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→*SERMONS*←

COMPLETE IN CHRIST.

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Ye are complete in Him.—COLOSSIANS ii., 10.

EVERY great system of faith, as every valuable mechanism, represents a principle peculiar to itself, a characteristic which entitles it to consideration. There may be deduced from that, or revolving around it—as you may furnish power from a central machinery for a whole system of wheels and spindles—many important adjuncts, but there must be one principle which imparts its force to all the rest. The world must have one central sun. The animal organization must have a heart, the pulsation of which sends its vitality to every other organ and member. The intelligent creation must have one all-sufficient mind. That is to each of these its characteristic.

So in every really valuable mechanism which the requirement of man has called forth, we find some one distinctive and essential feature which marks its individuality. Implements differ one from the other as each kind expresses an excellence peculiar to it, and therefore to be desired. Where we may not possess the genius for invention, we may yet be capable of new adaptations which shall entitle our results to the dignity of a discovery.

In the same manner men are of large or small account in the world as they recognize their individuality. The profoundest wisdom is to meet the

His printed sermons convey an inadequate impression of his preaching, lacking as they do the charm of delivery, as well as many extempore passages. The subtle power we name "personal magnetism" is felt from the opening sentence of the service. The ring and modulations of a remarkably fine voice, the increasing animation of face and gesture as he warms with his theme—the *wholesouledness* of the man—enlist attention throughout the discourse. In mind and in body he has excellent "staying-power," and, as with all born orators, an audience is inspiration.

In theological views Dr. Terhune is sound and conservative, but of a kindly

catholicity of spirit that makes him popular with other denominations. As a platform-speaker he is especially happy. He never rises unless he has something to say worth the hearing and gives it with pertinence and force.

His medical studies have added much to his success among the ill and afflicted; his knowledge of human nature and his own large humanity more. Were he a less able preacher, his gifts as a pastor would bind his people to him. As a citizen, he has in each of his former homes stood in the front rank of those who bring to the work of reform and the cause of Christian benevolence, warm hearts, sound judgment and singleness of purpose.

* Leading Thoughts of Sermons *

Preaching—the Great Function of the Gospel Ministry.*

BY THEODORICK PRYOR, D.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), NOTTOWAY, VA.

Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.—*ACTS xx., 24.*

My proposition is: That the great work, the fundamental business of the minister of the Gospel is to preach, and to preach the Gospel. The Apostle Paul himself by preaching and by example illustrates this proposition.

All history, secular and sacred, attests the wonderful change in the history of the world which took place under the preaching of the apostles. Heathen oracles and heathen customs, hoary with age, were overcome. In the language of that day, the world seemed to be turned upside down. Through what agency was this stupendous revolution accomplished? Not by philosophy or civil power, for these were in direct antagonism to religion. The simple answer is, "The simple, the earnest and the incessant preaching of the Gospel." Paul, one of the most successful

of the workers, announced that his great mission was simply to preach the Gospel (I. Cor. i., 17; ix., 16; Gal. i., 15, 16; Eph. iii., 8; Rom. xi., 13).

The apostle's teaching to Timothy and to Titus inculcates the same great truth. He insists that they must "preach the Word." And his practice corresponded. What was the great work that Paul did? It was preaching. He was at this at all times, in season and out of season. As soon as the Saviour called him, immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood, but in Damascus at once he preached and taught that Jesus was the Christ; and all around, from Jerusalem to Illyricum, he "fully preached" in the twenty-three countries within these bounds; and in all these lands it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Why should we be surprised at this? The great Master himself went all through their cities preaching in the synagogue; by the seaside and on the mountain side He preached. He sent out His disciples preaching, and His great commission was, "Go ye into all the world *and preach.*"

This was the power that overthrew the religions of antiquity, so that even in the

* Preached in Vicksburg at the opening of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

days of the Apostle Paul, Christian hymns were sung in the palace of the Cæsars.

So conspicuous is this that it would seem almost a work of supererogation to say to the members of this court that the work of the minister is to preach. Never can I consent to the view that the great work of the minister is to rule, and that springing out of this, like a parasite, is the preaching. It may comport with the Pope of Rome, or with the Patriarch of Constantinople, or the Primate of all England, to boast of power, but it does not belong to a minister of the Reformed Church to make the exercise of power the great point of his work.

Paul's love of preaching was not just a feeling; it was the great controlling principle of his life. At the time when Paul first appears in the narrative, he was "a young man named Saul." Very soon afterwards he was converted, and immediately he went to the work of preaching. His course was a long one. When he wrote to Philemon he called himself "Paul the aged." All this time he was looking forward to the crown of rejoicing. And when his head rolled off under the blow of the cruel execution, his gray hairs clotted with his own blood, his spirit went to receive the reward of his preaching. He never speaks of himself as Paul the hierarch, or Paul the ruler, but as Paul the Apostle, *sent to preach*.

I want by God's help to impress upon the minds of the young ministers, who are soon to take the place of us who are soon to drop into the grave, that their one great aim in life is to preach.

Not only in Paul's day, but in the days of the Reformation, it was *preaching* that shook the power of Rome to its foundations. In England, in the eighteenth century, when Erastianism and formality seemed to rule in England, it was the *preaching* of Whitfield and Wesley that aroused the nation. So in this country it was the *preaching* of Edwards and of Tennent that brought forth the spirit of revival. So in this land there is need of a noble army of *preachers*.

I think our Church is spending too much of her strength on subordinate matters, important themselves, but taking too

large a share of the attention of the people, a share too large for their relative importance. Principal Cairns, in a recent address, told of the promise of a brighter day at hand for Scotland, and it was because of the growing disposition there to concentrate effort on preaching.

Dr. Plumer's last letter to me contained these words:

Oh, let us pray for Zion, let us pray for Zion; let us preach for Zion, let us preach!

Brethren, my heart's desire is, that this spirit may prevail in our Church. Brethren, it does not matter much where we work in this world. As Henry Martyn said, "The road to heaven from India is just as short as from England." When these gray hairs of mine (as soon as they will) shall lie in the grave, the only inscription I ask is,

Theodorick Pryor, a sinner saved by grace; an humble, earnest preacher of the Gospel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Overcoming Desire.

BY WILLIAM FAWCETT, D.D. (METHODIST), CHICAGO, ILL.

And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, etc.—*HEBREWS XI., 15.*

The chapter from which this text is taken is a record of the faithful. Abraham was called of God to enter upon a special work. He went into the country pointed out to him never to return. The evidence of his consecration rested upon his perseverance. It was so with Isaac and Jacob. They went out never to return, not because of an interdict forbidding them, not because of natural obstacles, lofty mountains, swollen streams, or impenetrable woodlands; but because they desired to remain where they were sent. So it is with all consecrated Christians. They are not Christians merely because they are obliged or foreordained to be; they are what they are because they desire it. Christianity draws much of its life from the universal desire of man to be more and better than he is. We can go back to the country whence we came. We started at the cry of the spirit, but we are not compelled to press on. Almost