

THE PULPIT TREASURY.

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→ SERMONS ←

THE SUBJECT AND SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

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Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.—EPH. iii., 8.

THIS epistle is generally and justly considered as the loftiest production of its inspired and gifted author. Opulent in thought and elevated in sentiment, it is throughout the fervid expression of a great loving heart and of a vigorous illumined intellect. Written under the joyous excitement of the grateful tidings of the firm faith and fearless fortitude of the Ephesian brethren, to whom he had long sustained such intimate and endearing relations, its obvious design is not so much to defend as to display "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." Hence the warm affections of the Apostle's brave and generous heart flow forth with unwonted spontaneity and fulness, and his active and enlarged mind expatiates exultingly in an element delightfully congenial with its spirituality and amplitude. His sentences glow with thought and thrill with emotion. And the frank revelation of his own inner life and personal experience draws us irresistibly into fellowship with his humble, earnest and hopeful spirit, and enkindles in us a desire for the attainment of like sublime faith, and the achievement of similar glorious triumphs.

The passage from which we have selected the text is an humble, grateful and exulting recognition of the sovereign, distinguishing grace of God, which

for the sacred office. A young man seeking admission to the bar must give proof of a knowledge of law. "Blackstone" and the "code" must be familiar to him, but, in entering the ministry, while there may be a careful inquiry as to his attainments in Hebrew and Greek, and an almost microscopic investigation as to his doctrinal views, his knowledge of the Book may be superficial or jejune. Many a Sunday school teacher, plodding for a few years over the international series of

lessons, undoubtedly possesses far more knowledge of Scripture than many who are ordained as teachers of the Word.

Only the Spirit can make preaching efficient, and if we will not use His instrumentality we cannot expect His favor. Paul admonished his brethren to "take . . . the sword of the Spirit." So now we need to take that sword and trust it. Want of faith in the Word of God will account for small success in the ministry.

THE PULPIT TREASURY IN THE FAMILY.

WHAT CHRIST BRINGS INTO THE HOME.

No. III.

You know of the man who had a house full of many things, but without the one thing. What did he do but climb up in a tree to see Jesus as He passed! And what did Jesus do but look straight into his face and say: "Come down, for I want to go into your house this day." So down he came at once and went off and threw open the door and brought Jesus into his home; and "that day did salvation come into that house." Salvation in your house, think of it! The Ark of God had to go from Obed-edom's house in a few months; but this never goes out of the house when once it has come in. Oh, then, see that Christ is in it! "Ark of God, come in! My dwelling is humble in Israel; but Thou regardest not the outside. Come in, O Saviour, and abide with us."

This, then, is the one thing you can bring in to the home. A word now as to the result—the wonderful change at home when Jesus is brought in. "The Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom." From the day the Ark of God got standing-room in it, the Lord blessed that house. I think it is Matthew Henry who remarks that the Lord paid well for His entertainment. Yes, He pays well. The blessing of God changes everything at home; even those things which you cannot keep out become changed most blessedly. Sin is one of them, but grace does wonders

for the sinful natures at home. It softens tempers. It keeps down selfishness. "It makes the home a little tabernacle of God."

The one thing which is the curse of the home goes out when Christ comes in, and if sinful natures do remain, yet they are kept under by the power of Christian love; and the inhabitants are more quick to mend their own faults than to notice and scold the faults of others. So, too, troubles are a different thing when Christ is in the house, and sickness and even death itself. The troubles are borne more patiently, and the sickness brings out more tenderness, and death is only going to sleep till the morning of life everlasting. A.

A Revolution in the Home.

T. DEWITT TALMAGE, D.D. (PRESB'N).

The religion of the Bible will make a revolution in the family. Those things that are wrong in the family circle will be overthrown by it, while justice and harmony will take the place. The husband will be the head of the household only when he is fit to be. I know a man who spends all the money he makes in drink, as well as all the money that his wife makes; do you tell me that he is the head of that household? If the wife have more nobility, more courage, more con-

sistency, more of all that is right, she shall have the supremacy. You say that the Bible says that the wife is to be subject to the husband. I know it. But that is a husband, not a masculine caricature. There is no human or divine law that makes a woman subordinate to a man unworthy of her. When Christianity comes into a domestic circle it gives the dominancy to that one who is the most worthy of it. As religion comes in at the front door mirth and laughter will not go out of the back door. It will not hopple the children's feet. John will laugh just as loud, and George will jump higher than he ever did before. It will steal from the little ones neither ball, nor bat, nor kite. It will establish a family altar. Angels will hover over it. Ladders of light will reach down to it. The glory of heaven will stream upon it. The books of remembrance will record it, and tides of everlasting blessedness will flow from it. Not such a family altar as you may have seen, where the prayer is long, and a long chapter is read with tedious explanation, and the exercise keeps on un-

til the children's knees are sore and their backs ache and their patience is lost, and for the seventh time they have counted all the rungs in the chair; but I mean a family altar such as you may have seen in your father's house. You may have wandered far off in the paths of sin and darkness, but you have never forgotten that family altar where father and mother knelt, importuning God for your soul. That is a memory that a man never gets over. There will be a hearty joyful family altar in every domestic circle. You will not have to go far to find Hannah rearing her Samuel for the temple, or a grandmother Lois instructing her young Timothy in the knowledge of Christ, or Mary, Martha and Lazarus gathered in fraternal and sisterly affection, or a table at which Jesus sits, as at that of Zaccheus, or a home in which Jesus dwells, as in the house of Simon, the tanner. The religion of Jesus Christ coming into the domestic circle will overthrow all jealousies, all janglings, and peace and order and holiness will take possession of the home.

TONGUES OF FIRE.

BY REV. E. PAXTON HOOD (CONGREGATIONAL), LONDON.

NO. III.

We remember having heard a dear departed friend tell how, when a boy, he was taken by his father one still, summer evening across the Northamptonshire fields—I believe it was to the little village of Thrapestone—to hear Robert Hall. It was one of those old village chapels, with the square galleries. As in the instance of Chalmers, the place was crowded with plain farmer folk and a sprinkling of intelligent ministers and gentry from the neighborhood. The minister came in, a simple, heavy, but still impressive looking man, one whose presence compelled you to look at him. In due course he announced his text, "The end of all things is at hand; be sober and watch," &c. Quite unlike Chalmers, his voice

was not shattering, but thin and weak. There was no action at all, or only a kind of nervous twitching of the fingers; more especially as the hand moved and rested upon the lower part of the back, where the speaker was suffering almost incessant pain. As he went on, beneath the deepening evening shades falling through the windows of the old chapel, his voice first chained and then charmed and fascinated his hearers one after another; the whole place seemed as if beneath a great spell. As he talked about "the end," the spell upon the people seemed to begin to work itself out into an awful fearful restlessness; first one, then another, rose from their seats, and stood stretching forward with a kind of