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Religious.

MY BROKEN-HEARTED LORD.

A SERMON PREACHED BY REV. THOS. ARMITAGE, D. D., AT THE FIFTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, NEW YORK, JAN. 28, 1872.

"Reproach has broken my heart, and I am sick,
And I looked for pity, but there was none,
And for comforters, but I found none."
—Psa. 69: 20.

MY HEARERS: Did it ever occur to you that there is a vivid contrast between Jesus in his death, and that of the noble army of martyrs who died for him? Jesus contemplated his death with a perturbation, a shrinking, and a dismay, which for the most part they did not share. Generally, the martyrs met death with a patience, a fortitude and a triumph almost miraculous, and sometimes their appeals in the midst of the flames were so eloquent, that they thrilled the hearts of spectators, and extorted from the lips of dark pagans the exclamation—"See how these Christians die!" Now certainly, the bodily agonies of some of these martyrs were quite as excruciating as were those of our Lord. For example, it is said of Peter that he was crucified with his head downwards, and if so, it was quite as painful for him to die in that form as it was for Jesus to be crucified with his head upwards. Besides this, it is an historical fact, that many of the martyrs who were not crucified passed through corporeal sufferings quite as severe as those of crucifixion. Some were consumed by slow fires—some had their flesh torn off piece by piece, with red-hot pincers, some were sawn in pieces by saws, while still others were rent limb from limb by the claws and teeth of wild beasts. In fact, heathen Rome sharpened all her devices for cruelty, by inventing new processes of torment, making death fearfully slow and torture fearfully lingering. But yet, frail and timid women as well as bold and hardy men recoiled not, but with perfect heroism, serenity and joy, breathed out thanksgiving in the last spasm, and defiant triumph in the last whisper.

Now, seeing that this difference between our Lord and his own servants is a fact of history, we are compelled to look it in the face, and I think that if we do so in the right spirit, it may pour a flood of light on the passage before us. We are all struck with that eloquent outburst of the apostle Paul when he approached martyrdom. He breathed not a sigh of complaint, he uttered not a groan, but on the contrary, he exulted in the prospect that the axe of Nero's executioner would soon bring his gasping head to the foot of the block, by his song "There is laid up for me a crown." Yet when Paul's Lord came to look into the stern face of death, he prostrated himself on the cold soil of Gethsemane, and with a dismay that must have riveted the gaze of all created intelligence, irrepressibly poured out this piteous wail—"Oh! my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." Nay, the very turf was bedewed with his tears, and flecked with his bloody sweat. The history of man had not witnessed such dismay. Every feature of his face, every pore of his flesh, every limb of his body, every fold of his vestment was saturated in a dew of blood. His manhood could no more contain these agonies, than a potter's vessel can contain the fathomless sea; hence, the intensity of his anguish forced relief for his clay tenement in this bloody perspiration. These were not the throes of common martyrdom. He drank another cup from that of his servants, therefore, he was not, able without complaint to endure the terrible scoffing of men, for his cry is this, "All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out their lips and shake their heads, saying, 'He trusted in God that he would deliver him; let him deliver him if he delight in him.'" All of which shows that there was some deep mental struggle, some mysterious fore-

boding unusual with suffering man, and totally strange to his own great life-work. Evidently, his suffering held their seat in the mysterious pavilion of his nature, his stupendous grief treasured upon immaterial lines unknown in the breast of common humanity. His death was to be the equivalent for the sins of guilty millions. Not only for the tribes that then peopled the world in all its geographical divisions and races, but for races and nationalities then unthought of. In the day of his suffering, these Western empires were all enwrapped in the undiscovered future, but still they were included in the redeeming act as much as the rabble of old Jerusalem. Yes, all generations to the end of time were present in his saving death, as much as those disciples who saw his agony, so that the real tragedy of Calvary was imperious to human scrutiny, and was chiefly enacted in the internal agitations of the incarnated God. Keeping this wonderful truth in view, we shall be the better prepared to consider reverentially this startling passage, "Reproach hath broken my heart!" It is a terrible sentence, which opens a field of wonders in explanation of the physical cause of our Redeemer's death. Our Lord was nailed to a tree, was crucified, but crucifixion did not take his life. He died on the cross, but not by the cross; it was the instrument that inflicted torture upon him, but not the instrument that inflicted death. You merely see the convulsions of the inner mountain by the cleft in the rock. HE DIED OF A BROKEN HEART. "Reproach has broken my heart," says the text.

In further considering this subject, allow me to claim your devout attention to the following thoughts, in connection with other recorded facts of his death, as given with accurate care by the Evangelists themselves.

I. OUR LORD'S OWN TESTIMONY RESPECTING HIS DEATH. He said that it was purely voluntary. "I lay down my life; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." He does not in any sense say, "No man taketh it from me without permission"—but absolutely, "I lay it down, no man taketh it from me." How could this have been a literal and physical truth, if he had died as the result of a crucifixion forcibly administered by violent men?

II. A SUFFICIENT LENGTH OF TIME DID NOT ELAPSE FROM THE MOMENT IN WHICH HE WAS NAILED TO THE TREE, TO THE HOUR OF HIS DEATH UPON IT, TO ALLOW DEATH TO ENSUE AS THE NATURAL RESULT OF CRUCIFIXION. What was crucifixion? It was a common mode of capital punishment among the Romans, as hanging is with us. It was practised hundreds of years before Christ, and it continued hundreds of years after Christ—in fact, it is but a short time since it disappeared entirely from the earth. All its laws and operations were quite as well understood, by constant observation, as we understand the peculiar characteristics of hanging. It consisted in driving two spikes through the insteps and two through the wrists while on the cross itself there was a projecting seat on which the loins rested; lest the body of the sufferer should tear out the nails by its own weight. Thus you see that no vital organ of the body was touched at all, such as the heart, the lungs, or the brain; indeed, not one of the great arteries even was opened, so as to cause profuse loss of blood. When the spikes first penetrated the limbs the blood oozed out from the four wounds freely, but exposure to the air soon cooled and almost entirely closed the mouth of the wounds around the heads of the nails, for the blood clotted and stanching them, and then, of course, it ceased to flow. So that the process of dying by crucifixion was very slow, and did not generally take place at all until mortification and gangrene set in at the wounds, and spread through the system. Consequently, the sufferer generally survived till the second or third day, and not uncommonly till the fifth, and even to the seventh day. These were cases in which sympathizing friends

gave nourishment to the crucified, as they frequently did, especially wine. You remember that our Lord drank vinegar on the cross to quench his intense thirst, for this was one of the marked attendants of this form of death. So slow was the torture, that well-authenticated records give cases where crucified persons were taken down from the cross after they had hung there for several days, and were restored to health.

Now, compare all this with the crucifixion of our blessed Lord. At the most he hung upon the cross but about six hours. The Jewish law would not allow the corpse of a criminal to be exposed to view on the Sabbath-day, and as three o'clock on what we should call Friday afternoon had arrived, and as their Sabbath commenced at six o'clock, it was found necessary to dispatch summarily the three victims on Calvary, that they might be buried before nightfall. It was the custom when the crucified lingered for a long time, and the executioners became impatient, to dispose of them as quickly as possible by breaking the legs above the instep with an iron mallet. They proceeded to this extremity at our Lord's crucifixion, and broke the legs of the two thieves who hung at his side, but when they came to Jesus, "they found that he was dead already, and they brake not his legs." Thus, the prophecy was strangely fulfilled, as if Jehovah watched it scrupulously, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." But when they reported the death of Jesus to Pilate, "he marvelled that he was dead already." He had never seen or heard of such a thing in the history of crucifixion, nor had any other man. It is questionable whether there is another case on record in the annals of crucifixion, where a person died within six hours, after being nailed to the tree. Certainly Pilate could not account for his death in that short time—it was perfectly unaccountable to him. Depend upon it, my brethren, it was not four nails that took the life of your Lord. It is true, divinely and ponderously true, that not by violence, but voluntarily he laid down his life. "No man taketh it from me. I lay it down of myself."

(Conclusion in our next.)

FORBID THEM NOT.

The following article from the *Christian Weekly* of March 2nd, may form a very fitting sequel to the editorial remarks in our last, respecting the Baptism of Children. It is not from a Baptist source, yet it gives no countenance to the very erroneous view which many Pedobaptists encourage, that the Saviour's injunction has reference to Infant Baptism. Only the most ignorant can now be imposed upon by such palpable fallacies:—

How early in life can our children be brought to Christ? This question is often anxiously asked. The answer is, As soon as they can feel their need of him. It is not easy to fix the time when moral responsibility begins. But whenever it does, then comes Christ. As soon as the child is old enough to sin, it is old enough to receive a Saviour and Redeemer. No one in theory, perhaps, doubts this, but in practice we do unconsciously and practically deny it. We stand between our children and their Saviour, without meaning so to do. Christianity is simpler than we think; and the sympathies of Christ are broader, and his helpfulness more gracious.

Unintentionally we forbid our children to come to Christ when we apply in their case those tests of religious experience and life, which, with propriety, we apply to those of maturer character. Many of the biographies of Christian children are the biographies of morbid children, little men and women, generally with too much brain, and too little body, whose religion shows signs of a disease, of which they early die. The motto of many Sab-

bath-school books reverses the apothegm of Christ. It is practically, Except ye be converted and become as men and women, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

We are not to expect of our children a comprehension of our creeds. If the child cannot be a Christian till he is old enough to understand these, it is clear he cannot be a Christian till he has arrived at a good measure of maturity. For a comprehension even of the more fundamental doctrines requires some measure of development as well as of thoughtful study. But Christ is for the ignorant as well as for the wise, for the untrained as well as for the mature. The child loves, and obeys, and trusts his mother long before he has any idea, any intelligent conception of the relation of parent and child. So he may love, and obey, and trust a divine Saviour long before he is able to form any correct, intelligent conception of Christ's divine character or his atoning work.

Nor are we to expect maturity of religious experience. Religious experience we are to expect. No moralities and negative goodnesses, no measure of honesty and truth and gentleness are to content us. There is no Christian character without religious experience. But the religion of children will be manifested in the experiences of childhood. They must experience repentance, faith, love, but as children, not as grown men and women.

Neither are we to expect maturity of Christian conduct. We that do not know how to control ourselves are not to expect self-control of our children; nor to sit in judgment on them for inconsistencies which perhaps only mirror those they see repeated daily in our lives.

We are to encourage our children to come to Christ as a divine helper and friend from the very cradle. As soon as we begin to teach them the difference between right and wrong, we are to point them to Him who helps them to gain a victory over the enemy. Thus we are to train them to be Christ's children that they may be Christ's in their maturer life.

It is true we cannot make our children Christians by training. There are not two methods of entering the kingdom of God, one by training and the other by regeneration. No. The declaration of Christ, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," is true at every age. If we could train our children for heaven we would not need to bring them to Christ. It is because we cannot that we must place them in his arms. The tendency of the soul uninfluenced by God, is downward. The law of gravitation is the law of the human race. But it is not necessary to wait until that tendency has wrought out a life of evil habits before it is counteracted. It is not necessary that our children should be left a helpless prey to the world, the flesh, and the devil, until they have reached maturity. The Good Shepherd that leads his sheep, doth also carry the lambs in his bosom. And the parent's first duty is to bring his lambs to the Good Shepherd for protection. How soon? As soon as he gives us our children we are to give them back to him in loving, trustful consecration.

MY CREED.

I believe that a religion that will not make a man happy in this world, will not make him happy in any other world.

I believe that Christ and His people have a better right to the good things of this world, than the devil and his people.

I believe a minister of the Gospel has as good a right to drive a fast horse, and wear a fashionable coat, and eat a good dinner, as any other sinner.

I believe that a man who won't trust his business to God, won't trust Him with his soul.

I believe that a man who does not know that he is a Christian is in a very bad way.

I believe that the outfit of one girl, for a common occasion, often costs more than all the money given by the whole congregation into the Lord's treasury.

I believe that the salary paid to many a faithful pastor is less than what is given by the same people for whiskey and patent medicines.

I believe it is foolish to expect in children the gravity that is proper in great-grandfathers.

I believe that to encourage young people in amusements that are innocent, is the best preservative from those that are vicious.

I believe that Christian people have to do with secularities as well as sanctities.

I believe there is sometimes more virtue in a hearty laugh, than in a box of pills.

I believe that debt is a sin and a shame, and a source of a thousand miseries in Christian people.

I believe that debt, and care, and poverty, and intolerable perplexities, come from giving too little to the Lord.

I believe that God never has, never will bless a people that are faithless to their obligations to support their pastor.

I believe that a minister can no more preach instructively without laborious study, than my lamp will continue to burn without being replenished with oil.

I believe that this is a pretty good sort of a world after all; and that it is a blessed thing to live and work and suffer here if these are done for Christ.

I believe that the man who is not hated and slandered by some is not of much account.

I believe that he who is always whining about the hard times and personal troubles is a disgrace to Christianity.

I believe that the first step towards repairing a broken fortune is to make a generous offering to the Lord.—Index.

WARD BEECHER'S CONCESSIONS.—Perhaps the most remarkable concessions ever made by any Pedobaptist minister regarding infant baptism are the following by Henry Ward Beecher: 1st. That infant baptism is nowhere commanded in the Bible. 2nd. That the baptism of households is not conclusive proof that the apostles practiced infant baptism; and, therefore, he gives that up, which he says "has been injudiciously used as an argument in favor of infant baptism." And, 3rd. That as a Christian ordinance it is substituted for circumcision, he asserts "is a doctrine utterly untenable."

It would be interesting to learn on what Mr. Beecher believes the rite rests, and where the authority for it is found.

THINGS IN ITALY.—Rev. J. B. Kendrick, one of the Baptist pastors in New York city, on his return from Italy says, "in no European nation are there such tokens of new life as in Italy; the people are throbbing with the consciousness of having awakened to higher aims and nobler destinies. The common school system is in successful operation all through Italy; in the very teeth of priestly opposition it has been introduced into Rome."

Of Baptist views he says, "they will be likely to prove very acceptable to the converted Italians. The old baptisteries before their eyes, evidently designed for immersion, and old frescoes telling the same story as to the ancient mode of baptism, must have their effect on the Italian mind, seeking to know the way of the Lord more perfectly."

One of the leading Universalist ministers in New England writes: "I accept and preach the divinity of Christ just as unequivocally as Mr. Hepworth does. Nothing else satisfies me."

The New Testament revisers have got to the second chapter of Luke, and hope to finish their work in six years.