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SERMONIC.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

A COMMUNION SERMON, BY CHARLES
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(Matt. xvii: 1-9.)

(Translated for this publication by Rev. J. C.
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THAT was an hour of blessed mystery which the three disciples were privileged to pass with their Master on the Mount of Transfiguration; that was an exclamation of supernatural ecstasy which fell from the lips of Peter: "Lord, it is good for us to be here: let us make here three tabernacles!" The world with its misery beneath them, the Lord gloriously transfigured before them, the communion of saints surrounding them—these three highly-favored disciples in these blissful moments breathed on Mount Tabor the atmosphere, as it were, of a better world, and enjoyed a foretaste of that happy existence when the spirits of the transfigured saints shall be forever assembled above in the tabernacles of peace, on the celestial Mount Zion, in the city of the living God.

To be sure, they were only blissful moments, it was only a fleeting fore-

[The first several sermons are reported in full; the remainder are given in condensed form. Every care is taken to make these reports correct; yet our readers must not forget that it would be unfair to hold a speaker responsible for what may appear in a condensation, made by another, of his discourse.]

taste. The tabernacles were not built on Mount Tabor. From the illumined lights of the transfiguration, the way led once more down to the earthly vale of woe; from Tabor the way led to the place of suffering on Mount Olive, to the tree of torture on Golgotha. Christ's way leads down, and whosoever wishes to ascend with Him, must first descend with Him. This was now fulfilled in the case of the Master and His disciples.

The splendor of what they beheld on Tabor was reflected in their souls during the darkest hours of their lives; what they heard on the Mount rang continually in their inmost hearts during their entire wearisome pilgrimage, and after many years John, in his Gospel, at remembrance of that joyful hour, wrote these words (i: 14): "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And Peter, in his second epistle (i: 16-18), testifies on this point: we "were witnesses of His Majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came

Men do not repudiate the doctrine of future punishment without cause. Back of this rejection lies an intense devotion to present indulgences—a latent and incorrect conviction that the love and service of Christ bereave the present of much that is of solid worth—the determined suppression of serious thought—a haughtiness of intellectual conceit that is ever the patron of error—the studied cultivation of stoicism and insensibility to the Gospel, and soul-restiveness under moral restraints.

These things poison the tone of thought until, imbibing the theory that this punishment is a fiction, they are ready to reject other vital doctrines, and push from them the only life-boat that can rescue them from ruin.

It has long been said that "death is an honest hour." The doctrinal narcotic, "No hell," with which men lull their minds into security in health, loses its influence when the black banners of death flutter before them. The pages of history are thronged with the recantations of those who labored long to believe in and propagate this heresy, that strikes at the roots of every green thing in the garden of morals. Voltaire, the Goliath of French infidels, laughed long and loud at the idea of punishment after death. But when on his death-bed, remorse sprang on him. He said to Dr. Trochin, "I shall go to hell, sir, and you will go with me." Then he took the soul-leap into the blackness of darkness. Dr. Young, the attending physician of the brilliant skeptic, Altamont, who had scouted the idea of future suffering, tells us that the dying utterance of his patient was, "And is there yet another hell? O thou blasphemed and indulgent God! hell itself will be a refuge if it will but hide me from Thy frown!" Talleyrand, the prince of French diplomatists, long denied the doctrine of deathless retribution as the result of a life of sin. But as he confronted things eternal, he said to his kingly friend, Louis Philippe, "Sire, I suffer already the pangs of the damned." Few men are willing, in their closing hours, to

venture out on the boundless ocean of the everlasting in a skiff of theory so frail as that which repudiates punishment for sin in the life that is imperishable.

Young men! the path to the bottomless pit is "paved with good resolutions." The population of perdition once anticipated the acceptance of God's service. Your troubled consciences already look with fear on the accusing scrolls of the past. You can say with the terrified soldier who refused to enter on a terrific charge, "It is not death I fear, but that which is after death." Repentance toward God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a holy life, comprise the safe path for you. Apelles said, "I paint for eternity." Will you not say, "I think, I act, I live from henceforth for eternity"? May God give you grace to make such a promise—to make it here and now—and to adhere to the covenant amid all the vicissitudes of life.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.

By W. F. V. BARTLETT, D.D., IN THE
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I have taught thee in the way of wisdom ; I have led thee in right paths. — Prov. iv: 11.

THESE words indicate the supreme duty which parents owe to their children. The father who can truly say, in addressing his son, "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom, I have led thee in right paths," may confidently feel that he has discharged the principal obligation which God has imposed upon him as a parent. A son or a daughter ruined by our mismanagement, by our neglect of duty, by our bad example — is there any sorrow like it?

What is the prime object we should seek for our children? It is to have them fixed and established in ways of wisdom and right paths. What are the means for securing this object? It is teaching them and leading them. Ways of wisdom and right paths mean pretty much the same thing. They

refer to soundness of understanding, purity of feeling, rectitude of purpose, a wise, right ordering of one's life. A man of wise mind and righteous character is the idea. This father had trained his son in character for wisdom and righteousness. He had done it by teaching and by leading. These two were the means that he employed. He led him by his personal example, by his persuasions and discipline, into the exercise of such a character, so that, when the boy became a man and was launched forth upon the world, his character was solidly fixed in the principles and practice of wisdom and rectitude.

It were well if all parents understood this duty, and were diligent in the fulfillment of it. It would save many a headache, many a gray head from going down in sorrow to the grave. There are fathers who think they have discharged their whole duty in this relation when they have provided for the physical wants of their households. If the storeroom and cellar and wardrobe are kept amply supplied, their sense of responsibility in this matter is at rest. Again, there are parents who are most concerned for the intellectual culture of their children. A fine address, hand and lip and foot trained in the arts of social life—in a word, what may be called parlor culture and manners is the most important consideration with them. In our day, when chromo pictures have taken the place of genuine art, and a false currency so long held the place of sterling coin, and polished novels are substituted for the true grain; when our beverages are *forged*, and our food is adulterated—a day of imitations and shams and humbugs—it is not surprising if there be parents who train their children for show, and not for solid worth and genuine excellence. Again, there are persons who pitch their parental responsibilities on a higher and better scale. They look chiefly after the traits of character which are forming in their sons and daughters. They wish them to be honest, prudent, industrious,

pure, truthful, courageous, high-minded. This is an ambition in the right direction. Still it falls far short of the ideal of parental training exhibited in our text. That contemplates a character which, while it does not ignore the secular virtues, ennobles and enriches them by the addition of the religious virtues. It is a character rooted in religion, animated and controlled by the principles of divine wisdom and rectitude. It is a character that makes, not only good citizens, but *godlike* men and women. It is a God-fearing, God-obeying, God-loving character; humble as to itself, just and loving toward our neighbor, filling its life with the lustre and fragrance of good deeds which reflect glory on the name of our Father in heaven.

If an artist wishes to sculpture a figure in marble, or paint it on canvas, he must first get the idea of it drawn out clearly and distinctly before his mind's eye. This familiar principle applies to the training of our household. Parents should have clear and distinctly-defined conceptions of what they are to aim at in training up their children, if they wish to bring them up well.

The great English essayist, John Foster, on the birth of his son, wrote a friend, "If the fellow turns out well, I shall not so much mind about his being extra-clever. It is goodness that the world is wretched for wanting." There is in the world plenty of physical subsistence, an abundance of intelligence, enough of fine accomplishments, but a woeful lack of *character*. What society sorely needs in the generations yet to come upon the stage, is not more knowledge, not more refinement of manners, not more of the comforts of life, but it is more godliness, more truthfulness, more honesty, more charity, more self-sacrifice and self-restraint. If the next generation is to be any improvement on the present, our sons and daughters must be taught in ways of wisdom and led in right paths. Can a child come to mature years with a better possession than a character fixed

in rectitude and radiant with goodness? If his brain be educated never so highly, can that supply the defect of a neglected heart? If his purse be filled never so amply, yet, if he come to manhood ungodly, untruthful, self-indulgent, selfish, vicious, is he not essentially, and in the worst sense, a pauper? When Pope describes Bacon as the wisest, greatest, meanest of mankind, does not that word "meanest" put a blot on his memory which his greatness, instead of lessening, renders still blacker? It is a man's best capital. You ask of a business man, not only has he money, has he business capacity, but is he honest, is he upright, is he true to his word, is he a man of character? You so value your own character that, if anything arises to disturb or shake your credit in the world of business, if you imagine the shadow of a suspicion is resting on you, it will take sleep from your eyes and slumber from your eyelids. So much do you prize character in a man, that when you see one who is honest, industrious, enterprising, struggling, with scanty means, to get along, you feel an interest in him. Take away from this community its persons of character, what would be left here worth living for? Character, indeed, is the brightest of all jewels. There is nothing that God esteems so highly.

This, then, is the main and constant object which parents should have in view in training their children. The question now comes, How shall this be accomplished? Our text answers this question in these two words—"Teaching" and "leading."

1. Teach your children right views of life. There is truth in the ethical apothegm of Socrates, that virtue is knowing—true, certainly, to this extent that, without a knowledge of the import of our life, no man's character will be based in rectitude. A man must think rightly, in order to feel and act rightly. An apple that is rotten on the surface will soon be rotten at the core. Suppose a boy grow up with the idea that this world is a great play-ground, where

he is to get as much pleasure as he can out of it; or suppose he be taught to look on the world as a theater for personal display; or suppose that he grow up in the idea that, if he is to be a success, he must get as much as possible out of the world with his own hands—as much money, as much power, as high a position—his character will be tainted through and through with an egotistic, covetous, selfish, worldly spirit. Whatever good traits he has will be at the mercy of this false idea. Would a man, when no eye is upon him, put out his hand and take what does not belong to him if he did not value money, or what money brings, more than integrity?

2. Teach your children right habits. You lead them into right paths. (1) By your example. (2) By prayer. (3) By keeping them under the influence of the sanctuary.

How great is our responsibility as parents! Let us pray, with all prayer and supplication, that God will enable us to teach our children in the way of wisdom, and to lead them in right paths.

WHAT IS YOUR AGE!

By REV. W. H. LUCKENBACH, IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH, GERMANTOWN, N. Y.

How old art thou?—Gen. xlviii: 8.

PHARAOH asked this question of the patriarch Jacob, and Jacob answered, "The days of the years," etc. (*vide* context).

He thought himself comparatively young at one hundred and thirty, though he had seen trouble enough to make him look old. While the discipline of trouble perfects the inner, yet it often sadly affects the outer man, etc.

This is not a novel question. It was old, even in Pharaoh's time. We often ask persons, "What is your age?" Sometimes we guess it from their general appearance; but it is as true of age as of character, that appearances are deceitful. We have seen men who were young at sixty, and we have pitied others who were old at forty.

We do not care to know how old you are by the almanac. You may keep this