he scarce ever heard so fine a defence of a weak cause as Mr. S.'s sermon (at Gateshead), "wherein he laboured much to prove the unlawfulness of laymen's preaching; but with such tenderness and good nature, that I almost wish the sermon were printed, for a pattern to all polemical writers."

Meanwhile other lay workers were springing up who represent the local preachers of the present day. When Wesley was in Cornwall in July 1747, he met the stewards of all the Societies. He says: "I now diligently inquired what exhorters there were in each Society, whether they had gifts

[1] Tyerman's *Life and Times of Wesley*, ii. 245–50.

meet for the work; whether their lives were eminently holy, and whether there appeared any fruit of their labour. I found, upon the whole—(1) That there were no less than eighteen exhorters in the county. (2) That three of these had no gifts at all for the work, neither natural nor supernatural. (3) That a fourth had neither gifts nor grace; but was a dull, empty, self-conceited man. (4) That a fifth had considerable gifts, but had evidently made shipwreck of the grace of God. These, therefore, I determined immediately to set aside, and advise our Societies not to hear them. (5) That J. B., A. L., and J. W. had gifts and grace, and had been much blessed in the work. Lastly, that the rest might be helpful when there was no preacher in their own or the neighbouring Societies, provided they would take no step without the advice of those who had more experience than themselves."

Nothing in John Wesley's course supplies a finer illustration of the way in which "his prejudices always gave way to truth" than his attitude towards lay preaching. He belonged to a family of clergymen, and was a zealous champion of High Church principles, but his obstinate prejudices melted away in the face of God's providential leading. His reward was found in the growth of Methodism in all parts

of the world. His lay preachers were the finest band of men that ever gathered round a religious leader. Southey says that John Nelson, the Birstal stone-mason, "had as high a spirit and as brave a heart as ever Englishman was blessed with." Methodism can never forget Thomas Walsh, the Irish papist, who was the best Hebrew scholar whom Wesley ever met; John Downes, the mechanical genius of the brotherhood; Thomas Olivers, the profligate shoemaker, who was converted under George Whitefield, and wrote that great lyric—

> The God of Abraham praise,
> Who reigns enthroned above.

These are only a few typical names out of Wesley's band of lay preachers by whose labour the Evangelical Revival spread all over the country.

But the work was not confined to Wesley's preachers. The story of JOHN HAIME the dragoon, who fought at Dettingen, is perhaps the first record of a Methodist lay preacher in the British army. Haime had a terrible struggle before he found the light. When at last he was able to rejoice in forgiveness of sins, he became a kind of chaplain in his regiment. He says: "When I began preaching, I did not understand one text in the Bible, so as to speak

from it in (what is called) a regular manner; yet I never wanted either matter or words. So hath God, in all ages, 'chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.' I usually had a thousand hearers, officers, common soldiers, and others. Was there ever so great a work before in so abandoned an army?" His labours were almost more than he could bear. He had to preach four or five times a day, and take care of the Society. But God made his path clear. He found means to hire others to do his military duty, and was thus set free for the growing spiritual work. As soon as they settled in any camp, the Methodist soldiers built a tabernacle with three or four rooms for their meetings. Haime was never happier than when he was preaching or praying. He thought every discourse lost under which no one was convinced or converted. There were three hundred members in the Society and seven lay preachers. The officers and chaplains tried to stop the work, but in vain. Appeal was made to the Field-Marshal, but he supported Haime, and encouraged him to go on. When the army went into winter quarters at Bruges, the preaching-room proved far too small for the congregation. There was a spacious building called the English church, and this Haime secured by the

consent of General Ponsonby. He fixed advertisements in several parts of the town,—"Preaching every day, at two o'clock, in the English church,"—and soon had a large congregation both of soldiers and townsfolk. He says: "We had some good singers among us, and one in particular, who was a master of music. It pleased God to make this one great means of drawing many to hear the Word. One Sunday the clerk gave out a psalm; it was sung in a hymn tune, and sung so well that the officers and their wives were quite delighted with it. The Society then agreed to go all together to church every Sunday. On the next Sunday we began; and when the clerk gave out the first line of the psalm, one of us set the tune, and the rest followed him. It was a resemblance of heaven upon earth. Such a company of Christian soldiers, singing together with the spirit and the understanding also, gave such a life to the ordinance, that none but the most vicious and abandoned could remain entirely unaffected." A few months later, on May 11, 1745, the heroic courage and boldness of the Methodist soldiers at Fontenoy amazed their officers. Haime himself bore a charmed life. "The French," he said, "have no ball made that will kill me this day." He was in the thickest of the carnage, but he came out of the

fight unscathed. The Duke of Cumberland heard many complaints about Haime's preaching, but when he found how brave and loyal he was, he gave a general order that he should preach anywhere, and that no one should molest him. One day he heard the soldier preach. Any commander might feel proud of such a man. "You fight," said Haime to his hearers, "for a good cause and for a good king, and in defence of your country. And this is in no way contrary to the tenderest conscience, as many of you found at the battle of Fontenoy, when both you and I did our duty, and were all the time filled with love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The following spring Haime yielded to sudden and grievous temptation. For a long time he was in darkness and distress, but he found his way back into the light, and did good service for some years as a Methodist preacher in England and Ireland. He died, in 1784, at Whitchurch in Hampshire, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

Wales owed its Evangelical Revival largely to HOWELL HARRIS, who went to Oxford in 1735 to study for the Church, but left in disgust at the immorality and infidelity which prevailed at the university. He returned to Wales, exhorted in the cottages, and formed several

Societies. He lived and died a Churchman, but though he repeatedly sought ordination the bishops refused it on account of his irregular labours. He was a great lay preacher. He ranged the country, preaching four or five times a day. He did not deliver set sermons, but poured out his thoughts and feelings, warning and exhorting the people in a manner that was almost electric. In 1742, after seven years' work, he found himself supported by ten clergymen and forty lay preachers. For twelve years he and his converts did not build a single chapel. They worshipped in private houses, school-rooms, barns, and in the open air. The first chapel was built at Builth in Brecknockshire in 1747. Harris's labours were apostolic. In one round of nine weeks he visited thirteen counties, travelled a hundred and fifty miles a week, preached two to four times a day. For seven nights he was not able to put his clothes off, as he had to meet the people and preach at midnight or very early in the morning to avoid persecution. He had to endure much from the mob, but he was blessed with a dauntless heart. He lived to see Wales transformed by Christian faith, and died at Trevecca on July 21, 1773, in his seventieth year.

Methodism in the New World owes its

origin to two Irish emigrants, Barbara Heck and PHILIP EMBURY. They had both been members of the Methodist Society in Ireland, and sailed for New York together in 1760. Embury was a Class leader and local preacher, but he seemed to have become discouraged, and did little or nothing to meet the spiritual needs of his countrymen in America. In 1765 another party of emigrants from the same part of Ireland landed in New York. Barbara Heck visited them and found them playing at cards. She seized the pack and threw it into the fire. Then she went immediately to Embury's house and told him what she had seen, adding with great earnestness, "Philip, you must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell, and God will require our blood at your hands." Embury raised difficulties. "How can I preach," he said, "as I have neither house nor congregation?" She replied, "Preach in your own house, and your own company." Embury could not refuse such an appeal. Mrs. Heck returned with her husband, his "hired man," and her own negro servant Betty. To them Embury preached the first Methodist sermon in New York.

The little company of hearers soon grew too large for Embury's house. A room was hired, and it was quickly crowded. Two Society

Classes were formed. Embury was in much request as a lay preacher. In 1767 he gained a valuable ally. CAPTAIN WEBB, of the 48th Regiment of Foot, had come to America as barrack master. Three years before he had been in a congregation at Bath which was disappointed of its preacher. He stepped to the altar wearing his regimentals, and gave an address, dwelling chiefly on his own experience. He was one of Wesley's converts, and by him he was appointed a local preacher. When he reached America he opened his house at Albany for service. One Sunday the humble Methodist congregation was startled by the appearance among them of an officer in regimentals. They soon discovered that here was just the man they needed for building up their infant Church. Captain Webb took his stand at the desk, laid his sword beside the Bible, and preached three times a week. He soon roused the whole city, and for ten years laboured incessantly as an itinerant lay preacher in America. He visited Philadelphia, Baltimore, and many other places, laying firmly the foundations of Methodism in the New World. John Adams, the President of the United States, heard him in Philadelphia with great delight. The congregation in New York grew so large that in 1767

a rigging loft had to be hired in William Street. This was soon overcrowded, and a chapel was built in John Street. Captain Webb subscribed thirty pounds; Embury, who was a skilful carpenter, worked hard for the new house, and Barbara Heck helped to whitewash the walls. Wesley Chapel was opened in 1768. Two years later, we read of at least a thousand people crowding it and the area in front of it. Embury preached here two or three times a week. There were soon more than a hundred members.

Some one wrote to tell Wesley of the blessing attending the labours of Embury and Webb: "The Lord carries on a very great work by these two men." The harvest was so abundant that an appeal was at last made to Wesley for helpers. The two first Methodist preachers sailed for America in the autumn of 1769, and found such a willingness to hear the Word of God as they had never witnessed before. Embury was now free to move from New York to Salem, where he again introduced Methodism with happy results. He injured himself whilst mowing in 1775, and died at the age of forty-five. Captain Webb returned to England. His burying-place, in Portland Street Chapel, Bristol, is one of the English

shrines of American Methodism. Lay preaching thus laid the foundation of churches which now number thirty-three thousand ministers and five million members. The religious condition of America in the days of Embury was deplorable, and the War of Independence aggravated the difficulties. It is stated in Bishop Seabury's Life that there were seventy vacant churches in the States of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and there were many other places where congregations might have been formed if preachers had been forthcoming.

In Georgia, in 1769, the Rev. S. Frink found only two churches, 150 miles apart. He says, the settlers "seem in general to have little more knowledge of a Saviour than the aboriginal natives. Many hundreds of poor people, both parents and children, in the interior of the province, have no opportunity of being instructed in the principles of Christianity, or even in the being of a God, any further than nature dictates."[1] If lay preaching needed any justification, the history of American Methodism would furnish a triumphant argument.

At Wesley's tenth Conference, held at Leeds in 1753, twelve local preachers were present. Two

[1] *Digest of S. P. G. Records*, p. 28.

years later, when the Conference again met at Leeds, a list is given of "Our chief local preachers," who number fourteen. Dr. George Smith,[1] the historian of Methodism, who was himself an eminent local preacher in Cornwall, shows that from the beginning local preachers have been a necessary element of Methodism, which could not have been reared up by any other means. "These local preachers, while providing for their own temporal wants by their week-day exertions, have greatly contributed to the diffusion of the gospel in every period of Methodist history. But it is not merely as an important class of religious agency that they are to be chiefly regarded. They have formed the *militia corps* out of which the ministry has been selected. Here the talents of the men were tested, their gifts and graces exercised; in this school the preachers and the people saw the effect of their ministrations, and from thence suitable candidates for the ministry have been chosen and approved." Dr. Smith gives a plan for the local preachers of the Leeds Circuit in 1777. At that time, and for many years afterwards, the plans of the itinerant and local preachers were separate and distinct from each other. The superintendent minister prepared the plan,

[1] *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, i. 307.

and got someone to write a copy for each local preacher. The Circuit was divided into two sections, each of which had preaching on alternate Sundays. Wesley himself drew up weekly plans for supplying the London chapels in 1754. One of these is printed in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* for 1855 (p. 428). The minutes of 1770 contain this regulation: "That each assistant may know the exhorters in his Circuit, let each give his successor a list of them."

When Adam Clarke went to St. Austell, in 1785, a young shoemaker named SAMUEL DREW joined the crowds that flocked to hear the Methodist preacher. Drew was the son of poor people, but Adam Clarke recognised the mental power of the metaphysical shoemaker, and had the pleasure of welcoming him into the Methodist Society. Three years later, Drew became a local preacher. It was twenty years before he left his shoemaker's bench, but in 1819 he became editor of the *Imperial Magazine*, which post he held till his death in 1833. His books, *The Immateriality and Immortality of the Soul* and the *Being and Attributes of God*, are remarkable for their ingenious subtlety and intellectual power. Dr. Clarke remained his steadfast friend to the end of his life. He describes him as "one of those prodigies of nature and

grace which God rarely exhibits" as links between man and the inhabitants of the higher worlds. Drew was not only an able local preacher, but wrote some valuable pamphlets in defence of Methodism; he edited *Coke's Commentary*, and prepared an excellent biography of that great missionary bishop. His health broke down under his literary labours in London, and the sudden death of Dr. Clarke proved a great blow to his old friend.

A man of altogether different stamp was SAMMY HICK, the "village blacksmith," who gave up his trade in 1826, after he had gained a modest competence, and devoted himself to Christian work. He visited remote and neglected districts, rousing the whole region by his quaint and earnest addresses. "In the city, in the village, in the pulpit, on the platform, in the love-feasts, and especially in the prayer-meeting, he was always at home, labouring with an ease, an aptitude, and a success which made him the favourite of not only the common people, but of cultivated minds which could appreciate his genius and his pure and unique character." The Yorkshire evangelist died in November 1829, leaving traces of his racy sayings in all corners of Methodism.

WILLIAM DAWSON, the Yorkshire farmer, one

of the most popular lay preachers that Methodism has seen during this century, was a true genius, and his powerful imagination produced effects on his congregation not unlike those which attended the ministry of George Whitefield. Once when he was preaching to the weavers at Pudsey on David and Goliath, he so moved his hearers that one man shouted, "Off with his head, Billy." His descriptions of the doom of the impenitent, and his setting forth of the Saviour's infinite compassion, made mighty appeals to the conscience and heart. When he preached to the sailors at Sunderland he pictured a vessel dashed on the rocks, with a few survivors clinging to the wreck. "What is to be done now? all is going—going for ever!" One sailor was so moved by the realistic picture that he shouted, "What is to be done?—why, launch the lifeboat!" A moment of awed silence followed, then the preacher seized his opportunity, and urged all to seek refuge in Christ. "Come into the lifeboat, and you shall not be destroyed with that everlasting damnation; you shall not sink into the raging waves of sin: you shall land safe on the shores of heaven!" He was as mighty on the platform as in the pulpit. A competent witness once said: "I have heard all, or nearly all, the greatest orators of my time, but I never heard

such overwhelming eloquence as that of William Dawson when he turned his resolution into a spy-glass, and described the present and the future of missionary enterprise." That blacksmith's shop, where the swords were being turned into ploughshares, and the spears into pruning-hooks, was never forgotten by those who listened to Dawson in his prime. He was a man of refinement and good sense. To a young beginner he gave this advice about preaching: "Gospel truth is a sovereign, and that of no common order; and I readily grant, preaching is the carriage in which he rides. I confess, too, that I do not like to see him ride in a common, paltry cart of bad grammar, low metaphor, and vulgar dialect. His majesty is worthy of a better vehicle than the head and heart and hands of man ever made. But still, I should not like to see a preacher turning the attention of the crowd to the composition, the painting and the gilding of the chariot, so as to lose sight of the monarch who rides in it—or should ride in it."[1] His death in 1841 made a notable breach in the ranks of the lay preachers of Methodism.

Dr. Fairbairn calls attention to the influence exerted by lay preaching on the rural life of

[1] Miss Keeling's *William Dawson*, p. 76.

England. "Methodism in all its several branches has done more for the conversion and reconciliation of certain of the industrial classes to religion than any other English Church." The politician finds, when addressing the peasantry, that he has to appeal to more distinctly ethical and religious principles than when he addresses the upper or middle classes. "It is the local preacher rather than the secularist lecturer who has, while converting the soul, really formed the mind of the miner and labourer." [1]

Dr. Abel Stevens pays a just tribute to the lay preachers in his *History of American Methodism* (p. 159). He says: "It may be affirmed that not only was Methodism founded in the New World by local preachers,—by Embury in New York, Webb in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Strawbridge in Maryland, Neal in Canada, Gilbert in the West Indies, and Black in Nova Scotia,—but that nearly its whole frontier march, from the extreme north to the Gulf of Mexico, has been led on by these humble labourers; that in few things was the legislative wisdom of Wesley more signalised than in providing in his ecclesiastical system the offices of local preacher and Class leader, a species of lay pastorate which, alike in the dense communities of England and the

[1] *Religion in History and in Modern Life*, p. 14.

dispersed populations of America, has performed services which can hardly be overrated. Most, if not all, of the early itinerants did inestimable service for the denomination as local preachers before they entered the itinerancy; most of them, again, became local preachers, and laboured on faithfully for the common cause. Their intervals of regular service have secured them historical recognition; but hundreds of their 'irregular,' and hardly less useful, co-labourers have been forgotten." In 1809, forty years after Wesley sent the first Methodist preachers to America, it was found that during that time 3000 local preachers had been raised up, of whom 1640 were then living and in connexion with Methodism. The returns for 1895 show a grand total of 46,000 local preachers[1] in connexion with the various Methodist churches of the United States and Canada.

The negro preacher is quite an institution in the Southern States of America. In the old days, many of the slave preachers were men of marked character and religious power. Bishop Haygood says: "Their skill in exegesis and dialectics was limited, but their power in exhortation and application was notable. Now that education is doing its blessed work in them more perfectly,

[1] Some of these are ministers who have left the itinerancy.

many of them are men of real intellectual power."[1] The negro pastor has more influence with his following than anyone else, and it is manifest that there is a wider sphere of usefulness before him in the future. The pulpit, far more than the schoolhouse or the newspaper, is the teacher of the negro. Freeborn Garrettson, the great itinerant evangelist, who began his work in 1776, had been a slave-holder, but after his conversion he stood up amongst his slaves with a hymn-book in his hand and gave them all their liberty. During his itinerant life he had a coloured companion, the noted "Black Harry," who not only cared for his master's wants, but helped him in his spiritual work as an exhorter and preacher. In 1788, when Ashbury induced him to lead the pioneer expedition up the Hudson, "Black Harry" accompanied him. The two preached almost daily on their way from Sharon to Boston, and the coloured man seemed to enjoy his position more than if he were attending the triumphal march of some military hero.

[1] *Our Brother in Black*, p. 222.

CHAPTER VI

WOMEN PREACHERS

JOEL'S prophecy, on which St. Peter laid such stress at the Day of Pentecost, reserved a special place for women in the conversion of the world. "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." The Acts of the Apostles introduce us to the first female preachers of the Christian Church, those four daughters of Philip the Evangelist, whom St. Paul knew so well when he stayed at their father's house at Cæsarea. But the apostle of the Gentiles was not led by that visit to alter the strong opinion on woman's place in the Church which he had expressed in his first letter to the Corinthians two years before. The women at Corinth occupied a different place in social life from that held by their Jewish sisters, and naturally took a prominent share in the Christian assemblies. Dr. Geikie says: "Once fairly at home in the gatherings of the converts, these Western sisters entered into the spirit of the hour, and took as active a part in what was

going on as the men. Hearing everyone speak who fancied the spirit moved him, they also gave their tongues free scope, in the full persuasion, no doubt, that the impulse to do so came from a higher power. Moved by the impending wonders and terrors of the expected advent, the prevailing excitement thus drew them out of the comparative privacy of female life required even among the Greeks, and made them play a part which did not harmonise with the usual strict subordination of the wife or daughter."[1] St. Paul was compelled to deal firmly in this matter. The Corinthian women had thrown aside the veil which had hitherto been regarded as indispensable for a modest woman. "Its mufflings hindered them in speaking, and interfered with the outward 'demonstrations of emotion in which the assembly at large indulged so freely." The apostle's famous deliverance[2] was manifestly a wise one in the presence of the ferment and fanaticism of the Corinthian Church. "Let the women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church." St. Paul's later ex-

[1] *Saint Paul*, ii. 132. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

perience confirmed him in this view. Nine years afterwards he writes to Timothy: "Let a woman learn in quietness, with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." [1]

St. Paul's verdict naturally carried great weight, both in his own generation and in those that followed it. His friend and fellow-labourer, Priscilla, furnishes a fine illustration of a woman's influence, along lines which we may suppose that he approved. If she did not speak in public, she exercised a commanding influence in other directions. The social relations of the sexes in the first centuries make it probable that women were employed in training female catechumens, but we find Tertullian as adverse as St. Paul to their preaching. "Let no woman," he says, "speak in the church, nor teach, nor baptize, nor offer (that is, administer the Eucharist), nor arrogate to herself any manly function, lest they should claim the lot of the priestly office." [2] Deaconesses found their sphere in visiting the sick and poor, in ministering to martyrs and confessors in prison, and in exercising a general oversight over the female members of the Church, both in public and in private. They made occasional reports to the bishops and presbyters.

[1] 1 Timothy ii. 11, 12. [2] *De Præscript.* 41.

We see how the subject exercised the mind of the early Church from the proceedings of various ecclesiastical assemblies.[1] The 11th Canon of Laodicea, A.D. 319, orders that priestesses should not be ordained in the Church. In the 99th Canon of the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, women were reckoned among the clergy—"De diaconissis et omnibus qui in clero censentur." The 1st Canon of Saragossa, A.D. 381, forbids women to meddle with teaching or expounding articles of faith. In the 99th Canon of the fourth Council of Carthage, A.D. 398, we read: "A woman, though she be learned and holy, should not presume to teach the men in an assembly." The Council of Chalcedon (451) ordered that a deaconess was not to be ordained before she was forty. Bernard, the abbot of Fontis Calidi, about the year 1180, inveighs against the Waldenses for maintaining that women might preach. Fox, in his *Book of Martyrs* (i. p. 869), speaks of Joan White, the wife of a martyr, "following her husband's footsteps according to her power, teaching and showing abroad the same doctrine, confirmed many in God's truth, wherefore she suffered much trouble and persecution at the hands of the bishops."

Social customs have changed so greatly since

[1] See Dr. Philip's *Vindiciæ Veritatis.*

St. Paul's time that we may be allowed to consider the question in the light of present needs, but the Church must approach this subject in the spirit of Christian prudence, and no woman who feels called to such a sphere of usefulness must presume on her sex, but must commend herself and her work to every hearer's conscience, by real knowledge of the truth and power to apply it to the heart.

Miss ELLICE HOPKINS tells, in her *Work among Working Men*, how her sympathy was enlisted on behalf of the artisans of a Cambridge suburb. She began services in a private cottage, but soon removed to the parish school. At first she occupied a small room there, but it was at once crowded, and many men had to listen outside. Miss Hopkins told one of these that she hoped to find better accommodation for him next week. "Oh, thank you, Miss," he replied; "I heard your 'scourse quite well through the door." The services soon became very popular. One dapper little assistant, whom she had instructed to seek out the worst men in the neighbourhood, told her, "I think I may say I was successful in my first endeavours in your cause, Miss. I brought you seven men—all drunk." He had picked them out of a public house, and shored them up, one after another, on a bench in a row, and they did

not disturb the meeting. As the fame of the services increased, men came streaming in from the villages around, sometimes walking ten or twelve miles. Five or six hundred were crammed into a room which was only intended for half that number. Once, after she had spoken plain, strong words about the degradation of some of their lives, two hearers walked silently home till they reached their garden gates. "Bill," said one to his friend, "for the first time in my life I've been well licked, and that by a woman." "So have I; good night," laconically rejoined the other, and bolted into his house. Her clergyman and her father were Miss Hopkins' constant supporters in her happy crusade. No one can read her record without seeing what an enormous power she wielded not only over rough men, but over the most intelligent artisans. She cannot refrain from quoting Dr. Johnson's "opprobrious" verdict: "Sir, a woman preaching is like a dog standing on its hind legs; the thing is not well done, but the wonder is it can be done at all." If the great lexicographer could have been present at those Abbey School services he would have been eager to modify his deliverance.

In tracing the history of female preaching, we find that the Continental Baptists had a place for it in their system. Women began to preach in

some English Independent churches about the year 1641. From a history of New England we learn that America had been somewhat in advance of us. A writer in 1636 describes the Baptist sectaries as saying, "Come along with me, I will bring you a woman that preaches better gospel than any of your blackcoats that have been at the university."

The women were more active among the Baptists than among the Independents. We read of Mrs. ATTAWAY, "the mistress of all the she-preachers in Coleman Street." She belonged to Thomas Lamb's church in Bell Alley, Coleman Street, and it seems that other women preachers were connected with the same church. We find women preaching "in Kent, Norfolk, and the rest of the shires." In 1653, Theodoras writes to the Right Hon. Lord Conway: "Here is start up an audacious virago (or feminine tub preacher), who last Sunday held forth about two hours together within our late queen's mass chapel at Somerset House, in the Strand, and has done so there and elsewhere divers Sabbath-days of late, who claps her Bible and thumps the pulpit cushion with almost as much confidence (I should have said impudence) as honest Hugh Peters himself!" A girl of sixteen is mentioned who preached to many young men and maidens. The women

preachers of the Society of Friends have been already referred to. That Society holds undisputed pre-eminence as to the refinement and the power of its female ministers.

The story of SUSANNAH WESLEY'S services at Epworth shows how circumstances may almost compel an earnest woman to become a lay preacher. The rector was in London attending Convocation. Mrs. Wesley began a little service in the rectory kitchen for her children and servants on Sunday evenings. Her zeal was much quickened by reading an account of some young Danish missionaries in Malabar, and when some neighbours asked leave to attend her gathering, she felt that she could not refuse. The curate was a dry, unevangelical man, so that the rectory service was a real boon to the parishioners. After she read the narrative of the Danish missionaries, Mrs. Wesley chose the best and most awakening sermons, and spent more time with the people in religious exercises. The first winter her congregation was seldom more than forty; but next winter, when her husband was again in London, more than two hundred were sometimes present, and many had to go away because there was no further room. She discoursed freely and affectionately with the people, and soon saw the fruit of her labour. Sabbath

desecration was checked, and some who had not attended church for years now began to worship there. Mrs. Wesley had told her husband what she was doing, and he had given her wise counsel. But before long the curate and some parishioners, who bore "a bad enough character," began to make complaints. Mrs. Wesley sent fuller explanations to her husband, who was naturally anxious to avoid irregularities. She added: "If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you desire me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience; but send me your positive command, in such full and express terms as may absolve me from all guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ." The meetings were allowed to go on, and formed part of that providential training which made Susannah Wesley not only the mother of the Wesleys, but also the mother of Methodism.

MARY BOSANQUET, of Leytonstone, the daughter of a Quaker banker, was the first lady philanthropist produced by Methodism. Before her marriage, to the Rev. John Fletcher, she had an orphanage, first at Leytonstone, then at Cross Hall in Yorkshire, where she and other lady helpers

preached to mixed congregations in the old kitchen of the hall. When she conducted an open-air service, her clear voice was distinctly heard by the crowd that gathered. She had a choice of words and a nicety of taste which gave force to all she said, and her words were, as Wesley says, "a fire, conveying both light and heat to the hearts of all that heard her." Wesley also tells us that "her manner is smooth, easy, and natural, even when the sense is deep and strong." Her dignity and modesty compelled respect from all who heard her.

SARAH CROSBY, one of Mrs. Fletcher's assistants in her first orphanage at Leytonstone, went one Sunday night to meet her class there, expecting to find about thirty present. She was astonished to see two hundred. It was impossible to speak to them individually, so she gave out a hymn, prayed with the people, and began to tell them what God had done for herself. A few days later she addressed another company of two hundred people. When she sought Wesley's advice, he replied: "Hitherto, I think you have not gone too far. You could not well do less. I apprehend all you can do more is, when you meet again, to tell them simply, 'You lay me under a great difficulty. The Methodists do not allow of women preachers. Neither do I take upon

me any such character. But I will just nakedly tell you what is in my heart.' This will, in a great measure, obviate the grand objection, and prepare for J. Hampson's coming. I do not see that you have broken any law. Go on calmly and steadily. If you have time, you may read to them the Notes on any chapter before you speak a few words; or one of the most awakening sermons, as other women have done long ago." This letter was written in 1761.

Eight years later, Wesley advises her, as he had formerly advised another lady, to keep as far from what is called preaching as she could; to intermix short exhortations with prayer, and announce her meetings as prayer-meetings. In another letter, bearing date June 13, 1771, Wesley delivers this verdict on women preaching to Miss Crosby (or perhaps to Mrs. Fletcher): "I think the strength of the cause rests there—on your having an extraordinary call. So, I am persuaded, has every one of our lay preachers; otherwise, I would not countenance his preaching at all. It is plain to me, that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence. Therefore I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, 'I permit not a woman

to speak in the congregation.' Yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions—at Corinth, in particular." Miss Crosby was engaged in evangelistic labours for many years. Her work lay chiefly in Yorkshire, where she preached in barns, houses, chapels, and in the open air. One year she rode nine hundred and sixty miles, conducted two hundred and twenty public services, as well as six hundred private meetings. She died in Leeds in 1804 at the age of seventy-five. Sarah Ryan and Anna Tripp, her two friends and fellow-workers at Leytonstone and Cross Hall, are buried in the same grave in the Leeds parish churchyard. All three were preachers.

Miss MALLETT, one of Wesley's friends, received from him this note: "We give the right hand of fellowship to Sarah Mallett, and have no objection to her being a preacher in our Connexion, so long as she preaches the Methodist doctrine and attends to our discipline." This was sent from the Manchester Conference of 1787, and endorsed by the Conference. After her marriage to Mr. Boyce, she and her husband were both on the local preachers' plan for many years. John Wesley's attitude towards women preachers, in the last years of his life, is thus summed up by himself: "God owns women in the conversion of sinners, and who am I, that I should withstand God?"

HESTER ANN ROGERS, the daughter of a Macclesfield clergyman, was another of the early Methodist evangelists whose addresses were marked by "good sense and quiet moral power." Her prayers were specially impressive, and were attended with much blessing. She was a noble witness to the blessing of entire sanctification, and was greatly esteemed by Fletcher of Madeley. She married a Methodist preacher, and died in 1794 at the age of thirty-nine. Mrs. Rogers was esteemed one of the saints of Methodism, and for a couple of generations was almost regarded as the ideal Christian whom every Methodist lady desired to imitate.

MARY BARRITT, a Lancashire girl, who in early life had to earn her living by field-work, became one of the most powerful and useful women preachers that Methodism has ever had. She was born at Hay, near Colne, in 1772, and, after her conversion, began to pray and speak in the village services. Her powers were soon recognised, and she became a roving evangelist. At Nottingham, five hundred people were brought to Christ during her three months' mission. The sagacious John Pawson, and the saintly revivalist William Bramwell, warmly approved her work. Two eminent Methodist preachers, Robert Newton and Thomas Jackson, and William Dawson,

the famous lay preacher, were converted under her preaching. She married Mr. Taft, a Methodist preacher, and proved herself a true yoke-fellow in his circuits. Dr. Benjamin Gregory, who knew Mrs. Taft intimately, says: "The lady whom it seems most natural to compare with Mary Taft is Mrs. Booth. They were alike in their masculine self-possession and self-consciousness, in their sedate, decorous, matronly demeanour, in simplicity of dress and speech, and in a solid basis of intelligence; but Mrs. Taft was far more fluent than Mrs. Booth."

George Eliot found one of her noblest characters in the ranks of Methodist lady preachers. DINAH EVANS was her own aunt, married to her father's younger brother. With her, in the happy days of her early Christian life, George Eliot had much pleasant fellowship. Her aunt won her entire confidence. In February 1839, when the girl of eighteen was her father's housekeeper at Griff, near Nuneaton, she wrote: "If you are able to fill a sheet, I am sure both uncle and you would, in doing so, be complying with the precept, 'Lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.' I need not tell you that this is a dry and thirsty land, and I shall be as grateful to you for a draught from your fresh spring as the traveller in the Eastern

desert is to the unknown hand that digs a well for him. 'Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel,' seems to be my character, instead of that regular progress from strength to strength that marks, even in this world of mistakes, the people that shall in the heavenly Zion stand before God." A month later she writes: "You were very kind to remember my wish to see *Mrs. Fletcher's Life.* I only desire such a spiritual digestion as has enabled you to derive so much benefit from its perusal. I feel that my besetting sin is the one of all others most destroying, as it is the fruitful parent of them all—ambition, a desire insatiable for the esteem of my fellow-creatures."

It was this "Methodist Aunt Samuel" who told a story, on a visit to Griff in 1839, which eighteen years later became the germ of *Adam Bede.* She had visited a girl who lay under sentence of death for the murder of her child. Whilst the loving Methodist prayed with her the girl confessed her crime, and Mrs. Evans went with her in the cart to the place of execution. The story made a profound impression on her niece, and when she told it to Mr. Lewis he said that the night spent in the prison would make a fine element in a story. Dinah Morris represents the aunt, but the real Dinah was a small black-eyed woman,

very vehement in her preaching, and so eager to win others for Christ that she would exhort "in season, out of season." This was in her younger days; when George Eliot wrote to her she was sixty years old. She was a singularly pure-minded and devoted woman, who preached in cottages and in the open air, and won many by her visits to the sick and poor. Elizabeth Fry recognised in her a congenial spirit, and became her friend and counsellor. Her future husband first heard her preach at Ashbourne. He says: "Some of the members of my Class invited me to go with them to hear a pious and devoted female from Nottingham preach. Truly it may be said of her that she was a burning and a shining light. She preached with great power and unction from above to a crowded congregation. Her doctrine was sound and simple. Simplicity, love, and sweetness were blended in her. Her whole heart was in the work. She was made instrumental in the conversion of sinners, and the resurrection morning will reveal more than we know of her usefulness." She married Samuel Evans, and continued her evangelistic work in Roylston, Snelston, and the neighbourhood. They afterwards removed to Derby, where they were eminently useful. Mrs. Evans died at Wirks-

worth after a lingering illness, preaching even in her delirium more eloquent sermons, it is said, than any she had delivered on Roylston Green.

If we turn to George Eliot's story, we find that as Adam Bede watched her mount the cart which served as her pulpit on the village green, he was struck with the feminine delicacy of her appearance and the total absence of self-consciousness in her demeanour. "She held no book in her ungloved hands, but let them hang down lightly crossed before her, as she stood and turned her grey eyes on the people. There was no keenness in the eyes; they seemed rather to be shedding love than making observations; they had the liquid look which tells that the mind is full of what it has to give out, rather than impressed by external objects. She stood with her left hand towards the descending sun, and lofty boughs screened her from its rays; but in the sober light the delicate colouring of her face seemed to gather a calm vividness, like flowers at evening. It was a small oval face, of a uniform transparent whiteness, with an egglike line of cheek and chin, a full but firm mouth, a delicate nostril, and a low perpendicular brow, surmounted by a rising arch of parting between smooth locks of pale reddish

hair. The hair was drawn straight back behind the ears, and covered, except for an inch or two above the brow, by a net Quaker cap. The eyebrows, of the same colour as the hair, were perfectly horizontal and finely pencilled; the eyelashes, though no darker, were long and abundant; nothing was left blurred or unfinished. It was one of those faces that make one think of white flowers with light touches of colour on their pure petals. The eyes had no peculiar beauty, beyond that of expression; they looked so simple, so candid, so gravely loving, that no accusing scowl, no light sneer could help melting away before their glance." Adam's secret comment as he looked was, "A sweet woman; but surely nature never meant her for a preacher." Dinah's prayer and her homely, tender, personal appeal soon showed him that he was listening to a woman rarely fitted to impress such a company as that which listened on the village green.

Mrs. BOOTH, the saint and genius of the Salvation Army, is perhaps the most noted lady preacher of our time. Her rare gifts of speech were nobly consecrated, and did not a little to break down prejudice and win friends in the early days of opposition. She wrote a pamphlet on "Female Teaching" in 1859, in which she

maintained that if a woman had the necessary gifts and felt herself called by the Spirit to preach, there was not a single word in the Bible to restrain her, but very many to encourage her. A few weeks later she was listening to her husband preach in Gateshead, when a mighty influence seemed to force her to her feet. She told the people how the change in her views as to woman's work had come about. A profound impression was made on the audience. Mr. Booth struck while the iron was hot, for he at once announced that his wife would preach in the evening. When the time came the chapel was crowded to the doors, and many looked back to that service as the turning-point in their history. The greatest woman preacher of our generation had received her commission. From this time her course was one of growing usefulness. After her husband resigned his position as a minister in the Methodist New Connexion, Mrs. Booth found a wider sphere of labour. Her gifts as an evangelist were soon recognised all over England. She had to make her notes on odd scraps of paper while nursing her baby or busy with household duties. She fixed on a line of argument, saturated her mind with her subject, and then trusted to the inspiration of the moment. Her own experience

continually helped her in her addresses. "She spoke because she felt, and in her impassioned utterances poured forth her soul upon her audience." Mrs. Booth was too much bent on results to theorise over niceties of doctrine. Her whole aim was to lead men and women to Christ, and this purpose gave power and inspiration to all she said. Her clear, pleasant voice, and her incisive and persuasive style of address, combined with her deep earnestness and her overflowing zeal, gave the "mother of the Salvation Army" an influence for good which it is scarcely possible to over-estimate.

CHAPTER VII

LAY PREACHING IN THE MISSION FIELD AND IN RUSSIA

WE have seen how the Apostolic Church cultivated the gifts of its lay preachers, and have found that in great periods of religious awakening, such as the Reformation and the Evangelical Revival of last century, the harvest was so vast that it could not have been reaped by any stated ministry. If lay preachers had not been raised up at these crises, to carry on and extend the work, it could never have reached the proportions it assumed. The prophecy of Joel clearly points to such an out-pouring of the spirit of prophecy as the divine preparation for the spread of the gospel. Nowhere have the blessings of lay preaching been more manifest than on the mission field. Methodism in particular has there reaped the fruit of her home organisation. She has found herself in the face of great opportunities such as

came through the evangelisation of the South Pacific, but when the fields were white unto harvest her host of lay preachers was ready to reap it.

KING GEORGE, of the Friendly Islands, holds a leading place among these lay preachers of the mission field. This stalwart young chief, who stood six feet high, came to visit the Rev. John Thomas at Hihifo, in March 1828. He was only twenty-five, but he was already a noted warrior, who ruled over the central group of the Friendly Islands. He wanted to have a missionary settled in his principal town to teach him and his people to pray. Mr. Thomas upbraided him with the fact that vessels had been destroyed by his subjects, but King George replied that this had been done purely out of covetousness, and that the people had found it really injured themselves, as ships ceased to call at the islands. Mr. Thomas saw the possibilities involved in this young prince's conversion. "It might appear some time," he wrote, "that God, who overruled all things to advance His own glory and the good of His cause, had something to accomplish by this man." Fifteen months later, King George paid a second visit to the mission house. He pressed for a teacher, and stated that he and his people were quite ready to

become Christians. He offered to supply the missionary with food, to build him a house and a chapel, and send all his people to be taught. A native teacher was sent to live on King George's island. He returned in January 1830, to report that the king had burned down his idol houses, and that hundreds of people were offering themselves for baptism. The chief was diligently learning to read. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas were at last able to sail for Haabai. The king became a regular attendant at Christian worship, and once or twice spoke to the people in the public service. Mr. Thomas was much impressed by the firm yet gentle tone of his address. "Is it possible," he asks, "that the great Head of the Church has designed this great man for a messenger of mercy? What, the king? Glory to God! I have a hope that He will make him a preacher of righteousness, and that he will be the honoured instrument of good to many." On August 7, 1831, the king made his public confession of faith, and was baptized. But King George was not yet a converted man. His behaviour at times caused grave anxiety to the missionaries. He was excluded from the little Society because of his conduct, and wrote to the missionary saying that he was not the first man who had

sinned. Solomon, he pleaded, was far more guilty than he. But in the end grace triumphed. A great revival broke out, and King George was seized by strong conviction of sin in a memorable prayer-meeting at Vavau. He was soon able to rejoice in forgiveness, and a couple of months later was appointed a Class leader and a local preacher. The Rev. David Cargill, who knew him intimately, says that his intellect was naturally vigorous, and that he carefully trained himself for his work. "His habits are retiring and studious; and he has perhaps read and thought more than any one of his subjects." He was a good theologian, and an efficient and popular speaker. It was pleasant to see the royal preacher set out in his canoe on a Sunday morning to fulfil his appointment in some distant island, and to hear the natives singing as they rowed their chief along. The queen also became an earnest Class leader and Sunday school teacher. They built a beautiful church at Lifuka. The communion rails were made from the carved shafts of spears, and two large war clubs at the bottom of the pulpit stairs bore witness to the happy change which had come over the people. King George preached the first sermon, and after it the English missionary baptized twenty persons.

There was only one adult unbaptized in the whole of the Haabai group, and he was detained at home by sickness. King George proved a tower of strength to the mission. A wise and enlightened Christian ruler, he devoted all his gifts and influence to promote the truest interests of his people.

One of the most noted evangelists of Burma was KHO-THA-BYU, a Karen desperado who had been personally concerned in more than thirty murders. He had gained his first knowledge of Christianity from a tract given him in Rangoon, and had entered the service of Dr. Judson. His terrible temper made it hard to bear with him, but Dr. Judson was patient, and the man gradually stepped into the light. He was examined and approved by the church at Moulmain, and was baptized by Mr. Boardman, at Tavoy, in the beginning of 1828. He set out almost immediately on an evangelistic tour in the Tennaserim valley. The rains prevented his reaching his destination, but he found his way to a village and began to explain the Catechism. One man accepted Christ, and recommended religion so earnestly that nearly all his neighbours became converts. Kho-tha-byu never lost an opportunity of preaching Christ. He fell sick at Panloh, where the

man with whom he lodged was so deeply impressed by his words that he became an exemplary Christian. In July 1830 he visited the Karen villages up the Salwen river. Four converts came back with him to Moulmain to be baptized; and the following November he brought seventy Karens who wished to be received into the church. Dr. Mason once left his zealous assistant behind at the zayat, whilst he himself went to distribute tracts in some of the neighbouring villages. On his return he found Kho-tha-byu surrounded by Burmans, who were listening carefully to his denunciations of idolatry. In one valley, where this native evangelist had laboured, every hut was inhabited by a Christian family. During one great revival the Karens thronged his house so that it was in danger of breaking down. They streamed in from morning to night to ask for explanations of the gospel. Kho-tha-byu pursued his restless itinerancy till 1837, when blindness and rheumatism compelled him to give up his work. He died in 1840, at the age of sixty-two. A memorial hall was built in 1878 to celebrate the jubilee of his baptism. The Christian Karens now number two hundred thousand, fully one-third of the whole population, and there are five hundred self-supporting congrega-

tions. Such is the transformation which, under God's hand, is largely due to the great lay evangelist of Burma.

The natives are really the most effective workers among their own countrymen. The Rev. W. W. Gill, in his *Jottings from the Pacific*, gives some illustrations of Scripture truth culled from native sermons and addresses to which he listened in Raratonga. The native oratory is full of parables, songs, and proverbs, and the gifted preacher makes full use of all these in his discourse. Scripture history is for him an inexhaustible mine of illustration. Each sermon has its "corking" or application—an allusion to a native bottle of scented oil which loses its aroma when left uncorked. One man, who was preaching at the time when all the fruits were ripe, compared prayer to a hooked stick which would reach to the topmost branch of the tree of life that grows in the paradise of God, and bring down its precious fruit. Another pointed out that whilst the young might gaily climb the tallest tree to pluck its fruit, none were too feeble or too aged to use the long hooked stick of intercessory prayer. A preacher said that immature Christians, easily turned aside by persecution and temptation, were like young cocoa-nuts, which cracked when

thrown down from the tree. Full-grown nuts come to the ground unharmed, so mature Christians remained steadfast under the fiercest trial. It was the custom at a great wedding for the bride to walk to her future home over the backs of the prostrate bodies of her husband's clan; the bridegroom stepped over a similar row of his wife's kinsfolk. Matenga made a fine use of this custom. "Tread boldly, brethren," he said, "on the prostrate body of Jesus; for He is our only way to the Father. Trust your entire weight—with all your burdens—on Him; He will not wince or cry. Only thus shall we safely arrive at the home of the redeemed." Teinaiti drew an effective illustration from the Raratonga place of pilgrimage. A considerable volume of water from a perennial fountain on the central mountain of the island finds its way to the edge of the cliff, leaps over its sides and becomes the source of all the streams which fertilise the island. "It is even so," said the preacher, "with the gospel. From this one source flows the living stream, which, dispersed amongst the nations of the earth, brings healing to all who are willing to drink. Whither have not these life-giving waters sped? Those who taste them shall never thirst." Mr. Gill's quotations from the addresses and prayers of these

native teachers show how well fitted such preachers are to reach the hearts of their own countrymen. An ordinary English address would fall flat on their ears, but the native preachers are masters of a style which seems to arouse and interest every hearer.

That there is a great sphere for lay workers on the mission field is obvious. The editor of the *Hindu*, himself a Brahmin gentleman, recently announced that he fully shared the hope "that, as Judaism and Christianity were reconciled in the Epistle to the Hebrews, so will Buddhism and Christianity, Hinduism and Christianity, Islam and Christianity, be reconciled yet by some supreme minds, who shall show that in Christ all that is good and true in these faiths has been embodied and completed by a special revelation." These are memorable words from the chief Brahmin editor of South India. The whole world is waiting to welcome Christ. Fields white already to harvest make, after all, the mightiest appeal for labourers. But where are we to look for evangelists? If we wait till specially ordained ministers can be sent forth, what hope is there of entering the doors of usefulness which God's providence is opening before the Church of to-day? Every branch of the Christian Church is beginning to ask how

it may best use the gifts of its laymen in the mission field.

In no part of Europe is the question of lay preaching more prominent than in Russia. The Greek Church has always lacked missionary spirit. It does not provide any kind of preaching for the people. They have simply to look on whilst the priests perform the service. They do not even take any part in the singing of hymns and doxologies, which are entirely left to the choir. Such services fail to satisfy the religious instincts of the Russian peasant, so that when anyone begins to preach and explain the Scriptures he becomes an eager listener. He knows that the priest is a representative of government, whilst the preacher must be acting under strong conviction, for he runs the risk of severe loss and punishment. Some interesting glimpses of the lay preachers of Russia are given in Prelooker's *Under the Czar and Queen Victoria.* He says that the Greek Church has no moral influence with the people, and millions have left its communion. The lay preacher is abroad, and the peasant eagerly welcomes his message. "There is, perhaps, no other people in the world so open to new impressions and influences, so ready to be led in any direction with childish confidence and simplicity of mind

as the outwardly rough and coarse, but inwardly sensitive and affectionate, Russian moujik." Stundism is spreading all over the country, and is bringing new hope to the downtrodden and oppressed. Mr. Prelooker gives a fragment of a Stundist sermon which he heard. "Signs," said the preacher, "are not deeds. It is well to surround a house with hedges to protect the building, but the hedges erected round the religious building are such as to hide the latter altogether from the eyes of the onlookers. Christ preached love, justice, brotherhood, mercy, forgiveness, chastity, purity, modesty, self-sacrifice, labour, equality, not to accumulate wealth, but to give it entirely away. Instead of this divine teaching, they give us ceremonies, processions, images, prostrations, burning of candles, sprinkling of water, the sign of the cross." Whole villages in the south of Russia are said to have embraced Stundism, leaving the priest to perform his ceremonies in an empty church. Lord Radstock's evangelistic visits to St. Petersburg, in 1874 and 1876, gave a great impetus to the movement. The preaching peasants have had to endure much persecution, but nothing can quench the zeal of themselves or their congregations.

Mr. Prelooker met at Elizabethgrad an old

man, called BALEBEN, who had often been fined for his preaching. He went with him one Sunday afternoon to the wretched little room. It had scarcely any light, and only a few wooden chairs on its earthen floor. Baleben had a Bible and hymn book, the rest were unprovided with books. The old peasant read a chapter of the Bible, on which he made running comments such as might be given in England to young Sunday scholars. The people listened with rapt attention. Several hymns were sung to sad and plaintive tunes. At certain passages the women sobbed and wept. The air in the room was well-nigh suffocating, but the people forgot everything in their delight at the preacher's message. A little later Mr. Prelooker visited another Stundist meeting near Odessa. After nearly two hours' tramp through the muddy roads, he and his guides reached a mud hovel, with bare rafters, earthen floor, and lime-washed walls. The place was packed with peasants and their children. Half of them stood, the rest sat on wooden benches. A tallow candle threw a dim light on the wrinkled faces of those who were nearest to the elder who conducted service. Mr. Prelooker had to step outside several times to snatch a breath of air. He preached his first sermon here to

Russian peasants, who listened with the greatest attention, and uttered frequent "amins."

In former times the soldiers were the chief preachers and founders of sects in Russia. Their military life had made them familiar with the worship of other nations, and when they got back to their native villages they would find an eager audience among old friends, whilst they imparted some fresh ideas or indulged in criticism of priest, church, or government. The greater the persecution such a man suffered, the more the people sympathised with him and hung upon his words. Women are taking an active share in the crusade, and there is not a little wild enthusiasm. One young girl, Kxenia Kusmina, left her home in the town and went to live in a village, in order that she might there preach her new creed. She predicted the disappearance of the Church and modern marriage, and taught strict vegetarianism. She gained many adherents, and passed from village to village with her twelve apostles, singing hymns and persuading the people to prepare themselves for a new life founded on social equality and communal marriage and property. Lay preaching is one of the greatest forces in the religious life of Russia at the present day; and though it has often a strong mixture of fanaticism in it,

there is a future before the lay preacher which fills all Christian men with hope. Mr. Prelooker himself is a Jew, the son of "a merchant and voluntary preacher" in Pinsk, and his grandfather's house was the rallying-place for the wandering preachers and teachers of the Jewish race.

CHAPTER VIII

LAY PEACHING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

AT the beginning of this century Scotland was stirred to its depths by the labours of the brothers Haldane. That country has produced no finer lay preachers than these two noted evangelists, who made preaching tours from one end of the land to the other. The parish ministers were as a rule unevangelical and sorely lacking in zeal, so that wherever JAMES HALDANE and his fellow-labourers went they found eager congregations. The magistrates tried to stop the meetings, but Haldane was not a man to be turned from the path of duty by threats of punishment. The General Assembly of 1800 forbade field preaching and discouraged the revival. ROBERT HALDANE, the elder of the two brothers, therefore seceded from the Kirk and erected tabernacles in the large towns. He also educated three hundred young men as evangelists, who caught his own spirit and laboured

with much success. Robert Haldane's great scheme for an Indian Mission had been thwarted by the opposition of the East Indian Company, but he had the true missionary spirit. After the peace of 1816, he went to Geneva, where he soon gathered twenty-five university students around him, to whom he began to expound the Epistle to the Romans. Frederick Monod and Merle d'Aubigne, the historian of the Reformation, were among his first disciples. Dr. Caesar Malan, who was already ordained, was greatly quickened, and ventured at the cost of much obloquy to preach the gospel in Geneva. Having lit the torch here, Haldane went on to Montauban, the head-quarters of French Protestantism, where he accomplished similar work.

The last half of this century has seen a noble succession of lay preachers raised up in all churches. One name adds special lustre to the movement. DWIGHT L. MOODY earned his degree as an evangelist in Chicago, where he gathered the street urchins into his mission school and founded a great Evangelistic Church. In 1872 he and Mr. Sankey began their first memorable mission in England, which stirred the whole nation, and marks an epoch in the history of modern evangelism. The philosophy of Mr. Moody's work was thus stated by himself. "Mr. Moody,"

some one asked, "what is the way to reach the masses with the gospel?" "Go for them," was his answer. His own addresses were so direct, so clear, so simple, that every hearer felt, This man means business now. Since the days of Wesley and Whitefield, no man has probably had such vast audiences or urged home the truth more mightily. Mr. Sankey's singing was the ministry of song in perfection. Every word was an appeal and an invitation. The return of the evangelists to America, as Dr. Pierson says, "was the signal for that amazing series of special services, evangelistic meetings, and Christian conventions, which have made the entire United States the field for Mr. Moody's tillage." Out of his evangelisation work has sprung the present School for Evangelists at Northfield, where young people of both sexes receive careful training in Bible study and evangelistic work. He is thus raising up a great army of lay preachers who are imbued with his own spirit, and ought to become valuable agents of the Church both at home and abroad.

Mr. Moody's friendly interest in Philip Bliss at Chicago in 1869 did much to enlist his services as the singing evangelist of America. Poet, composer, and evangelist, he deserves a niche in this History of Lay Preaching.

JOHN MACGREGOR holds an honourable place among the lay preachers of this generation. He regarded the Open-Air Mission as the chief work of his life. He was first attracted to it in April 1853, when he was on his way to visit some ragged schools in the East End. He threw his whole strength into the movement, and in May 1854 preached his "first regular open-air sermon." He and the friend who stood at his side were pelted with dirt and cabbage stalks, but opposition only made "Rob Roy" more resolute. For many years he gave himself to this work, arguing with infidels and cavillers, and winning some notable results. He was a street controversialist as well as a preacher, and had rare gifts for his special work—a strong voice, a great fund of anecdote, a lively sense of humour, and an admirable command of himself, which made him superior to insult or interruption. A youth at King's Cross, who was one of the ringleaders in trying to foment a disturbance, paid him this tribute: "Don't he keep his temper beautiful with all that impudence from *those fellows?*" In a little pamphlet intended to guide open-air preachers, he says: "No other duty or privilege need be neglected for this. It is a variety, and therefore little fatiguing. It is out of doors, and thus easily

associated with healthy exercise. It calls forth the whole power of the mind, and gives room for every talent and all kinds of learning; therefore nobody can be above it. It may be effectually done by simple words and knowledge of the Scriptures, and therefore nobody need be below it. It is social, for it is found well that friends should join. It sends men to church, to school, to read, to feel, to think, and to pray, so it helps every other means of good. Let those who will take part in such a blessed work burst through the false shame which Satan ties up many hands with, cast aside the slothful habit with which the flesh paralyses even active spirits, and brave the sneer of a world which *must* sneer if both it and they are consistent. Once having begun, they will not soon stop, for they are in a track well trodden by saints and martyrs, and sprinkled with the blood even of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself."

Lord Shaftesbury stood by Macgregor stoutly in his crusade. He said, "I am for striking right and left, by day and by night, before and behind, wherever I can find the devil; and that is at all times and everywhere." He went to Mile End Waste on Fairlop Friday in 1881, where he met the whole band of open-air preachers, and himself gave a short address to the crowd. Archbishop

Tait countenanced the movement by preaching in his robes at Covent Garden. In an interview with Dr. Wilberforce, then Bishop of Oxford, about open-air preaching in 1855, Macgregor urged that ten of the best clergy should be selected. Each ought to choose two laymen, and say, "Go to the worst places in my parish, and do your best with the Bible, out of doors, and tell me this day three months how you get on." He boldly maintained that "where lay agency is most honoured by the minister, clerical influence is most cherished by the people."

At the annual meeting of the Open-Air Mission at the Mansion House in 1883, Earl Shaftesbury said: "I look upon these open-air services as perfectly normal; they are certainly primitive; the very earliest preaching of the gospel was in the open air, on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, by our blessed Lord Himself. And they are unquestionably ecclesiastical. In the earliest times of the Reformation there was open-air preaching at Paul's Cross. All the worthiest of the bishops preached there; there, too, the bishop of glorious memory, Bishop Latimer, preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, and hundreds heard those words of truth which went right home to their hearts, and brought forth good fruit in after-days."

Sir ROBERT FOWLER, Lord Mayor in 1883–85, was a lay preacher. On Sunday, April 20, 1884, he gave an address at the Agricultural Hall, and on October 19 he says in his journal: "In the evening to Dalston, where I preached on 'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego' in the chapel, which was full. May a blessing rest on it! I feel that people come to hear the Lord Mayor out of curiosity, and thus attention may have been called to the truth; and this is a talent one is accountable for while holding office. What I shall do when I lose the advantage of the accidental position must be left to the future."

Sir ARTHUR BLACKWOOD, the Secretary of the Post Office, must take rank as one of the most earnest and successful lay preachers of our day. He delighted in open-air work, and his services at Willis's Rooms, and in drawing-room gatherings, produced a marked effect on the upper classes. Many pleasing incidents of his success are given in his Life. The Rev. Archibald Brown is perhaps the most notable convert whom Sir Arthur ever led to decision. Nor should the name of Lord Radstock—one of the most powerful lay preachers of our day—be forgotten.

All Churches are beginning to recognise that increased attention must be given to lay preaching. No regular ministry can possibly

overtake the openings for service which are continually presenting themselves. In evangelising the villages and establishing mission churches in large towns, laymen must act largely as the pioneers. The success of village Methodism is largely due to its lay preachers. The Church of England has been somewhat slow to move in this direction. Bishop Ryle pointed out, at a recent meeting of his Diocesan Conference,[1] that almost everything had been left in the hands of the clergy. "The position of the English laity is nothing more nor less than a rag and remnant of popery.[2] It is part of that *damnosa hæreditas* which Rome has bequeathed to our Church, and which has never been completely purged away." A great change is coming over the spirit of the Church in this respect. Archdeacon Sinclair shows that in primitive times laymen took a much more active part in Christian work. He says:—

"We have now seen that in the beginning the laity were on an equality with the clergy, submitting to the superintendence of the ruler

[1] *Guardian*, November 6, 1895.

[2] "What is the province of the laity?—To hunt, to shoot, to entertain! These matters they understand, but to meddle with ecclesiastical affairs they have no right at all."—Letter of Mgr. Talbot to Archbishop Manning (Purcell's *Life of Manning*, ii. 318).

whom they have themselves chosen, and who has been ordained by authority. We have seen them preaching without limitation out of doors, and with the consent of bishop or clergy in the church. They baptize at first freely, afterwards in case of necessity. They elect clergy and bishops. At first, in the very simplest days, they break bread from house to house, but they soon lose this privilege through disorder. They receive letters from apostles and churches. They are represented by imperial commissioners in general councils. They at last acquire the right to appoint to churches which they have built. At the present day, when Christian ministrations are needed so sorely on all hands, we may well take these facts into our most serious consideration." The Archdeacon adds: "The Bishop of London has already appointed laymen to preach in churches at times other than those of the regular services. In the dearth of spiritual ministrations amongst the vast masses of our population, perhaps other opportunities may be discovered for lay work, under proper restrictions, in accordance with primitive precedent." [1]

Dr. Waddington [2] quotes a circular, issued by

[1] *Words to the Laity*, pp. 59, 60.
[2] *Congregational History.*

certain laymen in the Church of England, who say: "We find that divers and several of those people called Quakers are also very good Christians, and preach true doctrine according to Holy Scripture; and we therefore declare that it is our opinion that such a voluntary ministry, to preach on free cost as aforesaid, is of excellent use and exceeding necessary to be allowed of in the Church of England, not only in preaching to poor people in poor tabernacles, who cannot pay anything sufficient to maintain a ministry, nor yet get pews in their parish churches, but also it makes the learned clergy to be the more sober and studious in their places, and therefore we can think no other but that such voluntary ministers are sent of God; for we remember the apostles were working men, of several trades as these are, yet we do not believe God sent these to hinder the clergy of maintenance, but only to season them as salt seasons meat. In great parishes there is need to be at least two congregations: the parish church for the orthodox minister and the rich, and a tabernacle for the lay prophets and the poor." The trend of opinion is certainly in this direction, and the Church of England has much to gain by its new policy. It will not only enable it to extend its field of influence, and enlist a host of new workers, but

it will give an opportunity to test the gifts of young men who are drawn towards the ministry. To make, as Mr. Barclay says, an impassable barrier between the clergy and the laity, so that "the most pious, and holy, and talented of the laity may neither preach the gospel, nor advance the interests of the church in his parish," is not the way for the Church of England "to prosper or obtain its legitimate hold on the masses of the population."

We might quote the opinions of many eminent Churchmen as to the pressing need of lay helpers. The Rev. Harry Jones touches on this subject of lay preaching in a recent volume.[1] He is speaking of "the needy, over-worked parson in the poorer parts of London," who finds it difficult to secure any adequate holiday. "In his case, if he has no clerical colleague, it seems hard that (while he makes arrangement with a neighbour for some occasional duties, which can be discharged only by men in holy orders) he cannot sometimes engage the services of a devout, orthodox lay friend to help him while he recruits himself for his work by a Sunday's absence. As it is, the Bishop of London has 'half' ordained certain 'readers' to assist in conducting worship within

[1] *Fifty Years; or, Dead Leaves and Living Seeds*, p. 53. Smith, Elder, & Co., 1895.

consecrated buildings; but they can only take an 'additional' service, or help by preaching in church when the minister is present. Thus they are unable (by aid rendered there) to give him a much-needed 'holiday,' which would restore him, filled with fresh vigour, to the spiritual advantage of all parties concerned."

He returns to the subject in a later part of the same volume (p. 183): "A notable forward step was taken by the Bishop of London, who, at a great function in St. Paul's, gave conspicuous permission to a number of devout laymen to preach in consecrated buildings. Now, as only one sermon (in the morning) is rubrically prescribed, this enables a clergyman to invite a 'lay' preacher into his pulpit in the afternoon or evening, as well as take an 'extra' service when the two appointed ones have been held. Two or three of these 'half-ordained' ministers have effectually helped me at St. Philip's. And if this movement spreads here and in other dioceses, a fresh and most valuable store of ministerial assistance will be provided for the clergy, especially in the country. A parson there, indeed, who cannot dismiss from his mind a suspicion that his sermons have not always met with such appreciation as he desires, may be able to take his seat with nimble attention

when he realises the sensation of 'sitting under' the squire. He will listen with respect, not unmingled with curiosity, and on the first occasion, at least, be unlikely to fall into a doze. Anyhow, the episcopal action to which I have referred may, let us hope, create a more wholesome public estimate of the layman's position in the Church, and make some feel the presence of fresh fire in the ecclesiastical furnace."

The present movement in Anglican circles in favour of lay preaching is based on the customs of the Primitive Church. A canon of the Council of Neo-cæsarea about A.D. 314 practically extinguished the permanent diaconate, which was henceforth regarded purely as a step to the priesthood. To meet the loss involved by this change, the office of reader was instituted. In the Eastern Church, readers were admitted by the imposition of hands; but in the Western Church, by prayer and the delivery of the New Testament, or those portions of it from which they were to read. The new officers were considered to be clerics of a minor order distinct from the body of laymen, but they had nothing to do with teaching in the form of exhortation or preaching. No attempt was made to restore the permanent diaconate at the Reformation, but a Statute, passed under Edward VI., authorised the bishops to draw up

an Ordinal, not only for the ordination of priests and deacons, but also for that of 'other ministers' or readers. The bishops drew up an Ordinal for the admission of readers, and at a Convocation, held at Lambeth in 1559, they also prepared "Injunctions to be confessed and subscribed by those that were to be admitted readers," in which their duties are defined in "reading the service of the day, Litany, and homilies." They were prohibited from administering the sacraments, and from preaching or marrying.[1] On January 7, 1559, Archbishop Parker issued a commission to the Bishop of Bangor to hold an ordination at Bow Church, London. Five readers were thus ordained with the deacons set apart at that service.[2] Two years later, on April 12, 1561, another Convocation at Lambeth ratified these injunctions, and it was resolved that readers should be appointed by the bishop, and have letters testimonial of their admission. Their duties were extended to the burial of the dead, churching women, and keeping the registers, but they were again prohibited from preaching or administering the sacraments.[3] In the first

[1] Strype's *Annals of the Reformation*, i. 275.

[2] Strype's *Annals*, i. 129; also his *Life of Archbishop Parker*, i. 129.

[3] Cardwell's *Documentary Annals of the Church*, i. 264-69.

year of James I. an Act was passed confirming that of Edward the Sixth's reign. After the Restoration the office of reader gradually became obsolete. Bishop Wilson of Sodor and Man who died in 1755, was the last prelate who issued licences for readers.

On May 3, 1866, the Lower House of Convocation passed a resolution "that the spiritual wants of the Church would be most effectually met by the constitution of the office of subdeacon or reader as an auxiliary to the sacred ministry of the Church." The following Ascension Day the bishops met at Lambeth and revived the office of reader. They drew up a form for their admission, chiefly based on that used in the Western Church, and subsequently licensed them to perform nearly all the duties of the diaconate in mission buildings. Dr. Jackson, then Bishop of London, formally authorised eight lay preachers in May 1869. They were only authorised to read the lessons in churches. This, however, did not furnish much relief to the clergy, and on February 15, 1884, the Upper House of Convocation agreed "that they should conduct such services in consecrated buildings as should be approved by the bishop, not being the appointed service of the day, and also to publicly catechise. On May 15, the Lower

House rejected this proposal by a majority of six, on the ground that it was doubtful if, under the Act of Uniformity of Charles II., readers could legally say the offices of the Church in consecrated buildings. The Upper House of Convocation confirmed the veto of the Lower House by a majority of one." We have drawn these particulars from a brief statement, signed H. G., and bearing date, January 1889. The writer argues that Convocation did not correctly read the Act, which contains no repeal of the first Act of Uniformity (2 & 3 Edw. VI. c. 1), which declares that "it shall be lawful for all men in churches and chapels, etc., to use *openly* any psalm or prayer taken out of the Bible, at any due time, not letting or omitting thereby the service, or any part mentioned in the Prayer Book. He concludes, "the right, therefore, of the laity to use churches for devotional services remains unimpaired: consequently, that of persons in minor orders must be equally so."

A statement published by the "Readers' Board for the Diocese of London" says that "Diocesan readers are authorised by the bishop to conduct 'extra services,' and to deliver addresses in church on the invitation of the incumbent. Extra services may consist of collects, lections, hymns, litanies, with or without a sermon,

address, or exposition. Such services may be held at any time on Sundays or weekdays, so that holy communion, and morning and evening prayer, are not omitted. Where there are two even-songs, one may be taken by a diocesan reader (with the exception, of course, of the absolution). The sermon which usually follows even-song may be preached at any time by a diocesan reader. Incumbents who may wish to avail themselves regularly of the help of diocesan readers are invited to look out laymen of experience, education, and Christian character, and to communicate with the Readers' Board as to their admission to the office. Where such help is only occasionally wanted, incumbents are recommended to apply to the hon. secretary of the Board for the names and addresses of readers authorised by the bishop to give such assistance.

The duties and powers of lay readers, as now revived in the Church of England, vary according to the views of the bishop who appoints and the incumbent under whom the reader acts. That is clearly brought out by the form of licence. In the diocese of Canterbury the readers do not as a rule enter the pulpit; but in the vast see of London it is not uncommon, especially in congested districts, or at special seasons such as Lent or Advent, for readers to lecture or preach

in the churches. Lord Stamford, Mr. G. A. Spottiswoode, Mr. Eugene Stock, and others, are in much request for such services, and the tendency seems to be to widen their sphere of usefulness. The number of laymen thus licensed is about thirty. Sick-visiting, preparatory classes for candidates for confirmation, lectures on church history and social subjects, and mission services, all form part of the reader's work, varying according to districts and special circumstances. Some of the readers confine their attention to reading the lessons in church and conducting a mission service, but they have a recognised ecclesiastical status. At a recent Conference at Lambeth Palace, held under the presidency of Archbishop Benson, various subjects of interest to lay readers were discussed. After evening prayers, a Maidstone clergyman gave an address urging on the readers the great need of reaching and keeping in touch with working men. Both he and the Archbishop recognised that the power of the lay reader lies in his position as such, and as distinct from the clergy, but working by their side and in hearty co-operation with them. His business is to "take off the rough" in parochial and evangelistic work, as one of the members of that Conference described it. The official Year Book for 1896 sets down the number of readers who

have received licences from the bishops at 1652. They are distributed over the various dioceses, and include not only men of position and education, but also working men. The movement as yet is manifestly only in its infancy.

The Nonconformist Churches have done much to develop lay preaching. Baptist and Congregational churches in the towns have surrounded themselves with a cluster of mission stations and village churches, and have called out a considerable staff of lay preachers, who work according to a fixed plan. The Baptist Handbook for 1896 reports 4336 local preachers in England and Wales, 195 in Scotland, 92 in Ireland, 22 in the Channel Islands. This is a total of 4645 as against 1845 pastors. But the genius of Congregationalism is not altogether favourable to such work. There is no definite training for the preachers, and sometimes the country churches are apt to chafe at the control exercised by the town centre.

In Methodism we find the highest development of lay preaching. The Wesleyan Methodists in Great Britain and South Africa have nearly 20,000 local preachers. The Primitive Methodists have 16,728; other Methodist bodies have about 4800. Before any one comes on a Wesleyan plan, the superintendent minister, or one of his colleagues, should examine him in

the second catechism, with its appendix of Bible history, and, when necessary, in the elements of English grammar. One or two of the local preachers must have heard him preach, so that they may report on his qualifications for the work. If his name is approved by the Local Preachers' Meeting, he is put "on trial." He remains on probation for at least twelve months, and must then preach a trial sermon, give an account of his conversion, his present Christian experience, and his call. Then he is examined as to his knowledge of the leading doctrines of Christianity. Every local preacher must read Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, and his Fifty-three Standard Sermons, before he is received on "full plan." It will be seen how well this scheme is adapted to test the powers of a young lay preacher and prepare for future study. Local preachers have a place as members of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, and if they remove to any other circuit are entitled to be put upon the plan there without further trial or examination. The local preachers meet once a quarter, and a special report must now be presented at the District Synod, stating what efforts are being made for the improvement of the lay preachers in each circuit. Much is being done to render the lay helpers increasingly efficient. Valuable

books are supplied at very low prices, so that even the poorest village local preacher may have tools for his work. Every page of Methodist history proves that such men have rare gifts to impress country folk, and they will not be slow to avail themselves of such opportunities. The associations of lay preachers are growing stronger, conventions are often held, and it is manifest that Methodism is not content with what has been already accomplished, but is seeking to make its lay preachers and evangelists more equal to the manifold opportunities of the day.

That sagacious and catholic-spirited clergyman, the Rev. Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne, saw the power Methodism possesses in its lay preachers, and wished to secure such helpers in his own church. "What is wanted," he says, "is an outside guerilla force of earnest, pious men, who would devote themselves to the task of mission work among that class whose habits of life and rearing have been such as to make them, naturally, little disposed to profit by a ministry working in a groove altogether foreign to their position and condition in life." He confesses that the cottage meeting of the Primitive Methodists rankled in his mind. He heard them singing in the open air, and soon saw that these gatherings met a want that the more orderly church service could not supply.

"They were the outcome of a religious zeal which would bear no ordinary restriction; it is often called rant and cant, but, be it called by what name it may, it was and is a great power for good in fields which seem to defy any other power." In another passage of his letters he points out that at the "meeting" in a village chapel people could worship without distinction of class. The preachers, he adds, are mainly Wesleyan Methodists, "many of whom are themselves day-labourers. They are earnest men of deep religious conviction; they possess a large amount of Bible-gleaned knowledge. Their great theme is the glory which awaits the converted in the world to come."

The Salvation Army might almost be described as a society of lay preachers. Here we come appreciably near to the fulfilment of the great Jewish lawgiver's wish—that all the Lord's people might be prophets. The title of one of the earliest publications that called general attention to the Army seems to be the motto of the movement. "Heathen England: being a description of the utterly godless condition of the vast majority of the English nation, and of the establishment, growth, system, and success of an organisation for its regeneration, consisting of working people under the superintendence of

William Booth." The Army is built on lay preaching, and its crusade is now almost world-wide. Its training homes are expressly intended to equip young preachers of both sexes for their work as evangelists.

The views of the Plymouth Brethren as to ministry correspond pretty closely to those of the Friends. All who are owned by the Spirit are at liberty to speak and teach. They hold that there is no need for an ordained order of preachers. John Darby was himself a clergyman in the Church of Ireland, but he became gradually convinced that any person feeling himself called to preach should be at liberty to exercise his gifts. In one of his tracts, "Liberty to preach Jesus possessed by every Christian," he denies the existence of any priestly office in the Church except the universal priesthood of all believers. The Plymouth Brethren hold the same position in regard to lay preaching. All who possess the qualification are not only authorised, but obliged to evangelise the world and build up the Church quite apart from any human ordination. We may mention the name of Mr. George Müller of Bristol, the chief leader of the Open Brethren, to prove how eminently useful some members of this communion have been.

The facts on which we have dwelt show that the modern Church has grasped the principle of the liberty of prophesying. All wise men are anxious that such liberty should not degenerate into licence. There may be evangelism which is above rule, as in the case of the most honoured and widely influential evangelist of the day. But such cases as Mr. Moody's will always be exceptional. The regular evangelism under proper ecclesiastical supervision tends to become the prevailing type. There is a great field for development in this direction.

Mr. Barclay holds that in every religious denomination there is a considerable number of truly Christian men and women who are ready for service, but are perfectly unable to create a sphere of action for themselves. "Where there is one man capable of commencing home missionary operations alone in the metropolis, or any of our large towns, there are a thousand who would work as patiently, and with equal success in proportion to their varied gifts, if they were kindly taken by the hand and shown a congenial sphere of labour for their common Lord."

Where the line between the lay preacher and the pastor should be drawn is a problem which different Churches will approach in a very different way.

Tyndale, in his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, charges the priests with separating themselves from the lay people. Ye "have a several kingdom among yourselves, and several laws of your own making; wherewith ye violently bind the lay people, that never consented unto the making of them" (p. 56). His definition of a priest comes out in a later passage: "By a priest, then, in the New Testament, understand nothing but an elder to teach the younger, and to bring them unto the knowledge and understanding of Christ, and to minister the sacraments which Christ ordained, which is also nothing but to preach Christ's promise" (p. 198).

Luther, by denying that there was any essential difference between priest and layman, struck a fatal blow at the claims of the Roman hierarchy. Cromwell held the same views. In answer to some Declarations framed by the Irish prelates and clergy in 1649, he says: "I wonder not at differences of opinion, at discontents and divisions, where so antichristian and dividing a term as 'Clergy and Laity' is given and received. A term unknown to any save the antichristian Church, and such as derive themselves from her. *Ab initio non fuit sic.*"

The word "laity" (λαός, people) has itself

a flavour of the days of priestcraft. It seems to fix a gulf between the minister and his congregation. But whatever responsibilities and privileges are accorded to the ministry, and no thoughful man will wish to make light of these, he is still one of the people. Nothing must be allowed to obscure the great doctrine of the common priesthood of all believers. Clergy and ministers all exist for the good of the Church, not for any personal glory or honour. (Eph. iv. 11, 12.) Their glory is not in superiority and domination, but in service. "There is nothing in the word 'preach' which makes it the exclusive prerogative of any order or class to spread the good news."[1]

Communions which hold high sacramentarian doctrine, or believe in apostolical succession, will naturally set a wide distinction between clergy and laity. The New Testament view, according to Nonconformist teachers, is clearly put by a Wesleyan theologian, who says: "The eldership is rather leadership than lordship. The elders are still themselves members of the flock, and the whole flock, pastors included, are Christ's clergy and the Lord's laity at the same time. The distinction between clergy and laity, if the original meaning of the two

[1] Pierson's *Evangelistic Work*, p. 15.

words be adhered to, or if the distinction be made to mean anything beyond the co-ordinating and the co-ordinated, the regulating and the regulated part of the community—is utterly, intensely anti-scriptural. Our Lord Himself teaches that distinctions of office do not in His kingdom, as they do in worldly kingdoms, imply distinctions of rank. In the very nature of His kingdom they cannot. So lofty and so sacred is the rank of the least of His little ones, that it is impossible for the greatest in His kingdom to attain a holier or a higher."[1] The flock are parties to the minister's appointment, and he watches over them as one that must give account. There is no doubt that the lay element died out of the Church within a few centuries of its foundation.

Dr. Rigg points this out in his *Comparative View of Church Organisations* (p. 57). "The Church everywhere was a Church without a godly lay fellowship, a Church with no laity but the world at large, a Church which, indeed, claimed the whole world as its laity." Hence the Church which had to be reformed in the sixteenth century was "a Church without a living Christian laity, without any godly lay fellowship." In this country the people at large

[1] Dr. Gregory's *Holy Catholic Church*, p. 101.

were regarded as the laity. Sovereigns, bishops, and Parliament "all agreed in suppressing whatever might have tended to bring forth a godly lay fellowship, competent to take part in the discipline and government of the Church."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

READERS' BOARD FOR THE DIOCESE OF LONDON.

(*Appointed by the Lord Bishop of London, June* 1890.)

I.

REGULATIONS AS TO READERS.

Readers in the diocese of London consist of two classes—(1) Diocesan Readers; (2) Parochial Readers.

Diocesan Readers.

The regulations as to Diocesan Readers are the following:—

1. The commission is to be held permanently, unless revoked by the bishop, and is to entitle the holder to conduct, in any parish to which he may be licensed, services in school and other rooms and in the open air, and also such extra services in consecrated buildings as the incumbent may wish and as the bishop may approve; and further, to perform occasionally similar duties in any other parish in the diocese at the request of the incumbent.

2. The person desiring to be appointed a Diocesan

Reader is to write to the secretary of the Readers' Board for a form of application, and is to return it filled up.

3. The Board, if it sees fit, will nominate the applicant to the bishop, and the bishop will, at his discretion, grant the commission after or without an examination in the Bible and Book of Common Prayer, and the bishop will name a time and place for admitting the reader to the office by the form of service in use in the diocese.

4. The reader will, at admission, and may when ministering, be habited in surplice, and will be entitled to the use of such badge and tippet as may be authorised.

N.B.—The commission will only be granted when extra services are to be conducted or addresses in consecrated buildings are to be given regularly.

Parochial Readers.

The regulations for the nomination and licensing of Parochial Readers are the following :—

1. The licence is to entitle the holder to conduct services in school and other rooms and in the open air in the parish to which he is licensed.

2. The incumbent proposing to nominate a Parochial Reader is to apply for a form of nomination to the secretary of the Readers' Board, and to return it filled up.

3. He will therein supply the names of two communicants who are ready to testify to the character and fitness of the proposed Reader.

4. The bishop, when satisfied of the competency of the person nominated, will issue his licence, which shall be sent to the incumbent upon whose application it is granted, and shall be handed by him to the Reader at such parochial service or meeting as he may deem expedient, during which the Reader will read and sign the prescribed declaration.

5. The licence is revocable by the bishop, and becomes void upon the death or removal of the incumbent or minister in charge of the parish, or upon the holder ceasing to work in the parish according to the terms of the licence, and when revoked or void must be returned to the secretary of the Board.

6. A licence avoided by the death or removal of the incumbent or minister in charge of the parish, can be revived by an endorsement made by the Readers' Board, upon the application in writing of the succeeding incumbent or minister within three months of his succeeding to the parish.

N.B.—No licence is required for reading the lessons in church.

II.

THE FORM OF ADMITTING DIOCESAN READERS TO THEIR OFFICE, ACCORDING TO THE USE OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON.

When the day named by the bishop is come, the chairman of the Readers' Board, or his deputy, shall present unto the bishop (sitting in his chair) the persons to be admitted readers, saying these words—

Right Reverend Father in God, I present unto you these persons to be admitted to the office of Reader in the Church.

The Bishop.

Hath inquiry been made into their life and conversation and their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures?

The Chairman (or his Deputy).

Inquiry hath been made, and they have been adjudged to be meet for the duties that will be required of them.

Then shall the bishop exhort all those who are to be admitted, standing before him, after the manner following—

Dearly beloved, it hath ever been the practice of the Church to employ not only the ordained ministers, but also devout laymen, in various labours for the spiritual good of men, and for the edification of the whole Body of Christ. And the Church hath profited greatly by their service, making increase of the Body according to the effectual working in the measure of every part. Wherefore this office of reader, for which ye now offer yourselves, is to be held in great esteem as fulfilling the Lord's purpose and serving greatly to the honour of the Church, the good of your fellow-Christians, and the glory of God. And we earnestly exhort you to see that ye live worthy of your high vocation, believing earnestly what ye are set to teach, adding good example to spiritual precepts, and ever remembering what that Church is of which ye are now to be officers, and who is the Head thereof. And now, before we admit you, let us fall to prayer that God's blessing may be with you always.

Then all of them in order kneeling before the bishop, he shall stand up and say—

O Lord God Almighty, who dost vouchsafe Thy heavenly blessing to all that love Thy Word, look down, we beseech Thee, on these Thy servants, now to receive authority from us to labour in that Holy Word within this diocese, as they shall be directed by Thy ordained ministers. Pour down upon them the abundance of Thy grace ; make them modest in their ministration, ready to obey those set over them in the Lord, diligent to prove and fashion their own lives and the lives of their families according to Thy blessed Word. Grant unto them to grow in the

knowledge and love of Thy Word, that they may minister therein to the salvation of souls, to the glory of Thy Name, and to the edification of Thy Holy Church; so that finally they may have their portion with those who from the beginning have in this office faithfully ministered Thy Word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Then shall the bishop deliver into the hands of every one of them, humbly kneeling before him, the New Testament, saying—

Take thou authority to read the Word of God, and to minister in thy office as shall be appointed unto thee by the bishop, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

Then shall the bishop say—

The Lord be with you.
Ans. And with thy spirit.
Let us pray.

Our Father, etc.

And these Collects.

O Lord God Almighty, sanctify, we beseech Thee, these Thy servants, and grant unto them with wisdom and understanding to read Thy Holy Word, and to exercise themselves therein. Keep them by Thy grace in all holy conversation, for the love of Thy Only-begotten Son, with whom and the Holy Ghost, the Giver of Life, Thou livest and reignest, one God now and ever. *Amen.*

Collect for Second Sunday in Advent.

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of Thy Holy Word, we may

embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Second Collect for Good Friday.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before Thee for all estates of men in Thy Holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve Thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Then the bishop shall bless them, saying this—

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

III.

THE ARCHBISHOP'S LICENCE.

EDWARD WHITE, by Divine Providence, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, to our beloved and approved in Christ [*name inserted*], Greeting: WE do, by these presents, give unto you, of whose fidelity, morals, sound doctrine, and good will we have been fully assured, our commission and authority to act as reader in the parish of [*name inserted*], within our diocese and jurisdiction of Canterbury, on the nomination of the Rev. [*name inserted*], incumbent of the same, AND DO authorise you to hold such services as we shall approve in unconsecrated buildings within the said parish, to read therein written or printed sermons which the incumbent shall approve, to read and explain Holy Scriptures as he shall appoint, to visit sick persons, and to aid him in such other ways, not forbidden by law or usage, as he

shall desire ; AND WE further authorise you to render the like aid in other parishes of our diocese, at the written request of the incumbent thereof, PROVIDED always that this licence shall not authorise anything to be done in the parish except at the express desire of the incumbent ; AND WE hereby declare that this our commission shall remain in force until it shall be revoked by us or our successors, or until a fresh admission to the said Parish of [*name inserted*] shall have been made.

AND SO we commend you to Almighty God, whose blessing we humbly pray may rest upon you and your work.

GIVEN under our hand and seal this day of , in the year of our Lord,

APPENDIX II

UNION FOR BIBLICAL AND HOMILETIC STUDY.

(AMONGST the organisations intended to aid lay preachers and other Christian workers in systematic study, the Preacher's Magazine Union is probably the most extensive. The subjoined programme indicates its methods and scope.)

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ABRIDGED PROGRAMME.

The object of the U.B.H.S. is to assist its members in systematic Biblical and Homiletic studies.

Membership is open to all Christian workers and Bible students. Members may join at any time.

Members are, as a rule, advised to take up the subjects of study in the order in which they are numbered, and not to undertake too many subjects in one Session. The num-

ber of subjects taken must, of course, largely depend upon the leisure and opportunity for study of the individual members.

Members who are engaged in or preparing for work which involves public speaking should begin with Sections I. and II.

Sections I. to VIII. may be easily taken as a two or three years' course, and the Council strongly advise preachers and teachers to go steadily through the whole scheme of study.

The subscription is only sixpence per annum, but members who can afford it are invited to give a larger sum in order to meet the expense of prizes, etc., and to provide poorer members with books at a further reduction.

The U.B.H.S. was started in connection with the PREACHER'S MAGAZINE, and members are advised to take that serial and to read it carefully.

Special arrangements can be made to meet the needs of classes held for the study of any of these subjects. Those who are already conducting such classes or desire to start them are invited to communicate with the General Secretary.

Detailed programme and other information can be obtained from the General Secretary.

The Session extends from September to May, but members may join at any time.

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II. Systematic Theology.

Tutor: Rev. J. R. Gregory, Trusthorpe, Mablethorpe, S.O. Text-book: Gregory's *Theological Student* (2s., post free).

III. Bible Study.

(1) Old Testament: Tutors: Revs. A. Moorhouse, M.A., B.D., 22 Park Road, Forest Hill, S.E., and J. H. Ritson, M.A., 13 Brentwood, Pendleton, Manchester. Text-book: Findlay's *Books of the Prophets.* Vol. I. (2s., post free).

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