

**THE CLASSIC PREACHERS
OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH;
LECTURES DELIVERED AT
ST. JAMES CHURCH IN 1877**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649284993

The classic preachers of the English Church; Lectures delivered at St. James Church in 1877 by
John Edward Kempe

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

JOHN EDWARD KEMPE

**THE CLASSIC PREACHERS
OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH;
LECTURES DELIVERED AT
ST. JAMES CHURCH IN 1877**

INTRODUCTION.

SPEAKING of places of Christian worship, Hooker says "Our repair thither is especially for mutual conference and, as it were, commerce to be had between God and us;"* and whatever tends to defeat this end, or, indeed, does not forward it, can hardly fail to be prejudicial to the spiritual life of the Church.

A distinguished physicist has been heard to describe, almost in the same breath with the avowal of his inability to join in any religious service, as such, the great enjoyment which he derived from listening to anthems, chanting and hymns. In the province of devotion this was an example of what we may conceive to take place in that of religious teaching and exhortation. The attraction of able and interesting literary exertions may not only gather to the pulpit an auditory which neither seeks nor is likely to derive any spiritual benefit from such hearing, but may seriously mislead many persons

* 'Eecl. Pol.' V, xviii, 1.

who are not insensible of their need of that help which preaching is divinely appointed to afford. If they have but listened to the preacher with a moderate degree of attention, and still more if they have had any kind of unobjectionable pleasure in hearing him, they may go away persuaded that they have realised all the benefit of the ordinance, and fulfilled all their duty towards it; and yet its effect upon them may not have been at all more spiritual or religious than was that of sacred harmonics in the instance which has just been mentioned.* The notion that a religious duty is done when its forms have been perfunctorily observed, and well done when this has been accomplished pleasantly or easily, is but a variety of the theory of the *opus operatum*, and a very dangerous one too, because it is not so obviously and repulsively superstitious as are some of those which an enlightened Christianity will unhesitatingly reprobate.†

* "It is certain that a sermon, the conclusion whereof makes the auditory look pleased, and sets them all a-talking one with another, was either not right spoken or not right heard."—Burnet's 'Pastoral Care,' c. ix.

† In this connection I may be allowed to quote the following:—
"Many persons were found at Church for the great Christian ceremonies, and at the theatres or even at the temples, for the

heathen spectacles. The ritual of the Church was viewed as a theatrical exhibition. The sermons were listened to as the displays of rhetoricians; and eloquent preachers were cheered with clapping of hands, stamping of feet, waving of handkerchiefs, cries of 'Orthodox!' 'Thirteenth Apostle!' and other like demonstrations, which such teachers as Chrysostom and Augustine often tried to restrain, in order that

At the same time it is easy to justify, though not without some reservation, the policy of making the service of the sanctuary attractive to the cultivated intellect as well as to a refined taste. The kind of considerations which may be allowed to prevail in recommendation of an element which is ceremonious, spectacular and sensuous in worship, may be extended with much less hesitation to efforts by which the intelligence of the community is sought to be conciliated towards the ministrations of the pulpit. It is surely a gain if minds which cannot otherwise be reached and feelings which cannot otherwise be moved by holy influences are, in any way which is not in itself

they might persuade their flocks to a more profitable manner of hearing. Some went to church for the sermon only, alleging that they could pray at home. And when the more attractive parts of the service were over, the great mass of the people departed, without remaining for the administration of the Eucharist. . . . Things which would have been good either as expressions of devotion or as means of training for it, became through their multiplication, and through the importance which was attached to them, too likely to be regarded as independent ends.—Robertson, 'History of the Christian Church,' Book II, c. vi., p. 356. Truly history, ecclesiastical as

well as civil, repeats itself. Let any one go to St. Paul's Cathedral, at an ordinary Sunday morning service, if he would see, that not only, as is the case in nearly every church, "without remaining for the administration of the Eucharist," but without even remaining to take away the text of the sermon, a great part of the congregation will still depart when the more attractive, *i.e.* the musical, portion of the service is over. It is impossible, however, to be too thankful for the improvement which has taken place of late years in the reverent and devotional tone and aspect as well as in the general "rendering" of the St. Paul's services.

prejudicial or unlawful, brought into a contact with sacred things from which spiritual profit may, at any rate, be fairly hoped for. Let us take the case of the Bible itself. If that Holy Volume had contained nothing but what the dullest might understand, the most unlettered interpret, and the most disputatious agree about, a large number of those who now study it diligently, and not without advantage to their souls, would, for want of intellectual stimulus, read it, if at all, with most unprofitable distaste and weariness. Given, as it is, in a form which affords occasions so numerous and of such great variety for mental activity and power to be applied to it, many are drawn and fixed to its pages by the pleasant sense of a healthful and (so to say) manly intellectual exercise, and are thus familiarised with objects, modes of thought, and principles of conduct which are calculated to direct and colour those higher faculties whereby the soul of man can hold converse with Heaven. And that which is true of the Word written, is also true of the Word preached. The first point is to get an attentive and respectful hearing for it. This secured, it becomes comparatively easy to turn that hearing to its proper account.

But as, in the case of worship, the ceremonial will be anything but justifiable if it interposes a concealing or obscuring medium between the worshipper and the object of his worship, so, in that of preaching,

it is not enough that its auditory is collected in a consecrated building, and that its utterances proceed from a gowned or surpliced orator, mounted in a pulpit. Call it by what name we will—a discourse, a lecture, an address, a homily, or what not—the ideal which is implied in the designation *sermon*, should never be lost sight of, always be distinctly aimed at. “So worthy a part of divine service,” says Hooker, “we should greatly wrong if we did not esteem Preaching as the blessed ordinance of God, sermons as keys to the kingdom of heaven, as wings to the soul, as spurs to the good affections of man, unto the sound and healthy as food, as physic unto diseased minds;”^{*} and directly or indirectly—more (as I venture to think) directly than indirectly—these purposes ought to be subserved whenever a Christian congregation is addressed from a Christian pulpit by a Christian minister.

No opinion is here intended as to what is called the greater utilisation of our Churches and Cathedrals by allowing semi-secular Lectures or Addresses to be delivered in them. This may or may not be defensible and expedient. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge is not denied to be within its functions in issuing books, provided they are written in a religious spirit, that fall under the designation of “General Literature,” and so

* ‘Eccles. Pol.’ V. xxii. 1.

possibly it may be held that, at least upon week-days, and with adequate safeguards (if such could be devised), we should do well to open our Churches for purposes auxiliary to religious ends, though not directly and distinctively directed to them. This is a question which it would be out of place to discuss here. The discourses in this volume were delivered at a regular Sunday service, and what was sought was to reconcile their introduction there with those views of the proper use of the pulpit at such times, which have ever prevailed, and I devoutly trust ever will prevail, in our own and nearly every other Christian communion. The aim was that in their effect upon the congregation they should be *sermons*, in accordance with the description quoted above from Hooker, and be distinctly understood and felt to be such. It was earnestly desired that they should not cause the Church in which they were delivered to be regarded as a kind of ecclesiastical Lecture Hall—a Royal Institution for Sundays—as in former times certain London chapels were said to relieve the tedium of the day by furnishing persons who could not make up their minds to ‘miss Church’ altogether, with the opportunity of whiling away a weary hour at a Sunday opera.

This object, as I thought, would not be attained, nor the danger avoided, if certain great English divines were treated generally, so that the discourses devoted to them should form so many portraits in

the gallery of the National Church, so many chapters in its history, or so many articles in its biographical dictionary. The proposal of a Series of Lectures, to be delivered in the Chapel of King's College, upon "The Masters in English Theology,"* was almost simultaneous with that of the discourses in this volume; and when my friend Canon Barry mentioned it to me, with the expression of a hope that I might not think it would clash with mine, I at once welcomed it with cordial approval. The pulpit of an educational institution, of which the theological department forms the most prominent and the most important feature—of which, indeed, it may be said that the theological is the distinctive character†—is undoubtedly most legitimately employed in such teaching as those Lectures are intended to communicate; especially as there is no pastoral charge connected with the chapel, and it cannot be considered—its size alone would prevent that—to supply to the students in general the place of a parish Church. But the very title of those Lectures at once points to an auditory of a different

* Now published by Mr. Murray.

† This is said with the utmost respect for the great medical school connected with the College. The fact that the Principal of the Institution is required to be a Divine, who is also its head theological Teacher, is of itself

sufficient to mark the pre-eminence of its theological over its medical character. The question of the comparative efficiency, popularity or extent of any particular department of the College is not meant to be in any way raised, or even hinted at or implied.