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→*SERMONS*←

THE FOUR GOSPELS: THEIR DIFFERENCES AND THEIR
ESSENCE.

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But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.—JOHN xx., 31.

THE things referred to here are the signs spoken of in the previous verse: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book." These signs were the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus; and were intended to produce faith in Him as being the Messiah, the Son of God and the real Saviour of sinners. Beyond all question the *resurrection* of Jesus is the crucial fact on which the Scriptures rest the demonstration of the truth of Christianity. An inspired Apostle, the most logical of them all, reasons about it on this wise: "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain, and our preaching vain; ye are yet in your sins; they also that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." Thus the Scriptures rest upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ the whole system of Christianity. If that fails us there is no Gospel and our faith is utterly vain. I may therefore without any straining of these words which constitute the text make them apply to the whole of the four Gospels—the four records of the earthly life of Jesus Christ—and may say that all these records are for the same purpose as the account of the resurrection, which is the seal and crown of the whole. So if Jesus' resurrection was intended to prove Him to be the Christ, the Son

beds; they could not have been very sick, for they looked as happy as possible, cuddled up with tiny white night-caps on. They were so small they could not even reach the wash-stand; so a shelf was put up, running around the room, for them to stand on to reach the basins. Every older girl has a little one in charge.

It is a great work she is doing among these degraded and dirty people, and a most self-denying one. They have one cook, but the children do everything else. In one corner of the yard an old horse was slowly turning a wheel, where the wheat was ground. One of the little ones had been set to watch it. The child had gone fast asleep, and when we reached there her sun-bonnet had fallen off her head, and her book was on the ground. Miss Dickson lifted her up gently, laid her on a bench, and called one of the older girls. We saw the whole process of bread-making, from the winnowing of the wheat down to slicing the brown loaves for tea, which is done with a curious kind of chopper. They do everything but raise the wheat. Black and unappetizing the bread seemed to me, but, judging from the huge baskets filled up, somebody must have liked it.

The kitchen was to me the greatest curiosity—everything was in such beautiful order. And the copper and tin vessels shone as if they had never been used. And she told us dinner for one hundred

and thirty had been cooked in that room. I thought there must be two kitchens. The china was white and pure; she said she never used tin, it was impossible to keep it nice; and the children had no respect for it, while they took a pride in taking care of the glass and china. They did not break a great deal; and though, of course, it was more expensive, yet it taught them good habits. She has a mothers' meeting every week, where they are taught to sew while the Bible is read to them. There are play-rooms, where each child has her own place—the younger ones have their dolls; and the older, work-boxes, drawing-books, paints, etc.

We went up into the class-room to see the children—and Miss Spencer, one of the young lady assistants, made them sing for us. The Gospel Songs sounded very sweetly, as they sang in English, "Along the hills of Galilee, the white flocks sleeping lay." Then they sang, "Oh, think of a home over there," in Arabic. The thought that from every tongue and every nation we shall all gather to fill the many mansions of the home over there, filled my mind as the sweet childish voices sang in the unfamiliar tongue the dear old song. The young ladies brought us tea and plum-cake, and then we came away, and will bring to our home across the seas pleasant recollections of our afternoon spent on the Galilean hill.—*S. S. Times.*

THE PULPIT TREASURY IN THE FAMILY.

The Old Cradle.

BY T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), BROOKLYN.

For about fifteen years this cradle was going most of the time. When the older child was taken out, a smaller one was put in. The crackle of the rockers is a pleasure yet in my ears. There I took my first lesson in music as mother sang to me. Have heard what you would call far better singing since then, but none that so thoroughly touched me. She never got five hundred dollars per night; but without pay she sometimes sang all

night, and came out whenever encoered, though she had only too little ears for an audience. It was a low, subdued tone, that sings to me yet across the thirty-five years.

You see the edge of that rocker worn quite deep? That is where her foot was placed while she sat with her knitting or sewing, on summer afternoons, while the bees hummed at the door, and the shout of the boy at the oxen was heard in the field. From the way the rocker is worn I think the foot sometimes must have been very tired, and the ankle very sore; but I do not think she stopped for that. When

such a cradle as that got agoing, it kept right on for years. Scarlet fever came in the door, and we all had it; and oh how the cradle did go! We contended as to who should lie in it; for sickness, you know, makes babies of us all. But after a while we surrendered it to Charlie. He was too old to lie in it, but he seemed so very, very sick; and with him in the cradle it was "Rock! Rock! Rock!"

But one day, just as long ago as you can remember, the cradle stopped. When the child is asleep, there is no need of rocking. Charlie was asleep. He was sound asleep. Nothing would wake him. He needed taking up. Mother was too weak to do it. The neighbors came in to do that, and put a flower, fresh out of the garden dew, between the two still hands. The fever had gone out of the cheek, and left it white, very white—the rose exchanged for a lily. There was one less to contend for the cradle.

It soon started again, and with a voice not quite so firm as before, but more tender, the old song came back, "Bye! Bye! Bye!" There was a wooden canopy at the head of the old cradle, that somehow got loose, and was taken off. But the infantile mind was most impressed with the face which much of the time hovered over. Other women sometimes looked in and said:

"That child's hair will be red! What a peculiar chin! Do you think the child will live to grow up?" Though not old enough to understand their talk, by instinct it was known to be disagreeable, and we began to cry until the dear, sweet, familiar face again hovered. Oh, we never get away from the benediction of such a face! It looks at us through storm and night. After thirty-five years of rough tumbling on the world's couch, it puts us in the cradle again, and hushes us as with the very lullaby of heaven.

Let the old cradle rest in the garret. It has earned its quiet. The hands that shook up its pillow have quit work. The foot that kept the rocker in motion is through with its journey. The face that hovered has been veiled from mortal sight. Cradle of blessed memories! Cradle that soothed so many little griefs! Cradle that

kindled so many hopes! Cradle that rested so many fatigues! Sleep now thyself.

One of the great wants of the age is the right kind of a cradle and the right kind of a foot to rock it.

A Failure in Life.

By J. B. HAWTHORNE, D.D. (BAPTIST),
ATLANTA, GA.

Lot's life was a miserable failure. In his eagerness to increase his worldly wealth and pleasures, he lost all he had. A wicked man may prosper in things of this world in spite of his wickedness. He may never fear God nor regard man, and yet make money and rise to positions of power and grandeur. But many will be the reverses and afflictions of the child of God who attempts a selfish and disobedient life. His fondest schemes will come to naught, and God will lay him on His anvil and beat and bruise him, until his stubborn will is subdued, and his earth-loving soul consents to part with its idols. Lot, who sought wealth and luxury at the sacrifice of every obligation to his God, was brought to see possessions in ashes, and to feel the pangs of deepest poverty. Such, my brother, will be God's discipline of you, if you attempt to follow the example of Lot.

Lot sought the worldly advancement of his children at the peril of every interest of their souls. The results of his folly are sickening to contemplate.

Are there not parents even in our churches who have chosen pursuits and made alliances for their children without regard to their moral and religious welfare? How many fathers have put their sons into business where every influence was deadly as the upas tree? How many a noble girl has been sacrificed by the unrighteous ambition of her parents? More galling than the chains of the galley-slave are the bonds riveted upon her soul at the marriage altar. For such folly there are no tears too salt, there is no remorse too bitter, there is no repentance too deep. O God! let me covet no fortune, no pleasure, no fame, at the sacrifice of principle and duty. May the glory of

Thy kingdom, and beauty of Thy righteousness be my soul's supreme desire. Help me to be so loyal to Thy will that men shall never question my sincerity. May the

richest legacy which I leave to my children, be a record of fidelity to Thee and them. Let my tent never be pitched towards Sodom.

HELPRUL HINTS FOR WORKERS

"Free Church" or Rented Pews.

BY JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), N. Y.

"The Gospel is free," it is said, "and we are to give it freely, putting the pews in the churches at the disposal of all who come."

Let us go a little farther back. What is the history of the church-building? Was it erected by the benevolence of a few, and is it to be provided with a preacher, and all expenses paid by them? If so, it is all right. It is a mission church. There are many such in our large cities, supported by Presbyterian congregations. But the feeling is in favor of making them regular churches.

"But I would not have pews rented at all. There is no scripture for it."

There is no mention of pews, or, for that matter, of church-buildings, in the New Testament. There is strong statement as to ministers being laborers and worthy of their hire, and the Old Testament and the New enjoin giving for religious objects as God hath prospered the givers, and not from a momentary impulse, but according to a regular plan.

"But look how it is. You say to the man with the gold ring: 'Sit thou here,' and the poor only gets inferior room."

Indeed we do not; we leave the gold-ringed man to buy or hire the pew, and he places himself, and we do the best we can for the poor man. You are more tempted to this error on your "free" plan than we are. Where do you put the gold-ringed people? In bad seats? Do they stand about the doors to "run the machine," and then sit, with ostentatious humility, in a back seat? Is this much better than the infelicity James condemns?

"But we leave the worshippers to give

what they feel they can give, and sit where they please."

So do we. When the building was finished the people took such seats as they found suited at once to their means and their tastes. They naturally wished to be together as families.

"But that makes invidious distinctions in God's house. You should not do that."

Nor do we. The distinction is no greater than in other conditions of the worshipper. Some drive carriages; others walk. Some live in fine houses; some in plain apartments. Some, like your friend, are gold-ringed, and others in plain raiment. These are *providential arrangements*; at least certainly not made by us, and it is more true to the truth of things to accept them than to cover them up by artificial devices. Are we not to worship "in truth," *i. e.*, according to the nature of things?

"But look at the Roman Catholics—how they are growing—and they have no pew-rents."

To begin with: they are not growing, but the reverse, if their own statements can be believed. Secondly, where they have pews, they are often rented; and thirdly, they have a worse plan, commonly, namely: worshippers paying at each diet for their chairs, or places, and according to locality. And finally, their system is so diverse from the Protestant, and their methods of making adherents pay money so unlike ours, that no argument can be drawn from them.

"But the masses are not drawn into our churches. We would get them if we had free seats."

To begin with: there are more of "the masses" in our churches—that is, a larger proportion of them to the population—than ever before. You can consult on