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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—CRITICISMS ON SOME OF THE ABLEST REPRESENTATIVE PREACHERS OF THE DAY.

BY AN EMINENT PROFESSOR OF HOMILETICS.

NO. IX.—REV. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D., MANCHESTER, ENG.

DR. MACLAREN is eminently a preachers' preacher. By this I do not mean—as in saying the same thing, for example, of Dr. Bushnell, I might—that his sermons constitute a mine of material and resource from which preachers may draw. Dr. Maclaren is not primarily, as Dr. Bushnell primarily was, a free, original, and fructifying thinker, who happens to occupy a pulpit. He is a true and proper preacher, and not a thinker half misplaced. But he is a preacher such as preachers in particular appreciate and enjoy. His singular skill in homiletic workmanship is a marvel and an inspiration to them. Seldom has a more cunning craftsman, one at every point less needing to be ashamed, wrought in the pulpit. This, preachers, of course, are especially qualified to feel, and this it is which makes Dr. Maclaren peculiarly a preachers' preacher. Preachers learn method from him, if they do not from him so much derive thought.

Still, Dr. Maclaren is in a very high degree a thoughtful preacher. Of thoughts—of thoughts rather than of thought, if one may make such a paradoxical distinction—any chance sermon of Dr. Maclaren's is likely to be full. The essential preacher deals in thoughts, while the essential thinker deals in thought. Dr. Bushnell was an essential thinker, but Dr. Maclaren is an essential preacher. He thinks for the pulpit, as Dr. Bushnell thought for the closet. Dr. Maclaren has done what Dr. Shedd recommends and President Robinson warns against—each authority speaking therein with excellent reason—he has “cultivated the homiletic habit.” You might half suspect that his mind must, through long exclusive application of faculty to the producing of sermons, have become in a sort automatic in its homiletic action; such is the inevitable, unerring precision with which it works, and such, within certain limits, is the flawless perfection of its results.

Those results are wonderfully even in value reckoned throughout

it gives you a joyful sense of added wealth in prospect to consider that the unbroken, though ripe, age of the preacher, together with his remarkable habit of steadily improving upon himself, seems to promise us, year by year, for yet many and many a year to come, "A Year's Ministry"—in volume after volume so named, of sermons growing more helpful rather than less, from the pen—or shall we say tongue?—of Alexander Maclaren.

II.—JOHN CHRYSOSTOM,

THE GREATEST PREACHER OF THE GREEK CHURCH.

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND WORK, BY PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D.,
NEW YORK.

NO. I.

"ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee; and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in Thy name, Thou wilt grant their requests; fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen."

This beautiful and comprehensive prayer, which is translated from the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, has made his name a household word wherever the Anglican Liturgy is known and used.

John Chrysostom is the greatest pulpit orator and commentator of the Greek Church, and still deservedly enjoys the highest honor in the whole Christian world. No one of the Oriental Fathers has left a more spotless reputation; no one is so much read and so often quoted by modern commentators. An admiring posterity, since the sixth century, has given him the name CHRYSOSTOM (THE GOLDEN-MOUTHED), by which he is generally known.

He was born at Antioch, the capital of Syria, and the home of the mother church of Gentile Christianity, where the disciples of Jesus were first called "Christians." The year of his birth is 347. His father, Secundus, was a distinguished military officer (*magister militum*) in the imperial army of Syria, and died during the infancy of John, without professing Christianity. His mother, Anthusa, shines with Nonna and Monica among the most pious Christian women of antiquity, who prove the ennobling influence which Christianity exercised on the character of woman, and through her on all the family relations. She remained a widow from her twentieth year that she might bestow her entire strength and care to the training of her only son, who early exhibited rare aptitude for learning. Perhaps she shared the aversion of the ancient Church against a second marriage. She gained by her exemplary life even the admiration of the heathen, and the famous advocate of heathenism, Libanius, on hearing of her consistency and devotion, felt constrained to exclaim: "Ah, what wonderful women there are among Christians!" She gave her son a good education, and

early planted in his soul the germs of piety, which afterward bore the richest fruits for himself and for the Church. By her admonitions and the teachings of the Bible he was secured against the seductions of heathenism.

Yet he was not baptized till he was twenty-eight years of age. The same was the case with Gregory Nazianzen, the son of a bishop, with Jerome, and with Augustin, the son of Monica. Such examples prove that infant baptism was by no means general at that time, especially where only one of the parents professed Christianity, as was the case with the mothers of Chrysostom and Augustin. Anthusa and Monica were probably influenced by the apprehension that their son might, by early baptism, before actual conversion, run the risk of a forfeiture of the baptismal blessing of forgiveness of sins. This is the argument which Tertullian used against infant baptism; and this was the reason why so many, even the Emperor Constantine, put off their baptism to the hour of dangerous sickness or to the deathbed.

Chrysostom received his literary training from Libanius, the faithful friend of Julian the Apostate, and the first classical scholar and rhetorician of his age. He was introduced by him into a knowledge of the Greek classics and the arts of rhetoric. Libanius accounted him his best scholar, and, when asked shortly before his death (395), whom he wished for his successor, he replied: "John, if only the Christians had not stolen him from us."

After the completion of his studies Chrysostom became a rhetorician, and began the practice of law, which opened to him a brilliant career. The amount of litigation was enormous. The display of talent in the law courts was the high road to the dignities of vice-prefect, prefect and consul. Some of his speeches excited admiration and were highly commended by Libanius.

But the dangers and temptation of a secular profession in a corrupt state of society discouraged him. The quiet study of the Scriptures, the influence of his intimate friend Basil, who embraced the monastic life, and the acquaintance with Bishop Meletius, combined to produce a change in his mind and career. He entered the class of catechumens, and after the usual period of three years of instruction and probation he was baptized by Meletius. This was the turning-point in his life, the entire renunciation of this world and the dedication to the service of Christ.

His first inclination after his conversion was to adopt the monastic life as the safest mode, according to the prevailing notions of the Church in that age, to escape the temptations of the world, to cultivate holiness, and to secure the salvation of the soul. But the earnest entreaties of his mother prevailed on him to delay the gratification of his desire. She took him to her chamber, and by the bed where she had given him birth, she adjured him with tears not to forsake her. "My

son," she said in substance, "my only comfort in the miseries of this earthly life is to see thee constantly, and to behold in thy traits the faithful image of my departed husband. This comfort commenced with your infancy before you could speak. I ask only one favor from you, do not make me a widow a second time; wait at least till I die; perhaps I shall soon leave this world. When you have buried me and joined my ashes with those of your father, nothing then will obstruct you in your long journey through life. But as long as I breathe support me by your presence and do not draw down upon you the wrath of God by bringing such evils upon me who have given you no offense."

These tender, simple and impressive words suggest many heart-rending scenes caused by the ascetic enthusiasm for separation from the sacred ties of the family. It is honorable to Chrysostom that he yielded to the reasonable wishes of his devoted mother. He remained at home, but secluded himself from the world and practised ascetic mortifications.

Meletius wished to secure him for the active service of the Church, and ordained him to the subordinate office of reader, who had to read the Scripture lessons in the first part of divine service, the "Missa Catechumenorum." But after the death of his mother he retired to a convent near Antioch for quiet study.

When Meletius and other bishops were banished by the Arian Emperor Valens in 370, the attention of the clergy turned to Chrysostom and Basil as suitable successors. Chrysostom avoided an election by a pious fraud. He apparently assented to an agreement that both should accept or resist the burden of the episcopate, but concealed himself and put forward his friend, whom he accounted worthier. His conduct is unjustifiable from our standpoint of Christian ethics. He, however, felt no compunction of conscience, and rather gloried in it as good management or accommodation (*οἰκονομία*). He justified it by the stratagems of war, the conduct of physicians towards refractory patients, several examples of the Old Testament, Paul's circumcision of Timothy for the sake of the Jews, and his observance of the ceremonial law in Jerusalem at the advice of James. (Acts xxi:26). The Jesuitical maxim, The end justifies the means, is much older than Jesuitism, and runs through the whole apocryphal, pseudo-prophetic, pseudo-apostolic, pseudo-Clementine, and pseudo-Isidorian literature of the early centuries. Several of the best fathers show a want of a strict sense of veracity. Origen, Chrysostom and Jerome explained the collision of Paul and Peter at Antioch (Gal. ii:11 *seq.*) away by turning it into a theatrical farce, which was arranged by the two apostles to convince the Jewish Christians that circumcision was not necessary. Against such wretched exegesis the superior moral sense of Augustin rightly protested, and Jerome changed his view.

The escape from the episcopate was the reason of one of the best and

most popular works of Chrysostom, the Six Books on the Priesthood. He vindicates, in the form of a Platonic dialogue, his conduct towards his friend Basil, and sets forth with glowing enthusiasm and eloquence the trials, duties and responsibilities of the sacred ministry, as the greatest office in the world. This book is to this day one of the most popular and stirring works of patristic literature.

CHRYSOSTOM AT ANTIOCH.

By excessive self-mortifications, in a convent near Antioch, where he spent six years, Chrysostom undermined his health, and returned to the city. There he was ordained deacon by Meletius in 371, and six years afterward presbyter, by Flavian. As deacon he had the best opportunity to become acquainted with the practical needs of the population, the care of the poor and the sick. After his ordination to the priesthood he preached in the presence of the bishop his first sermon to a vast crowd. It abounds in flowery eloquence, in humble confession of his own unworthiness, and exaggerated praise of Meletius and Flavian.

He now entered upon a large field of usefulness, the real work of his life. The pulpit was his throne, and he adorned it as much as any preacher of ancient or modern times.

Antioch was one of the four capitals of the Roman Empire, along with Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome. Nature and art combined to make it a delightful residence, though it was often visited by inundations and earthquakes. An abundance of pure water from the river Orontes, a large lake and the surrounding hills, fertile plains, the commerce of the sea, imposing buildings of Asiatic, Greek and Roman architecture, rich gardens, baths, and colonnaded streets, were among its chief attractions. A broad street of four miles, built by Antiochus Epiphanes, traversed the city from east to west, the spacious colonnades on either side were paved with red granite. Innumerable lanterns illuminated the main thoroughfares at night. The city was supplied with good schools and several churches; the greatest of them, in which Chrysostom preached, was begun by the Emperor Constantine and finished by Constantius. The inhabitants were Syrians, Greeks, Jews and Romans. The Asiatic element prevailed. The whole population amounted, as Chrysostom states, to 200,000, of whom one-half were nominally Christians. Heathenism was, therefore, still powerful as to numbers, but as a religion it had lost all vitality. This was shown by the failure of the attempt of the Emperor Julian the Apostate to revive the sacrifices to the gods. When he endeavored to restore the oracle of Apollo Daphneus in the famous cypress grove near Antioch and arranged for a magnificent procession, with libations, dances and incense, he found in the temple one solitary old priest, and this priest ominously offered in sacrifice—a goose! Julian himself relates this ludicrous farce and vents his anger at the Antiochians for squandering

the rich incomes of the temple upon Christianity and worldly amusements.

Chrysostom gives us in his sermons lively pictures of the character of the people and the condition of the Church. The prevailing vices, even among Christians, were avarice, luxury, sensuality and excessive love of the circus and the theater. "So great," he says, "was the depravity of the times that if a stranger were to compare the precepts of the gospel with the actual practice of society, he would infer that men were not the disciples, but the enemies of Christ." Gibbon thus describes the morals of Antioch: "The warmth of the climate disposed the natives to the most intemperate enjoyment of tranquillity and opulence, and the lively licentiousness of the Greeks was blended with the hereditary softness of Syrians. Fashion was the only law, pleasure the only pursuit, and the splendor of dress and furniture was the only distinction of the citizens of Antioch. The arts of luxury were honored, the serious and manly virtues were the subject of ridicule, and the contempt for female modesty and reverent age announced the universal corruption of the capital of the East. The love of spectacles was the taste, or rather passion, of the Syrians; the most skillful artists were procured from the adjacent cities. A considerable share of the revenue was devoted to public amusements, and the magnificence of the games of the theater and circus was considered as the happiness and as the glory of Antioch."

The Church of Antioch was rent for eighty-five years (330-415) by heresy and schism. There were three parties and as many rival bishops. The Meletians, under the lead of Meletius, were the party of moderate orthodoxy, holding the Nicene creed; the Arians, headed by Eudoxius, and supported by the Emperor Valens, denied the eternal divinity of Christ; the Eustathians, under the venerated priest Paulinus, were in communion with Athanasius, but were accused of Sabellianism, which maintained the divine unity and strict deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but denied the tripersonality, except in the form of three forms of self-revelation. Pope Damasus declared for Paulinus, and condemned Meletius as a heretic. Alexandria likewise sided against him. Meletius was more than once banished from his see and recalled. He died during the sessions of the Council of Constantinople, 381, over which he presided for a while. His remains were carried with great solemnities to Antioch and buried by the side of Babylas the Martyr. Chrysostom reconciled Flavian, the successor to Meletius, with Alexandria and Rome in 398. Alexander, the successor to Flavian, led the Eustathians back into the orthodox church in 415, and thus unity was restored.

Chrysostom preached Sunday after Sunday, and during Lent, sometimes twice or oftener during the week, even five days in succession, on the duties and responsibilities of Christians, and fearlessly attacked

the immorality of the city. He declaimed with special severity against the theater and chariot races, and yet many of his hearers would run from his sermons to the circus to witness those exciting spectacles with the same eagerness as Jews and Gentiles. He exemplified his preaching by a blameless life, and soon acquired great reputation and won the love of the whole congregation. Whenever he preached the church was crowded. Pickpockets found an inviting harvest in these dense audiences, and Chrysostom had to recommend his hearers to leave their purses at home.

A serious disturbance which took place during his career at Antioch called forth a remarkable effort of his oratorical powers. The populace of the city, provoked by excessive high taxes, rose in revolt against the Emperor, Theodosius the Great, broke down his statues and those of his deceased excellent wife Flacilla and his son Arcadius, dragged the fragments through the streets, and committed other acts of violence. The emperor threatened to destroy the whole city. This caused general consternation and agony, but the city was saved by the intercession of Bishop Flavian, who in his old age proceeded to Constantinople and secured free pardon from the Emperor. Although a man of violent temper, Theodosius had profound reverence for bishops, and on another occasion he submitted to the rebuke of St. Ambrose for the wholesale massacre of the Thessalonians.

In this period of public anxiety, which lasted several months, Chrysostom delivered a series of extempore orations in which he comforted the people and exhorted them to correct their vices. These are his twenty-one "Homilies on the Statues," so called from the overthrow of the imperial statues which gave rise to them. They were preached during Lent, 387. In the same year St. Augustin submitted to baptism at the hands of St. Ambrose in Milan. One of the results of those sermons was the conversion of a large number of heathens. Thus the calamity was turned into a blessing to the Church.

During the sixteen or seventeen years of his labors in Antioch, Chrysostom wrote the greater part of his Homilies and Commentaries; his work on the priesthood; a consolatory epistle to the despondent Stagirus; a treatise on Virginité; and an admonition to a young widow on the glory of widowhood and the duty of continuing in it. He disapproved of second marriage, not as sinful and illegal, but as inconsistent with an ideal conception of marriage and a high order of piety.

The years of his presbyterate at Antioch were the happiest of his life. We now follow him to the patriarchal chair of Constantinople, and the scene of his conflict with a corrupt court which led to his banishment.