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→*SERMONS*←

CHRIST'S TEMPER TOWARD THE WEAK.

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A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory.—MATT. xii., 20.

JESUS had been rebuking the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in reference to their sanctimonious notions about the Sabbath, wherein they assumed that it was unlawful for the disciples to satisfy their hunger, or for acts of healing to be performed on that day. To enforce this rebuke, and to show that it was "lawful to do well on the Sabbath days," He went into the synagogue and "restored whole" a man's withered hand. Then the Pharisees counselled "how they might destroy Him." While they were engaged in their wicked council, Jesus went away, but kept on healing the multitudes which followed Him, while He told them "not to make Him known." At this point in the narration, in the midst of a cluster of miracles, the Evangelist throws in a quotation from "Esaïas the prophet," to show that this miracle-working man was fulfilling prophecy by the temper He exhibited toward the weak, closing with the words of the text.

John the Baptist lying in prison, "sent two of his disciples" to ask Jesus, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the

lent homiletical rules, but very unwillingly. He wants the occasion, the subject and the man to determine the movement of a sermon, rather than the rules of art. Thus mere formality is avoided as much as possible; and his sermons are living organisms rather than artistic productions. And they are full of individuality.

His special aim was to win back to the Gospel the cultivated minds that were alienated from it. He gives the following rules for the accomplishment of this: "The minister must explain the Scriptures in an attractive manner; in order to do this he must have extensive culture and an enlarged view of things, so that he may be able to use everything that can serve this purpose. He must also create decided confidence in himself. Frequently it is well to use the homily instead of treating separate texts; still better is it to explain connectedly entire books of the Bible . . . Every sermon must be an act, and must be conceived and born in the spirit; it must be thought out in the study and must be born in the pulpit. It should contain a kernel of doctrine, but immersed in imagination and feeling. It should bear the impress of holy simplicity, which is not however to be confounded with commonplace plainness or with shallow popularity. The sermon should grow out of living intercourse between the preacher and the congregation."

The introduction precedes the announcement of the text. It is generally short and striking, and calculated to gain the attention. After the introduction the text is announced. Unless this needs

explanation it is immediately followed by the subject and its divisions, and the development of the theme.

A brief outline of a sermon will explain his method. The first sentence of the sermon we select contains the thought considered in the introduction, and is as follows: "Brethren in Christ, what a beautiful characteristic is it of our faith, that it is so simple in itself, and begets in us a like simplicity." After briefly considering this thought he announces his text: "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of Heaven." This is followed immediately by the subject, which is thus announced: "*The Christian life is a glorified childhood*: such is the truth that these words teach us." After explaining the subject the divisions are announced and discussed. The Christian life is viewed as a glorified childhood in faith, in love, in hope. At the close he appeals to the impenitent, and then adds these words: "Who will wonder then if Christians are a joyous people as children are? How much rather ought we to be astonished at ourselves, if we are still sad! The Christian life is a transfigured childhood: like children, we believe without suspicion; like children, we love without distinction; like children, we hope without limitation; and together with this has the Spirit of grace given to our faith, *light*; to our love, *wisdom*; and to our hope, an *everlasting foundation*. Honor—and praise—and worship be unto Him who hath done such great things for us. Amen."—*Luth. Eoan.*

PULPIT TRUTHS FOR THE TIMES.

BY JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D.

Invited to state concisely what the Christian Church needs to hold fast, and to hold forth, in the present day, I venture to indicate the following:

(a) The Scriptures, the rule of faith; as distinguished from the Church, the fathers, the councils, the traditions, or the so-called "Christian consciousness." The

place of the Divine Spirit in inspiring and in interpreting them is a part of this theme.

(b) The scriptural idea of God as just, holy, and good; as distinguished from the popular pictures of Him as mere infinite good-nature. The nature of sin will thus appear. Grace will be understood; and it will come to men's penitent hearts, that

God was under no obligation to give sinners a first, not to say a second probation.

(c) The Bible view of Christ's atonement, more than illumination, more than correcting mistakes, more than drawing by example; and including the actual dying sacrifice for sins, of the Divine-human Saviour, who had a right to give His life for such an end.

(d) The Bible idea of the ministry; as against the papal idea, as against ritualism, sacerdotalism, and, on the other side (which is, in part, a reaction against the foregoing), against all that would convert the body of Christ's disciples into a voluntary speculative society.

(e) The place of the Old Testament; not obsolete, but part of one whole revelation. Neglect of it shaping as it does New Testament language and institutions, prepares for crude and erroneous ideas of Christianity.

(f) The scriptural idea of the Church;

bound to do aggressive work for Christ among men, in His spirit; aggressive as light is, as salt is, as is the fragrance of a rose. This will imply regulated Christian activity in God's household, orderly service in the army of the Lord; regiments indeed being distinguishable, but under the one Leader and Commander.

(g) The Protestantism made necessary by the corruption of Christendom. We are Protestants, "for cause," against a corporation which adapts religion to the corrupt nature of men, and which puts forth "another gospel," "which is not another," for the elements of the Gospel are eliminated, or buried under perpetuated Pagan or perverted Jewish rites. Many do not know why we are Protestants, and so they become unconscious instruments of a power which in seeking to secure in the New World what it is losing—largely to reactive infidelity, for which it is responsible—in the Old.

DR. THOMAS CHALMERS AND THE UNCHURCHED MASSES.

BY A. T. PIERSON, D.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), PHILADELPHIA.

Dr. Thomas Chalmers is a name especially worthy of a permanent record, as one of the men who led the way in the practical solution of that great problem of our civilization: How to deal with the masses in our great cities.

At his sixty-fifth year we find this greatest of Scotchmen on fire with all his youthful ardor, in this mission to the masses in Edinburgh, in which, as in Ephesus, the gold, silver, and precious stones of the sacred fanes and palaces were in strong contrast to the wood, hay, stubble of the huts and hovels of the poor. With sublime devotion Chalmers at this advanced age, when most men retire from active and arduous toil, entered upon the most difficult experiment of his life, that he might demonstrate by a practical example what can be done for the poor and neglected districts in a great metropolis.

The West Port, in the "old town" of Edinburgh, was the home of a population,

whose condition may be described by two words, poverty and misery. He undertook to redeem this heathen district by the Gospel, planting in it schools and a church for the people, and organizing Christian disciples into a band of voluntary visitors. The name "territorial system" was attached to the plan as he worked it, and has passed into history under that sonorous title.

In St. John's parish, Glasgow, he had already proved the power of visitation and organization. Within his parochial limits he found 2,161 families, 845 of them without any seats in a place of worship. He assigned to each visitor about fifty families. Applications for relief were dealt with systematically, and so carefully yet thoroughly that not a case either of scandalous allowance or scandalous neglect was ever made known against him and his visitors. There was a severe scrutiny to find out the fact and the causes of poverty, to remove necessary want and