

**PREACHING AS CONNECTED WITH FAITH: A
SERMON, PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION
OF MR. JAMES H. MEANS, AS PASTOR OF
THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
AND SOCIETY, DORCHESTER, MASS., JULY
13, 1848**

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GEORGE W. BLAGDEN

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A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

ORDINATION OF MR. JAMES H. MEANS,

AS PASTOR OF THE

Second Congregational Church and Society,

DORCHESTER, MASS.,

JULY 13, 1848.

BY REV. GEORGE W. BLADEN,

PASTOR OF THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH, BOSTON.

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Dorchester, July 17, 1848.

Rev. G. W. BLAGDEN,

Sir,—The subscribers were appointed a Committee in behalf of the Second Church and Society in Dorchester, to request a copy of your Sermon delivered at the ordination of the Rev. James H. Means, 13th inst., for publication. Your compliance with the above request, will much oblige your humble servants,

EDWARD SHARP, } Committee.
MARSHALL P. WILDER, }

Boston, July 24, 1848.

E. SHARP, and M. P. WILDER, Esqs.

Gentlemen,—Agreeably to your request, as a Committee in behalf of the Second Church and Society in Dorchester, a copy of the Discourse at the Ordination of the Rev. James H. Means, on the 13th inst., is herewith submitted to your disposal.

Yours, with much regard,

G. W. BLAGDEN.

WJ

SERMON.

2 COR. IV. 13.

WE ALSO BELIEVE, AND THEREFORE SPEAK.

It is a marked characteristic of the gospel, that it regulates the outward, by purifying the inward man ; and controls the issues of life, by the diligent keeping of the heart. This truth is recognized in the text.

The apostle Paul, in his connection with the Corinthian church, had been subjected to great and peculiar trials. False teachers had crept in among them, desiring to turn them from the faith. Even his own character had fallen into suspicion, and almost into disgrace. They had quarrelled among themselves respecting their religious teachers ; one affirming that he was of Paul, another that he was of Apollos, a third that he was of Cephas. And, they had also entertained jealousies and heart-burnings towards one another, in regard to the relative distinction and importance of their respective gifts. The Apostle's heart seems to have been almost broken, by these dissensions. And his two epistles to this church are alike an encouragement and a

guide to every preacher, called, as every one may be, to act with any people in a trying and disputatious time. They are an encouragement, because they show that troubles between himself and any people, do not necessarily prove that the fault must be on his part, since an inspired and devoted Apostle had to meet them. And they are a guide, because they show how such an Apostle acted in the midst of such trials; and to what considerations of religious truth he resorted, to sustain, comfort, and make him faithful.

The text develops one consideration which had great influence in keeping the Apostle faithful, in the most trying times. He had been, in immediate connection with it, rapidly detailing to the Corinthians, the trials, difficulties and dangers with which he and his brethren, as apostles and ministers of the gospel, had to contend. And, in a kind of climax of apparent paradoxes, he had said:—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus's sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak."

This is our text. And the subject it presents, is particularly appropriate to this occasion. It is, *the necessary connection there is between faith and the preaching of the gospel*. Comprehending in the word preaching,—as the text and the whole epistle warrant us in doing,—pastoral duty, or preaching from house to house, as well as the public proclamation of the truth; while we shall direct our attention more particularly to the latter.

1. Before proceeding to illustrate the direct and more specific connection between true faith and preaching, as thus defined, it is desirable to notice, generally, that the great object of this faith is CHRIST. It is because the preacher becomes like the Saviour, and spiritually and truly identified with Him, that he thus preaches. This was the declared position of the Apostle. He assured the Corinthians, that it was because the difficulties and dangers, he and others met and endured, caused them always to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus was made manifest in their body. And therefore, he added, “We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’s sake; that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” This was the reason why they preached powerfully and faithfully, in the midst of trials. This was the reason why death worked in them, but life in their hearers. It was because, by faith, they imbibed the spirit of Jesus,—his love, his patience, his courage, his zeal, his submission to his Father’s will.

Paul, with his companions, having this spirit of

faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore have I spoken: he also believed, and therefore spoke. This was the secret of his zeal, and holy and indomitable courage, in proclaiming Christ and him crucified. And therefore, he also added, with great propriety, "For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Yes, the Apostle, both as a preacher and a Christian, emphatically hid his life with Christ in God; and endured as seeing Him who is invisible! And, there was the hiding of his power. It was a favorite theme with him, one with which this, and all his other epistles teemed, that the obstacles he encountered in his course of duty, made him dead to sin, and alive unto righteousness,—causing him to hide his life with Christ in God. And therefore, he also affirmed, in that fine and rich declaration in his epistle to the Galatians;—"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

A personal and vital union to Christ, is thus necessary, as the first and most essential element in a good preacher of the gospel. He must believe, if he would speak.

2. But, besides Christ himself as the great object of faith, there are great truths or doctrines, connected with the Saviour, which make him so dear to the soul of every faithful preacher, and sustain him in his duty so efficaciously. One of these truths is

mentioned by the Apostle in connection with the text; and this plainly implies others, while all of them are essential to the Christian scheme of salvation.

Thus Paul speaks, just after the text, of the certain resurrection of the dead; and of the deep conviction of himself and his fellow-laborers, that though their outward man perished, their inward man was renewed day by day; so that their light affliction, which was but for a moment, worked out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While they looked not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Now this looking, by faith in the resurrection, to an eternal state of glory, beyond the grave, was plainly connected with the fundamental truths, or first principles of the gospel, as the means of attaining to such a joyful resurrection. It was connected with repentance for sin, and faith in Christ as the Lamb of God which taketh it away, and with new obedience, and the doctrine of a future judgment, and a state of reward and punishment. Thus the doctrine of the resurrection was so prominent with the first preachers, not only as an evidence of the truth of Christianity, but on account of the other doctrines it implied.

These truths were in the hearts of such preachers as Paul and his companions, and believing them as living and ever operating verities, they spoke accordingly. As out of the abundance of the