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Doctrinal Theology.

COSMOLOGY.

(Continued.)

ANTHROPOLOGY.

God created man in his own image.¹⁾ The creation of man was a part, the closing part, of the six days' work of creation. On the day of which the inspired record says, "And the evening and the morning was the sixth day,"²⁾ God, according to the same account, created man.³⁾ Man is not a product of spontaneous generation, not a result of a long continued process of evolution, but a distinct work of God, made at a definite period of time, and not a rudimentary work, but a complete and finished work.⁴⁾ This work of God was from that first day of its existence *man*, not a cell, a microbe, a saurian, an ape, but man, created according to the will and counsel of God. It was the triune God who said, "*Let us make MAN*,"⁵⁾ and God created *MAN*.⁶⁾ As the human individual, even in its embryonic state is at all times essentially human, so the human race never passed through a state of brute existence or through

1) Gen. 1, 27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

2) Gen. 1, 31.

3) Gen. 1, 27.

4) Gen. 2, 1. 2.

5) Gen. 1, 26.

6) Gen. 1, 27.

tinual extensive and intensive growth in spiritual knowledge is secured. But such language, whatever it may be, is certainly not Christian. Christian religion is revealed religion, and divine revelation comes to us in this world's eventide only by the written word of God. What is not there revealed will not be revealed before the light of glory shall encompass God's elect, and whatever is revealed is accessible to those who *search the Scriptures, thinking that in them they have eternal life, and that they are they which testify of Christ.*¹⁾ And now, to answer the question twice proposed, I say to the glory of God that, as there is only one among all the religions of the world, one and one only true religion, Christianity, so also there is among the various Christian churches one and one only which, viewed both according to the material principle and according to the formal principle of Christianity, holds, teaches and confesses the doctrine of the true Christian religion in all its purity and unalloyed and unadulterated with falsehood or error of any kind, and *that church is the LUTHERAN CHURCH.*

A. G.

NOTE.—We have given this lecture as a specimen of what we are offering once a month to our young people at the State University at Columbia, Mo. The lectures are not delivered on the University grounds, but in a building located near the Campus and owned by a number of students as their private property.

PARAGRAPHS ON PREACHING.

The first requisite for preaching is something to preach, just as the first requisite for giving is something to give, and for cooking, something to cook. The chief reason why a brute can not say anything, is that the brute has nothing to say. When a man insists upon speaking on a subject of which he is ignorant, he will make a fool either of himself, or of those who hear him, or of both, and that is certainly

1) John 5, 39.

not the purpose of preaching. The first question therefore which a preacher should put to himself is: *What* will I say? Some of us have heard, and perhaps even read, sermons which made nothing so clear as the fact that the preacher had failed to answer or even to propose to himself this very question. The result of this neglect is a rambling discourse, in which the preacher says a little about many things and not much about anything. The congregation upon whom a sermon of this description has been inflicted will go away as empty as it came. And a preacher who has delivered such a sermon is like the woman with a fierce fire in the range and a great kettle on top of it with nothing in it but a gallon or two of water, which she boils to death or turns into vapor and calls it cooking a dinner for a hungry family of eight.

That woman's family would not fare any better if she had filled her pot with waste paper or with pebbles and sawdust, with water enough to stew, and salt, pepper, and allspice to taste. The preacher must not only have something to say, but what he would say must also be of service to his congregation. He must not only choose a subject, but also a proper subject. And here again many preachers, especially in our day, are sadly deficient. As a consequence their sermons are void of spiritual nourishment, and their congregations will either refuse to partake of their fare or fall away with dyspepsia and starvation. There is no possibility of sustaining and invigorating spiritual life by sermons on "Old Bachelors," "Old Maids," "Riding a Bicycle," "My Trip Through Yosemite," and kindred subjects. Business men and professional men have good and sufficient reason to stay away from a church where the preacher endeavors to enlighten or entertain them on subjects pertaining to professional matters and business affairs as such, concerning which he may know comparatively little, and that little wrong, and aspires to palm off his talk for a sermon.

Another form of the question: What will I preach? is: What does my congregation need? A preacher would exhibit very little wisdom by presenting to the inmates of a home for aged invalids an elaborate discourse on "The Education of Children," or "The Duties of Young People toward the Church," though that sermon might be a masterpiece at the proper place. Of course, there are certain truths which must be inculcated upon every congregation of Christians, the doctrine of sin and grace, of redemption and justification. "Preach the Gospel" is the charge of the Master to all his preachers. But on the other hand it may be just as safely said that every congregation has its peculiar wants, and it is the preacher's duty to know those wants and to meet them in his sermons. This is most certainly one of the reasons why Christ instituted a pastoral office, a local ministry, thus securing to the congregation a steward who, living among the household of God entrusted to his care, may become familiar with the local congregation and its individual members and to furnish spiritual food with due discrimination and adaptation. An old preacher was asked how long he had been in preparing a certain sermon, and his answer was: "Thirty years." A minister should not only consider himself preparing sermons when in his study and at his desk, but also as he moves about among his people, keeping his eyes and ears open as he holds converse with them in their various walks of life. It is in this way that he may equip himself with what is necessary for securing a correct answer to this important question: What do my people need?

But the question: What will I preach? should be more precisely put, What will I preach in this sermon? Of course, he will preach the Law and the Gospel. But to preach all the Law and all the Gospel would probably make a long sermon. Besides, laying down the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel is only part of what a

sermon should be; the doctrine should also be applied for consolation, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. To do this properly is possible only when the preacher carefully restricts himself to certain points of doctrine judiciously chosen not only with regard to his congregation, but also with due consideration of times and opportunities. The preacher will hardly be in danger of preaching a funeral discourse at a wedding, or a Christmas sermon for Pentecost. But a funeral is not simply a funeral, but that one particular funeral, which is identical with no other and accompanied with circumstances unlike those of any other funeral past or future. It is the preacher's task to adjust his sermon to present opportunities. This is one of the reasons why a careful and conscientious minister will hardly ever find a sermon preached in an earlier year again available without certain changes demanded by changed conditions not only in himself but also in the congregation. He will feel that certain matters mentioned or even emphasized on an earlier occasion would no longer be needful or even appropriate, and that certain things passed by in an earlier year should or must be said to-day.

Still another form of putting the question: What will I preach? may be called for by prevailing circumstances. It is: What will *I* preach? with the emphasis on the pronoun. Some things which an older preacher might very properly say in the pulpit, some subjects which may be handled with all propriety by a man of patriarchal appearance, should remain unsaid and unhandled by a young preacher in his first official year. The pastor of a congregation may discuss matters in his pulpit which a guest, a brother minister from a distance, should not touch. A lack of judgment in this respect may be of deplorable consequence, and cases might be mentioned of estrangement and even irreparable breach between a pastor and his congregation caused by indiscretions owing to a neglect of this question: What will *I* preach?

An appropriate form to put the question would also be: Whom will I preach? St. Paul when he came to preach at Corinth determined not to know anything there save Jesus Christ and him crucified,¹⁾ and he went and preached Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.²⁾ And whom else should he preach, since to Christ all the Prophets gave witness,³⁾ and there is salvation in no other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.⁴⁾ Yet there is many a preacher whose chief purpose rather seems to be to preach the Rev. Mr. John Johnson, or whatever his name may be, to exhibit himself as a great orator, and the probability is that he will rate his success by the notice in the Monday morning paper and the remarks there published on the ornate and eloquent effort of Dr. Johnson, perhaps only equaled by the excellent music rendered by ladies and gentlemen whose real aim had also been to sing the praises of the singers. A Christian preacher should preach Christ crucified and Christ glorified not only when he has taken his stand on Tabor and Calvary and the Mount of Olives, but also when he has ascended Sinai. For even from there he should not only see the smoke and lightning on the mountain of the law, but also the pillar of the cloud and of fire in the valley, the spiritual rock, which was Christ.⁵⁾ But while Christ should be the great central subject of all our preaching, many congregations of to-day might with more truth than the woman of Magdala complain of their preachers: "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him."

Every sermon should be textual. But the words of St. Paul that whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,⁶⁾ are true of every text of Scripture;

1) 1 Cor. 2, 1.

2) 1 Cor. 1, 23.

3) Acts 10, 43.

4) Acts 4, 12.

5) 1 Cor. 10, 4.

6) Rom. 15, 4.

for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is first of all profitable for doctrine.¹⁾ The question, What will I preach? should, therefore, first of all mean: What doctrine will I propound to my congregation from the text of my sermon? Only when the preacher has succeeded in singling out some certain definite point of doctrine which he will exhibit to his congregation, and not until then, the preacher should consider the question: What must I preach? satisfactorily answered. If at any time he should find himself face to face with a text in which he failed to find some point of doctrine sufficiently definite to be clearly set forth, he should simply lay aside that text for the time being and choose another. In such case the defect would, of course, be not in the text, but in the preacher, and he should candidly acknowledge this defect rather than conceal it to himself and prove it to his hearers by giving them a sermon deficient in what the congregation may rightfully claim at his hands before and above all else, sound doctrine. The preacher is and should be in the first place a teacher, and if whatever is written is written for the learning of those who read, whatever is preached should certainly be preached for the learning of those who hear, and hence, again, the question, What will I preach? should in the first place mean, What doctrine will I propound to my congregation? and it is with a view of answering this question that the text should be examined.

What, then, if the text contain more doctrines than one? Perhaps it would not be unreasonable to take up the doctrine which is the most important in the text. You have preached on that last year? May be you have. May be you have not. Another careful study of the text may convince you that your former view of the words was more superficial than you were aware. But if your plea be true,

1) 2 Tim. 3, 16.

perhaps present circumstances will recommend an exhibition of the same doctrine but with a different application, or the congregation may profit by, and be thankful for, an exposition of another point of doctrine from a text, the depth of which they have never surmised. We have heard Christian people on their way from church in conversation on the sermon of the day, giving expression to their joy at having now for the first time learned to understand a certain passage in that text, though they had heard it expounded for many years. It was because a certain important truth had been brought out in the sermon where they had never found it and where probably it had also escaped the attention of the preacher in former years.

The sermons and postils of our fathers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries excel chiefly in two points. The first is that they keep the great cardinal truths of Christianity constantly before the congregation, so that their hearers could hardly fail to become thoroughly familiar with that which is needful for Christian faith and life. The second is that there is no word in the text too insignificant for their attention, and their penetration is often truly surprising. For these reasons the postils of these venerable preachers may generally be used to great advantage in the selection of a subject for a sermon when a survey of the text with the naked eye has proved unsuccessful. We remember having on various occasions found in an old postil the substance of an entire sermon we had heard of a Sunday morning, and material for three or more good sermons besides, all in one sermon on the same text, and a thoroughly doctrinal sermon, too. In fact the best use of the old postils may be made where the object is the choice of a good doctrinal subject.

Next to the text the purpose of a sermon should be consulted in the choice of a subject. Now, the chief purpose of all our preaching is the salvation of souls for the glory of God, and it is a good maxim that every sermon should contain so much of the saving truth of the Gospel that a hearer might by that one sermon be led to Christ and to the acceptance of the benefits of Christ, or in other words, that every sermon should be sufficient to save a soul. A sermon which propounds the law, and nothing but the law, is not properly a Christian sermon and does not answer the purpose for which the ministry was instituted. Christian preaching is the preaching of Christ crucified. It is true, there are some texts, especially among the epistolary lessons of the church year, which are law from beginning to end. The selection of these texts was made at a time when the proper relation of faith and works, of the law and the gospel, had begun to be forgotten in many parts of the church. In expounding these texts we must, of course, with due reverence exhibit the doctrine laid down therein, and not turn law into gospel. But just as truly as the exordium of a sermon should not be an exposition of the text, the preacher may, without exposing himself to censure even from a technical point of view, give in his exordium what he can not give in the exposition of the text, a good and even abundant measure of gospel truth fresh from the fountain, thereby preparing his hearers not only for victory over sin and death by faith in Christ, but also for a cheerful fulfillment of the law in filial obedience and grateful joy for the benefits of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. That in such cases the exordium is really the more profitable part of the sermon makes the sermon all the better.

A. G.
