

THE PULPIT TREASURY.

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— Sermons —

THE ROCK-FOUNDATION.

BY HENRY C. POTTER, D.D., ASSISTANT BISHOP OF NEW YORK AND RECTOR OF
GRACE CHURCH.

Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not : for it was founded upon a rock.—ST. MATT. vii., 24, 25.

IF there is one cry which, in these days, is heard oftener than any other when men are talking about religion, it is the cry for definiteness. The pulpit, professing to speak for its Master, Christ, calls men to come and be His disciples and join His fellowship, and believe His truth, and obey His precepts. And men answer, "How can we do as you bid us, until we know who are Christ's disciples, and where is His fellowship and what is His truth and His will? One set of teachers make of religion a ceremony, and another an emotion, and others yet a historic memory. There are the Romanists and the Revivalists and the Liberalists—which shall we follow? Whose creed shall we believe? May not you Christians wisely set about finding some common ground of agreement among yourselves before you urge men to come into a fellowship whose conspicuous characteristics are its differences and alienations?"

It is the chief value of such words as I have just read to you, that they lift all such criticisms as these into the clear light of common sense and practical duty. "You want"—it is as though Christ Himself had said it—"some

duties and responsibilities. Do not hesitate to tell them that it is cheaper, a thousand times, to have a place in the Church of the living God than to be a servant of the world with its pleasures and its fascinations. Do not hesitate to tell them that to have one member of a family go in the way of ruin and destruction costs more—costs more a thousand times—than it can ever cost to be in a true and living connection with the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Try to build up here a body of intelligent, living, believing people, through whose united life and whose common work the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be diffused around about.

And you will not forget in the last place that you are a member of a presbytery, and so a member of a larger Presbytery—The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The honor of that Church is, in some sense, committed to your hands. You are to be a true brother, upholding the character, and cultivating the fellowship, and trying to promote the usefulness of your brethren in Jesus Christ. To be a minister in this city with its multitudinous temptations, with its many openings for labor, with its many

distractions, is at once a responsible and difficult work. Look upward habitually for grace, that grace that God gives, and which he never withholds from the soul that waits upon Him.

There are some peculiar elements in your relationship to this people which I trust God will give you grace to utilize to the utmost. Many of them are strangers, like yourself, from another land. Not a few of them are yet without homes. They are dwelling among strangers; they have difficulties on that very account. You can understand them; you can sympathize with them; you can draw them away from ways of temptation; you can draw them into ways of happy and useful service; and if they have not all comfortable homes on the week-days, you can at least contribute to giving them a true and real and happy home on the Lord's Day, and so by His grace help them in seeking preparations for the Home that is eternal above.

May God bless you in this work; and may God bless the people who have called you to the ministry and who, I trust, will sustain you with their sympathies, their prayers and their co-operation.

THE BOOK OF ACTS, CHRIST'S MANUAL OF MISSIONS FOR HIS CHURCH.

By PROF. A. W. PITZER, D.D., HOWARD UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D. C.

No. I.

Luke, a Gentile physician, the author of this work, in his address to Theophilus, alludes to a "former treatise he had made of all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach until the day in which he was received up."

Dr. M. Baumgarten, in his able and admirable work on Apostolic Church History, calls attention to the peculiar force of this word, "*began*." Luke in his Gospel of Grace for the Gentile world set forth the *beginnings* of the work of Jesus Christ in his fleshly and earthly life. Clothed in glorified flesh, at the Father's right hand and in the Heavenly Realm, he *continues* that same work, by His Word, His Spirit, and His servants; and is the

acting subject of this entire history. Whether on earth or in heaven, He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever; and in every age, and under every dispensation of His grace, His work is the same. From the Eden of Moses to the Paradise of John; from the promised Seed of the Woman to its fulfilment in the slain Lamb of the Apocalypse He is the same Healer and Lord; and to Him all Prophecy is one connected, consistent and completed Testimony. The sphere of His activities may change from Heaven to earth, or from earth back to Heaven, but there is no change in the personality or work of the actor Jesus.

When on earth, in human form and

flesh, He spake words of wisdom and wrought deeds of divine power and mercy; by words and works He revealed God to man, and was Himself God manifest in the flesh.

After His resurrection from the dead, He gave, during forty days, to more than five hundred competent and credible witnesses the most conclusive evidence of His identity, and of the reality and power of His risen life; and it may be safely affirmed that if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then the events narrated in this book could not possibly have transpired, and the very book itself would have been a literary impossibility.

The facts of gospel history are germinal; so that if Luke's biography of Jesus in the Gospel is not trustworthy, neither is his further account of the same Jesus in the Acts—the two books must stand or fall together. The actor Jesus is the same; what He "*began*" to do in the former treatise, He "*continues*" to do in the latter. Before His departure from the earthly scenes of His activities and His return to the Heavenly Realm, He thoughtfully prepared agents and instrumentalities for the continuation and extension of His blessed work of revealing God and saving sinners.

Just as the personality of the Son grew into more glorious prominence from the Eden promise of the Woman's Seed until the birth of Mary's Son, when all the fullness of the God-head was shrined in the man Christ Jesus; so now the personality of another Divine Person, the Paraclete, which had been gradually revealed through the ages, emerges into the full light; and throughout this book, he occupies the position of prominence in apostolic history that Christ had filled in gospel history. The mode and order of the Divine Existence—Father, first; Son, second; Spirit, third—is the mode and order of the Divine Revelation; so that with great propriety this book has been called the "Gospel of the Holy Spirit."

Not until ten days after the exaltation and enthronement of Christ at the Father's right hand, did the Spirit come with power on the assembled disciples at Jerusalem.

The ten days of waiting between the Ascent of the Son and the Descent of the Spirit is marked by three striking features: the disciples *obeyed* the command of their absent Lord—"Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." They waited in *prayer*; the Spirit had been promised, and he would surely come, but these obedient disciples did not cease to pray for his presence; they waited in prayer with *one accord*; the disciples were all of one mind; the same longing desire for the coming of the Comforter filled every heart. Apostles, disciples, godly women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and his brethren were waiting to be filled with the Spirit and to be endued with power. Mary does not occupy the position of Mother of God and intercessor with her Divine Son, to receive the homage and adoration of His followers, but joins in one accord with them to obey His commands and to worship Him.

The order of the work of evangelization was prescribed by the Lord Himself—they were to *begin* in Jerusalem, the city of David, and the city of the city of David's Lord. Salvation was of the Jews, and not until they were guilty of the further sin of resisting and blaspheming the Holy Spirit, thus showing themselves unworthy of eternal life, was the kingdom to be taken from them and given to a people bringing forth the fruits. After they had evangelized in Jerusalem, then they must go into Judea. Persecuted and driven from the Holy City, the disciples were commanded to bear the Glad Tidings to the regions round about, that peradventure the elect remnant of Abraham's seed might accept Christ as Lord and thus be saved. The third stage in the progress of their work was to be Samaria, with its mixed population—the Jews left there at the Captivity with whom their Gentile conquerors had intermixed and intermarried. Having done this, then they must go to the uttermost parts of the earth—their field was the world—and proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom as God's testimony to all the nations of the earth.

As Christ's witnesses in the world, His disciples were commanded to declare unto

men in all lands what they had heard and seen and known of the manifested life of Incarnate Godhead. To the end of the world (age) the Lord would be with them with signs and wonders and all needful gifts of the Holy Spirit; nor was either the promise of His presence or of the gifts of the Spirit limited to the apostolic era of the Church.

When the Son came down from Heaven to earth and was found in fashion as a man, the angels sang in the star-lit skies over the plains of Bethlehem, where the infant Jesus was born. When the Spirit descended on the disciples in the city of David's son and Lord, there was *the Sound* as of a mighty rushing wind, and there were cloven tongues as of fire—the audible and visible material symbols of His presence and power. The outward signs have passed away, but the Spirit's presence abides perpetually with the Church.

The multitudes followed *the Sound* until they came to the place where the disciples were assembled; and then and there they saw the Tongues as of fire, and heard the disciples (not the Apostles only), not preaching in different languages to unbelievers, but speaking in tongues to

God; in tongues whose full significance they did not comprehend, though they knew that these disciples were declaring the wonderful works of God. When a congregation had assembled, Peter preached to them, not in Tongues, but in the common language of Judea. The "*signs*" of the Sound and the Tongues were for the unbelievers; nor is it stated anywhere in the New Testament that the Apostles preached the Gospel to the unbelievers in Tongues.

The Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, came into new, peculiar and most intimate relations with the entire body of believers—into organic connection with all the disciples; connection, complete and permanent. Henceforth He is to dwell in and abide with every believer, and on this day He conferred no special and pre-eminent gifts upon the Apostles, above their brethren.

Here, then, are the factors in the world's evangelization; an Omnipotent and Omniscient Spirit; living disciples to bear witness to the facts concerning Jesus Christ; the command of the King; the order of march. The field is the world.

A CUP OF COLD WATER FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

By G. W. SAMSON, D.D. (BAPTIST), NEW YORK.

That Christ has yet to exercise his power to rule in all Mohammedan lands, even in the land of His own home, is forced on the traveller in Palestine.

In riding from Gaza, past Hebron, to Jerusalem, on the old "Desert road," the thirsty traveller sees on his right, about the middle of his dreary ride, an arbor-like, open, but roofed structure of stone. His muleteer directs his way thither. Within, a venerable Mohammedan dervish draws up a small bucket of cool water from a deep well, dips and re dips a cup, and hands it to the passers by. When offered money, he refuses, and for this reason: Mohammed taught that the highest merit is attained by ministering bodily comfort to the needy, and, because need for cool water

is *the want* of Desert travellers. Wealthy Mohammedans leave bequests to dig deep wells on Desert routes, to build a shelter and leave a supporting fund to give a cup of cold water in Mohammed's name. As he rides to Jerusalem and is passing between Gerizim and Ebal, he stops to view, not to drink from, the now dry well of Jacob, dug by the patriarch for his family's comfort. There Jesus said to a woman really of Israel's stock, but unrecognized by the Jews, "Give me to drink," leaving to the worldly the world's supply; but he added, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

Here appears the essential contrast between that religious faith which looks on

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→*SERMONS*←

VOICEFUL STONES.*

BY ROBERT STUART MAC ARTHUR, PASTOR, CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, N. Y.

*What mean ye by these stones?—*JOSH. iv., 6.

THE long and weary wilderness journey was over. Moses, the leader and lawgiver of Israel, had now gone up to glory and God. His mantle had fallen upon the son of Nun, the brave and noble Joshua. The task assigned him was great; the divine promises given him were greater. God said to Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." He also added: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." These are great and precious promises. Joshua caught their inspiration. He had shown a spirit of trustful bravery, when forty years before he exhorted the people to go up against the land. In that spirit he now assumed command of the hosts of God. Forward went the priests of the Lord bearing the ark of the Lord. Their feet are dipped in the brim of the Jordan, and lo! the bed of the river is dried up. The rushing tide of waters, in this time of harvest, "rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan;" while the waters below were carried on to the Dead Sea. Forward went the priests with the ark into the

* Preached at the opening of the new Calvary Baptist Church, Fifty-seventh Street, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, Sunday morning, December 23d, 1883.

They hear from the pulpit and read in the Bible threatenings of coming danger, but they naturally think that those who love them best would give warning if the danger be real. No such note of alarm is sounded, and they sleep on in the bosom of the family. There is no time to be lost. How soon may joy be changed to

grief, songs be changed for sorrows! It is sad enough to lose our friends if we know we shall meet them in heaven; but to have them on the dying bed turn toward us a look of reproach that we have spoken no word of warning would give a pang from which I pray God you and I may be spared.

THE BOOK OF ACTS, CHRIST'S MANUAL OF MISSIONS FOR HIS CHURCH.

BY PROF. A. W. PITZER, D.D., HOWARD UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D. C.

No. II.

The extension of the Church, as related by Luke, is not an aggregation of disconnected incidents and fragments of history, but is a natural, orderly and scientific statement of the great germinal facts and truths of Christianity in their practical effect on the men of that age, both Jews and Gentiles; it is a history of the Gospel in the life of the believer and in the life of the Church.

In the development of this history, prominence is given, first, to the Holy Spirit; secondly, to the Word; thirdly, to the anointed Messengers.

The God-head, presence and power of the Spirit stand out with great distinctness in the first few chapters; then, the Word comes into greater prominence; and then after this, the anointed Messengers; especially Peter and Paul are the living centers around which the history revolves. The Spirit, the Word, the Witnesses is the order of the Divine Revelation.

The method of evangelization pursued by the Messengers was to establish Churches in the great centers of civilization and commerce; so that from these central sources of Christian influence, the Gospel could be quickly and easily carried into all the surrounding country. The work begun at Jerusalem was carried on from city to city—to Samaria, to Cæsarea, to Antioch, to Corinth, to Ephesus, to Philippi, to Thessalonica, onward to imperial Rome herself, the great throbbing heart of the known world. The one paramount duty that pressed upon each disciple and upon the whole Church was,

to preach the Gospel to every creature; to obey the command of the absent Lord, and to "continue" to do and teach what He "began." To do and teach is the work, not of the Apostles only, but of Prophets and teachers and pastors and evangelists, and helps and deacons; of private members and of goodly women, not a few. The one great business of life, not of a few official members, but of the whole body of believers, was to establish and extend the Church by bearing witness to her crucified, risen and enthroned Redeemer; and so the Disciples, scattered by persecution, are found in Judea, in Samaria, in Asia Minor, onward to India and to Italy, testifying the Gospel of the grace of God.

The Gospel thus proclaimed came in contact with every form and phase of human life and civilization; in contact and in conflict with the bigotry of Jerusalem, the idolatry of Athens, the prowess of Rome, the luxury of Corinth, the licentiousness of Cyprus, the magic of Ephesus, the barbarism of Lystra; in contact and in conflict with blinded Jews, and novelty-seeking Greeks, and boastful Romans, and pleasure-loving Epicureans, and sneering Stoics; it met the cripple at the alms-place, and the king on the throne; and the Gospel of Messiah proved itself to be the Wisdom of God and the Power of God unto salvation to every one that believed; and as many as were ordained to eternal life did believe. Until the return of her absent Lord, the Church will find nothing new to hinder or oppose her on-

ward march in proclaiming the glorious Gospel of the Son of God.

In this book we find the true model of all Gospel preaching: not with enticing words, not with excellency of speech, not in or with the wisdom of this world, not as pleasing men, but God, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The most effective gospel preaching is that which simply bears witness out of the written Word to Christ Crucified, the wisdom of God and the Power of God unto salvation. This testimony, under the power of the Holy Spirit, proved effectual to the salvation of sinners at Jerusalem, Samaria, Paphos, Athens, Corinth and Rome. Believers were added to the Lord; the crucifiers of Christ in the holy city, the bewitched people of Samaria, the licentious inhabitants of Cyprus, high officials from far-off Ethiopia, the barbarous people of Malta, centurions and soldiers of Rome, sellers of purple of Thyatira, prison-keepers at Philippi, inquisitive Greeks, servants of Cæsar's imperial household, women both noble and base, not a few, hear the marvellous testimony of the living witness, and are turned from idols, licentiousness and lies to serve the true and living God, and to wait for His Son Jesus Christ from heaven. Nor has this blessed Gospel in the lapse of eighteen Christian centuries lost one particle of its power—it is still mighty to save; nor is there any other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved.

There was no elaborate code of rules prescribing with minuteness the details of evangelization and methods of Church organization. We read of a vigorous missionary Church at Antioch, in Syria, and of another at Rome, founded we know not how; certainly not by any Apostle; most probably by some of those devout persons from these places who were present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and who bore back with them the new found love of Christ and the fire of the Holy Ghost.

This book will be searched in vain for classified and numbered rules for the evangelization of the world.

In all places whither the disciples went, they found Jews of the Dispersion, the

synagogue worship, and the local eldership—the essential elements of Christian Churches. The Scriptures were read and expounded, the facts concerning Christ were stated and proved, disciples were made, baptized and instructed in gospel truth, elders were ordained, and entrusted with the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them bishops—and this done, the disciples passed on their way to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond.

The Church met with enemies, evils and discouragements, not only from without, but also from within—there were mistakes of judgment and sins in conduct; there was race prejudice and national pride; there was legalism and Antinomianism; there was excitement and excess; there were false teachers and false doctrine; there were dissensions and divisions; there were backsliders and apostates; there were defections and antichrists; but in spite of all these things the work went on, disciples were made, believers were added to the Lord, Churches were organized, and Jesus continued to carry forward His own blessed work of salvation: He continued with His Church both doing and teaching.

After eighteen centuries the Church of this age finds itself still engaged in the evangelization of the world; we call this the day of universal missions, and questions of urgent interest are pressing upon the Church for solution: the sphere and functions of missionary boards, the powers of the evangelist, the relations between the home and foreign Churches, the status of heathen converts and ministers, the use and necessity of creeds in unevangelized lands, the support of missions, the founding of schools and colleges—these and like matters are fast becoming burning questions in all denominations; and the still more important and absorbing question that will not rest, the *oneness* of Christ's Church, and how shall all these various sects best co-operate in the work of evangelization.

Whatever answers we may give or attempt to give to these questions, the fact must be kept steadily in view, that *all the elements of the problem are precisely the*

same to-day that they were in the apostolic age of the Church—there is no new thing under the sun, as regards the evangelization of the world.

Since the departure of our Lord, more than fifty generations of the race have passed from these earthly scenes to other shores; powerful nations have disappeared completely from human view, and new nations and civilizations and governments have risen from the ruins of the old; the sad fact, however, still remains—millions of mortals have never heard the Gospel, and are to-day in the region and the shadow of death; and the command of the Risen Redeemer to preach the Gospel to every creature is not yet fully executed. Alas! how far are the kingdoms of this world from being the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.

Meanwhile, Christ still occupies the same place of power and glory at His Father's right hand; just as omnipotent to save now as He was on the day of Pentecost; just as present with His disciples to-day as He was with Paul in the Philippian jail or with the company of believers at Jerusalem.

The Holy Spirit is still in the Church, and still convicts the world of sin and righteousness; nor has He ever relinquished one iota of His sovereignty in the disposal or manifestations of His "*gifts*;" nor are we authorized by Scripture to say that any of His gracious or miraculous influences have ceased forever from the Church. Joel's predictions of His manifestations were partially fulfilled, but not exhausted either at Pentecost or at any subsequent period of apostolic history—His gifts to the Church were not limited to or by the lives of the Apostles.

The Written Word, too, abides to-day and forever the same—except that under the direct guidance of the Spirit there has been added to the Old, the New Testament; Gospels and Acts, Epistles and Revelation; the Word of God, but in human words, written by human hands, translated now into 300 languages and dialects of the earth, and carried by millions of human hands to all the ends of the earth: a book that can never die, because the everliving God lives in it evermore.

The same fallen race, the same exalted Saviour, the same almighty indwelling Spirit, the same Divine Word, the same Church of the Living God.

There are no living Apostles now, nor any successors of them, as those who saw the Risen Lord and received a personal call from Him, but there are pastors, evangelists, teachers, elders, deacons, and devout and devoted women—officers and members of all ranks and conditions, with different gifts and graces, even as there were in the apostolic Church—missionaries with burning zeal and tongues of fire like Paul and Silas; liberal givers like Barnabas, orators eloquent like Apollos, and martyrs like Stephen; there are Johns, Marks, Lukes, and Timothys, and Dorcasess; and alas! there are Diotrophes and Demes, Hymeneas and Alexanders, and Ananias and Sapphira.

The Church still abides under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit; the infinite resources of the God-Head and heaven are her's. What she needs is simply to recognize and realize her high calling and in the power of the Omnipotent Spirit give herself anew to the evangelization of the world.

A WORD TO THE PEW.

REV. JAMES CROIL (PRESBYTERIAN), MONTREAL.

No minister is perfect. Do not be surprised or disappointed then that your pastor is not faultless. He is perhaps no better and no worse than his brethren. If you expected angelic virtues without a mixture of human frailties, you were much to blame. Paul was not yet per-

fect. Peter and John had their faults. In all the range of Christian biography; where can you point to your faultless, blameless, perfect men? Since then faults and imperfections are to be expected, be watchful of your own heart and mind lest you give scope and exercise to a spirit of