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THE HARDENED SINNER TREMBLING.

A sermon, preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, N. C., Sunday night, July 27th, 1873, and reported for the "Recorder."

ACTS XXIV. 25.—And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.

INTRODUCTION.

Many persons seem to suppose, that very corrupt men have lost all power of feeling. It is often a mistake. They are frequently struck with fear when specially wrought upon. Few men have utterly lost the power of trembling in view of the consequences of their own wrongdoing.

Felix was a hardened sinner, and yet he trembled. Let us consider (1) the nature, (2) the grounds, and (3) the results of his trembling. Notice then,

I.—NOW HE TREMBLED.

It was not in view of the enormity of his sins as such. Not because these sins were offensive in the sight of a holy God. This is proven by the fact, that he continued to practice his villainies. If his trembling had been on account of the sin itself—if he had seen the sin to be a fearful thing, and had shrunk with horror at it, then he would have been really penitent.

II.—WHY HE TREMBLED.

(1.) Paul preached righteousness, i. e. justice. He was adapting himself to his audience, making himself "all things to all men." Felix was an extortioner, cruel, unjust, licentious and base—(Tacitus). An understrapper of the subjugating power—formerly a slave—just such a creature as he might have been expected to be under the circumstances.

(2.) Paul preached temperance, i. e. self-restraint, chastity. The world has come to be greatly perverted now-a-days. We use it to mean abstinence from intoxicating drinks. We have our "temperance men," our "Good Templars," our "Friends of Temperance," &c. But "temperance" in the Scripture sense—which is the true sense—means a proper regulation of all our passions and appetites. The truth is that there are a great many very intemperate teetotallers. In the matter of personal chastity Felix was outrageously criminal.

(3.) Paul reasoned of judgment to come. This showed Felix something of the nature of the end to which he was hastening. Many infamous men now tremble in view of their coming doom; but they do not change their course of life. Men are dishonest with their souls.

III.—THE RESULTS OF HIS TREMBLING.

(1.) Did not give up his injustice. Extreme meanness of his subsequent conduct in keeping Paul, in hopes of being bribed. (2.) Did not give up his impure life with the infamous Drusilla. (3.) Did not refuse the truth. Few men do refuse it. They say it is a good thing; they ensure Christians for not living up to it.

(4.) He postponed. Cheated conscience sold out the little remnant of his moral life. His infamous paramour afterwards perished in an eruption of Vesuvius. Let us learn the lesson that "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

WHAT EDUCATION DOES.

The Church at Sandy Run were, twenty-five years ago, worshipping in a large, comfortless building at a point two miles removed from any leading road, and almost inaccessible at times on account of the roughness of the route and the difficulty of getting persons in the neighborhood to unite their forces to keep it in order. They had been favored for fifteen years with the services of Father Snead, a good, God-fearing man, but not at all competent to train the flock committed to his care.

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MEN BORN IN NORTH CAROLINA, WHO HAVE ATTAINED DISTINCTION IN OTHER STATES.

Statesmen, Jurists, Divines, &c.

In searching for facts in the personal history of Baptist Ministers, who were born in North Carolina, and have attained eminence in other States, my mind naturally reverted to the many distinguished men, in the various walks of life, who were natives of this State but have achieved reputation beyond her borders.

It is now settled beyond controversy, I believe, not only that Andrew Jackson read law and practiced law in Salisbury and Guilford County, but that he was born in this State. When a little boy, the writer, in going to Cook's Mill, Mecklenburg County, used to pass by the house in which James K. Polk was born; and Andrew Johnston, it is well known, was a native of Wake County, N. C.

Hon. Hugh Lansen White, of Tennessee, who was a candidate for President in 1836, was a native of Iredell County. Hon. William Rufus King, of Ala., Vice-President during Mr. Pierce's administration, was born in Sampson. John H. Steele, who became Governor of New Hampshire, was a native of Rowan, and a carriage maker by trade.

Gen. Joseph R. Hawley, who has been Governor of Connecticut, and is now a member of Congress, and the chairman of the National Centennial Committee, was born in Robeson County and is by profession a printer. Gov. Mosely, of Florida, was a native of Lenoir. Gov. Polk, of Tenn., of Mecklenburg; Bayley Peyton, of the same State, and a man of national reputation, was from North Carolina; so was Gen. Felix K. Zollicoffer, who fell early in the late war. Chancellor J. L. Sneed, of the Supreme Court of Tenn., was born in Raleigh. Judge Bragg of Mobile, and Gen. Braxton Bragg were the sons of John Bragg, a carpenter in Warren County, who had the wisdom to educate his boys, and in some respects, an abler man than all of these was Thomas Hart Benton, of Missouri, who was born in Orange County. There are a few names that have risen up before the eye of memory, of the many sons of North Carolina, who have become distinguished in affairs of State beyond her borders. Nor is the list smaller or less brilliant, when we come estimate the number and character of the eminent preachers our State has sent forth to labor in other fields. The Episcopal Church is small in North Carolina, but she has given an unusually large number of Bishops to other dioceses.

Bishop Polk, of Tennessee, was born in Raleigh, and in the main building of the Baptist Female Seminary. The present Bishop of Georgia, John Beckwith, was also born in this city. Bishop Davis, of South Carolina, a man of sainted piety, was a North Carolinian, so was Bishop Hawks, of Missouri, Bishop Green, of Miss., Bishop Freeman, of Arkansas, and a greater man by odds than either of them, Dr. Francis L. Hawks, who died only a few years since in New York, was born in North Carolina, practiced law for some years and entered the ministry in this State.

Bishop Paine of Alabama, an honored name among Methodists, was born in Person County. Dr. Wadsworth, a very distinguished Methodist preacher of Alabama, was born in Craven, and Dr. J. E. Edwards, a gentleman of fine reputation in the Virginia Conference, was born in Guilford County.

I am not so familiar with the great names of the Presbyterian Church, but as that Church has always had an unusually large number of learned and able men in its ministry at home. I have no doubt that it has contributed its full quota of eminent laborers in other parts of the great vineyard which the South and West have afforded.

The men with whom the Baptists have enriched other States have been peculiarly great, and it shall be the special object of this series of articles, to sketch their lives, and illustrate their virtues. We have had some great men in North Carolina, Biddle, Meredith, Wait, Finch, McDaniel, Crudup, Trotman, J. L. Pritchard and others, were all good and useful men, and some of them were great men, but our greatest men have shed the lustre of their splendid talents on other fields.

During the past hundred years no State in this Union has produced, in our Baptist Zion, more illustrious names than those of Mercer, Kerr, Brantly, Manly, Mims, Howell and Poindeexter.

T. E. P.

THE REAL TEACHERS.

We know and feel that the men and women of this land do not represent their teachers in science nor morals, nor do they represent their teachers who gave them birth, or that fashioned them by daily intercourse for life and its duties. They take the child before all other influences; begin; they keep with the child after other influences are stayed. There are adult classes in our homes as well as infant classes. It is feared that we neglect the adult more than the young. Where does your boy spend his evenings? With whom does your daughter associate? Do you seek to guard them? Do you remember that a vile jest, a hurtful remark, or an obscene play may leave its imprint upon the character of a youth, which nothing can efface?

One night a girl fresh from a beautiful country home was going out on one of the theatre trains from Boston. She was bound to cry out in agony, "Take me to a baggage car—anywhere! let me be rid of this vile talk." They quieted her. They induced her to go again and again. To-day she is lost. That mother who permitted her child to visit a friend who was oblivious to home duties is guilty of the destruction of the life of her child. In the home the child is taught. Is the parent polite or impolite, cross or courteous, frank or false? look at the children and they will tell the story. A little boy was seen imitating the walk of a drunkard. The father cried out, "What are you doing, my son? Trying to walk as father walked last night?" On the other hand, Washington Irving tells us that all the children follow the mother in her manner of life and faith. The home soul is the soul that goes with the man or woman all over the world. Let us soon complete our work.

Two purposes should hold every teacher in thrall. 1. The conversion of the children. 2. Their highest development. In accomplishing these results, something seems to be of primary importance. I. We must

KNOW THE CHILD.

Every child is different, as every man and woman has characteristics that distinguish them from others. To know a child it is essential that the home be visited, and that the character of the home be ascertained; the associations, the habits, the acquirements of the child are all embraced in the words, "know the child." We must, second,

BELIEVE IN THE CHILD.

In other words, believe that in every individual there is something worthy of being brought out. Let a child know that you believe this, and there is no limit to your influence. Who is there that cannot remember that golden moment when some one, it may have been a father, or a mother, or a pastor, or a teacher, gave expression to this faith? Confidence placed something in you, which you would not have lost for worlds. Every child naturally feels friendless. He is in a great world, all unknown to him. Possibilities are all about him. Perils beset him behind and before. The child wants to put his hand in the hand of some loving friend, in whom he can confide, and to whom he can trust his interests. That friend is absolute in power and control over him so long as he returns his confidence and faith. Here lies the danger. Homes are closed to these stranger youth. Reputation, a thing of slow growth; character, a fact difficult of acquirement, must be secured before the entry is obtained to circles of society worth the having; while run-shops, theatres, brothels, all stand wide open, and through their representatives invite the unwary to enter.—S. S. Times.

Thistles in the Heart.

Bad habits are the thistles of the heart, and every indulgence of them is a seed from which will spring a new crop of weeds. A few years ago a little boy told his first falsehood. It was a little solitary thistle seed, and no eye but God's saw him as he planted it in the mellow soil of the heart. But it sprang up, oh, how quickly! and in a little time another and another seed dropped from it to the ground, each in its turn bearing more seed and more thistles. And now his heart is overgrown with this bad habit. It is as difficult for him to speak the truth as it is for the gardener to clear his land of the ugly thistle, after it has once gained a footing in the soil. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are his delight."—The Child's World.

Bible in the Heart.

A poor Italian woman, a fruit-seller, had received the Word of God in her heart, and become persuaded of the truth of it. Seated with her modest stall at the head of a bridge, she made use of every moment in which she was unoccupied with her small traffic, in order to study the sacred volume. "What are you reading there, my good woman?" said a gentleman, one day, as he came up to the stall to purchase some fruit. "It is the Word of God," replied the fruit-vender. "The Word of God! Who told you that?" "He told me so himself." "Have you ever spoken with him, then?" The poor woman felt a little embarrassed, more especially as the gentleman insisted on her giving him some proof of the truth of what she believed. Unused to discussion, and feeling greatly at a loss for arguments, she at length exclaimed, looking upwards, "Can you prove to me, sir, that there is a sun up in the sky?" "Prove it?" replied he. "Why, the best proof is that it warms me, and that I can see its light." "So it is with me," she replied, joyously; "the proof of this book's being the Word of God, is that it lights and warms my soul."

Roll Call in Heaven.

An incident is related by a chaplain who was in the army during one of our hard-fought battles. The hospital tents had been filling up fast as the wounded men among the number was a young man mortally wounded, and not able to speak. It was near midnight, and many a loved one from our homes lay sleeping on the battle field, that sleep that knows no waking until Jesus shall call them. The surgeons had been their rounds of duty, and for a moment all was quiet. Suddenly this young man, before speechless, calls in a clear, distinct voice, "Here!" The surgeon hastened to his side, and asked what he wished. "Nothing," said he; "they are calling the roll in heaven, and I was answering to my name." He turned his head and was gone, gone to join the great army, whose uniform is washed white in the blood of the Lamb. Leader, in the blood of the Lamb, your names will be heard. Call your answer "Here!" Are you one of the soldiers of Christ, the great Captain of Salvation.

AN ANCIENT FARMER.

"The Lord be with you"—his address to the reapers on entering the harvest-field—has the ring of sterling metal. What a contrast Boaz offers to farmers we have known, by whose lips God's name was frequently profaned, but never honored—their servants, like their dogs and horses, being cursed, but never blessed. And in accordance with the apostle, "Like master like man," what shocking oaths have we heard, volleying as it were out of the mouth of hell, from the lips of coarse, animal sensual farm-servants!

Boaz never opens his mouth but pearls drop out. His speech breathes forth pious utterance. All his conversation is seasoned with grace; and though the result of a divine change of heart, how natural his religion seems! Not like a gala-dress assumed for the occasion, not like gun-flowers for ornament, but such as spring living from the sward: not like an artificial perfume that imparts a passing odor to a thing that is dead, but the odors exhaled by roses or lilies bathed in the dew of heaven. "One who could say, 'I have set the Lord always before me.' God is in all the good man's thoughts, and his holy name as often in his mouth to be honored, as it is in others to be profaned."

Though it may have been a common custom to bless the harvest and its reapers, he did it from his heart; nor were they words of course or custom he spoke when, bending on Ruth an eye of mingled pity and admiration, he said: "If I had been fully showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband, and how thou hast left thy father, and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knowest not heretofore. The Lord remember thy work, and a full reward will be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Nor was it only in the language of piety that his pity expressed itself. It did not evaporate in words. We have heard him speak; see how he acts. One night, sleeping by a heap of corn, alone as he supposed, he wakes to find a woman lying at his feet. It is Ruth. Instructed by Naomi, she takes this strange Jewish fashion to seek her rights, and commit her fortunes into his hands. There is not in all history a passage more honorable to true religion than the story of that midnight meeting. Silver seven times purified never shone brighter as it flowed from the glowing furnace than Boaz's high principles then and there; nor purer nor brighter the stars that looked down on the scene of such a triumph. The house of God, the holy table where, by the symbols of Christ's bloody death, saints have held high intercourse with heaven, never got purer thoughts than this trampling-floor that night. A noble contrast to such as, disgracing their professions, have received women beneath their roof to undermine their virtue and work their ruin. Boaz, in his fear of God and sacred regard to a poor gleaner's good name, is a pattern to all men. Bailing his own spirit, he stands there "better than he that feareth a city." He is enrolled among the progenitors of the Messiah; nor, take him for all in all, was there one in the list, whom Christ had less cause to be ashamed, one more worthy to be the ancestor of an incarnate God—of him who was "holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners."—Studies of Character, by Dr. Guthrie.

He is Able.

God is able of these stones to raise up seed to Abraham. Able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. What he has promised he is able to perform. Able to make all graces abound toward you, that you, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, who is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. Able to keep that which I have committed unto him. Able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Able to succor them that are tempted. Able to keep all whom the Father hath given him, so that he will lose not one. Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Believe ye that he is able to do this?

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