INCOMPLATENESS; OR RRUBBABEL AND CHRIST.

Sermon by Dr. Geo. C Lorimer, Music Hall, Boston, Oc. 27 h 1895.

Stenographically reported by W. M. Rihan.

"The hands of Z rubbabel have laid the oandation of this house; his hand shall a so finish it." Z c. 4:9.

How vague and shadowy the great men of the world become. As their body returns to dust, so their personality ultimately melts into a symbol. For what are Homer and Cesar and Demosthenes to us, but mere names representing vocations, so that when a sweet poet arises or an eloquent man speaks, or a great soldier figuis, trying to describe him, we call him a Homer, or a Dem sthenes, or a Cesar.

The Bible is not merely a book formed of types of history, of poetry, or of eloquence. There is nothing about Alexander, and there is nothing about Virgil to you, except the name, the history you have read, or the poetry you have scanned. They seem to lack personality; their individuality is gone. They are the shadows and anticipations of poetry, of strife, war, statesmanship and whatever else they have represented in the world.

But it is very different with our Saviour. Our Lord is first of all to us a personality. He is not a name, he is not a foreshadowing of something like himself or transcending himself in religious nature. Toward him we feel as we only feel toward our father or wife—a personal attachment. We talk with him and walk with him and hold high fellowship with him. And even as our Saviour is yet the living Christ, so also, transcending the mighty and former ages, the living Christ in this requires all their excellence to give us a complete conception of his physical grandeur. Just as every ray of the sun would have to be stored up to give us an impression of the sun, so with the scattering rays of light through the ages. All these must be gathered and interblended, to form an adequate conception of our Master; and toward this end contributes Z rubbabel who is referred to prominently in this chapter as "Prince of the Captivity." His name indicates that he was born in Babylon. He was the leader of the people, bringing them back to the land that had been devastated.

The history of that movement is one of singular fascination to the student, how this people, weary and worn and beggarly, returned to the habitation of their fathers and labored personally for the rebuilding of their sacred house. I have computed the money offerings of this people for the restored temple, and remembering how differing the values are between these days and ours, you will be startled to know that the people presented from $805,000 to $807,000 for that work. Now friends, you must, to understand their passion for the work before them, consider their poverty. Understand they had to build houses to begin anew their civilization, and they emphasized their faith by building an altar to use, the size of the altar in the old temple. I do say that our God, who does mighty things and prefers a great thing to a little thing anytime, is more honored in you good people trying to spend $500,000 for a new temple, than if you try and stint and become meagre and narrow and small, as though the smallest altar was all that Jehovah cared for. But the work was interrupted; and at the time of the disclosure of this vision, some twenty years had elapsed before any work had been done on the building; but in March, 516 years before Christ, the building was finished, and it was finished as described here, with great joy. "The people cried with great joy, bringing forth the head stone."

What concerns us this morning is the promise made to Zerubbabal, the type of our blessed Master, "His hands that laid the foundation of the house, shall also finish it." Some of us know the joy of a thing completed. Some of us know what it is to have accomplished a campaign and won an election. Some of us know what it is to write *finis* at the close of a book that has absorbed months or years. Some of us know what it is to build a meeting house and to see the spire pointing up to heaven, and what it is to worship there. Some of you from the country know what it is to build a little, humble church, having within her walls all the satisfaction others have had in building a cathedral.

We are fragments rather than wholes. In the great movements of history we are mere fractions hardly ever integers. We are the beginnings of ends. We have to do with the sowing of the field, and rarely with the gathering in of the harvest, for the Master has said, "One soweth and another reapeth;" and we would be altogether discouraged, were it not for the assurance that they that sow and they that reap shall rejoice together in the harvest. But our Saviour is an exception. He is the first and last, the beginning and ending the Alpha and Omega. An old writer once said that the circle represented deity, because his surface is forward and his circumference is nowhere, the thought being that space itself seemed to be adjusted to the convenience of the illimitableness of God.

Now, when our Saviour is spoken of as the first and the last, the *beginning* and *end*, we see apparently a contradiction; for the first is not the last, and the beginning is not the end; but the thought has reference to our Saviour as running through all time—he is the beginning, the end, the first the last; redemption is complete in him. As the apostle Paul has phrased it, "We are complete in him."

Men who study the world err whenever they imagine they are dealing with finalities. Robert Browning somewhere reminds us of this. It is, however, a mistake made to which the poet calls attention. As a rule we look out upon the world which we call a finality. The fact is, the world is not a finality. Incompleteness rests upon everyt ing I know anything about on the globe, and in everything pertaining to the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Apparently incidentally, but with design, the first thing the Jews did was to build an altar. That altar never changed. So our Saviour is our altar, our atonement. By him and through him prayer ascends continually to the presence of the highest. That one thing is fixed. When you have accepted that, you are comforted in every other department of your unwise universe, where especially religious things prevail. Take a man's own life. How many individuals feel fretted, when they feel they are near the close of life, because they have not had a chance of speaking all that was in them. Victor Hugo said when near the close of his life in which he had been pouring forth all that was in him, "There is much that is in me unspoken, but it is a ladder leading up to the infinite world, where the part of man unfinished and unfulfilled here, shall have a fulfilment grander than upon earth." There is not a man here complete. There is not a full-orbed man. We are flattened at the poles every one of us. We find ourselves more or less shorn of strength when most it is needed. There are men and women who have had their dreams and visions, and have started up in the night. But the trouble was you couldn't write it when you got. There was the trouble. Hence you find an abyss that no kind of climbing has ever scaled. So you find it confronting you everywhere. We may boast of our nation as much as you please, we may magnify our political knowledge, and brag how we are independent of every land; but that is not the question; we are still incomplete. Look out upon society and mark the inequalities; then answer where even here in America we can claim completeness.

It is also true of the church. One of the most difficult things is to convince members of a church that they are not absolutely perfect. Paul says, "One thing I do; leaving things that are behind . . . . I press toward the mark," and the church is in the same condition as Paul himself. You must make a glorious future if you are to gain anything from it. I tell you because I always dare to speak my convictions, that we are in a transition stage; we are moving on from lower degrees to higher degrees; we are working upon a spiritual house rising. We thank God for its foundations and towers, and yet, and yet, and yet, how much more beautiful can we prophesy it will become, how much more of spiritual splendor can we think, than we see around us in any part of the christian religion that we see in the world. Let us not imagine we are facing finalities, we are not; but where we are not facing finality we have the assurance that what is commenced shall be carried forward to completeness, and we are complete in him who told Zerubbabel that laid the foundations of the house, his hands should also finish it. It is remarkable what differences you will find, if you will take humanity before our Saviour's advent and take men today. While we do not take men "like angels coming up out of the mire," nevertheless, you will find in men a different look, a different spirit—in other words, the humanity of the 19th century is not the humanity of the Cesars. I remember reading in Putnam's magazine, I think it was in '56, an article in which a contrast was drawn between humanity in the times of Homer, in which a dead child would be tied to the wheels of a chariot and be drawn to the halls of the conqueror, and the humanity of the present century. We would not bring a lot of young girls into a room where a murder had been committed that they might look upon blood. General Grant would not have thought of this, nor would any other great general of modern times. No; those things that were common then, are not even exceptional now, where Jesus Christ reigns, showing that it has been due to the incoming of the divine life entering the heart, changing the horizon.

While you are not complete,—way I would be very sinful if I was to encourage you to imagine that you with your wavering tongues, and hands and feet—that you had reached the stature of manhood in Christ Jesus; but though we have not attained we shall attain, for we shall be complete in him. And what is true of our Saviour is true of the church, and hence the beautiful signs given us in the closing portions of the divine Word.

As I read this chapter, I find that there was a great mountain in the way of Zerubbabal. Now that is one fact in our Saviour's dealing with the world. Christianity has had to overcome mountains, but the mountains have become plains; for the Lord said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel, lo! I am with you," and they looked up and saw the mountain and said, "Lord, how can we get through that mountain," and lo! the mountain became a plain. And so it has been you will find, through all history. Thus, in proportion as the church has believed God, though a mountain was right in her eyes, she has triumphed. When Christianity has said, "There is a world lying in heathenish darkness to be conquered, the mountain is before me but I must go, I don't know where I am going to get the money to do it, but I must go," somehow the mountain has always vanished. However incomplete we may be, the completion shall not fail us. So we have likewise a promise given by our Lord that the Holy Spirit shall be with us. The Holy Spirit works so within and about us, we have reason to believe the completion shall not tarry. As he spake in the morning of creation and said, "It is good," so the day shall come when he shall place the cap stone in its place, and looking upon mankind, say, "Praise, praise, unto it!" and all the hosts of man shall echo back, "Praise, praise unto it!"

If you think anything can be slighted because it is out of sight, you are like some domestics. They sweep the room, and leave what are known as "round corners," and think because the dirt is in the corner somewhere out of sight it is all right. So with some men when they laid the foundation of a building they laid it in pudding stone, but it was out of sight, and by and by the whole thing collapsed and fell down. But there was one thing that impressed me in some buildings in Europe. It was that the topmost stone, that would perhaps never be seen by the eye of man, was finished with exquisite workmanship, because the eye of God would see it. So put the best where it is not seen by man, for God will see it. The glory grows, the beauty of today is to be excelled by a diviner beauty on the morrow. The beauty on the morrow shall be far excelled by that which lies beyond. And then shall come the consummation when the graves shall yield up their dead, and the Lord shall come to reign in his beauty, and his church redeemed and without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, shall be presented faultless and blameless in his sight.

Just one word, and it is a word of beauty. 'Who hath despised the day of small things?' As we meditate upon the text, if not upon the sermon, let this question arise, 'Who hath despised the day of small things?' There were many who despised the small day in our missionary offerings. There were many who despised the small day of this church, there were many who despised giving. I tell you, you cannot today inaugurate the grandest movement, but what some man would sneer at it. I have been laughed at for believing we should not go into Tremont Temple church with a burden of debt, and I say that if we should go in there with a debt of $500,000, we should be practically ruined.

Rivulets flow into streams, streams into mighty rivers and make glad the ocean. So let us not be discouraged. Despise not the day of small things.

I say to you young men, I am so constituted, that if I was to join an army, I would much rather join the weaker side. In other words, I have a profound feeling that for my own manhood and dignity, it is much better to work in a day of small things and work up, than do as a great many men do, take the big things and work down so small you can hardly see them.

Do you think I despise a small body like our Prohibition party? They will sweep the land bye-and-bye. So I think from the humble condition of things today, Liberty will move on. However Truth may be sneered at, it shall triumph "from the rivers even unto the end of the earth." I don't doubt even the day of small things, I had rather take my stand on the side of the small thing that is the right thing, than on the side of the big thing that is the wrong thing.

And the people shall bring the headstone bye-and-bye, crying "Praise, praise unto it."

ABIGAIL, THE BEAUTIFUL INTERCESSOR.

BY REV. F. B. MEYER, B. A.

She was a woman of good understanding and of a beautiful countenance—a fit combination. Her character has written its legend on her face. The two things do not always go together. There are many beautiful women, wholly destitute of good understanding; just as birds of rarest plumage are commonly deficient in the power of song. But a good understanding, which is moral rather than intellectual, casts a glow of beauty over the plainest features.

It is remarkable how many Abigails get married to Nabals. God-fearing women, tender and gentle in their sensibilities, high-minded and noble in their ideals, become tied in an insoluble union with men for whom they can have no true affinity, even if they have not an unconquerable repugnance. In Abigail's case, this relationship was in all probability not of her choosing, but the product of the Oriental custom, which compelled a girl to take her father's choice in the matter of marriage. As a mere child she may have come into Nabal's home, and become bound to him by an apparently inevitable fate. In other ways, which involve equally little personal choice, compelled by the pressure of inexorable circumstances, misled by the deceitful tongue of flattery, her instinctive hesitancy overcome by the urgency of friends, a woman may still find herself in Abigail's pitiful plight. To such a one there is but one advice—You must stay where you are. The dissimilarity in taste and temperament does not constitute sufficient reason for leaving your husband to drift. You must believe that God has permitted you to enter on this awful heritage, partly because this fiery ordeal was required by your character, and partly that you might act as a counteractive influence. You must stay as you are. It may be that some day your opportunity will come, as it came to Abigail. In the meantime do not allow your purer nature to be bespotted or besmeared. You can always keep the soul clean and pure. Bide your time, and amid the weltering waste of inky water be like a pure fountain, rising from the ocean depths.

But if any young girl who reads these lines, of good sense and earnest aspirations, secretly knows that, if she had the chance, she would wed a carriage and pair, a good position, or broad acres, irrespective of character, let her know that to enter the marriage bond with a man, deliberately and advisedly, for such a purpose, is a profanation of the divine ideal, and can end only in one way. She will not raise him to her level, but sink to his; her marble will not change his clay, but coarsen to it.

Nabal's servants knew the quality of their mistress, and could trust her to act wisely in the emergency which was upon them. She immediately grasped the situation, despatched a small procession of provision bearers along the way that David must come, and followed them immediately on her ass. She met the avenging warriors by the covert of the mountain, and the interview was as creditable to her woman's wit as to her grace of heart. The lowly obeisance of the beautiful woman at the young soldier's feet, the frank confession of the wrong that was done, the expression of thankfulness that so far he had been kept from blood-guiltiness and from avenging his own wrongs, the depreciation of the generous present she brought as only fit for the servants, the chivalrous appreciation of his desire to fight only the battles of the Lord and to keep an unblemished name, and sure anticipation of the time when his fortunes would be secured and his enemies silenced, the suggestion that in those coming days he would be glad to have no shadow on the sunlit hills of his life, no haunting memory—all this was a beautiful, and wise, and womanly as it could be, and brought David back to his better self. Frank and noble as he always was, he did not hesitate to acknowledge his deep indebtedness to this lovely woman, and to see in her intercession the gracious arrest of God. "And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me, and blessed be thy wisdom, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from blood-guiltiness, and from avenging myself with my own hand.

What a revelation this is of the ministries with which God seeks to avert us from our evil ways. They are sometimes very subtle and slender, very small and still. Sometimes a gentle woman's hand laid on our wrist, the mother reminding us of her maternity, the wife of early vows, the child with its pitiful, beseeching look; sometimes a thought, holy, pleading, remonstrating. Ah! many a time, we had been saved actions which have caused lasting regret, had we only heeded. And above all these voices and influences there has been the gracious arresting influences of the Holy Spirit, striving with passion and selfishness, calling us to a nobler, better life. Blessed Spirit, come down more often, stay us in our mad career, and let us not press past thee to take our own wild way!—The Christian (London).

HAD NO TIME.

When the country around Cincinnati was newer than it is now, a pious farmer was busy clearing his lands. He had a number of hands employed, and was anxious to accomplish a large amount of work while the weather was favorable. He called them early and went out with them before breakfast was ready. A horn was blown, and they came and ate, and returned to their work.

The farmer had been accustomed to have prayers every morning in his family. But to keep so many men from chopping and log-rolling while he read and prayed was more than he could afford; so Satan suggested, and the good man yielded. His pious wife saw with grief that the family altar was neglected, and her husband, in his haste to get rich, was departing from God. She talked with him, she pleaded with him, but in vain. At last, she determined to try another experiment.

The next morning the farmer and his men went out, as usual, to their work. The sun began to climb up the sky, but no breakfast horn was heard. They grew hungry, and looked anxiously toward the house; they listened, but still the expected summons did not come. After waiting an hour or two beyond the usual time, they went into the house. No table was set, no coffee was boiling on the fire, no cook over or before it. The good wife was knitting quietly with the Bible on her lap.

"What does this mean?" cried the husband. "Why isn't our breakfast ready?"

"I thought you were in such a hurry about your work that you hadn't time to eat."

"Haven't time to eat! Do you think we can live without eating?"

"You can live without eating as well as you can live without praying. The spirit needs the bread of heaven as much as the body needs the bread of earth."

"Well, well," said the farmer, "get us some breakfast, and we will have prayers every morning, no matter how busy we are, or how many workmen I have."

She got the breakfast, and he kept his word. The lesson was a good one, and never forgotten.

"Turn the rascals out"—the familiar party cry—may be applied to microbes as well as to men. The germs of disease that lurk in the blood are "turned out" by Ayer's Sarsaparilla as effectually as the old postmasters are displaced by a new administration.

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Novelty is the foundation of the love of knowledge, which is nothing but the desire of youthful novelty.—S. Smith.

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The character of a man's country is as strongly impressed on his mind as its accent is on his tongue.—La Roche foucauld.

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God made the first man after a divine original, and after a divine original, too, he made the firs. home.—J. B. Brown.

OUT OF SORTS.—Symptoms, headache, loss of appetite, furred tongue, and general indisposition. These symptoms, if neglected, develop into acute disease. It is a trite saying that an "ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and a little attention at this point may save months of sickness and large doctor's bills. For this complaint take from two to three of Parmelee's Vegetable Pills on going to bed, and one or two for three nights in succession, and a cure will be effected.

Admiration and love are like being intoxicated with champagne; judgment and friendship like being enlivened.—Dr. Johnson.

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JESUS, SAVIOUR, PILOT ME.

The *Endeavorer* tells the following story:

Miss Gertrude sat by the window; her hands had dropped in her lap while her sewing had fallen to the floor; she seemed lost in thought; her brow looked troubled, and the tears came to her eyes. "There are times" she murmured, "when we don't know, we can't tell what is best;" then the tears came faster.

"Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea,"

came from the kitchen where Martha was doing up the morning work. Martha's face was dark, but she had a beautiful white heart washed in the blood of the Lamb.

'Unknown waves above me roll,
Hiding rocks and treach'rous shoal."

As the song continued Gertrude leaned back in her chair and listened:

"Chart and compass come from thee:
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me."

"Ah, chart and compass have I none," she repeated as she began slowly to pace the floor.

"As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean still."

"My mother! how often has she prayed for her erring girl." The words of the song called up the face of one long departed.

"Boist'rous waves obey thy will,
When thou say to them, 'Be still.'"

Gertrude paused and knelt beside her chair, burying her face in its cushion.

"Wondrous sovereign of the sea,
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me,"

From the depths of her heart Gertrude prayed—

"Jesus, Saviour, pilot me."

Martha, busily engaged in her work, had paused in her song, but broke out again in tones more soft and sweet than before:

"When at last I near the shore,
And the fearful breakers roar
'Twixt me and the peaceful rest,
Then while leaning on thy breast,
May I hear thee say to me,
'Fear not; I will pilot thee?'"

Gertrude arose; the boisterous waves had been calmed. She went about her day's work with a rest of soul she had not known before. All day the words seemed to echo in her ear—

"Fear not, I will pilot thee."

A gentleman once said to me in the presence of a great grief, "It is not a mistake that we allow ourselves to think so much of each other, that we allow ourselves to centre so much of affection in a single human life, or in two or three human lives, until the time comes when nothing can happen to such a life which does not undo and crush and martyrize our own?" And I could not help thinking how much better it is for any life to be undone and crushed and martyrized than to go through its earthly career without the blessings in some deep and abiding love. It is natural to the genus man to be hungry for love. He wants its light in somebody's eyes, he wants its arms about his neck. It makes every moment of sickness an anxious moment, it makes every moment of parting one that changes the front of the universe for somebody; but sum up all the memories of sanctified homes, of self-sacrificing mothers and gentle fathers, of affectionate brothers and sisters, of manly sons and womanly daughters, of friends that come with influences of benediction, of neighbors and fellow-citizens who feel somewhat of each other's losses and gains—sum it all up, and tell me who would forego it to be rid of the struggles and the sufferings which its very depth and intensity bring? The omnipotence of the heart!—It is the divine spark within us which no experience can quench; it testifies of its possessor that he is "a god, though in the germ."—Frederic A. Hinckley, in "The Deeper Meanings."

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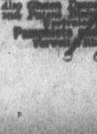

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Free from Eruptions

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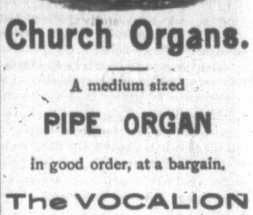

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