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→ SERMONS ←

THE RANK OF PREACHING IN THE PLAN OF JESUS.*

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And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.
—MARK xvi., 15.

THE design of Jesus was to build a kingdom of God upon earth. It was not necessary that He should found a kingdom of God in Heaven, for it already existed there in full and perfect form. His method was first so to penetrate individual souls with His own temper and disposition as that He should become their spiritual leader; and then, by a natural process of spiritual affinity, to gather them into a common society. This society, or Church, or kingdom, was in its turn to affect the life of the world, at first slowly, silently, almost imperceptibly; as the leaven the meal; ethically and spiritually always, but surely and universally, until at last, as He counts time with whom a thousand years are as a single day, the race should be renovated and restored to the perfect love and righteousness of God, and should amply reflect His radiant, resplendent, eternal glory. This was the high, calm, and singular purpose of Jesus of Nazareth. History offers no account of any other person ever proposing such a gigantic task, such a sublime work!

Upon what human agency or means did He chiefly rely for the accomplishment of this great work? So far as He laid under contribution human

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THE TREASURY IN THE FAMILY.

Christian Hospitality.

By T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D.

The first trial often comes in the whim and eccentricity of the guest himself. There are a great many excellent people who have protuberances of disposition, and sharp edges of temperament, and unpliability of character, which make them a positive nuisance in any house where they stay. On short acquaintance they will begin to command the household affairs, order the employes to unusual service, keep unseasonable hours, and in a thousand ways afflict the household which proposes to take care of them. Added to all, they stay too long. They have no idea when their welcome is worn out, and they would be unmoved even by the blessing which my friend Gerrit Smith, the philanthropist, asked one morning at his breakfast table, on the day when he hoped that the long protracted guests would depart, saying: "O Lord, bless this provision, and our friends who leave us to-day!" But, my friends, there are alleviations to be put on their side of the scale. Perhaps they have not had the same refining influences about them in early life that you have had. Perhaps they have inherited eccentricities that they cannot help. Perhaps it is your duty, by example, to show them a better way. Perhaps they are sent to be a trial for the development of your patience. Perhaps they were to be intended as an illustration of the opposite of what you are trying to inculcate in the minds of your children. Perhaps it is to make your home the brighter when they are gone. When our guests are cheery, and fascinating, and elegant, it is very easy to entertain them; but when we find in our guests that which is antagonistic to our taste and sentiment, it is a positive triumph when we can obey the words of my text and be "given to hospitality."

We were born to serve, and when we serve others, we serve God. The flush on that woman's cheek, as she bends over the hot stove, is as sacred in God's sight

as the flush on the cheek of one who, on a hot day, preaches the Gospel. We may serve God with plate, and cutlery, and broom, as certainly as we can serve Him with a psalm-book and liturgy. Margaret, Queen of Norway and Sweden and Denmark, had a royal cup of ten lips, on which were recorded the names of the guests who had drunk from this cup. And every Christian woman has a royal cup, on which are written all the names of those who have ever been entertained by her in Christian style—names not cut by human ingenuity, but written by the hand of a Divine Jesus. But, my friends, you are not to toil unnecessarily. Though the fare be plain, cheerful presidency of the table and cleanliness of appointments will be good enough for anybody that ever comes to your house. John Heward was invited to the house of a noble man. He said: "I will come on one condition, and that is that you have nothing but potatoes on the table." The requisition was complied with. Cyrus, King of Persia, under the same circumstances, prescribed that on the table there must be nothing but bread. Of course these were extremes, but they are illustrations of the fact that more depends upon the banqueters than upon the banquet. I want to lift this idea of Christian entertainment out of a positive bondage into a glorious inducement. Every effort you put forth, and every dollar you give to the entertainment of friend or foe, you give directly to Christ. Christ said to His disciples: "He that receiveth you receiveth Me; and he that giveth a cup of cold water for My sake shall not lose his reward."

Among the Greeks, after entertaining and being entertained, they take a piece of lead and cut it in two, and the host takes one half of the piece of lead and the guest takes the other half as they part. These two pieces of lead are handed down from generation to generation, and from family to family; and after a while perhaps one of the families in want or in trouble goes out with this one piece of lead

and finds the other family with the corresponding piece of lead, and no sooner is the tally completed than the old hospitality is aroused and eternal friendship pledged. So the memory of Christian hospitality will go down from generation to generation and from family to family, and the tally will never be lost, neither in this world nor the world to come.

Mark this: The day will come when we will be turned out of doors, without any exception—barefoot, barehead, no water in the canteen, no bread in the haversack, and we will go in that way into the future world. And I wonder if eternal hospitalities will open before us, and if we will be received into everlasting habitations? Francis Frescobald was a rich Italian, and he was very merciful and very hospitable. Once an Englishman by the name of Thomas Cromwell appeared at his door asking for shelter and alms, which were cheerfully rendered. Frescobald afterwards lost all his property, became very

poor, and wandered up into England; and one day he saw a procession passing, and lo! it was the Lord Chancellor of England; and lo! the Lord Chancellor of England was Thomas Cromwell, the very man whom he had once befriended down in Italy. The Lord Chancellor, at the first glance of Frescobald, recognized him, and dismounted from his carriage, threw his arms around him, and embraced him, paid his debts, invited him to his house, and said: "Here are ten pieces of money to pay for the bread you gave me, and here are ten pieces of money to provide for the horse you loaned me, and here are four bags, in each of which are four hundred ducats. Take them and be well." So it will be at last with us. If we entertain Christ in the person of His disciples in this world, when we pass up into the next country we will meet Christ in a regal procession, and He will pour all the wealth of Heaven into our lap and open before us everlasting hospitalities.

HELPS IN PASTORAL WORK

A Pastor's Talk to Young People.

1. First and foremost, be careful to be united to our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the *sine qua non*. You may be united to a hundred churches and yet that union will not answer as a substitute for union with Christ—you may be united to so many and yet sustain no vital relation to Christ.

2. Next, as young people be united among yourselves. Allow no cliques in the church. This is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. It would displease our Lord. It builds a Chinese wall against the progress of His religion. Turn a friendly face toward every one; let the fact that a young person belongs to your church cover a multitude of faults. Let your membership be worth at least courtesy and a kindly spirit towards all your fellow-members. It matters not how much gold or how large a membership or how high a social position a church may have, if it is honey-combed with clique

it is rendered fatally weak in its vital parts. "In union there is strength;" in the church this is pre-eminently true.

3. Always be loyal to your church. Stand by its stated services and do your share of the work. Stated meetings mean standing engagements for you. Let nothing but home duties interfere with church duties. Don't act as if your solemn vows were a pretence and a farce.

4. Remember, in the church obligations are mutual. Does the church owe something to you? It is no less true you owe your best, your choicest to the church. If you have time, a talent, a gift, an accomplishment, don't sell it or give it somewhere else first, but let the church which has nourished and taught and comforted you have the benefit of it.

5. Consult with your pastor, not only in regard to your spiritual interests, but also about your temporal affairs. If you are becoming interested in a young man