

**PASTORAL EXHORTATIONS;
OR, THE CHURCH
INSTRUCTED, AND THE YOUNG
INVITED, TWO SERMONS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649334384

Pastoral exhortations; or, The Church instructed, and The young invited, two sermons by
George Smith

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

GEORGE SMITH

**PASTORAL EXHORTATIONS;
OR, THE CHURCH
INSTRUCTED, AND THE YOUNG
INVITED, TWO SERMONS**

INTRODUCTION.

THE Author of the following discourses will, perhaps, be sufficiently vindicated from any charge of presumption in their publication, by stating that he has committed them to the Press at the unanimous request of the Christian church over which he has the honour and the happiness of presiding in the Lord.

On the day immediately succeeding that on which these Sermons were delivered from the pulpit, the church members of his flock assembled in the East India Road School-room, with a view to celebrate the fourth anniversary of his settlement as their minister, and to promote, by social intercourse, their own mutual improvement. Addresses, bearing on the advancement of personal piety and congregational efficiency, were delivered by several of the members; and frequent reference having been made to the pastoral instructions of the previous day, it was resolved, on the motion of the two senior deacons, that the pastor should be respectfully requested to publish the sermons to which they had then listened with profit and pleasure. This application was, to him, invested with such a degree of affectionate authority, as he had no inclination to resist. And though, indeed, the discourses were prepared and preached without any reference to publication, he was not unwilling to place in a permanent form, the truths they contained, and to embrace the opportunity thus presented of recording some interesting circumstances connected with the history of the congregation to which he ministers the word of God.

Trinity Chapel, Poplar, was built at the sole expense of George Green, Esq., of Blackwall, with a view to the spiritual advantage of the large and rapidly increasing population, in the midst of which it is situated. The inadequacy of the previously existing religious instruction, and the prevalence of Puseyism in the neighbourhood, prompted to

the erection of this house of prayer. The property, which is freehold, has been generously conveyed into trust, and the advantages thus communicated to the public will be perpetuated to future generations. On Thursday, August 5th, 1841, the chapel was opened for Divine worship, when suitable and impressive sermons were preached, in the morning by the Rev. Thomas Raffles, D.D., LL.D., of Liverpool, and in the evening by the Rev. James Sherman, of Surrey chapel, London. In the following December, the writer of these notices, who was then the pastor of the church assembling in Norley chapel, Plymouth, was invited to become the minister of this new chapel. It was not, however, till the following spring, and after a second visit to the scene of his present labours, that he saw it his duty to accede to the request. On Lord's day, the 29th May, 1842, he entered on his stated ministry there; preaching in the morning from Zechariah, iv. 6, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts;" and in the evening from Isaiah, liii. 10, "And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." On Friday, the first of July, in the same year, a Christian church was formed, consisting of forty-eight persons, who agreed "to watch over each other in love, and to maintain the doctrine and discipline taught in the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and usually held by churches of the congregational order." The church then elected their present pastor, and chose Mr. George Green and Mr. Thomas Williams as their deacons; and, on the following Sabbath, commemorated the death of the Saviour at the sacramental table, in the breaking of bread. On the 15th of December the public recognition of the pastor took place. In this service the late excellent Dr. Fletcher, the Revs. A. Tidman, J. Sherman, and other ministers assisted, while a great number of metropolitan pastors assembled to testify their fraternal interest in the newly formed Christian church, and its then recognised minister.

Reviewing the years that have rolled away since these events transpired, there is great cause for mutual thanksgiving to the God of all grace and consolation. The church has steadily increased, so that scarcely a monthly meeting has taken place without the admission of several persons to its fellowship, and at the end of the fourth year of its existence, the number of its communicants was found to be about two hundred and fifty. From the beginning the congregation has been considerable, and now that the

charm of novelty has passed away, it not only remains undiminished in numbers, but it has been found desirable to enlarge the chapel so as to provide accommodation for an increasing attendance.

The congregation thus collected has been the means, in the hand of God, of accomplishing some things which it is hoped will tend to the promotion of his glory. They have erected two school-rooms, for Sunday and daily instruction, which are largely attended by children, who receive an efficient and Christian instruction. The Bible classes, conducted by the pastor, have, it is believed, been extensively useful in the impartation of scriptural knowledge, and in the formation of Christian character, as many of their members have been added to the church. The voluntary zeal of some ladies in the congregation has sustained a Dorcas society, which originated in the enlightened solicitude of the now sainted and lamented wife of the pastor, for the welfare of the poor around her. A benevolent society, for visiting and relieving the indigent sick at their own habitations, has been well sustained in its lowly career of growing usefulness. Associations have been formed in aid of British missions, the London City mission, the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Jews, and other institutions which aim at the temporal advantage and everlasting salvation of the human family. The first collection made in the chapel was on behalf of the London Missionary Society, and the contributions to that eminently catholic and Christian institution have steadily increased, till the amount collected in the year ending March 31, 1846, including some special contributions, was £218 19s. There is good reason to believe that this Christian sanctuary is, in a variety of ways, exercising a beneficent influence on many minds, and the hope may well be cherished, that the holy peace and spiritual prosperity hitherto enjoyed in its precincts are but pledges and preludes of more abundant blessing from God.

These facts are narrated not for the purpose of promoting personal or sectarian boasting, but with a view to glorify the grace of the Saviour, and to render suitable acknowledgments to the work of that benevolent individual by whose liberal zeal the whole of this religious interest was originated. But for the enlightened anxiety of Mr. Green to benefit his neighbours, the chapel would have had no existence, and few, if any, of the efforts now described would have been made to spread the gospel. This exam-

ple is one which enlightened wealthy individuals would do well to imitate. If the ignorance and irreligion of the masses of the people are to be overtaken and subdued, Christians of all denominations must put forth greater efforts than hitherto for the accomplishment of this object; and if the congregational churches of this country are to take their proper share in the work of evangelizing our home population, they must multiply places of Christian worship in densely inhabited neighbourhoods. Their evangelical and liberal principles are suited, under the blessing of God, to work savingly on the middle classes of society, and these are eminently fitted, in their combined associated capacity as Christians, to diffuse the light of gospel truth in the localities in which they dwell.

In conclusion, the writer would express his earnest hope, that the church and congregation for whose edification these sermons are especially intended may increase in all knowledge and spiritual understanding, that their love to each other and to all Christian people may abound yet more and more, and that their career of usefulness and happiness may be as that of "the sun shining in his strength." With these sentiments he dedicates this production to his beloved people, and subscribes himself, with feelings of lively interest in their welfare, their affectionate Pastor,

GEORGE SMITH.

TRINITY PARSONAGE, Aug. 1846.

The Church Instructed.

A SERMON, &c.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon he shall receive a reward. If any man's work be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.—1 CORINTHIANS iii. 11—15.

VARIOUS and contradictory interpretations have been given by ancient and modern commentators of this somewhat difficult but comprehensive and instructive passage of the word of God. The church of Rome, ever ready to pervert the revelation of heaven, and to change the truth of the Bible into fables, has, with her accustomed adroitness, pressed this scripture into the unnatural support of the monstrous notion of purgatory. Fixing on the latter clause, which speaks of being saved as by fire, she has affirmed that it refers to a state of penal suffering between the

time of death and the day of final judgment, in which the spirits of those who die under the guilt of venial sins are purified by the action of fiery torment, and made meet to participate the holiness and joys of heaven. In refutation of this assumption it may be sufficient to observe, that this doctrine was utterly unknown in the purest ages of Christianity, and was evidently borrowed from the Platonic philosophy of Greece. It worked its way gradually to general acceptance in the dark ages of the church, and has been held, with many variations, by the abettors of Popery to the present time. Such a dogma dishonours the perfect sacrifice of Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin; detains its votaries in a state of bondage, from which the Saviour died to deliver his people; and emboldens men to continue in sin, with the prospect of absolution in a future state; while it has proved a powerful instrument of priestly domination over, and exaction from, the people. It finds no countenance in the sacred scriptures, which declare that the believer when absent from the body is present with the Lord; and it contradicts the passage before us, which affirms, not that the person saved shall be tried as with fire, but that his work shall be subjected to this ordeal.

An elucidation of a totally different order has been given of our text, by persons who are properly opposed to all innovations on the simplicity of the Christian ritual. Believing that the

kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; that it consists not in outward forms, but in the control of divine grace upon the heart, they have viewed with regret the superstitious observances which persons, at different times, have grafted on the doctrine of Christ, and while judging them charitably as it regards their motives and state before God, have compared their additions to the scriptural forms of Christian worship to "wood, hay, and stubble," destined to an ignominious destruction ; though the persons themselves, relying as they did, notwithstanding the obscurity of their views, on the Saviour, as the all-sufficient foundation of human hope, shall be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Now we are far from saying that this is not a great scriptural truth, while we affirm that it does not appear to be the truth taught in this passage. It is evident, from the context, that the question under consideration was not one respecting ceremonies, but one which had reference to the construction of the church at Corinth. Disputations concerning meats or drinks, or the keeping of a holy day, were not agitating the minds of its members ; but rather points of leadership and schismatic rivalry, fomented by persons who appear to have been corrupting the purity of the church, not by teaching the people to look favourably upon Jewish ceremonies, but by retaining in fellowship with them individuals who were depraved in character and conduct.