

THE PULPIT TREASURY.

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Sermons

THE ROCK-FOUNDATION.

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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

Jesus, as Mohammed did, only as the greatest of philanthropists and of teachers, and that faith which recognizes Christ as the Divine Redeemer; whose implanted Spirit is, as John writes, "a fountain of living water welling up unto everlasting life." Yet His twice-repeated appeal to His disciples as to giving "a cup of cold water" in *his* name has a subordinate earthly lesson, while its Supreme teaching is spiritual. It was at the close of His charge given to His chosen, when in the second year of His ministry, and of their training under His eye, Christ sent them out for the first time on independent mission work, that he said (Matt. x., 42): "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward." It was in the third year of Christ's ministry, when, after a year's trial they were found "disputing which should be the greatest," and even mild John was boasting of his supposed fidelity in rebuking one who "cast out devils" in Christ's name, while yet, as the self-assured leader said, "He followeth not us;" it was in view of this ignorance at once of the self-sacrifice and of the condescension demanded in their work, that Jesus said to that same chosen band (Mark ix., 51, parallel to Matt. xviii., 6): "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in *my* name, because ye *belong* to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." Here is, in both these statements, an *act*, a *motive* and a *reward* calling for thought.

As to the *act*, it is both suggestive and comprehensive. A man like Dr. Tanner, as often repeated among Brahminic devotees in India, may live without food for many days; but he cannot exist without water for the body's cooling and circulating fluids. So there is a moral life that is kept up by the interchange of *little* acts; the kind salutation, the smile, the "kiss of charity," the word "fitly spoken and in season," which cost nothing to the giver, but are invaluable to the receiver. So the little acts of *giving*, the "mites" of poor widows, the full carrying out of Paul's universal appointment, "Let every *one* of you lay by him in store as the Lord hath *prospered* him"—it is these gathered *drops* that fill the exhaustless reservoirs of world-wide Christian charities. The *motive*, too, like that which sees in a child the lineaments of an esteemed parent, that recognizes in the livery the servant of a liege-lord, it is this recognition of "Christ" in his disciple that at once honors the Master, and which permits him to honor the service. The *reward*, too, is in keeping with the act and its motive. The little badge a prince bestows is more than a life-estate. To find true what Jesus declares shortly after this second appeal (Matt. xxv.), that the awards of the *final* judgment *turn* on these little acts and their motive, that Jesus will say of forgotten trifles, "Ye did it to me," the *realization* of this fact so as to make it the rule of every-day life—*this* is to learn the lesson of giving a "cup of cold water" in the name of Christ.

THE PULPIT TREASURY IN THE FAMILY.

Home Piety.

By T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D. (PRESBYTERIAN).

There are a great many people longing for some grand sphere in which to serve God. They admire Luther at the diet of Worms, and only wish they had some such grand opportunity in which to display their Christian prowess. They admire Paul making Felix tremble, and they only wish they had some such grand

occasion in which to preach righteousness, temperance and judgment to come. All they want is only an opportunity to exhibit their Christian heroism. The apostle comes to us and he practically says: "I will show you a place where you can exhibit all that is grand and beautiful and glorious in Christian character, and that is the domestic circle. Learn first to show piety at home."

If one is not faithful in an insignificant sphere, he will not be faithful in a re-

sounding sphere. If Peter will not help the cripple at the gate of the temple, he will never be able to preach to three thousand souls into the kingdom at the Pentecost. If Paul will not take pains to instruct in the ways of salvation the jailor of the Philippian dungeon, he will never make Felix tremble. He who is not faithful in a skirmish would not be faithful in an Armageddon.

The fact is, we are all placed in just the position in which we can most grandly serve God, and we ought not to be chiefly thoughtful about some sphere of usefulness which we may after a while gain, but the all-absorbing question with you and with me ought to be "Lord, what wilt Thou have me *now* and *here* to do?"

There is one word around which most of our thoughts should revolve. That word is "home." Ask ten different men the meaning of the word and they will give you ten different definitions. To one it means love at the hearth, it means plenty at the table, industry at the work-stand, intelligence at the books, devotion at the altar. In that household discord never sounds its war-whoop and deception never tricks with its false face. To him it means a greeting at the door and a smile at the chair. Peace hovering like wings, joy clapping its hands with laughter. Life a tranquil lake. Pil-
lowed on the ripples sleep the shadows.

Ask another man what home is, and he will tell you it is want looking out of a cheerless fire-grate, kneading hunger in an empty bread-tray. The damp air shivering with curses. No Bible on the shelf. Children, robbers and murderers in embryo. Obscene songs, their lullaby. Every face a picture of ruin: want in the backgrounds and sin staring from the front. No Sabbath wave rolling over that doorsill. Vestibule of the pit. Shadow of infernal walls. Furnace for forging everlasting chains. Faggots for an unending funeral pile. Awful word. It is spelled with curses, it weeps with ruin, it chokes with woe, it sweats with the death-agony of despair. The word "home" in the one case means everything that is bright. The word "home" in the other case means everything terrific.

How To Manage Children.

CHARLES STANFORD, D.D., LONDON.

No. II.

The most important office in society is the parent's office, and the first father was the first magistrate. In this home rule, of course, "the husband is head of the wife," and she would think little of him if he were not; but the domestic authority of husband and wife is inseparable. They are not "twin stars," for "twin" means *twain*, and it has been ordained that "the twain shall be one." Baron Swedenborg says that "the married in heaven always melt into one angel;" if so, it must be a heavenly thing for this melting process to be finished, far as may be, on earth, so that between father and mother there may be delicate, mutual, continuous, indefinable help in the exercise of domestic authority. The child's obedience to this must begin from the first possible moment, and it will be harder every moment you postpone it. Wait until he is old enough to reason with, require of him only what he can understand, and you virtually give up altogether. From the the first, and until he ceases to be a child, you alone must decide what he shall have, or learn, or do.

The difficulty is to settle the principles of your government. Some of the faithful so govern their children as to stifle their natures. They are always waiting to be down upon them. They give out pun-
gent, stringent, most minute orders on all matters, in all moments. They are ever coercive in trifles. They scrub them with good advice from day to day, and aim to keep them what they ought to be by the sheer force of autocratic dictation. They would hold their opinions for them, lest they should hold the wrong ones; tie their hands, lest they should get into mischief; hobble their feet, lest they should run away; bandage their eyes, lest they should behold vanity; lock the muzzle on their mouths, lest they should be rude; or keep them under glass, lest "the wind should visit them too roughly." And the result is that, when the inevitable time comes for the youth to leave home and act for himself, he might say of liberty, what Wamba, the son of Witless, did, "I