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SERMONIC.*

ADORNING THE TRUTH.

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*Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in
all things.*—Titus ii : 10.

We have here a general truth in a special application. The application is to the case of servants, who are so to live as to make Christianity beautiful in the eyes of their heathen masters. The general truth is, that the people of God, by their well-ordered life and conversation, should render religion and religious truth beautiful and attractive to all who observe them.

Mark the peculiar language. We are here exhorted not only to be adorned by the Gospel—as the apostle says elsewhere, “to be beautified with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,” for in this we are objectively clothed upon by Divine grace; but meantime we are subjectively to render all the doctrines of grace beautiful by the exhibition we make of them.

The word “*doctrine*,” as used here, means instruction—any or all of the great truths set forth in the Divine Word. The word “*adorn*” means to decorate or beautify, as with gems or garlands or goodly apparel.

The exhortation and obligation to

this duty is universal. It applies, first, to all who in any sense or sphere are teaching Christian truth. And the Divine command is, “Hold forth the truth in its beauty.” And this precept is very largely violated in two opposite directions.

I. On the one hand, we find the doctrines of grace set forth as bald, ugly and repulsive *dogmata*. Men take a precious truth, which, as found in the Bible, is a concrete and living thing, and treat it as an anatomist treats his “subject”—by careful dissection showing the well-adjusted but still ill-favored and ghostly muscles and bones. Now, certainly, Jesus Christ, the great model teacher, never so treated it. Having to do with the most profound and mysterious doctrines, He always set them forth in aspects of loveliness. Teaching us how to contemplate and approach the august and awful Jehovah, He dwells not on the infinite essence or attributes of the absolute Son, but says, simply and sweetly, “Your Father who is in heaven.” Speaking of God’s infinite operations, there is no vociferation about omniscience and omnipresence, or overwhelming of us with the great forces of the universe, but, instead, the tender benediction, “Behold the birds; consider the lilies.” Setting forth what

[* 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.]

and follow Me." Wherever genuine Christianity appears it bears these credentials. To any "other gospel" we may put the query in vain, "Where is the print of the Nails?"

2. Apply this test to individual character.

3. The value and the permanence of the work we are doing is fixed by the same test that determines the validity of truth and the genuineness of character. Am I a preacher and teacher of preachers? Let me remember Philip Henry's motto, "Preach a crucified Christ in a crucified style." A greater than Henry has said: "We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ." How many pretentious pulpit orations vanish into thin air when this test is applied! How cheap the tinsel, how tawdry the ornaments, how vulgar that frantic sensationalism which aims, apparently, to attract a crowd or court a grin rather than to woo a soul!

4. The grandest inspiration of life is found, therefore, in the possession of these marks of the Lord Jesus.

THE URGENT INVITATION.

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

Compel them to come in.—Luke xiv: 23.

OH, how like God to prepare such a banquet, and how terribly like man to refuse invitations to it! Observe—

I. THE FREENESS OF THE GOSPEL. They were to carry the invitations into the highways, to every class.

II. THE FULLNESS. All things are ready. Christ is ready, the Spirit is ready, the Church is ready; all ready but *thysself*.

III. THE BANQUET IS THE PROVISION OF LOVE AND THE EXPRESSION OF LOVE.

Compel, not in the sense of physical compulsion, an overcoming of free will. The Greek word means urge vehemently: use strong persuasion.

No principle is so urgent as love. Hate grows more than two sets of teeth. It is seldom toothless. Yet love follows its object even more persistently. It

lays hold of the soul in order to constrain it. It comes with celestial argument. It reasons with the soul. It urges: (1) The Gospel purifies our desires; (2) It brings in the expulsive power of higher affections; (3) Brings peace of mind; (4) Gives clearness of conscience; (5) Greater will to resist sin; (6) A much more productive life; nothing so fertilizes mind and heart as Christianity; (7) The smile of God; (8) It bids the soul think of the positive injury which comes by not accepting the Gospel invitation.

IV. God, in sending out His invitations, backs them with the authority of Fatherhood.

V. Observe the doom of those who refuse to accept. The door is shut. Not one who refused shall taste of the supper. The door is shut as effectively through your neglect as through your refusal. Practically the sinner shuts the door against himself.

Let us gather a few crumbs from the banquet in the way of practical observations:

1. God constrains souls to come to Him by a great many methods. Prosperity, trials, etc.

2. Hunger ought to send to that feast—heart-hunger. There is much more hunger in the world than is reported to the boards for the relief of the poor.

3. It is the duty of Christ's people to make the religion of Christ attractive. An invitation to a cold, cheerless house would not win even a beggar. He would say, "No, I thank you, I am cold enough here in the street; I don't want to go into an ice-house."

4. The refusal of Christ's invitation is a terrible insult and injury.

5. The time to accept is very short. Come, the banquet waits.

Make use of your reading.—Let every book-worm, when, in any fragrant, scarce, old tome, he discovers a sentence, a story, an illustration that does his heart good, hasten to give it.—*Coleridge*.