

A Pattern for Preachers,

OR

A GOSPEL TRACT AND
ITS MISSION.

BY GEO. C.



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A GOSPEL TRACT AND ITS
MISSION.

A PATTERN FOR PREACHERS

THE Gospel of the glory of the blessed God has been declared to be His “power unto salvation to every one that believeth.” “He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” He will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (Rom. i. 16; 2 Peter iii. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 4).

In recent years He has been pleased to open many doors for the publishing of His saving message; and in drawing the attention of the reader to one of these we shall take the liberty of *personifying* a Gospel

tract by regarding it as a Gospel preacher.*

We may say at once, that as this "preacher" has no *fixed* place of preaching, and as his field of service is wherever he is *sent* (even if not wherever he is wanted), he may very properly be called a "*travelling preacher*."

One thing, however, has to be borne in mind; he is so powerless in himself that, wherever he goes, he has to be *carried*. That is, he is absolutely subject to the will of another.

But take him where there is an opening for his message, and he will deliver it on the spot. It is all the same to him whether it is in the

* The vital necessity of the soundness of a "Gospel tract," and of the Lord's direction in its use, are in this paper pre-supposed.

poorest slum or in some stately drawing-room, by the bed-side or the sea-side, in the town or in the country, by camp-fire or in barracks, in store or in stable, by road or by rail ! If there is but one to listen, no matter where, he is "always ready."

Some preachers have a very decided preference for *rich and fashionable* audiences. Some are only at home with *intellectual* hearers who can appreciate a well-studied discourse—brilliant, logical, and mentally entertaining. Others prefer preaching to the poor and the less learned, these being generally more approachable and less critical.

Others, again, have no such choice. So long as their congregation is a *large* one, they seem thus far satisfied. The news they proclaim is so unspeakably blessed, and their opportunities for proclaiming it so few and ever decreasing, that they

specially rejoice in getting many to hear at one time.

But this preacher has *no* particular preference. He is bound to no special grade of society ; he makes choice of no particular class, or creed, or shade of opinion. And as to the question of numbers—few or many at one time—it does not affect him in the least.

Then some preachers are timid and diffident, especially in speaking to individuals. Not so with this one. His unassuming fearlessness impresses you as being a most desirable quality, in any gospel witness. For example : he would be as ready to look a member of the Royal Family in the face and tell him of another “Crowned Head,” as to tell the poorest beggar in the gutter of One who is “rich unto all that call upon Him ” (Heb. ii. 9 ; Rom. x. 12). He would as fearlessly tell

a popular modern theologian of the serious consequences of preaching "any other Gospel" than the one brought from heaven by the Holy Ghost, as tell a contrite sinner of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God; or tell him that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Gal. i. 8, 9; 1 Pet. i. 12; Luke xv. 7, 10).

Then some preachers occasionally consider themselves "off duty!" This one *never* does. As long as Jesus is pleased to wait at God's right hand, he knows no "time-limit" whatever! "In season, out of season," he is "always ready." Mid-day or mid-night, it matters not. It is never too early for his services; and never too late either. "*Always abounding* in the work of the Lord," might well be said of him. "*Patient continuance*" characterizes

him. Unfailing readiness, untiring constancy may justly be claimed for him. He will patiently repeat the same address, to the same individual the same day, as often as any one can possibly find time to listen.

Some preachers feel greatly annoyed when the patience of one of their hearers gets exhausted by the length of a discourse, and leaves before it is half finished. Our "travelling preacher" takes offence at no such slight! If only a few words are listened to, and even these opposed by bitter expressions of unmeasured and unmerited anger, he will never answer back. *God alone* is able "to give repentance" to one who opposes the truth of the Gospel. Should such repentance be brought about (and how often it has been), our preacher is as free to calmly repeat his message as if no affront had ever been offered!

On the other hand, if you should think his message too important to keep from some acquaintance, who is as really, and as vitally concerned in it as yourself, and you would like *him* to share it, this "preacher" will wait, without complaining, till you find your friend and give him the chance of hearing.

Should it further strike you that his message would be a true comfort, or a timely warning, to some loved-one over the seas, thousands of miles away, you will find this preacher instantly ready to be sent, no matter where! Nor will the expense of sending him be any serious impediment; for one of the smallest copper coins of the realm will be sufficient to cover the cost of his journey, even if it be to the other side of the globe.

On such errands he waits not to be accredited by any human organiza-

tion. He is as ready to be made use of by the little girl of nine or ten, who is only "steward" for a few coppers weekly, and who delights to devote part of her "spending-money" in making known the Saviour's love to others, as by the greatest potentate or the richest millionaire on earth.

One word in conclusion as to the *results* of his mission. Not until all the Lord's labourers are called into their Master's presence in glory, and the soul-history of each saved one clearly brought to light, will it be fully known how much this "travelling preacher" has been owned of God to the awakening of the careless, the restoration of the wandering, the confirmation and comfort of the feeble in faith and the down-cast in spirit. Yet what refreshing results has "the God of all encouragement" allowed to come to light even here below. Take a

few of the many instances that have come before the writer.

The keeper of a country public house, in turning out a sack of chips and shavings brought from a carpenter's shop close by, discovered a Gospel tract among the fragments. The few words read at a glance arrested his attention. He read the whole, was led to the Saviour, and gave up his inn. He read the tract to an organ grinder who stayed there for the night, and who, it is said, seemed glad to hear it. This stranger was found frozen to death on the road before the next night ; so that our so-called " travelling preacher " was the last he listened to !

A young man in Scotland was in sore distress of soul. He went privately to the minister ; but his

spiritual adviser thought it was no case for *his* services, and advised him to see a doctor. The medical man, finding nothing seriously wrong with his body, advised him to try some place of amusement as a necessary diversion for his mind. Feeling a very decided shrinking from the theatre and music hall, he went to an institution where he expected to obtain spiritual help, but only to hear some comic discussion going on ! Distressed, and disheartened almost to despair, he left the place. On his way home he found, lying on the road, a "Gospel tract," and in it, to his peace and joy, the very news his heart was craving for !

A Christian man had worn a Gospel tract so long in his pocket that it had become too much soiled, he thought, to give away. Not wishing to destroy it, he stuck it one day on

a thorn in the road-side hedge. One evening shortly afterwards a man, for whom he had been some time specially praying, unexpectedly turned up at the weekly prayer-meeting. At the end of the meeting this Christian found that God had both heard his prayer and used his act of service. This very man had found the tract in the hedge, and the Spirit of God had made good use of it, for he had reached the Saviour through it.

A Gospel tract was sent to a lady in India. Feeling no interest in such things, she pushed it into a drawer out of sight. Shortly afterwards she was summoned to England by the sickness of a relative. On board the vessel *another* copy of the same Gospel tract was placed in her hand. She read it, and was converted to God. Her husband, left behind in

India, went casually one day to seek for something in the drawer just referred to. There he discovered the very tract his wife had slighted, and through it, by God's mercy, discovered the Saviour his own soul needed.

This couple learned, by letter, the happy news of each other; but they never met on earth again! When they next meet, it will be where sowers and reapers, in the presence of "the Lord of the Harvest," shall rejoice together.

"God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty" (1 Cor. i. 27). And He has graciously been pleased to honour so weak an instrument as the one we have been describing. And, what is more, blessed be His holy Name for ever, He is doing so still.

No preacher on earth has been

granted such an "open door" as *this* "travelling preacher." He gets an entrance and a hearing where many *could not* if they would; and where many others *would not* if they could.

Having sought to draw attention to this remarkable "door" which, in the Providence of God, is now so widely open, we leave it with the reader, counting on the Lord's blessing. By His love alone can ours be effectually drawn forth in any service for His pleasure. It is certain that the looked-for end is very manifestly approaching.

May we who truly love our Lord Jesus Christ, and "love His appearing," be found in ever increasing appreciation of His personal blessedness. Then to make known God's precious Gospel concerning Him to those who are destitute of its full comfort will be our ever increasing delight.

That His *own* heart is in such service in this "day of good tidings," there can be no shadow of doubt. Shall *we* "hold our peace"? (2 Kings vii. 9).

"THE NIGHT COMETH WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK" (John ix. 4).

"THE MORNING COMETH" when "EVERY MAN'S WORK SHALL BE MADE MANIFEST" (1 Cor. iii. 13).

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