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SERMONIC.*

NOT YET.

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*“Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying,
This people say, The time is not come, the
time that the Lord's house should be built.”*
—Haggai i: 2.

The history of this case is this:

The Jews had been carried away into Babylon as captives, their city having been sacked and their civil and religious polity totally suspended. In that captivity they lacked the moral influence of the prophets. Those extraordinary messengers which God had vouchsafed to them and their fathers from time to time came no more amongst them.

It was not until about eighteen years after their return to the Holy Land that God sent such men as Haggai and Zechariah to rekindle the flames of zeal and holy effort. The Babylonish captivity had been terminated by the overthrow of Babylon by the Persian, Cyrus, who, on coming to full possession of the empire, published a decree setting the Jewish people free, permitting them to return to their own country and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. He sent with them many of the sacred vessels which

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, had brought out of the temple in Jerusalem and placed in the temple of his god Bel. Cyrus, furthermore, issued letters recommending the governors of the various provinces to render the Jews assistance in rebuilding their city and their Holy House. It is said that 50,000 people took advantage of this decree to assemble at Jerusalem.

Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who was of the royal family, and of Joshua, who was of the priestly family, the good work began. They reinstated their feasts. They put up a temporary altar. They made great collections of money and great outlay to bring together the requisite stones and timbers. In the second year they laid the foundation of the Temple, with great pomp, the appared priests with trumpets and the Levites with cymbals, leading the people in their songs and shouts.

But all things did not go forward swimmingly. Enemies arose, jealous neighbors who were ready to obstruct their work; who, although they could not annul the decree of Cyrus, could weaken the hands and frustrate the purposes of the people of Judah. This they did through the whole reign of

[* The first several sermons are reported in full; the remainder are given in condensed form. Every care is taken to make these reports correct; yet our readers must not forget that it would be unfair to hold a speaker responsible for what may appear in a condensation, made by another of his discourse.—ED.]

foundation of moral character, the ground upon which man becomes a partaker of the Divine nature. The Divine plane of projection upon which is cast the infinite perspective—divinest achievement when man became a living soul. Well may we exult with the mystic Emerson at this awakening of our mysterious self: "I clap my hands with joy and amusement before this first opening to me of this august magnificence." Yes, divinest apocalypse! Image of the Invisible! Sing your anthem of creation, ye morning stars; keep time together, and shout, ye sons of God! for joy.

SONS OF GOD.

BY T. L. CUYLER, D.D., IN LAFAYETTE AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN.

Ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father.—Rom. viii: 15.

The soul of the believer feels exhilaration when it comes into the 8th chapter of Romans, like that we feel when we view the sunrise from the top of some high mountain.

By nature we are children of God, but we do not occupy the place of children. The prodigal, feeding on husks in a strange country, was still the child of his father, but he was away from his father and his father's house. When he returned he received a welcome, a home, a ring, a robe, songs of rejoicing and, above all, a *father*. From that time forth he was in a special way the child of his father. So is it with the repentant soul that is adopted into the family of God.

I. THE NATURE OF THIS SONSHIP. What is it to be the son of God?

1. It implies a renovated heart. The prodigal's heart was changed before he could arise and return to his father. There must be Christ-likeness and assurance of this from within, and recognition from without.

2. Those who are the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. Led to what? (1) To clear views of the

truth; (a) by understanding the Bible; (b) by comprehending the meaning of Divine providences. (2) Led to safety. To be led by the spirit is the only way of safety.—He who is led does not lead. Some Christians think themselves wise enough to instruct God as to the experiences through which they should pass.

3. The adoption into sonship makes the son peculiarly loved. Say what we will, parents, about universal charity, we love our children with a special love.

4. It makes us heirs. How wonderfully was Moses exalted by adoption into Pharaoh's family; but not so wonderfully exalted as is every Christian who is adopted into the family of God.

5. It makes us joint heirs with Christ; sharers of His glory. Christ declares that the glory the Father had given Him He gave to His disciples.

II. WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THIS SONSHIP?

1. Reverence. Abba means father. It shall not be translated "beloved," as is done by some sentimental writers. 2. Trust. 3. Obedience. We should regulate our lives by His commandments. 4. We must seek to sustain the family honor. There is a wholesome family pride. 5. Resignation. A true son will let God have His way.

III. HOW ARE WE TO BECOME SONS OF GOD?

By our natural birth? By hearing His word? By admission into His church? No, by none of these ways. John gives us the answer: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."—John 1: 12. The word power might be better translated privilege or honor.

CONCLUSION.—Observe several lessons: 1. To all those who come home the door is open; God is desirous to receive back His children. 2. God takes great delight in being loved. 3. We come to God through prayer, then find protection, then protection.

You had better lay hold of God than have Him lay hold on you.