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THE LEGACY OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM
TO CHRISTIAN PREACHING

by

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

- A. Justification for Study.
- B. Statement of Problem.
- C. Delimitation of Subject.
- D. Method of Procedure.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Justification for Study

There are to be found in the records of the lives and ministries of the early Church Fathers so many gracious benefits to posterity that we impoverish ourselves unless we, as ministers, utilize the spiritual legacies to which we have fallen heir.

Not least among these treasures of Christian church history are the contributions of that illustrious preacher and churchman of the fourth century,¹ John Chrysostom, of whom Farrar says:

"Chrysostom is one of the most splendid and interesting figures in the early history of the Church..... He combines so many brilliant gifts that he stands almost supreme among the 'Doctores Ecclesiae' as an orator, as an exegete, as a moral reformer, and as a saint."²

But Farrar is not alone in the high appraisal of this Greek Father and Preacher. He is confirmed in his estimation of Chrysostom by other equally glowing trib-

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- 1. Dargan, E.C., "A History of Preaching", Vol. I, p. 62. (Note: Dargan points out that in this century "lived and spoke the greatest preachers of the ancient Christian world." It was the period when "Christian preaching in its ancient development reached its culmination.")
- 2. Farrar, F.W., "Lives of the Fathers", Vol. 2, p. 461.

utes from scholars both ancient and modern. One of his contemporaries writes of him:

"By living a divine life he imparted zeal from his own virtues to his hearers,"¹

and from Schaff we read of him:

"John, to whom an admiring posterity since the seventh century has given the name 'Chrysostom the golden-mouthed', is the greatest expositor and preacher of the Greek Church, and still enjoys the highest honor in the whole Christian World. No one of the Oriental Fathers has left a more spotless reputation, no one is so much read and so often quoted by modern commentators."²

And finally, one of his best biographers calls Chrysostom the "great teacher of consummate holiness"³ whose genius was sacred eloquence, and whose mission was to inflame the whole heart with a fervent love of God.

These laudable statements on the merits of Chrysostom, together with the appeal of his own personal writings, prompted the writer to make the following investigation which has proved fruitful in revealing the permanent spiritual values to be derived from this eminent Christian preacher. In the purity and practical wholesomeness of his doctrines, in the loftiness of his moral standard, in the excellence of his sacred oratory, and

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1. Sozomen, "Ecclesiastical History", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Bk. 8, Chapter 2, p. 399.
2. Schaff, Philip, "History of the Christian Church", Vol. III, p. 933.
3. Stephens, W.R.W., "Life and Times of Chrysostom", p. 448.

in the prominent position which he held in his own generation, we find the characteristics which enter into the success and divine approval of the ministry in every age.

B. Statement of Problem

A formal statement of our problem resolves itself into the question: What are the fundamental elements in the life training and ministry of St. Chrysostom which have relevant value to Christian preaching?*

Therefore, in our treatment of this subject, we propose to search out and set forth the chief elements of the spiritual legacy which Chrysostom handed down to posterity.

C. Delimitation of Subject

Due to the wide scope of Chrysostom's contributions in various fields, it has been necessary to delimit our research to a study of his contributions with respect to

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* For a definition of Christian preaching we accept Chrysostom's statement on the subject as a function "to change the deliberate will, to alter the turn of mind, and to tear up error by the roots and to plant the truth in its place". (Homily 3 on First Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 12, p. 13) We supplement this statement with Phillips Brooks' definition of Christian preaching, which says: "Preaching is the bringing of (Gospel) truth through personality." ("Lectures on Preaching", p. 5)

preaching. We have endeavored to include any relative material which has proved a determining factor in the development of Chrysostom as a preëminent preacher of the Gospel. These details of his life and ministry were directly influential in his own ministry and enriched it to succeeding generations. Hence, a sufficient account of his life is related to show how he was providentially prepared for this high calling; and also to reveal how richly he invested it in the advancement of God's kingdom.

The chief source material used in this thesis is taken from homilies, commentaries, and treatises as translated in the first series of the "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Volumes IX-XIV. These original writings have been supplemented by research into the histories of Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Milman, and into the biographies of Palladius, Stephens, Neander, Bush, and Farrar. Other references are found in the bibliography appended at the end of this thesis.

D. Method of Procedure

Our plan of procedure in this study will follow that of Chrysostom's own historical and exegetical method of approach. Consequently, we shall give attention to his heritage and early training in the light of

their influence on Chrysostom's future ministry. We shall also show their relation to his permanent contributions to Christian preaching. The preparation and qualifications for the order of preaching are next reviewed and explained in connection with Chrysostom's providential calling, and with their relevant suggestions to posterity. Then follow four chapters relating the events, and appraising the values, of Chrysostom's ministry which prove his contribution to preaching as an Orator, as an Exegete and Theologian, as a Prophet, and as a Ruler and Reformer. The final chapter will include a summary and appreciation of the permanent contributions which make up the spiritual legacy of Chrysostom to the ministry of Preaching.

CHAPTER II

THE HERITAGE AND EARLY TRAINING OF CHRYSOSTOM IN RELATION TO HIS CON- TRIBUTION TO CHRISTIAN PREACHING

A. Home Environment.

B. Education.

C. Summary.

CHAPTER II

THE HERITAGE AND EARLY TRAINING OF CHRYSOSTOM IN
RELATION TO HIS CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIAN PREACHING

A. Home Environment

1. Birthplace

In the city of Antioch, where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians, God raised up a preacher so rich in grace and eloquence that posterity has called him Saint Chrysostom. He was given the name John at birth, and by his perseverance in godliness he gained the title of Saint, and because of his preëminent preaching of the Gospel he is remembered as the "golden-mouthed".*1

Antioch, situated upon the river Orontes, was the metropolis of the Eastern Diocese and the capitol of Syria. Its atmosphere and traditional glory must have exercised a considerable influence in the background of Chrysostom's susceptible disposition and

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1. Proclus, "Patrologia Cursus Completus", Oratio 20, Paragraph B, p. 830.

(Note: Farrar, F.W., op. cit., Vol. II, p. 461)
(* The name Chrysostom was first used by Joannes Moschus about 630 A.D.)

training. It stood highest among the cities of the East, until overshadowed by the rising fame of Constantinople. It was, in the words of Chrysostom, "the head and mother of all that lie towards the East.....This city hath been the tabernacle of the Apostles".¹

This luxurious cosmopolitan center was in fact an Oriental Rome, possessing alike the advantages and the disadvantages of the world's capitol. In the vast throng of people that flocked there from every quarter of the earth, in its exaggerated refinement and civilization that bordered on softness and effeminacy, in the luxury, extravagance, and sensuality which followed in the train of its wealth it rivaled the western Imperial City.

The population of the city amounted to about two hundred thousand souls, of which half were nominally Christian. The city was supplied with good schools and several churches; the greatest of the latter, in which Chrysostom preached, was erected by the order of Constantine. Magnificent parks, baths, and theatres attracted this pleasure-loving people to resort to idle dissipation after their hours of greedy

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 3, "On the Statues", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 355.

pursuit for gain. The tender years of Chrysostom were impressed with a civic pride for his native city, but as a preacher of moral righteousness he condemned its profligacy saying:

"Great is the tyranny of Mammon. We have been ransomed by Christ, and are the slaves of gold..... Every day God is blasphemed through us, through our plunderings, through our covetousness."¹

Such was the home environment which favored Chrysostom's future by its eventful contribution to his birth and training. It produced in him keen insight, broad sympathies, and deep convictions in regard to the winning and welfare of his native people over which he later became the chief spiritual shepherd.

2. Parentage

John, the name by which alone he is known among his contemporaries and his early biographers, was born of distinguished parents about the year 347 A.D.² His father, Secundus, was a general of high rank in the imperial army of Syria and was killed when John was an infant. Hence, whether he was a Christian or

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 77, John, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, pp. 280-281.
2. Schaff, Philip, "Prolegomena", Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 5.

not, he had no direct influence on the training of his son.¹

Anthusa, the mother, was a rare Christian of noble breeding and exemplary life. Left a widow at the tender age of twenty, she faithfully assumed the grave responsibility of bringing up her two children in one of the most turbulent and dissolute capitols of the Eastern Empire. In spite of the many proffers of second marriage, Anthusa chose to regulate the affairs of her household alone, and to attend to the management of her modest estate in the midst of the calumnies and temptations which assailed so young and beautiful a widow in the profligate city of Antioch.²

3. Christian Nurture

Anthusa gave herself unstintingly to the Christian nurture of her promising son, and early planted in his soul the germs of piety which afterwards bore the richest fruits for himself and for the Church. Chrysostom reveals in his treatise on the Priesthood

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1. Palladius, "The Dialogue Concerning the Life of St. John Chrysostom" (Translation by Herbert Moore) p. 37.
2. Stephens, W.R.W., op. cit., p. 9ff.

how she invoked divine grace to help in his training, and how she spared not of her patrimony to afford him a respectable position in life.¹ Because of this she has been classed with Nonna and Monica, among the most pious mothers of the fourth century, who prove the elevating influence of Christianity in the perseverance of the sanctity of domestic training. It was the fidelity of Anthusa to her husband and her devotion to Christian duty by her son which caused the noted Greek sophist to exclaim: "Heavens! what women there are amongst the Christians,"² who would bind themselves to a life of widowed celibacy at the age of twenty, conforming to the high moral standard of self-sacrifice and virtue in order to direct, in the paths of religious belief, the hearts and minds of their sons and daughters. The pagans could not help fearing for the prospects of the old faith, when they perceived in such women as these the power which the new faith could exert over its professors.

Anthusa felt that in the religious training of her son she was doing that which true affection for her departed husband prompted, and which integrity to

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1. Chrysostom, "On the Priesthood", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 34.
2. Chrysostom, "Letter to a Young Widow", "Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 122.

her God demanded.

"This gradual and almost imperceptible growth and progress in Divine things, which so strongly fortified Chrysostom in later days, was no doubt, in the Providence of God, due to the gentle, loving, and hallowed influence and teaching of his devoted mother from his earliest childhood."¹

In the evident fruitfulness of his early Christian nurture we have seen the first and one of the most potent environmental factors in the making of Chrysostom's character and ministry. With this splendid spiritual background, he enriched Christian preaching to his own and succeeding generations. For such a foundation, the highest honors are extended to a dutiful Christian mother.

B. Education

Anthusa afforded her son the best education that the flourishing metropolis of Syria could offer. She did not follow the ambitions of most parents among the cultured classes of that day, who sought for their sons high and lucrative offices. The quickest means to such places of influence and power was to study Latin and civil law toward entering the judicial

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1. Bush, R. Wheeler, "Saint Chrysostom, His Life and Times", p. 40.

courts. John was afforded a liberal education in the classics. He was placed under the tutorship of Andragathias for his instruction in Greek philosophy, and under the noted Libanius for his study of rhetoric and culture.¹

1. The School of Libanius

Libanius had achieved a famed reputation as the first classical scholar and rhetorician of his age, and as the ablest defender of paganism. He was the friend and correspondent of Julian, and on amicable terms with the Emperors Valens and Theodosius. The experience of Libanius was very extensive, he having held popular schools at Athens, Constantinople, and Nicomedia, and now had returned to his native city, Antioch. His brilliant powers of oratory followed after the best examples of the classic age, being himself a faithful student of Demosthenes' attic style.² To his daily lectures came the young Chrysostom, together with such other promising scholars as Basil of Raphnea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Theodore

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1. Sozomen, *op. cit.*, Bk. 8, Chapter 2, p. 399.

2. Sozomen, *Ibid.*

of Mopsuestia, and Maximus of Seleucia, all of which were destined to fill places of power and influence in the Christian Church.¹

In this school under the expert Libanius were formed those singular powers of eloquence which were destined to win for John the significant appellation of "Chrysostomos" and by which he should defeat his master's religion. The pagan sophist helped to forge the weapons which were afterwards to be so skillfully employed against the cause to which he was devoted. So apt a scholar was John in oratory and classical learning that he soon became the most brilliant pupil of Libanius. But all this praise and learning under pagan influences did not divert the stalwart young Christian from his childhood faith. Consequently, when later on his death-bed Libanius was asked by his friends who was in his opinion capable of succeeding him, he replied, "It would have been John, had not the Christians stolen him from us."² This tribute from a master teacher would indicate that Chrysostom was, in the words of St. Paul's preaching

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1. Socrates, "Ecclesiastical History", Bk. 6, Chapter 3, p. 139.
2. Sozomen, op. cit., Bk. 8, Chapter 2, p. 399.

requirements, "apt to teach".

2. Friendship with Basil

In spite of Chrysostom's exposure to pagan culture in the school of Libanius, he had imbibed draughts far deeper and more satisfying from the well spring of the Holy Scriptures in his mother's home. He was accustomed to say that "the Bible was the fountain for watering the soul".¹ And throughout his whole life he showed by striking example the mighty power which the Holy Word exerted over the soul leaning on it for succor. He revolted against the low morals so prevalent in his day, after having become acquainted with the sublime ethics of the New Testament.

There was, however, beside his home ties, another strong Christian anchor to which Chrysostom's youthful soul clung. This proved to be his growing admiration of, and intimate friendship with, a worthy schoolmate named Basil. Basil was a classmate of Chrysostom's and is most likely identified with a Basil, Bishop of Raphnea in Syria, not far from Antioch, to which office he was inducted by the pious fraud of his nearest

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 51, John, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 184.

friend John.¹ A glowing tribute to Basil's friendship is found in the writings of Chrysostom in which he says:

"I had many genuine and true friends, men who understood the laws of friendship, and faithfully observed them; but out of this large number there was one who excelled all the rest in his attachment to me, striving to outstrip them as much as they themselves outstripped ordinary acquaintance. He was one of those who was constantly at my side; for we were engaged in the same studies, and employed the same teachers. We had the same eagerness about the studies at which we worked, and a passionate desire produced by the same circumstances was equally strong in both of us. For not only when we were attending school, but after we had left it, when it became necessary to consider what course of life it would be best for us to adopt, we found ourselves to be of the same mind.

"But when it became our duty to pursue the blessed life of monks, and the true philosophy*(an expression meaning a life of religious contemplation and study) our balance was no longer even, but his scale mounted high, while I, still entangled in the lusts of this world, dragged mine down and kept it low, weighing it with those fancies in which youths are apt to indulge. For the future our friendship indeed remained as firm as it was before, but our intercourse was interrupted; for it was impossible for persons who were not interested about the same things to spend much time together. But as soon as I also began to emerge a little from the flood of worldliness, he received me with open arms; yet not even thus could we maintain our former equality; for having got the start of me in time, and having displayed great earnestness, he rose again above my level, and soared to a great height."²

Basil early determined the question of his call-

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1. Stephens, W.R.W., op. cit., p. 15.
2. Chrysostom, op. cit., Bk 1, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 33.

ing in favor of monasticism; he decided, as Chrysostom expresses it, to follow the "true philosophy".¹ This was the occasion for an interruption in their close fellowship. Chrysostom, soon after the age of twenty, had embarked on a secular career, and could not immediately decide to follow the calling of his more spiritual friend.

3. Effects of Legal Practice

When Chrysostom had completed his literary education, it was quite natural that he should pursue the bent of his talents. He, therefore, devoted his energies to the practice of law, which offered lucrative returns as well as political prominence. "The amount of litigation was enormous."² The reputation of Chrysostom as a powerful rhetorician would ere long have won him a place of prestige. But he became disgusted with the restlessness and evil practices peculiarly connected with this profession. "To accept a fee for making the worse cause appear the better cause, seemed to him to be taking Satan's wages."³

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1. Chrysostom, op. cit., "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Bk 1, Vol. 9, p. 33.
2. Schaff, Philip, op. cit., "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 6.
3. Schaff, Philip, Ibid.

The low tone of morality which prevailed in the law courts, and the corrupt practices which he there saw justified, so grieved and offended John that he felt that the life of an advocate was likely to prove injurious to his Christian character. The sordid aims which were there set before him, so different from the exalted standard of Gospel excellence, as well as the base and degrading conduct which he saw commonly prevailing amongst advocates in that day, were thoroughly repugnant to the noble simplicity of the religious standards which he had formed in his childhood.¹ The wholesome character of the young lawyer recoiled from the evil practices that were so prevalent about him. He became weary of the avarice, fraud, and artifice by which his chosen profession was being demoralized. "With this disinclination toward worldly employment, Chrysostom's earnest mind was turned to more godly pursuits."² Through the persuasion and example of Basil, Evagrius, and other friends, his mind was soon made up. He determined to abandon the pleasures and lucrative attraction of the secular life. At once he devoted himself to gaining entrance into some quiet and secluded

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1. Stephens, W.R.W., op. cit., p. 14.

2. Milman, H. H., "History of Christianity", Vol. 3, p. 119.

life where he might give himself more entirely to the exercise of piety and holiness.¹

As yet Chrysostom had experienced no foreshadowings of the ministerial career which lay before him. It may be said, however, that no training and profession could have better fitted him for the pulpit, and for the popular exposition of the Greek Scriptures, than the background which Providence had furnished. Hence, we find him a fit candidate for the Holy Orders when, shortly after this, he came under the influence of the aged and revered Bishop Meletius of Antioch who was to become his spiritual father.

C. Summary

In reviewing this introductory chapter on the life of Chrysostom, it becomes apparent that we have set forth the contributing factors which helped to make the minister, rather than the contributions of his ministry to Christian preaching. This initial step is both logical and necessary. The singular excellence of Chrysostom's life and preaching, as well as his extensive influence, are to a great de-

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1. Socrates, *op. cit.*, Bk 6, Chapter 3, p. 138.
See also Chrysostom, "On the Priesthood", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, Bk 1, p. 33.

gree the natural fruits of these significant beginnings.

The native city of Antioch served as a splendid sociological garden in which to compare the merits of Christianity with those of Paganism. It was here that young Chrysostom was introduced to the high spiritual and cultural values of civilization by his exceptional Christian mother. The higher life was enhanced to him through the example and sound counsel of his noble friend Basil. While here also, Chrysostom received from the school of Libanius the finest instruction in classical learning that Paganism could offer. Moreover, from the unhappy experience gained in the practice of law, discretion had taught Chrysostom that the best investment he could make of his life was to follow the "true philosophy". Consequently, we are ready to enter with him into the more definite training for the Christian ministry in the economy of a benign Providence.

CHAPTER III

SIGNIFICANT FACTORS IN THE MINISTERIAL PREPARATION OF CHRYSOSTOM FOR THE CHRISTIAN PREACHER

- A. Steps in Conversion.
- B. Life as an Ascetic.
- C. Consecration to Order of Deacon.
- D. Summary.

CHAPTER III

SIGNIFICANT FACTORS IN THE MINISTERIAL
PREPARATION OF CHRYSOSTOM FOR THE
CHRISTIAN PREACHER

A. Steps in Conversion

A call to the Christian Ministry according to Divine Order may be either gradual or immediate, as experience has proved. The preparation for this high calling, however, in the case of Chrysostom was thorough and of long duration. In the gradual change that he was undergoing from a secular life to a pious religious life we look in vain for that definite cataclysmic religious experience, as St. Augustine, Luther and Wesley explained and experienced it. For up to this time Chrysostom had not submitted to baptism, and had he been asked whether or not he were a Christian he would undoubtedly have denied being a Christian. According to his own statement, anyone that was not baptized or did not partake of the holy communion was considered at that time not a Christian. When speaking about the baptismal function of the priest, he says:

"These verily are they who are entrusted with the pangs of spiritual travail and the birth which comes through Baptism; by their means we put on

Christ, and are buried with the Son of God, and become members of that blessed Head."¹

Again in another place he mentions the efficacy of baptism as the "laver (which) causes the sins to disappear".²

Nevertheless, we know that Chrysostom was a worthy product of the best Christian training. He had gained a noble character by embracing the principles of Christianity as they were first instilled into him by his godly mother, and later exemplified in his faithful friend Basil. The next radiant influence to lead him further in the Christian way was that of the beloved Bishop of Antioch by the name of Meletius.³

1. Influence of Bishop Meletius

Bishop Meletius had been promoted to the See of Antioch in 361 A.D., but due to the envy of the strong Arian constituency in this Synod, he was deposed for holding to the triunity of the Godhead.

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1. Chrysostom, "Treatise on Priesthood", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 47.
2. Chrysostom, "Instruction to Catechumens", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 167.
3. Stephens, W.R.W., op. cit., p. 16.

The See at Antioch continued in a state of turbulence through schism until, under the reign of Julian, the Synod of Constantinople reinstated Meletius as head of the Catholic party in Antioch.¹ Meletius resumed the duties of his See at Antioch in 367 A.D. and it was here that he received Chrysostom as one of his catechumens.

Gentle in disposition, holy and blameless in life, sympathetic in nature, the bishop was admirably fitted to attract the interests and to draw forth the best out of the youthful and earnest Chrysostom. Nor was the bishop the less attracted by the brilliant powers, the ardent aspirations, the vigorous energy, and the pure motives of the young advocate. Meletius saw in him the promise of much future benefit to the Church. He, therefore, willingly received Chrysostom and advised him as to the best course for him to pursue for his own well being and God's glory. He took Chrysostom under especial charge and indoctrinated him in the saving truths of Christianity until the young learner glowed with zeal for his Master. The deep piety and the gentle disposition of Meletius proved to be a wellspring of bless-

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1. Socrates, op. cit., Bk. 2, Chapter 45, p. 73.

ing in the moulding of Chrysostom. We may trace a marked resemblance between the characters of the spiritual counsellor and his disciple which endeared them to one another. After a three year probationary period John was admitted to Christian baptism at the age of twenty-three. This was an epochal point in his religious career. It was practically the dedication of himself to a life of entire devotement to God.¹

It may, perhaps, appear remarkable at first sight that Chrysostom, whose parents were so strict, and who was brought up so circumspectly by his pious mother, should not have been baptized before this time. The exact reason is not known. The disreputable condition of the Church at Antioch under the Arians may have been responsible for Chrysostom's reluctance in receiving the rite. Moreover, it was not uncommon in that day to postpone baptism to a late period of life, and sometimes even to the very closing scene.² This practice arose from the prevalent notion that every past sin was washed away at baptism, and that all sin willingly committed thereafter was regarded as sin against

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1. Neander, "The Life of Saint Chrysostom", Vol. 1, pp. 12-14.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 13, Hebrews, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 431 (See Note 4)

the Holy Ghost, and therefore unpardonable. It is unlikely that Chrysostom was the victim of such a false notion in view of the remarks in his homilies against such practice. He says:

"Attend to this, ye who come to baptism at the close of life, for we indeed pray that after baptism ye may have also this deportment, but thou art seeking and doing thy utmost to depart without it. For, what though thou be justified, yet is it of faith only. But we pray that thou shouldst have as well the confidence that cometh of good works."¹

We might gather from these remarks that Chrysostom esteemed the rite of baptism a symbol of the acceptance of the Christian life and an inward act of grace performed by the Holy Spirit. He would not be a candidate until he felt that his spiritual standards were commensurate with his profession of baptism.

2. His Christian Baptism

Upon acceptance of Christian baptism Chrysostom became, in the fullest sense of the word, a new man. He devoted himself at once to the attainment of a higher and holier life. Baptism was for him an oath of allegiance to Christ and His standards. Its pledge in

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 2, 2nd Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 12, p. 283.

that day read literally:

"I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy angels, and all thy service, and all thy pomp, and I range myself under Thee, O Christ!"¹

We note therefore that to John the celebration of baptism was a transition from the product of his heritage and training to a definite decision of his own soul to follow Christ and a consecration of his life to a service of discipleship.

"Christ has given baptism unto us", says Chrysostom, "not that upon receiving it, we should depart; but that we may manifest the fruits thereof in our lives. And have ye not heard, that the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, etc."²

This was indeed the spirit of Chrysostom after his baptism. His friend and biographer, Palladius, says that after his baptism Chrysostom never again swore or told a falsehood, or defamed anyone, or even tolerated a facetious joke.³ His baptism like that of Augustine's was a work of divine transformation in his life, an entire renunciation of this world and a

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1. Chrysostom, "Instruction to Catechumens", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 170.
2. Neander, op. cit., (quote: Appendix on Baptism, p. 80)
3. Palladius, op. cit., (Translation by Herbert Moore) p. 155.

consecration to the service of Christ and the Church. The change, though not as radical as Augustine's, was just as significant and permanent.

3. Ordained Reader in the Church

The wise Bishop Meletius did not want to lose this promising young Christian for the services of the Church. He therefore ordained Chrysostom, soon after his baptism, to the office of reader in the Church of which he himself was Bishop. This was a new order of ceremony introduced into the Church in the third century. The order of procedure was to have the readers introduce those portions of Scripture appropriate to the "Missa Catechumenorum", or first service. Next followed the "Missa Fidelium", or closed service of Communion, to which only the baptized were admitted. This was done from the Ambo or reading desk for the laity, and must not be confounded with the Bema, or Tribunal of the Sanctuary to which only the clergy were admitted.¹

The ordination ceremony was plain, yet impressive. The Fourth Council of Carthage ordained that the bishop

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1. Chrysostom, "On the Priesthood", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, Bk. 6, pp. 75-77.

should testify before the congregation to the purity, the faith, and life of the candidate. Then in their presence he was to place a Bible in the hands of the reader with these words:

"Take thou this book and be thou a reader of the word of God, which office if thou discharge faithfully and profitably thou shalt have part with those who have ministered the word of God."¹

Chrysostom confirms the reverent attitude with which the so ordained reader assumes his appointed duty. He says:

"For when the Reader standing up says, 'Thus saith the Lord', and the Deacon stands and imposes silence on all, he does not say this as doing honor to the Reader, but to Him who speaks to all through him. We speak not our own things, but the things of God, letters coming from heaven are every day read."²

Here was opportunity for Chrysostom both to study the written Word and to use his nascent powers of eloquence in conveying it to the congregation before him. So we find him at the age of twenty-three serving in his first capacity as Christian worker with an eager determination to withdraw himself into seclusion in order to give entire devotement to the doctrine and practice of godliness.

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1. Labbe, "Ecumenical Councils", Bk. 4, Canon 8, p. 1170.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 3, Thessalonians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 387.

B. Life As An Ascetic

There seems to have been an errant philosophy in the early church which held that a Christian could not be in the world without being a part of it. In other words, they sought as Christians to purify themselves through resorting to asceticism rather than Christian temperance. It was the custom, therefore, for converts to choose between the active or retired ministry. The majority chose the secluded life.¹

The first inclination of Chrysostom after baptism was to adopt the monastic life as the best way to cultivate holiness and to insure the salvation of the soul. He desired intensely to join his friend Basil, and retire with him from the sins, follies, and temptations of this world. And, doubtless, he would have carried out this resolution had he not been checked by the weeping entreaties of his mother. She plead with him not to leave the home of his childhood, and not to abandon her, who had sacrificed so much for him, to the loneliness of a second widowhood. The affectionate nature of John could not resist his mother's tears

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1. Neander, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
See also Palladius, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

when she promised that she would give him the amplest opportunities for retirement and contemplation in his own home. Consequently, his home was turned into a private monastery where Chrysostom secluded himself from the world and practiced a most rigid asceticism. He ate little and seldom, and only the plainest food. He slept on the bare floor with a block for his pillow, and rose at frequent intervals in the night for prayer. He also shunned company and kept an almost unbroken silence in order that he might not relapse into his former compromising habits.¹

In our self complacent, ease-loving age we frown at the mistaken theory of dualism which encourages such an austere discipline in life. We boast that world brotherhood and ethical temperance are far more wholesome and Christian than the denials of asceticism. But let us remember that some of the loftiest and loveliest souls that have enriched humanity have used these strange, stern means as steps to a holy and blessed life. Every man, if he has an ideal at all, is to some extent an ascetic. We purpose to renounce that which is a hindrance to our highest at-

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1. Bush, R. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 62.

tainment. Chrysostom, like a great host of the saints who have struggled for the true way under adverse beliefs and circumstances, may well have fallen short of the best method, but his motive arose out of the noble impulse to follow the principles and life of his Master, who reminds us that life is more than meat, and that man shall not live by bread alone.¹

Chrysostom, at least in his earlier life, could hardly reconcile a social life in connection with a calling to the holy orders of Christ's ministry. He succeeded in winning his classmate, Theodore, who was about to succumb to the secular stage of marriage, back to the higher consecration of celibacy by his eloquent plea of his honest, though somewhat erroneous convictions. An excerpt from this letter reveals the persuasive force of John's argument in favor of celibacy.

"For there is no man free, save only he who lives for Jesus Christ. He stands superior to all troubles, and if he does not choose to injure himself, no one else will be able to do this, but he is impregnable; he is not stung by the loss of wealth; for he has learned that we brought nothing into this world, neither can we carry anything out; he is not caught by the longings or ambition of glory; for he has learned that our citizenship is in heaven; no

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1. Newton, Joseph Fort, "What the Saints Have to Teach Us", p. 81.

one annoys him by abuse, or provokes him by blows; there is only one calamity for a Christian which is disobedience to God; but all other things such as loss of property, exile, peril of life, he does not even reckon to be a grievance at all. And that which all dread: departure hence to the other world, this is to him sweeter than life itself.....Therefore, he who is engaged in the service of Christ, drawing himself out of the turmoil and stormy billows of life, takes his seat upon secure and lofty ground. For what position can be loftier or more secure than that in which a man has only one anxiety, 'How he ought to please God?'"¹

This letter, together with other treatises of Chrysostom on the merits of the ascetic life reveals his enthusiasm for monastic virtue which shows itself in seclusion from, rather than in transformation of the world. However, he is providentially led out into active service later in his ministry, in which his abstemiousness and unworldliness are a purgative to the corrupt society of the cathedral city. He presents the most favorable aspect of that mode of life, which must be regarded as a wholesome reaction against the degenerating influences of a pagan society.

If we had today but a measure of Chrysostom's rigid self-denial and devotion to the circumspect

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1. Chrysostom, "Letter to Theodore", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 115.

Christian life, we, as leaders of the flock, would indeed be a far greater renovating factor in society. Christian asceticism is a pertinent clause in his legacy to the present-day ministry, which we would do well to embrace.

1. Study Under Diodorus

While Chrysostom practiced the ascetic life at home he was anxious to receive further instruction in the knowledge of the Scriptures. Bishop Meletius having been again banished from Antioch, his duties were taken up by two monks, Carterius and Diodorus, prefects of the famous monasteries outside of Antioch. Diodorus exerted a very considerable influence over the mind of Chrysostom. It was from him that Chrysostom learned that practical and grammatical method of explaining Scripture which eminently characterized him. By Theodoret, the eloquence of Diodorus is compared to a limpid river, and the style of his language is described by Photius as clear and perspicuous. He wrote a treatise on the distinction between "Allegoria and Theoria".¹

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1. Cave, William, "Lives of the Fathers of the Church", pp. 240-241.

The practical element in Diodorus, his method of literal and common-sense interpretation, was inherited chiefly by Chrysostom who carried it forward in his preaching with peculiar power and success.

2. Life in the Monastery

Though we are in no degree ready to advocate the system of monasticism, we must recognize the sincerity of its devotees in the earlier centuries, who overlooked altruism in their eagerness for a life unspotted by the world. This errant philosophy arose out of the false conceptions, prevalent in that day, of the inherent evil of matter. Through Christianity, the soul had become profoundly conscious of its immortality. Hence it took this avenue of escape for its preservation.

It was to a monastery outside of Antioch that Chrysostom resorted for six happy years in which time he devoted himself to prayer, meditation, and theological study. It was in this seclusion that Chrysostom gained his keen and intimate acquaintance with the Word of God. He, like John Wesley, became virtually "a man of one book". He recommends its frequent use in the following advice:

"Let us then give diligent heed to the study of the Scriptures, for if thou doest this the Scripture will expel thy despondency and engender pleasure, extirpate vice, and make virtue take root, and in the tumult of life it will save thee from suffering like those who are tossed by troubled waves."¹

Throughout his writings, and his whole conduct, he affords a striking example of the mighty power which the Bible can exert over the human heart; for by saturation with the contents and principles of that sacred volume the saintly features of Chrysostom's character were formed. Hence arose his enthusiasm for holiness, his high moral energy, his unshaken constancy and ardent love, his aversion to the vain ostentation of his times, his eager zeal for truth and justice, animated by a fervent and steadfast faith.²

From the writings of Chrysostom we get an insight of the monastic life which made it such a rigorous discipline of the flesh and such an influential asylum for the aspiring soul of its inmates.³

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1. Chrysostom, "On Eutropius", Homily 2, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 252.
2. Palladius, op. cit. (Translation by Herbert Moore) pp. 38-39.
3. Chrysostom, Matthew, Homilies 68-69, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, pp. 417-426.
See also "On the Priesthood", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, Bk. 6, p. 77.

"The monks lived in separate cells or huts but according to common rule and under the authority of an abbot. They wore coarse garments of camel's hair or goat's hair over their linen tunics. They rose before sunrise, and began the day by singing a hymn of praise and common prayer under the leadership of the abbot. Then they went to their allotted task, some to read, others to write, others to manual labor for the support of the poor. Four hours in each day were devoted to prayer and singing. Their only food was bread and water, except in case of sickness. They slept on straw couches, free from care and anxiety. There was no need of bolts and bars. They had all things in common, and the words 'mine and thine', which cause innumerable strifes in the world were unknown among the brethren. If one died, he caused no lamentation, but thanksgiving, and was carried to the grave amidst hymns of praise; for he was not dead, but 'perfected', and permitted to behold the face of Christ. For them, to live was Christ, and to die was gain."¹

There can be no doubt that Chrysostom, in his after life, modified and toned down the almost extravagant praises of the monastic life in which he at this time indulged. Though he did not relinquish the principles which he now advocated, nor ever cease to admire the fancied perfection of the Christian life, yet he afterwards became more liberal and practical in his views. He finally learned to distinguish between the practice of religious asceticism and Christian temperance, and favorably advocated and practiced the latter and more blessed virtue.

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1. Schaff, Philip, op. cit., "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 9.

C. Consecration to Order of Deacon

"One of the last acts of Bishop Meletius before leaving Antioch was to ordain Chrysostom as deacon."¹

A greater contrast than the initiation of Chrysostom into clerical life and that of a young deacon in our day can scarcely be imagined. He was now thirty-seven years old, and had supplemented the good liberal education of his youth by several years of devotion to close study of the Bible, to rigorous mortification of the flesh, and to prayer and meditation in the monastery. He had used every means of promoting purity of soul and wisdom of mind. The rank he now entered was a very humble one.

It was the duty of deacons to take care of the holy table and its furniture, to administer the cup to the laity, but not to a priest or a bishop, and occasionally to read the Gospel.² They were permitted to baptize in most churches. But their main part of the service was to make the announcements as to the order of procedure in prayer, preaching, reading, and litur-

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1. Stephens, W.R.W., op. cit., p. 90.

2. Hefele, C. J., "Nicene Councils", Canon 18, p. 426.

gy. They were not permitted to preach except by the special order of the bishop. Outside of service hours they were to act in the capacity of churchwardens.¹ They brought cases of poverty and sickness before the notice of the bishop; they distributed alms under his direction, and also reported to him any grave moral offenses.²

"They were essentially, as the name implies, ministers to the bishops and priests, and were often styled, in symbolical language, 'the bishop's eyes', or 'ears', or 'right hand'."³

1. Philanthropic Services

The functions of a deacon led Chrysostom into everyday contact with the Christian population of Antioch, and especially among the poorer classes. It has been estimated that of the one hundred thousand Christians in Antioch, about three thousand were indigent, and mainly supported by the Church.⁴

Chrysostom gave himself unstintingly to the task of finding and sustaining those in dire poverty.

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1. Palladius, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 11, Timothy, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 441.
3. Stephens, W.R.W., *op. cit.*, p. 92.
4. Chrysostom, Homily 66, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, p. 407.

No Christian responsibility was insisted upon more vehemently in his preaching than that of almsgiving. This he emphasized not only as a beneficent act to alleviate suffering and distress, but also as a method of spiritual discipline to counteract the prevalent evils of a selfish and degenerate society.

Through his intimate work with the social and economic conditions of his people Chrysostom gained a keen insight of human nature, and made such first-hand contacts as enabled him to learn the excellencies and defects of his congregation personally. He was thereby qualified to speak with the knowledge of practical experience so applicable and effective for the Christian minister.

The main characteristics of the people to whom Chrysostom ministered are abundantly illustrated throughout his homilies to which we can only refer.¹ We are interested chiefly with the person and work of Chrysostom himself; therefore, we will briefly note some of his personal characteristics which have exerted such a wide influence.

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1. Chrysostom, "On Statues", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, pp. 380-470.

2. Human Limitations

Before we summarize the divine qualities of the great character before us, we would call attention to his human imperfections. These errors were not entirely self-blameworthy, since they were incorporated in the superstitious customs and misconceptions of a primitive Christian age. Yet, even if some of these mistakes were due to Chrysostom's personal disposition, it is granted that to err is human. Moreover, a man's excellent worth does not consist in his freedom from fault, but in the abundance of his powers for good.

The first indictment has to do with Chrysostom's "pious fraud", employing that later Jesuitical maxim, "the end justifies the means", against his beloved friend Basil. The two young men of promising ability had been chosen as logical candidates for the Episcopate, although they were under the canonical age of thirty. Both had agreed, after much reluctance, that they would consent to ordination together. But Chrysostom, deeming himself unworthy of so high an honor, allowed his friend Basil to be inducted, while he concealed himself, thus escaping election to office. When Basil discovered the deception, he upbraided his friend with the breach of compact, but Chrysostom

laughed and rejoiced at the success of his plot. In defense of his scheme he appealed to the tactics of doctors and military leaders, and instances in the Bible where evil had been averted and good advanced by similar stratagems. Schaff points out that

"this conduct, which every intelligent Christian must today condemn, caused no offense among the Christians of that age, still less among the heathens, and was regarded as good management or 'economy'. The moral character of the deception was supposed to depend altogether on the motive, which made it good or bad."¹

Another instance of Chrysostom's deceptive measures invokes such sympathy that the reader will be prone to palliate the fault which we feel has been over-estimated. This time it occurred in connection with John's first banishment from Constantinople.

Hearing the pronouncement of his exile, he said:

"I am not afraid of banishment, the earth is the Lord's, and I shall find Him whithersoever I may go."²

But though full of fortitude on his own part, yet on account of the desolation of his flock, the exceedingly agitated state of the city, and the inevitable commotion which his public abduction would

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1. Schaff, Philip, op. cit., "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 8.
2. Walter, Joseph W., "Saint Chrysostom", p. 34.

cause, he ordered a horse to be held, as if in waiting for him, at the great western door of the cathedral, and while the outraged multitude were waiting there to withstand his extradition, he unselfishly avoided bloodshed by privately quitting the city and immediately embarking for Bithynia. Only the strictest Phariseeism would stamp such a measure of discretion an immoral act.

One biographer points out that Chrysostom was irritable of temper, suspicious, and too credulous with those who would deceive him. He showed these defects in his quarrel with the court and the aristocracy of Constantinople. With a little more worldly wisdom and less ascetic severity he might perhaps have conciliated and converted those whom he repelled by his pulpit fulminations.¹ While it is maintained that Chrysostom's earlier deprivations did have a direct bearing on undermining his health and thus indirectly affecting his otherwise gentle disposition, he nevertheless exhibited a moral grandeur commensurate of a saint. Impatience with worldliness, downright opposition to sin in high places, and unflinch-

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1. Schaff, Philip, op. cit., "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 17.

ing fidelity to the unvarnished truth brought Chrysostom many enemies the same as it did his crucified Master. Yet his fearless denunciation of pagan vices in the Imperial Court and his courageous allegiance to what he deemed his spiritual duty cannot but command our highest admiration and respect. He felt that as a Christian he could not tolerate the taint of neutrality in the cause of God.

3. Spiritual Qualifications

John Chrysostom was preëminently an unworldly person of most earnest piety. This fitted him with a keen susceptibility for communion with God at all times. He stilled the many tempests of his life, both inward and outward, by the frequent solace of prayer. He embraced the maxim that "nothing inside the will of God is outside the reach of prayer". He shows in one of his homilies how that no prayer is available before God until we have renounced sin, and that pollution of the soul must be warded off or cleansed by continual resort at the throne of Grace.

"It is inconceivable", says Chrysostom, "that a man, who prayeth with becoming zeal and constantly calleth upon God, should ever sin; for he who hath warmed his hearth, hath raised and transported his soul to heaven, hath invoked his Lord, and, mindful of his sins, holden converse with Him concerning their forgiveness, beseeching him to be reconciled and merciful,

after such holy exercises layeth aside every worldly thought, soareth as it were on wings, and is raised above human passions! But since, being men, we easily relapse into supineness, shouldest thou, when one, two, or three hours have elapsed after prayer, perceive thy former fervor gradually ebbing, betake thyself quickly again to prayer, and warm thy cooled heart. And if thou act thus throughout the day, maintaining the warmth of thy devotion during intervals by the frequency of thy prayer, thou wilt afford the devil no opportunity, nor entrance to thy thoughts."¹

Not only are we interested in the pedagogy of prayer which Chrysostom advanced for the highest spiritual attainment, but also in the rich ministry of intercession which he shared and advocated for his congregation. After returning from his first exile John celebrated the triumph together with his faithful flock at the Church in a communion of prayer and praise. In acknowledgment of his reinstatement he says:

"I am persuaded that it is in no small part to your prayers that the triumph is due. God cannot resist the prayers of a whole people. And do you continue, my children, as you have done, to aid me by your prayers. Should my hands fail me in the hour of prayer, support them with your hands. Pray with me and for me; for so will you also be praying for yourselves. I live and breathe but for your good. It is your interest that fills my heart with prayer."²

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 51, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, p. 319.
2. Walter, Joseph, op. cit., p. 32 (quote)

And with this he closes his prayer, as he invariably closed all his messages, with a beautiful benediction. Many of these prayers and benedictions are still extant in the liturgies of the Church.

Underlying Chrysostom's superhuman power in prayer was his indomitable faith in the living and providential God. Although he had been trained to employ all the fine arts of reasoning, he did not rely on intellect to determine his principles of action, but yielded himself to a childlike resignation to intuitive perception and obedience to Divine revelation. To persons unacquainted with the true nature of faith, and on that account discounting it, he claimed that faith is by no means an arbitrary supposition, but a spiritual act, whereby the soul really enters into and becomes incorporated into a sphere hitherto closed to it, and in virtue of which incorporation a new life and consciousness of a higher order arises in man. He thus alludes to the power and dignity of faith:

"Faith is a precious thing, if it proceed from a heart and soul glowing with a mighty love. By such faith we are made wise; human weakness is hidden; and while reason, which aspires to know all things, is left below on earth, ourselves are raised to heaven; or rather faith comprehendeth and accomplisheth what human wisdom is unable to find out. Let us then hold fast faith,

and not intrust our affairs to reason; for the work of faith needeth a noble and youthful mind, which raiseth itself above things seen, and leaveth the weakness of human understanding behind it; for no one can have faith, unless he soar above the ordinary flight of mortal men. It is itself a living organ which is able to emancipate itself from the influence of the visible world, and thereby attain communion with the Divine Spirit."¹

Chrysostom did not disparage human reason; he only desired that it should be conscious of its own insufficiency to comprehend the mysteries of religion. He likened the relation of the reason with faith to that of the eye with the light that gives it vision. Not only do the Scriptures confirm this fact but in everything that befalls us we are to recognize the hand of Providence. Chrysostom then goes on to show that the interposition of God works, if not always for our immediate good, eventually for our highest interest and for His glory.²

Commensurate with his efficacy in prayer and his unflinching faith was Chrysostom's entire devotion to God in every aspect of service as a Christian steward. He ever sought first the Kingdom of God and

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1. Neander, op. cit., p. 280f. Homilies: John, 63; Hebrews, 22.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 22, Hebrews, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, pp. 465-467.

its interests since he had early learned to conform his own will to the will of his heavenly Father.

Like the "Son of Man", he chose to live in humble circumstances that he might give the more to his fellow men. He censured those who withheld God's gifts, saying:

"Be not grudging about thy Master's goods, but distribute them among thy fellow-servants; for we have all things from Christ; and all this about 'Mine' and 'Thine' is bare words only. Thy soul is not thine own; how then can thou claim as thine own God's temporal gifts? Only that which thou art willing to share is awarded thee blessing; what thou withholdest is purloined from thy Master."¹

Even when Chrysostom was in exile he saved the money supplied for his own pressing wants, and gave it towards the relief of those who were in dire suffering in his immediate neighborhood. His religious zeal led him to foster missionary enterprise in Phoenicia, Cilicia, Persia, and among the Goths. This last venture was prompted out of a virtuous heart of love and mercy. For Chrysostom maintained it is not enough merely to show liberality; one must be merciful also.

"Mercy", says he, "is more acceptable to God than all sacrifices. It is the virtue that He

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 10, 1st Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 12, p. 56.

loves the best. Of all the qualities of man, it is that which most surely wins him the suffrages of his fellow-creatures. How indeed can we do without it for ourselves! Have we not need of all the mercy of God? Let us then at least have the merit of following it. Let the sweet unction of mercy diffuse itself around us."¹

We have already expressed our conviction that such continuous and unselfish efforts as he displayed could not have failed to achieve success. To this grand cause of transforming the spiritual condition of those entrusted to his care John was preëminently qualified. And in the pursuit of this noble calling it may fairly be said that he sacrificed his health, his peace of mind, his comfort, and his talented life.

D. Summary

In tracing the more immediate steps in the preparation of Chrysostom for the Christian ministry it has been impossible to relate, or account for, all the accompanying factors which entered in to complete this training. It is safe to say that training never ceases for the one who is obedient to all the will of God. Chrysostom had learned this much, and to that

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1. Walter, Joseph W., "Life of Chrysostom", from Homily 11, 33, p. 189.

extent he was a fit instrument to wield a mighty ministry in the place to which he was soon appointed.

In his baptism, which we must consider Chrysostom's conversion, he had found victory and purpose in following the higher life. Under the influence and leadership of Bishop Meletius he gained a deeper love for the Word of God, and an opportunity to serve the Church as Reader. This position, however humble, acquainted him with the Divine manuscripts and cultivated his voice to become eloquent in the expression of holy thought.

His rigid ascetic life had disciplined Chrysostom's nature to withstand the cruel treatment which lay before him. Through the refinement of his sufferings he shared an intimate fellowship with Christ, for he held that self must be fully mortified before the Spirit can reign supreme in us.¹

In the capacity of deacon Chrysostom found the richer life of sharing his blessings with his fellow men until he was recognized as John of Almsdeed, which was a beautiful tribute to his work among the poor.

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 13, Romans, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 436.

His human limitations, which were products of an ignorant age are far outweighed by his exceptional spiritual qualifications which so admirably fitted him for the illustrious ministry referred to in the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

THE LEGACY OF CHRYSOSTOM TO CHRISTIAN PREACHING AS PRESBYTER AND PREACHER IN ANTIOCH

- A. Priesthood at Antioch.
- B. Preacher of Sacred Eloquence.
- C. Summary.

CHAPTER IV

THE LEGACY OF CHRYSOSTOM TO CHRISTIAN
PREACHING AS PRESBYTER AND PREACHER IN ANTIOCH

A. Priesthood at Antioch

Chrysostom's diaconate was now at a close and he was no longer to serve God as a layman. During his five years as deacon he had proved his ability as a learned, vigorous, and powerful writer. He had also given indication of those peculiar talents which marked him out as pre-eminently qualified for the ministry.

We have observed the honorable service which Chrysostom rendered in behalf of the poor. It was in part due to his assiduity in this blessed ministry that he gained such widespread popularity with the multitudes in the city of Antioch.¹

It is as the spiritual priest of Antioch that we follow another decade of his life. During which period he delivered the greater part of the discourses ex-

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1. Walter, Joseph W., "Life of Chrysostom", p. 276.

tant, which must be a very small portion of those preached, since he preached regularly twice a week, besides preaching special sermons on festal occasions.¹ It was in this office of presbyter that he earned the reputation to be called "the great luminary of the world".²

1. Ordination to Presbyterate

Bishop Flavian, who had succeeded Meletius to the Bishopric of Antioch in 381 A.D.³ was not long in sensing the excellent qualities of Chrysostom as a preacher. Hence he determined to place him in a more enlarged sphere of service, and ordained him presbyter of his own church in 386 A.D.⁴ The office of bishop in a metropolitan city carried with it a multiplicity of duties. These were similar in many respects to those of a civil governor. The bishop

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1. Canon Venables, "Dictionary of Christian Biography", p. 160.
2. Theodoret, "Ecclesiastical History", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Bk. V, Chap. 27, p. 151.
3. Sozomen, op. cit., Bk. 7, Chapter 9, p. 382.
4. Palladius, op. cit., p. 40.

resided at Antioch, and discharged the duties of a chief pastor, assisted by his staff of priests and deacons. To Chrysostom was given the honor of frequently officiating and preaching in the place of the Bishop. The more responsible appointments were given to the most gifted priests. The more menial tasks were left for the less talented. The aptitude for teaching and preaching made Chrysostom particularly a privileged character. It was in this capacity that he was to rule the destiny of souls from the pulpit, which was his divine appointment according to his own statement.

"The office of a teacher and that of a priest is of great dignity, and to bring forward one that is worthy requires a divine election."¹

2. Pastoral Relationships

The pastoral relationships of Chrysostom with the congregation at Antioch were the happiest and most successful of his entire ministry. The Eastern Church employed its most gifted presbyters as teachers of the Word on doctrine and morals.² We find therefore that

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 5, 1st Timothy, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 423.
2. Hatch, Edwin, "The Organization of Early Christian Churches", p. 78.

Chrysostom, with his special aptitude for preaching, was raised to that office from the beginning. The lesser duties, as those of caring for the distressed, administering sacraments, and baptizing were in his time entrusted to the less talented presbyters.¹

The only method we have of ascertaining the personal relation of Chrysostom with his people is to gather hints from the references of his homilies. They evince the richness of his intellect, his fertility of resource, his untiring energy, his wisdom, prudence, and caution, as well as his distinguishing eloquence. In his homilies we may discern how Christianity is with him a living reality. He dwells always in its presence and companionship on practical themes for the ennoblement of life. We feel through them the quickening pulse of his genuine Christian love and zeal. He fully sympathizes with the problems of his hearers and ardently loves them even while he is scathing in his rebuke at their shortcomings. He never seems alien, nor stands aloof from his audience, but throws himself among them in an overwhelming desire to restrain and save them from their sins.

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 3, 1st Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 12, p. 13.

Chrysostom holds the office of pastor in high dignity and speaks of him as a spiritual steward who must be an unblemished example of that which he is offering to share with his flock. He maintains that if the pastor's relation with God is true, then the harmony with the people will follow. His characterization of a qualified pastor is here given:

"Priests are the salt of the earth. He must therefore be discreet and skilled in many matters, and to be as well versed in the affairs of this life as they who are engaged in the world, and yet to be free from them all more than the recluses who occupy the mountains. For since he must mix with men who have wives, and who bring up children, who possess servants, and are surrounded with wealth, and fill public positions, and are persons of influence, he too should be a many-sided man--I say many-sided, not unreal, nor yet fawning and hypocritical, but full of much freedom and assurance, and knowing how to adapt himself profitably, where the circumstances of the case require it, and to be both kind and severe, for it is not possible to treat all those under one's charge on one plan, since neither is it well for physicians to apply one course of treatment to all their sick, nor for a pilot to know but one way of contending with the winds. For, indeed, continual storms beset this ship of ours, and these storms do not assail from without only, but take their rise from within, and there is need of much condescension, and circumspection, and all these different matters have one end in view, the glory of God, and the edifying of the Church."¹

From this one quotation alone we gather character-

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1. Chrysostom, "On the Priesthood", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Bk. 6, Vol. 9, pp. 76-77.

istics of a pastor which are essential and applicable to every age. The advice is so timely and well taken that it appeals to us as the instruction of a present day writer with a comprehensive knowledge of the nature and needs of the ministry.

"The homilies on the 'First Epistle to the Corinthians' have ever been considered by learned and devout men as among the most perfect specimens of Chrysostom's mind and teaching."¹

The date of these messages is not known, but from internal evidence it is certain that they were delivered at Antioch.² Antioch was at this time a flourishing church but was filled with a frivolous and impulsive people not unlike the Corinthians to which St. Paul had first addressed these themes. The following events which tend to bring out Chrysostom's leadership and civic influence over the turmoil of affairs which he encountered there shall be given brief attention before we turn to his eminent qualities as a preacher.

3. Civic Influence

The exceptional influence which Chrysostom bore on the political affairs of the city were revealed during

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1. Marriott, C.M., "Introduction", Homily on 1st Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 12, p. iv.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 21, 2nd Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol.12, p. 124.

the sedition of Antioch against the famous Theodosius. It was during the months of March and April of 387 A.D. that he preached his discourses on the Statues to a fearful and penitent people awaiting clemency from their offended ruler.

The occasion for the rebellion was an edict from the Emperor which demanded an excess tax to subsidize the imperial army with a liberal donative. The ominous silence with which the proclamation was first received grew rapidly to a popular outbreak of mutiny. The rabble, swelling in numbers and fury as they rushed through the city, proceeded to acts of open violence. The public baths were ransacked; the praetorium was attacked, the governor narrowly escaping with his life. The mob stormed furiously into the hall of judgment where they defaced the portraits of past emperors and tore from their bases the statues of the present Emperor and his deceased wife, and dragged them through the streets of Antioch. Further outrages were only stopped by the appearance of a band of archers dispatched by the prefect. The insurrection having been quelled, calm reflection caused the offenders to see the probable consequence of their fury. A panicky fear followed which cast a dismal gloom over the en-

tire population.¹

The ruling Bishop, Flavian, was absent at the time and had left his see in charge of Chrysostom. Day after day during this terrible suspense Chrysostom devoted his noblest gifts as a sacred orator to awaken repentance among the dissolute crowd seeking for a ray of hope through pardon. We will here give space to one or two of his comforting exhortations which are typical of his whole series of homilies on the statues.

"But afford me your attention! Lend me your ears awhile! Shake off this despondency! Let us return to our former custom; and as we have been used always to meet here with gladness, so let us also do now, casting all upon God. And this will contribute towards our actual deliverance from calamity. For should the Lord see that His words are listened to carefully; and that our love of divine wisdom stands the trial of the difficulty of these times, He will quickly take us up again, and will make out of the present tempest a calm and happy change.....We are dreading lest the wrath of the Emperor should descend upon all; and it is not sufficient for us to say in defense, 'I was not present; I was not an accomplice'; 'nor a participator in these acts.' 'For this reason' he may reply, 'thou shalt be punished and pay the extreme penalty, because thou wert not present; and didst not check, nor restrain the rioters; and didst not run any risk for the honor of the Emperor! Hadst thou no part in these audacious deeds? I commend this, and take it well. But thou didst not check these things when being done. This is a cause of accusation! Such words are these, we shall also hear from God, if we silently suffer the continuance of the injuries and insults committed against Him."²

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1. Stephens, W.R.W., op. cit., pp. 157-160.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 2, "On the Statues", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 346.

Thus he continued for twenty-two days this most remarkable series evincing most strikingly his power over the minds and passions of his fellow citizens. That he knew how to utilize to great advantage the parallel of the material circumstance with that of the spiritual is evident from the closing lines of the above quotation.

The venerable Flavian, who had been dispatched to the court as an intercessor, was pleading for leniency toward the Antiochians. In the meantime, it was the object of Chrysostom to rouse the people at home from their dejection and to improve this season of humiliation by a thorough repentance and reformation in respect to their prevailing vices and follies. On the whole the eager and earnest Chrysostom may be said to have rejoiced at the penitence of the city, for this afforded him an opportunity to effect a spiritual renovation in the moral life of the people. He observed with great satisfaction that if the forum was deserted the church was thronged, just as in stormy weather the harbor is crowded with vessels.¹

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 4, "On the Statues", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 364.

B. Preacher of Sacred Eloquence

Since it is the purpose of the writer to reveal the contribution of Chrysostom's pulpit work to the ministry of preaching, we shall set forth the elements of his power as a preacher of the divine Word. That we are justified in thus holding up Chrysostom as a model of this essential gift of preaching, is strongly supported by modern teachers of homiletics. We read the following tribute from one of them:

"To name him is to name eloquence itself. Never has anyone united in a higher degree the talents which make an orator.....An orator truly popular, he is worthy to be set before all ages as the most perfect model of Christian eloquence, because, on the one hand, one admires in him with a most noble character the higher virtues of a real apostle; on the other hand, he unites to an admirable doctrine the purest taste and the perfect knowledge of the language in which he writes."¹

This power must be attributed to at least three factors: the divine calling of the person, the moral integrity of the holy message, and the high excellence of the method of delivery.

1. His Divine Commission

It is inconceivable, in view of Chrysostom's life

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1. Bull, P.B., "Preaching and Sermon Construction", p. 257.

and training, that he should have entered the pulpit by accident. It would indeed have seemed contrary to Providence had not a man of his piety and gifts, his extensive learning, and his impressive voice and manners, been called to the holy order of preaching. His training at home was the purest and best that a Christian mother could offer. Under the lead of the most distinguished rhetorician of his day he had been thoroughly grounded in the native tongue and literature of that elastic and expressive Greek out of which our New Testament came. His study and contact as an advocate in the law courts had acquainted John with the customs and rulings of society. The Bible had been the book most read in his home, and then for six years it had been his all absorbing study in his monastic retreat. He had literally learned it by heart both to preach and to practice. From the fact of his constantly scrutinizing his own heart and feelings, Chrysostom had gained a marvelous insight into human nature which he applied in diagnosing and remedying the faults of his fellow men. To crown the preparation for his active ministry he spent five eventful years as deacon in the city of Antioch, where with a heart full of love and sympathy he ministered personally to the poor and afflicted, sharing their depriva-

tions, longings and aspirations. This was the splendid background of preparation for the call to preach of a man endowed with outstanding inherent ability for the ministry.¹

The reluctance of Chrysostom to accept the office of the priesthood until both reason and Providence had fully confirmed this leading is clearly shown in his discussion with Basil in which he maintains that both the candidate and those that ordain must be conscience-bound to fully vindicate their actions in accordance with the divine seal and wisdom.

"For as it is not enough for those who are chosen to say in excuse for themselves, 'I did not summon myself to this office, nor could I avoid what I did not see beforehand'; so neither will it be a sufficient plea for those who ordain them to say that they did not know him who was ordained. The charge against them becomes greater on account of their ignorance of him whom they brought forward, and what seems to excuse them only serves to accuse them the more. For how absurd a thing, is it not? that they who want to buy a slave, show him to the physician, and require sureties for the sale, and information about him from their neighbors, and after all this do not yet venture on his purchase without asking for some time for a trial of him; while they who are going to admit any one to so great an office as this, give their testimonial and their sanction loosely and carelessly, without further investigation, just because someone wishes it, or to court the favor, or to avoid the displeasure of someone else. He who is going to

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1. Anderson, Galusha, "The Elements of Chrysostom's Power as a Preacher", p. 56.

ordain, therefore, ought to make diligent inquiry, and much more he who is to be ordained. For the Church of Christ, according to St. Paul, is Christ's body, and he who is entrusted with its care ought to train it up to a state of healthiness, and beauty unspeakable, and to look everywhere, lest any spot or wrinkle, or other like blemish should mar its vigor and comeliness."¹

According to the above criterion Chrysostom would not allow the induction into the ministry of many theological students of our present day who hold no such convictions of divine calling but have entered the profession of the ministry for mercenary reasons. In this conviction he was entirely right. If we would adopt his caution and safeguards against violating the sanctity of the sacred office we should prevent the ordination of many misfits, and avert many abuses and reproaches in the order of the clergy. We see in the following excerpt on the dignity of the priesthood Chrysostom's exalted opinion of the office.

"What manner of man ought a priest to be? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him? For consider what manner of hands they ought to be which minister in these divine mysteries, and of what kind his tongue which utters such divine truth; and ought not the soul which receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world?.....The soul of the Priest should shine like a light beaming over the whole world. For if anyone will consider how great a thing it is for one, being a man, and compassed

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1. Chrysostom, "On the Priesthood", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, pp. 63-64.

with flesh and blood, to be enabled to draw nigh to that blessed and pure nature, he will then clearly see what great honor the grace of the Spirit has vouchsafed to priests; since by their agency these rites (of the Sacraments) are celebrated, and others no wise inferior to these both in respect of our dignity and our salvation. For they who inhabit the earth and make their abode there are entrusted with the administration of things which are in Heaven, and have received an authority which God has not given to angels or archangels, e.g. They who rule on earth have indeed authority to bind, but only the body: whereas this binding lays hold of the soul and penetrates the heavens; and what priests do here below God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of his servants."¹

It is no wonder then that, when Chrysostom felt that Christ had honored him by admission to a sacred work, he reverently and eagerly began to preach the word with holy boldness.

2. His Dynamic Message

The secret of Chrysostom's dynamic was the burning message which flamed in his soul by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He did not preach about the Gospel, or apart from it. His dominant message was the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation. This he deemed sufficient for the salvation of his congregation and applied it with such eloquence that the integrity and

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1. Chrysostom, op. cit., "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, pp. 47-76.

authority of the truth arrested hearers and converted souls to the Kingdom of God. We have already referred to his astonishing knowledge and use of the Scriptures. He never seemed at a loss for quotations, but from the treasure-house of his Scriptural acquisition he was able to draw forth the argument or illustration which best suited the particular occasion. Nor did he fail to make God's Word the basis, as well as the touchstone of his arguments.

Chrysostom had not derived his convictions upon points of doctrine from secret traditions of the Church, but from a study of the Bible. From his youth upwards his life and Christian views had been formed and matured by the reading of Holy Writ; and he was far from making the exposition of the Inspired Writings subordinate to Church tradition. He considered the Scriptures to be a direct and independent source of knowledge, fully sufficient of itself to determine the truths of our faith; and to this living fountain alone he referred. Of them he says:

"Let us not therefore carry about the notions of the many, but examine into the facts. For how is it not absurd that in respect to money we do not trust to others, but refer this to figures and calculations; but in calculating upon facts of faith we are lightly drawn aside by the notions of others; and that too, though we possess an exact balance, and square and rule for all things, the declaration of divine laws? Wherefore I exhort and entreat you all, disregard what this man

and that man thinks about these things, and inquire from the Scriptures all these things; and having learned what is the true riches, let us pursue after them that we may obtain also the eternal good things."¹

Instead of answering the heathen as Augustine would have done, by referring them to the authority and tradition of the Church in order to determine the true sense of Scripture, Chrysostom called upon them to examine the Bible freely, and thence to draw their own conclusion:

"If we professed to follow human reason, ye might indeed be disquieted; but since we declare that our faith is drawn from the Scriptures, and they are plain and true, ye may easily discover the truth. He whose belief accordeth with the Bible is a Christian; but he who is at variance with it is far removed from true Christianity."²

This was the test by which a true Christian was measured according to Chrysostom. Since belief as used by Chrysostom was synonymous with conduct or life practice,³ many of his congregation, instead of embracing the principles of the Word of God in their lives, made the Sacred Volume itself an object of superstition and idolatry by wearing it upon their

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 13, 2nd Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 12, p.346.
2. Neander, op. cit., Homily 33 in Acts, pp. 250-251.
3. Chrysostom, Homily 59, John, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 212.

neck or arms as an amulet. To these Chrysostom remarked that the Holy Scriptures were not given to us that we should enclose them in ornamental books or wear them as charms, but that we should engrave them upon our hearts. His great aim was to impress the truths of religion deeply in people's hearts and consciences, so that the fruits of their faith might be seen in their daily Christian walk and conversation. To this end he never ceased to warn, exhort, and encourage his hearers, that by means of his preaching they should become better men and women, better fathers and mothers, better sons and daughters, and better citizens of God's Kingdom on earth.¹

As a result of this, Chrysostom's preaching was powerful because it was pre-eminently ethical and practical. To be sure, he faithfully proclaimed the whole round of Biblical doctrine, but not in crystallized dogma; he presented it just as he found it in the words of Scripture. He never stopped to speculate upon it, but urged it upon the attention of his hearers for practical ends. He preached morals so powerfully that he not only profoundly impressed men of his own time

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1. Bush, R. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 116.

with the transcendent ethics of the Gospel, but also has stimulated many preachers since to follow in his footsteps with the same effective ethical impact.

The breadth and specific character of Chrysostom's ethical preaching may be seen in his varied discourses both at Antioch and at Constantinople. He preached against heresies, idolatry, and indifferent secularism, but specifically against sin with all its accompanying vices of subtle degeneracy and moral pollution to be found in a cosmopolitan capitol city. Perhaps it would not be amiss to compare Constantinople at that time with a metropolis of today in their revelry of sin, from the extreme of wanton luxury to the other extreme of poverty and degradation. From his homilies we gather these significant views on this point:

"Wealth is a chain, a grievous chain, to those who know not how to use it; a tyrant, savage and inhuman, imposing all his commands by way of outrage on those who serve him.....Those who strut in the market place are more to be pitied than those who haunt the crossings of the streets, and enter into the courts, and cry from their cellars, and ask charity. For these, for their part, do utter praises to God, and speak words of mercy and a strict morality."¹

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 13, 1st Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 12, p. 76.

This appears to be very sound ethical reasoning for present day ministers to propagate in regard to the unequal distribution of wealth. Chrysostom proves to us, from this further quotation, that he is not prejudiced:

"Again, to live in luxury does not seem to be a manifest and admitted crime; but then it brings forth in us great evils--drunkenness, violence, extortion, and rapine. Riches are not able to profit the little-minded: nor is poverty able to injure the magnanimous. Therefore let us not only avoid sins, but those things too which seem to be indifferent, yet by degrees lead us into these misdeeds."¹

No vanity, no sin, escaped John the preacher; he poured forth his most vehement rebukes against the profligacy of the rich, their extravagance in dress, the theatre, games, profane oaths, and indecency. He dwelt boldly and earnestly on the majesty of God and the comparative littleness of man, on moral accountability to Him, on human degeneracy, and on the mysterious powers of evil by force of which good people in this dispensation are in a small minority. He emphasized the certainty of future retribution; yet also the never fading glories of immortality which Christ has brought to light by His sufferings and death, his

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1. Chrysostom, "Homily 15, "On the Statues", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 442.

glorious resurrection and ascension, and the promised influences of the Holy Spirit. These truths he preached, not with tricks of rhetoric, but simply and urgently, as an ambassador of Heaven to lost and guilty man. Chrysostom has taught us by this that when preachers throw themselves on the cardinal truths of Christianity, and preach with a conviction inspired by the Holy Spirit, they will carry the people with them through the portals of a living hope into the sanctuary of a blessed experience in Christ.

3. His Excellent Method

Chrysostom's reputation and popularity as a preacher were almost at once firmly established. His eloquence attracted all classes of society and people with every phase of philosophy and religious sentiment. They would crowd around the pulpit from which he preached in order that they might not lose any of his forceful utterances. One biographer tells us that Chrysostom had to warn the congregation to leave their purses at home since in the congestion of the crowd pickpockets found it an easy matter to ply their craft during the service.¹

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1. Bush, R. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 107.

His audience signified their appreciation and approval of John's burning messages by frequent interruptions of applause and words of high approbation. A modern homiletical instructor points out the congregation's estimation of their preacher in the following quotation:

"Better that the sun should cease to shine than that our Chrysostom's mouth should be stopped."¹

Not infrequently they indicated by their plaudits that, so far from being wearied by the length of his sermon, they were ready and willing to listen to him for a still longer time. Often the discourse lasted for more than an hour. John Lord's description of Chrysostom's manner of preaching is itself eloquent in its appraisal of the power and influence of the fourth century saint. He says:

"His elocution, his gestures, and his matter were alike enchanting. Like Bernard, his very voice would melt to tears. It was music singing divine philosophy; it was harmony clothing the richest moral wisdom with the most glowing style. Never, since the palmy days of Greece, had her astonishing language been wielded by such a master. He was an artist, if sacred eloquence does not disdain that word. The people were electrified by the invectives of an Athenian orator, and moved by the exhortations of a Christian apostle. In majesty and solemnity the ascetic preacher was a Jewish prophet delivering to kings the unwelcome

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1. Pattison, T.H., "The Making of the Sermon", p. 354.

messages of divine Omnipotence. In grace of manner and elegance of language he was the persuasive advocate of the ancient Forum; in earnestness and unction he has been rivalled only by Savonarola; in dignity and learning he may remind us of Bossuet; in his simplicity and orthodoxy he was the worthy successor of him who preached at the day of Pentecost. He realized the perfection which sacred eloquence attained, but to which Pagan art has vainly aspired--a charm and a wonder to both learned and unlearned--the precursor of the Bourdaloues and Lacordaires of the Roman Catholic Church, but especially the model for all preachers who set above all worldly wisdom those divine revelations which alone can save the world."¹

It is not to be wondered at that such preaching as this, coming from the heart, and confirmed by the holy life, produced very marked effects upon Chrysostom's hearers. He did not need to court popularity by placing himself on an ethical plane of the masses he was addressing; nor did he aim at arresting attention and attracting notice, by singularity, or eccentricity, or by humoring current tastes of a questionable character. His unrivaled charm, as that of every really eloquent man, lay in his singleness of purpose, the firm faith in his mission, and his noble zeal and passion for souls.

Chrysostom's great power over his audiences was, moreover, due to his technique in the presentation of

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1. Lord, John, "Beacon Lights of History", Vol. 1, pp. 292-293.

the Gospel. His homilies were popular, yet accurate expositions of the Scriptures. He came to his great congregations after careful preparation of interpreting the sublime truths of the Bible, and spoke with the authority which that Word gives to the ambassador that proclaims it. Sometimes he wrote his sermons and preached extemporaneously from them but he never read his manuscripts. At other times he was prompted to preach upon some practical application arising out of his immediate surroundings. Thus on one occasion he opens his sermon by an appeal to charity in behalf of some miserable beggars whom he had encountered on his way to the church, and on another occasion he drew a striking analogy between a then approaching thunder storm and the coming judgment.¹ He was apt at instantly perceiving and taking advantage of the impression made either by his words, or by any sudden occurrence in the church. Once during an evening sermon when it became necessary to have the place illuminated his hearers were distracted by the lighting of the lamps in the church. He seized this opportunity to say:

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1. Walter, Joseph W., op. cit., p. 257, from Homily on the Acts.

"Awake from your inattention; lay aside your sloth. While I am explaining to you the Holy Scripture, ye have turned your eyes to the lamps, and to him by whom they are lighted. How great an indifference! I also kindle for you a light, the light of the Holy Scriptures; upon my tongue burneth the light of instruction, a better and a greater light than that upon which ye gaze."¹

If we take his homilies at random, we find that each one is an exposition of from one to a dozen or more verses of Scripture interspersed with hortatory remarks on practical Christian living. But his homilies, even on extended passages, were by no means destitute of unity. He sometimes expounded a whole book or epistle by a series of sermons. When he resorted to this method, at the beginning of each discourse he would carefully restate the main points of the previous lesson in order to intelligently prepare the way for the one about to be delivered. One example which is representative of his many instances of this procedure is found in Chrysostom's discourse on the "Acts of the Apostles". He reviews the results of the healing of the impotent man at the Beautiful Gate by Peter and John, and then proceeds to the persecutions of the next chapter.

(Acts 4:1-ff)

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1. Walter, Joseph W., op. cit., p. 258, from "Homily on the Statues".

"Ere yet they had time to take breath after their first trials, straightway they enter into others. And observe how the events are disposed. First, they were all mocked together; this was no small trial: secondly, they enter into dangers. And these two things do not take place in immediate succession; but when first the Apostles have won admiration by their two discourses, and after that have performed a notable miracle, thereupon it is that, after they are waxen bold, through God's disposal, they enter the lists.

"But I wish you to consider, how these same persons, who in the case of Christ must needs look out for one to deliver Him to them, now with their own hands arrest the Apostles, having become more audacious and more impudent since the crucifixion. In truth, sin, while it is yet struggling to the birth, is attended with some sense of shame; but when once fully born, it makes those more shameless who practice it. --- 'And the captain of the temple' it is said. The object again was to attach public criminality to what was doing, and not to prosecute it as the act of private individuals: such in fact was constantly their proceeding."¹

In the progress of an expository discourse, it is often desirable, for the sake of coherence, to keep the connection of the whole context before the congregation by frequently referring the subject under discussion to that which has gone before. Chrysostom sets us the example of managing this with great skill. He also frequently threw in some arresting questions as to what came next; these were calculated

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 10, Acts of the Apostles, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 63.

to arouse the hearers and make them notice it when stated. This method of introducing a text and reiterating it for emphasis is supported by a modern authority on preaching.¹ The present day audiences, like his, do not commonly have the sacred text before them, hence we do well to adopt Chrysostom's method to supply the deficiency. Thus, while delivering an exposition of the Word, when Chrysostom came to the second point he would restate the first; when he reached the third point he would reiterate the first and second; and so to the end of his discourse he skillfully kept all of its paramount thoughts before the minds of the hearers. This idea made so popular by John Chrysostom is still highly advocated by instructors of homiletics. In fact, for a model of expository preaching there are no better works than the homilies of St. Chrysostom. The opinion of one eminent authority of the twentieth century is as follows:

"One who wishes to cultivate himself as an expository preacher will of course be disposed to search the literature of the pulpit for good examples of that species of sermons. The most instructive example of expository discourse, both doctrinal and historical, is the Homilies of Chrysostom. While no man would think of making discourses now precisely on the model of his, it is remarkable how

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1. Phelps, Austin, "The Theory of Preaching", p. 231.

much may be learned from them as to the skillful, spirited, and effective management of expository preaching."¹

All of his homilies do not stand on an equal level of excellence. Some must necessarily surpass others in argumentative force, in their clearness of ethical teaching, and their utility of divine truth. But in all of his sermons the inspired Word was allowed to fall with full force and convicting power upon its audience with definite spiritual application for their eternal good. Here again Chrysostom presents us an example. Much as he delighted in explaining Scripture, yet he felt that, in preaching, the practical interest is paramount. So the truth which he thus brought out was always applied to meet the real needs of the human heart.

C. Summary

Chrysostom's preaching ministry extended over a wider period than merely his interim at Antioch, but we have chosen to set down his main characteristics of preaching in this chapter, for it was at Antioch that

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1. Broadus, John, "Preparation and Delivery of Sermons", note pp. 336-337.

he reached the zenith of his pulpit power. He had been called there to preach and was not encumbered with the heavier burdens of the episcopal office, and the opposition which he encountered at Constantinople.

We have seen how that he immediately won the hearing of his large congregation after being admitted to preach in Flavian's pulpit. He also ably defended the faith of the Church against the prevalent heresies of that day.

His relations with the people as pastor are interesting for the versatility of the man, and also for his keen insight into the nature of this office. By his strong moral influence in the civic community he was able to utilize the panicky condition of the insurrectionists to evangelize the unconverted pagans.

The elements of Chrysostom's power in the pulpit we found were due to his divine commission, his authoritative Scriptural message, and the superior excellence of his delivery. Chrysostom never permitted the force of his sermons to be frittered away in vague generalities, but invariably pointed his messages by a personal application, e.g.

"But since our discourse has now turned to the subject of blasphemy, I desire to ask one favor of you all, in return for this my address, and

speaking with you, which is, that you will correct on my behalf the blasphemies of this city. And should you hear anyone in the public thoroughfare or in the midst of the forum, blaspheming God, go up to him and rebuke him; and should it be necessary to inflict blows, spare not to do so. Smite him on the face; strike his mouth; sanctify thy hand with the blow, and if any should accuse thee and drag thee to the place of justice, follow them thither; and when the judge on the bench calls thee to account, say boldly that the man blasphemed the King of Angels! For if it be necessary to punish those who blaspheme an earthly King, much more so those who insult God."¹

The force of his preaching was attributed to the fact that he could touch every chord of human feeling, treat every interest of human life, draw illustrations from every object and relation of the known universe, and use all to gain acceptance and obedience for the gospel of salvation. This has stamped him as the prince of expository preachers who has never been surpassed and perhaps not equaled in his talent of preaching.² He is therefore a worthy example for us to study and imitate in this highest of Christian callings.

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 1, "On the Statues", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 343.
2. Broadus, John, "The History of Preaching", pp. 77-79.

CHAPTER V

THE LEGACY OF CHRYSOSTOM TO CHRISTIAN PREACHING AS EXEGETE AND THEOLOGIAN

- A. Contributions in Exegesis.
- B. Theological Interpretation.
- C. Summary.

CHAPTER V

THE LEGACY OF CHRYSOSTOM TO CHRISTIAN
PREACHING AS EXEGETE AND THEOLOGIAN

A. Contributions in Exegesis

The previous chapter has made it evident that Chrysostom was an eminent preacher. It is the purpose of this chapter to set forth some of the apparent reasons for his power as a preacher of the Gospel. These are found in his various writings in which he displays his high scholarship in the methods of exegesis, and his deeply evangelical and practical theology. Both these spiritual acquirements were instrumental in clarifying and fortifying the preacher's message, and to this extent they must be acknowledged as contributions of permanent value to succeeding ministers. Even among present day commentaries and theologies one will not escape the several allusions to the original statements of the Greek Father. In many cases his opinion stands practically without alteration.

1. Writings

Philip Schaff maintains that Chrysostom was the most prolific writer among the Greek Fathers. Suidas

goes so far as to say that "only the Omniscient God could recount all his writings."¹ The complete list of his works, which have been preserved, are divided into five classes: 1. Moral and ascetic treatises, including the work on the Priesthood; 2. About six hundred homilies and Commentaries, covering the greater portion of the Scriptures; 3. Occasional, festal, and panegyric orations; 4. Letters; 5. Liturgy. The most valuable and permanently useful of these works are his Homilies and Commentaries which reveal the fruit of his excellent exegesis and correspondingly unbiased theology.²

2. School

Chrysostom was an exponent of the Antiochian school of theology and exegesis of which he became one of the foremost representatives. The school was founded by Diodorus (?-394) a presbyter of Antioch, and stood on the basis of the Nicene orthodoxy. It was marked by a degree of literalism in its interpretation of Scripture, quite in contrast to the exces-

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1. Suidas, "Life of St. Chrysostom", quoted by Schaff in "Prolegomena", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 17.
2. Schaff, Philip, "Prolegomena", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 17.

sive use of allegory by the Alexandrian school. Its philosophy showed the influence of Aristotle as the school of Alexandria revealed the influence of Plato. The two schools agreed in maintaining the divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, but differed in their method of interpretation. The Antiochians placed a higher premium on the doctrinal and practical value of the New Testament over that of the Old, and also made a sharper distinction between the divine and human elements of the two Covenants.¹

Chrysostom recognized allegorizing in theory, but seldom used it in practice. He considered the obvious grammatical and historical sense rich enough for all purposes of instruction and edification. His theology was derived out of his exegesis from the original Greek manuscripts. This is a commendable practice for anyone who would assimilate an unbiased system of doctrine. Yet Chrysostom founded no school of theology. His influence exerted itself in the field of exegesis down through the ages. John of Damascus in the eighth century, Photius in the ninth, Oecumenius in the tenth,

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1. Walker, Williston, "A History of the Christian Church", p. 145.

and Theophylact in the eleventh, contributed but little that was new to the study of exegesis, but all drew largely from the mine of expository wealth which they found in the writings of Chrysostom.¹ So also have the English divines received many of their valuable hints in their approach to the Scriptures from this same source.²

3. Textual Critic

A study of other patristic exegetes must lead to an endorsement of the prevalent opinion on the merits of Chrysostom as an expositor. He avoided to a great extent the extremes of both Origen and Diodorus, and for this reason stands nearer to us than any Father of the Eastern Church in his approach to the Bible. A careful study of his homilies must lead to this conclusion. Take, for example, instances where Chrysostom observes a variation of reading; 2. variation in punctuation; and, 3. the adoption of a special version to which is attached special signi-

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1. Chase, F.H., "Chrysostom: A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation", p. 24.
2. Newton, J.F., "What the Saints Have Taught Us", p. 38.

ficance.^{1*} On this very point Chrysostom remarks:

"Assuredly then, we ought not hastily to pass by even those sentences of Scripture which are thought to be plain; for these also have proceeded from the grace of the Spirit; and this grace is never small, nor mean, but great and admirable, and worthy the munificence of the Giver."²

Although a pioneer in the study of textual problems, Chrysostom recognized the human and historical element in the formulation of the Scriptural records. He consequently interpreted words and passages in the light of their derivation and usage as they related to their context.

More recent investigations on recension tend to explain Chrysostom's apparent acquiescence to the current text. Since a Greek text not unlike the universal text of the Middle Ages was dominant, probably by authority, in Antioch at the close of the fourth cen-

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1. Chrysostom, Homilies, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", *See: On Readings, John 1:28, John 17:7, Romans 2:26, 2nd Corinthians 5:3, Ephesians 5:14; On Punctuation, Matthew 8:9, Luke 1:27, John 5:27, John 7:38, 1st Corinthians 5:4, Colossians 2:17, etc.; On Interesting Versions, Matthew 6:28, 7:14, 8:11, 10:29, Mark 7:19, Luke 9:31, John 5:13.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 1, "On the Statues", "Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 332.

tury. When we learn that Antioch was the true ecclesiastical parent of Constantinople, it is not hard to conceive of the traditional Constantinopolitan text as the "textus receptus" of Chrysostom's day.¹

4. Grammarian

In regard to grammatical exegesis, Chrysostom possessed advantages over us in that he preached in the language of the original New Testament. His audience would be well acquainted with the customs and idioms of the New Testament writers. For the interpretation of the Old Testament he depended on the Septuagint version which was written in the Greek.² He preached in a style of speech superior to that of the "Koine"³ or common vernacular of that day. Nevertheless he was a favorite with the people of Constantinople, who were on his level of comprehension.

Chrysostom's employment of metaphors is perhaps his outstanding grammatical contribution. It is rea-

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1. Westcott and Hort, "Introduction to New Testament", pp. 142-143.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 5, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, pp. 32-33.
3. Nestle, D. Eberhard, "Greek New Testament", Introduction, p. 47.

sonable to expect that the use of metaphor so prevalent in the writings of St. Paul, and the training of the Sophists, influenced Chrysostom in this vivid form of illustration. He concreted and enhanced his spiritual ideas by transferring them into the well known figure of the athlete, soldier, sailor and actor. A few graphic examples will serve to instruct us in this convincing form of speech.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us'. He did not say, let us contend as boxers, nor, let us wrestle, nor, let us do battle; but, what was lightest of all, that of the foot-race, this has he brought forward. Nor yet did he say, let us add to the length of the course; but, let us continue patiently in this, let us not faint."¹

On the passage in 2nd Timothy 2:3, we find the following:

"So it behooves thee not to complain, if thou endurest hardness, for that is the part of a soldier..... He mentions wrestlers and soldiers, the one to prepare him for slaughter and blood, the other with reference to endurance, that he might bear everything with fortitude and be ever in exercise."²

Or again, in the metaphor of the mariner in 2nd Timothy 2:1:

"The young sailor at sea is inspired with great confidence, if the Master of the ship has been preserved in a shipwreck. For he will not consider

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 28, Hebrews, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 14, p. 492.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 4, 2nd Timothy, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 13, p. 488.

"that it is from his inexperience that he is exposed to the storm, but from the nature of things."¹

And further, the scene of the arena is depicted from

Paul's testimony in 2nd Timothy 2:7:

"The good fight, yea, for it is fought in the cause of Christ, and great crowns are won in it. This crown is without end. This is not of olive leaves. It has not a human umpire. It has not men for spectators. The theater is crowded with angels."²

Finally, the comparison of the stage life in Titus 1:11:

"Retire from the earth, and look to that theater that is in Heaven.....I forbid thee not to desire glory, but I would wish it to be the true glory, that which proceeds from God.....Let us be pious in secret, not cumbered with parade, and show, and hypocrisy.....Dost thou see the masks worn by stage players? How beautiful and splendid they are fashioned to the extreme height of elegance. Canst thou show me any such real countenance? By no means. What then? didst thou ever fall in love with them? No. Wherefore? Because they are empty, imitating beauty, but not being really beautiful. Thus human glory is empty, and an imitation of glory: it is not true glory. That beauty only which is natural, which is within, is lasting: that which is put on externally often conceals deformity, conceals it from men until the evening. But when the theater breaks up, and the masks are taken off, each appears what he really is."³

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 4, 2nd Timothy, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 487.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 9, 2nd Timothy, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 511.
3. Chrysostom, Homily 2, Titus, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, pp. 526-527.

Chrysostom's works are filled with similar metaphors and other figures from almost every aspect of life. They were used very effectively by him and are examples to us in the art of preaching.

Chrysostom employed all the parts of speech with an original aptness which clothed his ideas in a language both forceful and lucid. Consequently, we find his references to the significance of tense, voice, and case in the interpretation of passages.¹ The full force of the articles, prepositions, and particles are also judiciously treated in his commentaries and homilies.²

A splendid doctor's dissertation has been written on Chrysostom's use of the optative mood. It arrives at the conclusion that his language was in perfect accordance with the classical forms of grammar and syntax, also that Chrysostom was a master in utilizing that fine accuracy and beauty of the Greek tongue in the art of expression.³

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1. Chrysostom, op. cit., Reference: John 1:29, Galatians 1:13, Titus 2:12.
2. Chrysostom, op. cit., Reference: John 1:3, Hebrews 1:3, Romans 8:9, John 9:2.
3. Dickinson, F.W.A., "Use of the Optative Mood in the Works of St. John Chrysostom.

To follow Chrysostom's derivation of words is an interesting revelation of how a fourth century writer used philology as a handmaid in the furtherance of preaching. He draws a distinction between ideas and words. Words are half veiled thoughts. One word cannot express the reality of a conception but different words can approach its full meaning. It is in dealing with these subtle yet real distinctions that Chrysostom shows his insight into a language. His treatment of New Testament synonyms is not the least instructive part of his exegetical work. One characteristic example will have to suffice on this point. The synonyms are: "conformed" and "transformed" as presented in the twelfth chapter of Romans. Chrysostom brings out the distinction between them very clearly in the following:

"He says not change the fashion, but 'be transformed' to show that the world's ways are a fashion, but virtue's not a fashion, but a true essence with a natural beauty of its own. A beauty which needs no external adjuncts and embellishments. If then thou wilt throw the fashion aside, thou wilt speedily come to the form."¹

The distinction is of even greater importance in the Christological passage in Philippians in which Chrysostom treats the nature and experience of Christ

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 20, Romans, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 498.

respectively.¹

This brief investigation does not claim to be exhaustive of Chrysostom's many excellent elucidations of Scripture, but it has called attention to the exegetical method which of late years has become the popular method of interpretation. The method which he handed down to us was to approach the passage in its original language for its literal and historical meaning in the light of its relation to the context and to parallel passages of Scripture. In this way he has preserved the native connotation of the text and at the same time maintained the common integrity of the revelation as a whole.

In his view of inspiration Chrysostom recognized the Divine-human character of the Scriptures. He regarded the Bible as written under the inspiration of God in such a sense as that no passage or word was to be despised; and that men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit but not to the total deprivation of their own human understanding and personal character.²

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 7, Philippians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 213.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 31, Romans, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 552.

It is recognized that "for sobriety of interpretation, for thorough general knowledge of the contents of Scripture, for his steady determination to elicit the sense of the sacred writers, and not to introduce into them a meaning of his own, Chrysostom is unrivaled. No writer has contributed so large an amount to the current field, or exercised a more wholesome influence upon the traditions of Biblical interpretation than this pioneer in the field of exegesis."¹

B. Theological Interpretation

The doctrinal views of Chrysostom were positive and usually well defined. So great a preacher could not help but embrace a definite theology, yet it was not the creedal system of doctrine wrested out of controversy like the views of Athanasius and Augustine. Chrysostom lived between the great Trinitarian and Christological controversies and was only incidently involved in the subordinate Origenistic controversy, in which he showed a charitable spirit when he defended the "Long Brethren"² against Theophilus, on the

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1. Farrar, F.W., op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 523.

2. Sozomen, op. cit., "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 2, p. 406.

divine nature of God.¹ God revealing Himself to the spirit of man directly through the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice was for Chrysostom the essence of Theology. In confirmation of this he says:

"All Scripture, that is all sacred writing is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. For this is the exhortation of the Scripture given, that the man of God may be rendered perfect by it; without this therefore he cannot be perfect. Thou hast the Scriptures, He (God) says, in place of me. If thou wouldst learn anything thou mayest learn it from them."²

The theology of Chrysostom must be gathered chiefly from his commentaries. In these he differs from the metaphysical divines of his age, because he did not allow the dogmatic bias to dominate his principles of interpretation. He set forth the verbal meaning with constant attention to the context of the passage, and connected therewith, in harmony with the form which he had chosen, the religious and moral observations which were founded directly on the text.³ The strong assur-

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1. Socrates, op. cit., "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Chapter 7, p. 142.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 9, 2nd Timothy, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 510.
3. Reuss, "History of the New Testament" (American Edition) p. 544.

ance and lasting influence of his expositions are in a large measure due to the simple and forceful manner in which he presents Divine truth for practical application. The Word is indeed made a light to our pathway.

The commentaries of Chrysostom are not of equal value, but all are permeated with a deep evangelical theology advanced to convert and edify his hearers. The homilies on the Pauline Epistles are the most judicious for instruction in practical theology. However, the eighty homilies on Matthew are so full of theological content that Thomas Aquinas declared he would rather possess them than be master of Paris.¹

In accordance with the purpose of this treatise, we shall confine our study of Chrysostom's theological tenets to those doctrines which have a direct bearing on his strength as a preacher or evangelist. Hence, the questions with which he was mainly concerned will be our main topics of discussion, e.g., the idea of God, the nature and need of Man, and the nature and work of Christ.

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1. Schaff, Philip, *Studies in Christian Biography*,
p. 45.

1. Idea of God

Chrysostom's idea of God or the Godhead must be gathered from statements scattered throughout his writings. It is evident from these that he accepted the Nicene decree (of 325 A.D.) on the nature and relation of the Godhead.¹

In his discourses against the contemporary heresies he disparaged the arrogance of those sophists who claimed to comprehend the Deity. Chrysostom humbly acknowledged in his mind that the essence of God was beyond our conception², and knowable to the Son only.³ Yet in faith one was able to recognize the existence and partial nature of God through His attributes which we experience in communion with Him.⁴

Throughout his homilies on the Gospel of John, Chrysostom refers to the following attributes: Pre-existence, Unchangeableness, Indefectibleness, Omnipresence, All Sufficiency, Infiniteness, Majesty, Personalty and Loving Kindness.⁴

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 74, In "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, pp. 271-272.
Homily 2, Hebrews, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, pp. 370-371.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 7, In "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 28.
3. Chrysostom, Ibid. p. 52.
4. Chrysostom, See Homilies on John.

2. Nature of Man

Let us consider then his exposition of man's nature. Chrysostom, unlike the majority of the Greek fathers, held to a twofold nature of man, body and soul. He indicates that the spirit is a super-human quality imparted to us by the Holy Spirit.¹

"For neither body nor soul in itself, if it receive not the impulse which is from above, is able to achieve anything good or noble.....So that on all hands we must have the Spirit on hand.....Thus, the soul and the flesh belong to things indifferent, since each may become either the one or the other. But the Spirit belongs to things good, and in no time becometh any other thing."²

Man, when first created, came forth pure and holy in the image of God to enjoy a nobler dignity than the one to which the fall lowered him. The cause of man's fall was his own weakness and indolent negligence, and with it he became deprived of that immortality and divine wisdom with which he had previously been gifted; but his nature was not essentially changed, it was only weakened. Evil is not an

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 13, Romans, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 435.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 5, Ephesians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 73.

integral part of man; it is not an inherent substantial force; it is the moral purpose which is perverted when men sin. If man's will was not unfettered there would be no merit in goodness and no blame in evil. There is no constraint either to holiness or to sin at birth. However, through moral negligence humanity follows in the trodden path of its forefathers yielding to appetites which may eventuate in acts of evil.

"Nothing is sin when it arises from necessity, but all sin rises from wantonness. God has not so framed man's nature as that he should have any necessity to sin, since were this the case, there would be no such thing as punishment. We ourselves exact no account of things done of necessity and by constraint, much less would God, so full of mercy and loving kindness."¹

Chrysostom would thus readily allow the expressions "hereditary tendency to sin", "hereditary liability to the punishment of death", but he shrinks from the expression "hereditary sin". That he exaggerated his emphasis on man's freedom of will was quite natural for a preacher of moral righteousness who lived in an age when the Manichean doctrine of necessity was so prevalent and popular. They held that man was abandoned to the dominion of devils or

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 2, Ephesians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 58.

to an irresistible course of fate.¹ To counteract the disastrous effects of such a demoralizing philosophy, which surrendered the will to the current of the passions, it was necessary to maintain very resolutely the essential freedom of the will and to insist on man's moral responsibility to live uprightly.

Urgently as Chrysostom, in his desire to stimulate self exertion and strengthen the moral life, insists on the absolute freedom of the will, he maintains no less clearly the insufficiency of man's nature to embrace the Christian life without Divine assistance. (See Homily 12) No one has described in more forcible language the powerful grip of sin upon the human nature. Sin for him is a terrible pit, a corrupting plague, a binding tyrant from which the soul must flee to God for refuge.² This process of coming to God involves the co-efficients of God's grace and man's volition bringing about man's deliverance from sin. And this brings us to Chrysostom's doctrine of salvation.

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 2, "Resisting the Devil", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 187.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 15, Hebrews, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 441.

3. Nature of Salvation

Chrysostom's doctrine of justification is naturally colored by his ethics. Maintaining, as he did, that the corruption of man's nature consisted in a weakness of the moral purpose, his exhortations were directed rather to inculcate energetic action, a gradual process of improvement of the person by the aid of Divine grace. He does not discard the idea of the atonement for he accepted the traditional doctrine of a debt discharged, a ransom paid, and a sacrifice offered up once for all.¹ Thus he explains St. Paul's statement that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners"² as meaning merely that they became liable to the punishment of death, i.e. mortality which he exhibits rather as a necessary consequence than as a punishment strictly so called; and he goes on to show that humanity has gained more than it lost by the fall on account of the moral discipline supplied by our present life and the restoration of immortality in Christ.³ Christ's death was equivalent to the death of all.

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 17, Hebrews, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 447.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 10, Romans, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 402.
3. Chrysostom, Homily 17, Hebrews, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 449.

In one place he definitely compares the atonement to the act of a king who gives his son to die in the place of a bandit, and together with the death transfers the liability from the one to the other.¹ But even here there is no emphasis on the substitutionary idea, no attempt to explain or justify the arrangement; it occurs simply as part of an appeal for gratitude towards the Father and the Son who have shown so much love for us. The point of the appeal in preaching would be just the same if the death were supposed to operate only through the gratitude which it excites.

This gracious example of God's love for us should instill a faith and integrity in us to appropriate His free gift in Christ. Faith thus becomes our initial instrument by which we embrace God's salvation and attain unto true righteousness.

"This is why we are called faithful," says Chrysostom, "that having left the weakness of the human reasoning (which is from beneath) we may ascend to the height of faith, and commit most of our blessings to her teaching. And if Nicodemus had done this, the (new birth) would not have been thought by him impossible."²

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1. Rashdall, Hastings, "The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology", p. 243.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 25, John, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 87.

Nevertheless he constantly insists that it is the favor of God alone which, in the end, bestows salvation on us. Faith and good works are necessary conditions, but not efficient causes of salvation.

"We look in vain in Chrysostom's writings", says Schaff, "for the Augustinian and Calvinistic doctrines of a double predestination, total depravity, heredity guilt, irresistible grace, perseverance of saints, or for the Lutheran theory of forensic and solifidian justification. He teaches that God foreordained all men to holiness and salvation, and that Christ died for all and is both willing and able to save all, but not against their will and without their free consent. The vessels of mercy were prepared by God unto glory, the vessels of wrath were not intended by God, but fitted by their own sin, for destruction. The will of man though injured by the Fall, has still the power to accept or to reject the offer of salvation. It must first obey the Divine call. 'When we have begun', he says, in commenting on John 1:38, 'when we have sent our will before, then God gives us abundant opportunities of salvation.' In other words, God helps those who help themselves. 'When God sees us eagerly prepare for the contest of virtue, He instantly supplies us with His assistance, lightens our labors and strengthens the weakness of our nature.'¹

It was, no doubt, this trustful dependence of Chrysostom on Divine grace, coupled with his firm conviction of the free capacity of man to turn to God, which enabled him to proclaim all his messages

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1. Schaff, Philip, op. cit., p. 47.

on Christian holiness in such a singularly confident and triumphant manner.

4. Efficacy of Sacraments

In regard to Chrysostom's view of the sacraments as they related to salvation he would have us observe their spiritual grace. He certainly considered baptism to be more than a symbol of dedication or initiation into the Christian Covenant. It included a moral renovation brought about through the new union of the soul with the indwelling Holy Spirit.

"This then is God's work in us", he says on John 1:12. "To have been born the mystical birth, and to have been cleansed from all our former sins, comes from baptism; but to remain for the future pure, never again after this to admit any stain, belongs to our own power and diligence in the perseverance of godliness."¹

It is the recasting of the vessel in the refining furnace to renew it completely but yet to again expose it to the corroding atmosphere. The virtue of baptism is effectual at the time, but the grace then given is as a trust to be carefully guarded, a talent employed in Divine usury until the perfect day. In one place

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 10, John, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 37.

Chrysostom contrasts the baptism of the Jews, of John the Baptist, and of Jesus Christ.

"The first was only a cleansing of the body from ceremonial defilements, the second was a means of enforcing an exhortation to repentance, the third was accompanied by remission of sins: it releases and purges the soul from sin, and gives a supply of the Holy Spirit."¹

In relation to the Lord's Supper Chrysostom held that there is connected with it three dominant ideas: a sacrifice, a presence of Christ, and a reception of Christ. This sacrament he calls the mysteries by which Christ communicates His redemptive body and blood to us in order that we may continue partakers of His salvation.² In Chrysostom's church the Holy Communion was administered every day, and he wished all to partake of it as often. In contending that the sacrificial cup and bread has become for the true believer the blessing of Christ's presence of which we partake, he says:

"This which is in the cup is that which flowed from His side, and of that we do partake. While we recount over the cup the unspeakable mercies of God and all that we have been made partakers of, so draw we near to Him, and communicate giving Him thanks that He hath delivered from error the whole race of mankind. The bread which we

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1. Chrysostom, Homilies 11 and 12, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, pp. 67-79.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 47, John, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 169.

break, is it not a communion of the Body of Christ? Because he intended to express something more and to point out how close was the union; in that we communicate not only by participating and partaking, but also by being united. For as that body is united to Christ, so are we united to Him by this bread, etc."¹

It must be confessed that Chrysostom's language is strong, in many instances bordering on the doctrine of transubstantiation or at least consubstantiation. But these expressions are not to be strained up to the letter when taken out of flights of rhetoric in a popular discourse. The design of Chrysostom was to give a solemn idea of the dignity of the sacrament, and to awaken the reverence and heighten the devotion of the receivers. On worthily receiving the Sacrament, he advises:

"Let us then in everything believe God.....Thus in the mysteries also, not looking at the things set before us, but keeping in mind His saying, 'This is my body'. For Christ hath given nothing sensible, but though in things sensible yet all to be perceived by the mind.....For if thou hadst been incorporeal, He would have delivered thee the incorporeal gifts bare; but because the soul has been locked up in a body, He delivers thee the things that the mind perceives, in things sensible.....Let then no one approach it with indifference, no one faint-hearted, but all with burning hearts, all fervent, all aroused... With each one of the faithful doth He mingle Himself in the mysteries, and whom He beget, He nourishes by Himself, and putteth not out to another; by this also persuading thee again, that

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 24, 2nd Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 12, p. 141.

He had taken thy flesh. Let us then not be remiss, having been counted worthy of so much, both of love and honor."¹

We are not aware in any of the writings of Chrysostom on this subject, that he held the elements in the Lord's Supper to be literally the body and blood of Jesus as the view is held in later creeds. In his eagerness to exalt the sacrament he did, however, use extravagant language so that the participant would be drawn from the visible objects at the Lord's table to the spiritual meaning of the Communion.

5. Reward and Punishment

Attention should be called to Chrysostom's doctrine on reward and punishment before closing this chapter, inasmuch as his eschatological hopes entered prominently into his exhortations to fervent Christian living. On the basis of Scriptural passages he points to the final consummation of this age when a literal coming of the Lord shall take place.

"If He is about to descend, on what account shall we be caught up? For the sake of honor. For when a king drives into a city, those who are in honor go out to meet him; but the condemned await the judge within. As the Father

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 82, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, pp. 495-496.

received the Son into the clouds (Acts 1:9) so the Son will receive the worthy children who are caught up into the clouds at His coming. And what is more blessed than all, so we shall ever be with Him."¹

He sets forth the glories of the heavenly citizenship and the privileges of the redeemed.² He admonishes his audience to obey the Gospel in view of its consequential recompense or retribution.³ It is inherent in the soul to hope for a glorious hereafter just as it is premonitory with the soul that there is a hell to shun. For God has so implanted that idea in us, that no one can ever be ignorant of it.

"Therefore", says Chrysostom, "let us be invited to virtue by the prospect of the kingdom. For he indeed who is exceedingly virtuous is induced neither by fear nor by the rewards of the kingdom, but for Christ's sake alone, as was the case with Paul. Let us, however, even thus consider the blessings of the kingdom, the miseries of hell, and thus regulate and school ourselves; let us in this way bring ourselves to the things that are to be practiced. When you see anything good and great in the present life, think of the kingdom, and you will consider it as nothing. When you see anything terrible, think of hell, and you will deride it. When you are possessed by carnal desire, think of the fire, think also of the pleasure of sin itself, that it is nothing worth, that it has not even pleasure in it. For if the

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 8, Thessalonians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 256.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 1, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, p. 7.
3. Chrysostom, Homily 6, Hebrews, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 396.

fear of the laws that are enacted here has so great power as to withdraw us from wicked actions, how much more should the remembrance of things future, the vengeance that is immortal, the punishment that is everlasting. If the fear of an earthly king withdraws us from so many evils, how much more the fear of the King Eternal."¹

We may readily see the psychological effect of such teaching on the ethical life of Chrysostom's congregation. It stimulated them not alone to flee eternal wrath, but also to consecrate their lives by purgative methods so that they might be fit candidates for the heavenly dwelling place. A healthy measure of reverential fear and devoted love thus combined as motives toward the high incentive of fulfilling the law of Christ.

It appeared to the moral zeal of Chrysostom an object of highest importance to deprive man of every ground of excuse for failing to put forth moral efforts. His field of practical labors at Antioch and Constantinople encouraged and promoted in him this bent of mind; for in these great cities he found many who, in the weakness of human nature and under the

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 2, Thessalonians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 382.

full sway of Satan, sought grounds of excuse for their deficiencies in practical Christianity. These motives, from within and from without, had no small influence in giving direction to the development of Chrysostom's theological arguments as presented in his homilies. He was deeply convicted with the feeling of the need of redemption for his audience and of their need of fellowship in a higher life with Christ. Consequently he emphasized the force of the above doctrines primarily with a view to their immediate spiritual conversion and permanent blessing. How far these doctrines were successful in attaining the end sought is abundantly shown in the great harvest of souls known as the "Johannites"¹ which were the spiritual children of the eloquent soul winner, John Chrysostom.

C. Summary

We have endeavored to show in this chapter that Chrysostom's success as a preacher was largely due to his splendid scholastic preparation and achieve-

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1. Socrates, op. cit., Chapter 18, p. 151.

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Chrysostom's extant works are more voluminous than those of any other Church Father and written on a wide range of subjects. When we consider that these writings are only a small portion of his complete works, and this literature only one aspect of his many ecclesiastical duties we are amazed at the attainments of this prodigious worker.

His place of pre-eminence in the school of Antioch won for him the title of "flower of the Antiochian School" and its "most illustrious representative". His sound opinions carried weight in the decisions of the Church Councils for succeeding generations.¹

It was, however, as an exegetical scholar that Chrysostom deserves special mention. His method of dealing with the divine Word is characterized by sound grammatical and historical principles and the healthy common sense of approach, introduced by his tutor, Diodorus. In the treatment of texts he sought to discover the intended meaning of the author by a careful understanding of the passage and its relation to its context.

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1. Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, p. 456.

Chrysostom might well be called a Biblical theologian. He considered it of primary importance to know the Scriptures. His expository works, being chiefly homiletic, dealt with doctrines in their practical application to life. He laid great stress on free will and the cooperation of the human will with Divine grace in the work of salvation. Yet he was always magnifying the personal work of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Dargan relates these admirable gifts of Chrysostom to Christian preaching in the following resume:

"On the basis of such a character as this, the more properly oratorical virtues naturally and safely rested. The nameless oratorical instinct--the way to say here and now the thing that ought to be said, the acute readiness to turn the hap of the moment to account - this was his. Command of language, wealth of material, abundance and fitness of illustration, fine imaginative and descriptive powers - these too were his. Add to all this a wonderful knowledge of the Bible and of human nature and of the art of applying the teachings of one to the needs of the other, and the splendid equipment of a live and mighty preacher stands confessed. Students of his sermons and of his life unite in a chorus of well deserved praise of his oratory, but none has said a finer thing of him than his pupil and friend, John Cassian: 'He kindled his zeal in the bosom of his Redeemer'."¹

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1. Dargan, E.C., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 93.

CHAPTER VI

THE LEGACY OF CHRYSOSTOM
TO CHRISTIAN PREACHING
AS INTERPRETER OF SCRIPTURE

- A. The Old Testament.
- B. The New Testament.
- C. Summary.

CHAPTER VI

THE LEGACY OF CHRYSOSTOM TO CHRISTIAN
PREACHING AS INTERPRETER OF SCRIPTURE

The most important factor which contributed to Chrysostom's preëminence as a preacher was undoubtedly his expository method. The moral earnestness and elevating piety of the speaker were merely supplements to the mighty impact of the Word through his skillful presentation. The position held by Chrysostom in the history of exegesis is therefore quite original. He was the initiator of the practical historical method of interpretation. This School maintains that "Christianity can never separate itself from its historical basis on the Religion of Israel; the revelation of God in Christ cannot be divorced from the earlier revelation on which our Lord built."¹ Hence it is significant that he was the first to employ the term "Bible" (ta Biblia) unifying the various manuscripts of Holy Writ into

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1. Smith, Robertson, "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church", Preface, p. 7.

one library of sacred revelation.¹

The question then as to the relation of the Old Testament to the New was not one merely of speculative interest. There is an inherent unity throughout, though not necessarily a common uniformity.

The later and more perfect Covenant exceeds the former one in glory of realization.

In commenting on the "better covenant" spoken of in Hebrews 8:6, Chrysostom says:

"Thou seest (he means) how much better is the one ministration than the other, if one be an example and type, and the other reality."²

A. The Old Testament

The Old Testament is the revelation of God, since the Holy Spirit speaks through the tongue of the law giver and the prophet. It belongs to the Son as well as the Father. Therefore Chrysostom maintains that Christianity is not an emergency plan, or afterthought to correct the failings of God's original plan. There is one body of faithful believers in all times, the

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 9, Colossians 3:16, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 300. Also Homily 8, 2nd Timothy, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", p. 507.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 14, on Hebrews 8:6, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 434.

bond of which is the knowledge of Christ. As between the writers, so also between their writings there is a kinship, and St. Paul may use the words of Isaiah with enlarged meaning for his own day. There is a oneness of purpose which binds together both covenants, namely, the transformation of fallen mankind to the righteousness of God. This is the contention of Chrysostom in his remarks on St. Paul's sermon at Antioch:

"For neither the Old Testament proofs seemed so cogent when taken by themselves as they are in this way, nor yet the latter testimonies apart from the former: wherefore He makes them mutually confirm each other."¹

Starting from this fundamental conception, we pass on to notice Chrysostom's principles of interpretation by which he made the Word of God a living force in his preaching. "God speaks to man in man's own sphere of understanding." As in the historical Incarnation the Eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us, so in the Bible, the glory of God clothes itself in the familiar garment of human thought and human language.² (See Homily 5, Matthew 1:22,23)

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 29, Acts, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 183.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 5, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, pp. 31-36.

This method of revelation on God's part lays a corresponding duty on man. Thus man must act upon his apprehension of truth with all gratitude, caring not to venture beyond his powers of reasoning with things too high for human understanding.

"The key to the whole position of Divine revelation according to Chrysostom", says Chase, "may perhaps be said to lie in two propositions:

1. God educates the human race towards the great consummation after His likeness. But all education must be gradual: it knows nothing of sudden and isolated starts.
2. God would bring out of every state of mankind the highest acts, the highest service both to Himself and to His creatures, which the stage of education attained to by man admits."

"Thus the morality which is commanded by God, if tried by the absolute standard, may be defective, yet relatively it will be perfect."¹ That it is within our comprehension and reach, Chrysostom maintains in comparing its excellencies over that of an obscure Greek philosophy. He says:

"But our lessons are not such; rather Christ hath taught us what is just, and what is seemly, and what is expedient, and all virtue in general, comprising it in few and plain words.....And these things even to a laborer, and to a servant, and to a widow woman, and to a very child, and

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1. Chase, F.H., op. cit., p. 45.

to him that appeareth to be exceedingly slow of understanding, are all plain to comprehend and easy to learn. For the lessons of the truth are like this; and the actual results bear witness thereto."¹

This accounts for the practice of Chrysostom in expounding a portion of the Scriptures week after week so that gradually his congregation might come to the knowledge of the truth.

1. History

The typical character of the histories of the Old Testament was very distinctly recognized by the Antiochian Expositor as it must also be frankly met by every logical preacher. Passages of different spirit require different interpretations. Chrysostom's belief on this point was a leading characteristic of his exegesis, and removed him at once "from a servile worship of the letter", and, on the other hand, "from the strange vagaries of the allegorists." He points out three classes of passages or phrases which require as many different kinds of interpretation.

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 1, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, p. 5.

- "1. Some passages must be interpreted literally.
2. Some must be interpreted in a different sense to that which lies on the surface, as with the words, 'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb'.
3. Yet again others must be taken in a twofold sense. We must apprehend that which is actual and historical: we must interpret the spiritual meaning, as in the case of the figurative history of Isaac. We know the fact that Abraham's son was offered up, but there is something distinct from this, latent in the conception, which we gather from the words--His Son--and this is the Cross."¹

Chrysostom affirms that there are rules by which we may test these classes of interpretation. Generally speaking, they will accord with other portions of Scripture, for Scripture invariably interprets itself.

2. Prophecy

Chrysostom held an exalted view of the prophet of the Divine Oracles. The prophet is first of all a preacher, a present moral power. Yet he is more, for he holds unique relations with God. He is the Providential Interpreter of God with a Divine afflatus moving him to speak truth of which he himself is not always cognizant.² These four main Canons of Interpreta-

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1. Chrysostom, Homily on Genesis (Quoted by Chase, op. cit., p. 69 ff.)
2. Chrysostom, Homily 8, Thessalonians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 355.

tion, with one illustration of each, will serve to show what seems to be implied in Chrysostom's treatment of the Prophetic Books. They are as follows:¹

- "1. The use of a passage of the Old Testament in the teaching of our Lord or of the writers of the New Testament is decisive as to its prophetic character and meaning."

This is illustrated in the correlative passages: Psalm 118:22 with Matthew 21:42, or that of Isaiah 7:14 with Matthew 1:23.

'For think not, saith He, that these things are now determined upon; they were prefigured of old.'² (Homily 5, Matthew 1:23)

- "2. A prophecy at times lies imbedded, having an apparent but no real connection with its context on either side."

The parenthetic prophecy in Isaiah 7:14-16 is a notable example of this rule.

- "3. Prophecy uses familiar names as indicating in cypher its true subjects."

Genesis 49:10 is one instance of many in the Scriptures which apply to this rule. Chrysostom accounts for the apparent obscurity of the prophets by reason of the animosity among the jealous Jewish priests against one who might displace them.

- "4. The prophecies of the Old Testament interpreted thus afford a solid foundation for a superstructure of distinctively Christian doctrine."

Chrysostom prefaces his exposition of Psalm 119 with almost the same words with which he introduces the great Christological passage in Philippians. Also in Psalm 8 he interprets in

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1. Chase, F. H., op. cit., pp. 69-74.

2. Chrysostom, Homily 5, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, p. 32.

Messianic Character the exaltation of the nature of Christ as the recipient of children's praise, the Creator of the heavens and human nature, and therefore on an equality with God.

These principles applied in preaching could not help but convince the hearer of the co-ordinate plan of God throughout the Holy Scripture to encompass the salvation of men.

B. The New Testament

1. The Gospels

It is interesting to note that Chrysostom's appraisal of the Gospels as to nature and harmony stands today as the general concensus of opinion, with the exception of very minor changes. This is certainly a tribute to his spiritual insight and practical interpretation.

He begins by saying that Truth is the fundamental aim of all the Gospel narrators. And close adherence to all the facts accounts for the differences of detail brought out by the four Evangelists. His explanation for this seeming contradiction is given in the following passage:

"What then? Was not one evangelist sufficient to tell all? One indeed was sufficient, but if there be four that write, not at the same times, nor in the same places, neither after having met together and conversed one with another, and then

they speak all things as it were out of one mouth, this becomes a very great demonstration of the truth."¹

Thus the unity or want of unity must not be estimated by the number of the writers, but by the oneness or the divergence of what they say.

"For clearly the four Gospels are One Message. Though the persons of the writers differ, the grace of the Spirit which moved the soul of each is one."²

Of this unanimity there are to the mind of Chrysostom two great external witnesses, the universal acceptance of the Gospels by believers, and the recognition of its various parts by the enemies of the truth. Again he reminds us that variation in statement must be distinguished from contradiction.³

In connection with interpretation, it is worth while to observe what Chrysostom has to say on the Lord's miracles in general. The miracles of the Gospel do not stand alone, though their profusion is in contrast with the paucity of those in the time of the Prophets. The wonders of old time, says Chrysostom, were wrought mainly to draw proselytes to Israel, or

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 1, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, pp. 2-3.
2. Chrysostom, Ibid., p. 8.
3. Chrysostom, Ibid., pp. 3-4.

to overawe in Egypt or in Babylon an imperious conqueror. Yet some, as, for example, the signs in the wilderness, were for the sake of the Israelites alone.

"For with ourselves also, when we were coming forth from error, many marvels were shown. Afterwards, when true religion was planted everywhere, they ceased. Miracles since then have been few and far between. Yet even in our generation they still are possible."¹

The miracles of the Gospel fall under a general law of God's working. They point to Christ as the world's Creator and Sustainer. They are the tangible proofs of the Lord's victorious contest in the spiritual region, the credentials of Christ the Redeemer. But the Lord's miracles were not wrought at random. They had constant reference to the moral state of those around Him. Prophecies and teaching influenced the more faithful; signs the duller minds. Still to those whom the teaching won, signs gave new steadfastness. Even the disciples were educated by miracles.

"For as in His teaching (the disciples) heard not all in common with the multitude, so in the case of the miracles they saw them not all with the mass of people, since it was needful that they who were about to receive in charge the presidency of the world, should have somewhat more than the rest. And what sort of miracles, saith someone, saw they by themselves? The Transfiguration on the mount; this (walking) on the sea, and

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 4, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, p. 20.

those after the Resurrection, which are many and important."¹

Numerous illustrations may be cited from Chrysostom's preaching in which he sets forth the spiritual values derived from the Master's use of miracles. His reasonable explanation of them was readily accepted by the congregation. The following principles employed in the exposition of Matthew 9:1, 2, are typical of Chrysostom's method of interpretation:²

1. He first identifies the particular miracle by distinguishing it from every other occasion to safeguard against seeming discrepancies.
2. He next reviews the exact working of the miracle.
3. He confirms its credibility by reference to similar miracles cited elsewhere in the Bible.
4. He calls attention to the omniscience of Jesus who is able to read the thoughts of the accusing scribes.
5. He observes the earnest saving faith of the palsied man over against the unbelief of the bystanders.
6. He points out the more gracious gift bestowed upon the infirm man who had asked for healing and was offered forgiveness.
7. He shows how Jesus conceals his declaration of Deity by saying "Thy sins be forgiven thee", rather than "I forgive thee thy sins".
8. Again he points out that Jesus discloses His authority more clearly to the group. "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins."

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 43, John, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 155.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 29, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, pp. 195-198.

9. "He hath authority", says Chrysostom, identifies the Son's equality with the Father.
10. By the physical healing, Chrysostom claims proof is given of the divine blessing.
11. The question bidding the comparison between physical and spiritual Chrysostom suggests to support the Deity of Jesus and to exalt Him.
12. The healed man is sent home to testify before those who were acquainted with his infirmity that he has been restored.

The principles of definition, observation, correlation and authentication, so common in Chrysostom's interpretation of a passage, are shown to a good advantage in the above approach.

Chrysostom reconciles many inconsistencies by recognizing the use of interpolation in the Scriptural records. He appears to be the earliest Greek Father in whose writings their presence as such can be traced.¹

Chrysostom's treatment of the parables recorded by the Evangelists is deserving of brief notice since they again display his sane spiritual interpretation for practical ends. He held that the Lord by means of parables could place Himself on a common level with the understanding of His hearers. He could unfold truth which, when presented in parabolic form, was less an-

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1. Chase, F.H., p. 132 (Quotation from Westcott & Hort,)
("Notes on Select Readings", p.77)

tagonistic though just as specific and condemnatory in the presence of His enemies. Christ wished at once to give vividness and distinctness to His words, and to infuse into His teaching a more pleasant savor, that it might be more abiding. As to the main scope of the parables, he says they were intended to conceal the truth before the despiteful and to allow the hungry, earnest soul "to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Also that He may make His discourse more vivid, and fix the memory of it in them more perfectly, and bring the things before their sight. All Christ's parables aim at producing virtue shewn forth in works. For of doctrines He seldom speaks."¹

This statement is significant in revealing Chrysostom's own motive of preaching which he also attributes to Christ; the fact that virtue and not orthodoxy was the one lesson enforced by the most characteristic portion of the Lord's teaching. In his own homilies Chrysostom makes frequent digression from some passage of Scripture to emphasize its ethical implication.² Notwithstanding this, he is conserva-

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 44, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, p. 281.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 42, John, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 14, p. 154.

tive in his method of interpreting the parables, i.e.,

"And as I am always saying, the parables must not be explained throughout word for word, since many absurdities will follow; this even He (Christ) Himself is teaching us here in thus interpreting this parable.....The saying is a parable; when we have learnt the object for which it was composed (we are) to reap this, and not busy ourselves about anything further."¹

A typical illustration of Chrysostom's treatment of the parables in preaching is his summary of the spiritual lessons in Matthew, the 13th Chapter, in which he says:

"Seest thou how many are the ways of destruction? By the rock, by the thorns, by the wayside, by the tares, by the net. Not without reason, therefore, did He say "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go away by it."²

In other words, he combines the central teachings of these parables to show that they enforce some significant doctrinal truth.

2. The Acts of the Apostles

In turning to the work on the "Book of the Acts", which bears Chrysostom's name, we find a very helpful and practical exposition on the Person and work of the

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 47, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, pp. 292-294
2. Chrysostom, Homily 64, Matthew, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 10, p. 394.

Holy Spirit in the life of the Apostles. This he calls "A Demonstration of the Resurrection"¹ by which the teaching and work of the risen Christ is continued through His Spirit empowered followers. Due to his arduous labors as Patriarch in a time of crisis, these expositions are not so full and firm, nor of such high literary quality as most of Chrysostom's homilies. Yet we find them rich in allusions to the customs and life of the metropolitan city of Asia in that time. The general character of the Book is admirably described by Chrysostom in the opening homily:

"The Gospels are a history of what the Christ did and said; the Acts of what the other Comforter said and did, not but that the Spirit did many things in the Gospels also; even as Christ here in the Acts still works in men as He did through the Temple, now through the Apostles."²

The Preacher, as he traces out the story of their work, emphasizes the Providential ordering of every detail, which shows that the whole history is the sure proof of a Divine economy. For instance, on the passage, Acts 10:44-46, Chrysostom points out the supernatural order of events. Then he goes on to explain

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 1, Acts, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 3.
2. Chrysostom, Ibid., p. 7.

that this peculiar arrangement of the gift of the Spirit before baptism was given as an evidence to Peter of the admissibility of the household of Cornelius, as well as of all the Gentiles. He remarks:

"Observe God's providential management. He does not suffer the speech to be finished nor the baptism to take place upon a command of Peter, but, when He has made it evident how admirable their state of mind is, and a beginning is made of the work of teaching, and they have believed that assuredly baptism is the remission of sins, then forthwith comes the Spirit upon them. Now this is done by God so disposing it as to provide for Peter a mighty ground of justification."¹

"The two reasons which Chrysostom urges for the study of the Acts are also the two chief grounds upon which modern criticism depends for establishing not only the general trustworthiness of the book, but also its authorship by Luke. They are in substance: 1. The continuity of the history as connected with the Gospels and, particularly, coincidences of style, matter, and diction with the third Gospel. 2. The remarkable undersigned coincidences of statement between the Acts and Pauline Epistles exclude the possibility of interdependence."²

These considerations demonstrate the gravity and sound judgment with which Chrysostom analyzed the character and purpose of these sacred writings.

3. The Pauline Epistles

The enthusiasm of awe is Chrysostom's approach to an interpretation of the Pauline Epistles. He some-

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 24, Acts, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", p. 155.
2. Stephens, W.R.W., op. cit., (note *) p. 2.

times minimizes the natural ability of Paul as a scholar in attributing to him a superhuman insight into the divine mystery of revelation through the full indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, he is not so far amiss in this view, on the basis of Paul's own testimony in which the Apostle discounts all his previous training and knowledge in comparison with the glorious spiritual endowment of which he is made partaker in Christ.¹

"To reveal His Son in me", says Chrysostom, "is to signify that he had not only been instructed in the faith by words, but that he was richly endowed with the Spirit; that the revelation had enlightened his whole soul, and that he had Christ speaking within him. That which is from the faith of God, i.e. it too is given by God. This is the righteousness of God; this is altogether a gift. And the gifts of God far exceed those worthless good deeds, which are due to our own diligence."²

However, Chrysostom's view on these points does not preclude him from carefully treating the human characteristics of the Epistles. When an Epistle is taken in hand, the opening sermon commonly forms a brief introduction to its contents. Thus the questions of date, place of writing, and motive of the letter are generally discussed.³

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1. Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 11.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 11, Philippians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 235.
3. Chrysostom, Homily on Minor Pauline Epistles, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 13, (See contents)

In the details of exposition Chrysostom is careful to follow two main rules. The first rule is that

"1. We must not examine the words as bare words, else many absurdities will follow, nor must we investigate the language by itself, but we must mark the mind of the writer. Expression nakedly considered may easily prove a snare and offense to many hearers. But if the cause of it is subjoined, all will applaud and admire the speaker. Let us then inquire with the intention of Paul in this writing, let us consider his scope, and general deportment towards the Apostles, that we may arrive at his present meaning."¹

He illustrates this by an allusion to common life in which he shows that in order to be valid, words must be symbols or expressions of intentions according to the circumstance. Thus he maintains that we must get an insight into the sentiment and aim of the speaker, a rule which is today accepted as the first maxim of sound exegesis. His attempt to elicit the Apostle's meaning and purpose in the following passage is quite representative of Chrysostom's method throughout:

"Often, when I have taken the Apostle into my hands, and have considered this passage, I have been at a loss to understand why Paul here speaks so loftily: 'I have fought the good fight'. But now by the Grace of God I seem to have found it out. For what purpose then does

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1. Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13, p. 11.

he speak thus? He is desirous to console the despondency of his disciple, and therefore bids him be of good cheer, since he was going to his crown, having finished all his work, and obtained a glorious end.

"A good fight", he says, therefore do thou engage in it. But is that a good fight where there are imprisonment, chains and death? Yea, he says, for it is fought in the cause of Christ, and great crowns are won by it. There is no worthier than this contest. This crown is without end. This is not of olive leaves. It has not a human umpire. It has not men for spectators. The theatre is crowded with angels."¹

The second rule is little more than a special application of the first, namely:

"2. That a close attention to the context will illuminate a difficult paragraph or phrase."

By application of this rule he refutes the argument held by some that the discourse in First Corinthians, seventh chapter, is intended for clergy only.² These canons of interpretation lead us to expect a constant effort on Chrysostom's part to trace the thread of thought and purpose which especially in the more argumentative passages binds the several parts into one integrated discourse. This he effects by short summaries of the argument at the turning points

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 9, 2nd Timothy, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", p. 511.
2. Chrysostom, Homily 19, 1st Corinthians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 12, p. 105.

of thoughts. Some very concrete and admirable illustrations of this method are found in the homilies on Romans.¹

Chrysostom is never so happy in his exegesis as when he is tracing out the personal element of the Epistles. He rejoices to show how the great missionary pastor varies his moods from self praise to irony, from irony to severity, and in the midst of severity a loving entreaty. He reveals how St. Paul stops the mouths of Judaizing offenders, how he raises the penitent by his gentleness, and how with a discriminating wisdom he meets the varying needs of the different Churches.² The explanation of Chrysostom's power is not far to seek. He was an expositor because he was first of all a pastor. This keen realization of the meaning of his office, this tone and bent of his mind, together enabled him to disclose with rare appreciation the subtle delicacy of feeling which moulds so much of St. Paul's writings.

C. Summary

We have thus briefly reviewed Chrysostom's approach to the Holy Scriptures as far as he dealt with

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 13, Romans, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 428.
2. Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 13 (See Dr. Schaff's note, p. 48)

them in his homilies. To formulate an elaborate working basis of Chrysostom's exegetical method has not here been attempted. We have endeavored to summarize the main characteristics of the commentator as he dealt with the main portions through various methods of interpretation which show his contribution to modern day exegesis.

Against some obvious failings such as anachronism, straining at too realistic interpretation, in support of the Antiochian method, rhetorical flights of verbosity, and perversion through love of combining different interpretations, we can set forth virtues which far outweigh the faults of interpretation. Foremost among these is Chrysostom's love of and integrity to the Holy Scriptures. Next he had a generous portion of common sense which he displayed in dealing with obscure passages. Again his sympathy with human life and the shifting currents of human emotion enabled him to give powerful and delicate expression to the superhuman messages of the Divine Book. But perhaps the crowning glory of Chrysostom is his vigor and clearness as an expositor. There are exceptions, to be sure, but generally he brings light and not darkness, order and not confusion, into the passage with which he deals. His was the pe-

culiar power to draw aside whatever veil appeared to rest on obscure phrases and to set them out in their full significance of value. Through his work to the Church of his own day, and that of later days, the Gospel of Salvation has found in him a free and useful channel.

CHAPTER VII

THE LEGACY OF CHRYSOSTOM TO CHRISTIAN PREACHING AS BISHOP AND REFORMER

- A. Induction into Office.
- B. Episcopal Functions.
- C. Exile and Martyrdom.

CHAPTER VII

THE LEGACY OF CHRYSOSTOM TO CHRISTIAN
PREACHING AS BISHOP AND REFORMER

A. Induction into Office

Chrysostom had spent twelve eventful years as Presbyter of Antioch during which time he literally transformed the religious atmosphere of the city. He had labored zealously in diffusing the knowledge of Christianity among every class of the community. He was known and loved by all until he enjoyed the highest reputation and the loftiest position which it was possible to reach at Antioch. Gladly would the Presbyter have dedicated the remainder of his days to the Church and community of which he had become such an integral part, but apparently Providence decreed it otherwise.¹

The patriarchal see of Constantinople, becoming vacant shortly after the death of the Emperor Theodosius, the choice of his successor Arcadius, fell to the renowned Presbyter of Antioch. This was due in part to the suggestion of the eunuch Eutropius,

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 44, Acts, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 11, p. 271.

who, upon visiting the city of Antioch, had been attracted to Chrysostom's preaching while there. John's eloquent preaching and popularity had so impressed the imperial agent that he determined to recommend Chrysostom to the Emperor for the episcopal office. Socrates informs us that the clergy, as well as the people of the imperial see, had selected Chrysostom, and hence the Emperor Arcadius was disposed to fall in with their choice in spite of the many ambitious aspirants who sought this eminent position of favor from the court.¹

Due to his humility, Chrysostom was one presbyter who did not desire the office of bishop. Consequently stratagem was employed to abduct their favorite preacher from the people of Antioch and he was conveyed by imperial chariot to the capitol of the East. In spite of his remonstrances at the beginning, by the time he arrived at Constantinople "he seems to have resigned himself to an elevation which he must have regarded as a call of God".² Accordingly, on February 26, 398 A.D., Chrysostom was both consecrated

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1. Socrates, op. cit., Chapter 2, p. 138.
2. Farrar, F.W., op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 491.

and enthroned Archbishop of Constantinople, the ruling see of the East and the most influential and powerful one next to that of Rome.¹

It is a conspicuous fact in the life of Chrysostom, that he was called upon to minister in two such famous and remarkable cities as Antioch and Constantinople. Moreover, he revealed the advantage of long pastorates in which the minister has opportunity to build up the church as a forceful and permanent institution for Christ in the community.

B. Episcopal Functions

The position to which Chrysostom had been elevated was one of burden and conflict, especially to a man of his religious habits and disposition. His duties were undertaken in good faith amidst an intriguing, factious court, a corrupt, frivolous people, and a demoralized, or at least secularized clergy.² He had rightly anticipated the judicial difficulties of the episcopate when years before he wrote:

"The judicial department of the bishop's office involves innumerable vexations, great consumption of time, and difficulties exceeding those experienced by men who sit to judge secular af-

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1. Socrates, *op. cit.*, Chapter 2, p. 138.
2. Socrates, *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, p. 139.

fairs. For it is labor to discover exact justice, and when it is found, it is difficult to avoid destroying it."¹

Constantinople was now to learn the difference between their new spiritual ruler and his predecessors. Where popularity and luxury had been the thing sought for, Chrysostom meant to establish piety and simplicity in the diocese. He at once dis-furnished the episcopal palace of its ornate equipment, and disposed of the costly plate and furniture for the benefit of the poor and the hospitals in the city.²

Instead of banqueting with the laity, he ate the simplest fare in his solitary chamber. He studiously avoided the court and its association except when duty compelled. Such austerities were soon misrepresented for spiritual pride and moroseness.

"Nothing", said St. Augustine, "can in this life, and especially at this time, be easier or more agreeable than the office of bishop if discharged in a perfunctory and adulatory manner; nothing can in this life, and especially at this time, be more laborious and perilous than such an office if discharged as our heavenly Commander bids us."³

This statement, coming from a close and renowned contemporary of Chrysostom, is strikingly applicable

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1. Chrysostom, "On the Priesthood", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 9, p. 58.
2. Palladius, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
3. Augustine, "Letter 21 to Bishop Valerius", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", Vol. 1, p. 237.

as a tribute to the convictions of the great Patriarch of Constantinople whose unhappy circumstances were brought about in allegiance to Christian duty.

1. Reforms Among Clergy

His strictness of reform gave offense to all classes, but especially to the clergy. A brief account of Chrysostom's initial steps of discipline among them is recorded by one of his contemporary historians in the following:

"As soon as John was raised to the episcopal dignity, he devoted his attention first to the reformation of the lives of the clergy; he reproved and amended their ways and diet and every procedure of their manifold transactions. He also ejected some of the clergy from the Church. He was naturally disposed to reprehend the misconduct of others, and to antagonize righteously those who acted unjustly; and he gave way to these characteristics still more in the episcopate; for his nature, having attained power, led his tongue to reproof, and nerved his wrath more readily against the enemy. He did not confine his efforts to the reformation of his own church; but as a good and large-minded man, he sought to rectify abuses throughout the world."¹

Chrysostom, with uncompromising zeal, attempted to raise the spiritual tone of the clergy as well as the church in general. In order to do this, it was necessary for him to depose some of his priests on the charges of homicide and adultery, while he repelled

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1. Sozomen, op. cit., Chapter 3, p. 400.

others from the Lord's Table who were guilty of minor offenses. He resolutely withstood the practice of the clergy in receiving "spiritual sisters" which was frequently the source of the grossest immoralities. Even in cases where the relation was innocent, Chrysostom would not allow so open a target for scandal.¹

To obviate the attractions of the Arians who gathered large crowds by their antiphonal hymns under porticoes and in the open air, and also for the benefit of those who were deprived from attending the church services, Chrysostom revived the old custom of nocturnal services with responsive chanting. These extra services subdued the Arians, but intensified the indignation of the indolent clergy.²

The rigor with which he pressed reformation upon the clergy in these and many other points excited a vehement spirit of opposition. But while his relations with the clergy were increasingly arousing hostility, he stood high in favor with the people who flocked to hear his sermons, and lauded the eloquence of the new Bishop as long as his denunciations were poured forth against the vices and follies of society

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1. Palladius, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

2. Sozomen, *op. cit.*, Bk. 8, Chapter 8, p. 404.

in general. He was no less popular with the Emperor Arcadius and the Queen Eudoxia. The latter, however, was secretly aspiring to supplant the Consul Eutropius who had been the author of her elevation, and was trying to make her feeble husband bow to her more powerful will. She did this from a selfish ambition to receive the highest homage of the Empire. As long as Chrysostom was of advantage to her promotion she flattered him by expressions of admiration and esteem. Later, when Chrysostom apprehended her duplicity, he denounced her schemes and character in such frank language that the antagonism begun was the cause of his exile, and indirectly, his death.¹

2. Political Reforms

The zenith of Chrysostom's power in Constantinople was proved in connection with the fall and disgrace of Eutropius, the favorite consul of the Emperor. The archbishop had apprehended the consul's part in the gross extortions and profligacy of the administration, and had publicly denounced Eutropius with unsparing fidelity. Nevertheless, when the reprobate consul was deposed and hunted as a criminal, he fled

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1. Canon Venables, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

to Chrysostom for right of asylum in the sanctuary of the church. The venerable archbishop exhibited the clemency and power of his dignified office by shielding the miserable refugee from the violence of the angry populace.

"None", said he, "shall penetrate the sanctuary save over my body; the Church is the Bride of Jesus Christ, who has entrusted her honor to me, and I will never betray it."¹

The next day, being Sunday, Chrysostom stirred the throng at the cathedral with an awe-inspiring scene and message. He had disclosed to the view of the congregation the cowering form of the penitent Eutropius clinging to one of the columns of the holy altar, while he preached on the folly and insecurity of worldly ambition under the significant theme of vanity.² The very apparent moral of this spectacular service was the emphasis on the fallen grandeur of man at the mercy seat of the holy sanctuary.

Eutropius remained within the precincts of the church for some time and then departed to Cyprus, but was apprehended and returned to Constantinople, where he was tried and executed for his high crimes

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1. Chrysostom, Homily 1, "Eutropius", "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", p. 247. (Introduction by Schaff)
2. Chrysostom, Ibid., Vol. 9, pp. 249-252.

against the State. Chrysostom declared that if Eutropius had not abandoned the church, it would never have abandoned him.¹

Chrysostom used the same eloquence and spiritual power that had dethroned Eutropius, in deposing the succeeding corrupt minister of State. Gainas was at first dominating the affairs of both Church and State, but was overpowered by Chrysostom and forced to flee for safety.² The details incident to this story and to the many efforts at reform during Chrysostom's episcopate are not essential to the purpose of this study. The foregoing have shown the moral integrity and power of the godly Bishop in his fearless onslaught against wickedness in high places. By the force of his convictions in his preaching he was able to sway the public opinion of this large city to the side of justice and decency. It was for this reason that the Court feared him, and when the other rivals had been disposed of, Eudoxia schemed how she might still the voice that condemned her quaking conscience.³

3. Missionary Activity

Another of Chrysostom's reforms through the energy

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1. Chrysostom, op. cit., p. 253.
2. Sozomen, op. cit., Bk. 8, Chapter 4, p. 402.
3. Palladius, op. cit., p. 73.

of his preaching was the stimulation of missionary activity. Above fulfilling the specified duties of his charge, wherever he saw an opening for the spiritual advantage of it. He had received a commission to "feed the flock" of Christ entrusted to his care, and this included a vast area.¹

It was in consequence of this earnest Christian love towards the souls of all within his diocese that he was led, at this time, to attend to the spiritual wants of the numerous Goths who were then resident at Constantinople. For their spiritual enlightenment he procured translations of the different portions of Holy Scripture in their own language, and engaged a Gothic presbyter to read the Word of God to his fellow-countrymen in a church erected for them. The archbishop himself was in the habit of occasionally addressing the Goths by means of an interpreter. Eternity alone will reveal the extent of Chrysostom's influence and labors in the conversion of these virile and migratory people, who later became a determining factor in the moulding of European civilization. But his labors did not end here. His missionary efforts

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1. Theodoret, op. cit., Bk. 5, Chapters 28-31, p. 152.

extended northwards to the Danube, and southwards to Phoenicia, Syria, and Palestine. He sought out men of apostolic zeal to evangelize some Scythian tribes on the banks of the Danube, and appointed a bishop from the Goths in Constantinople by the name of Unilas, who accomplished great good among them.¹

C. Exile and Martyrdom

While Chrysostom was holding a synod at Ephesus, he left Severian in charge of his pulpit. This proved disastrous, for upon his return he found that a group of faithless and degenerate bishops and presbyters had undermined him politically. Several charges had been drawn against him, among which was the complaint of the Queen that she had been likened to Jezebel in one of Chrysostom's sermons. The indictments were sustained by illegal proceedings at the synod of the Oak which condemned Chrysostom to banishment for contumacy.²

Soon after his departure from Constantinople, the city was shaken by an earthquake. Eudoxia, believing it to be an expression of God's anger toward

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1. Bush, R. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 207ff.

2. Sozomen, op. cit., Bk. 8, Chapter 17, p. 410.

her folly and the injustice of the synod, joined the multitude in demanding his recall.¹ Thus the first result of the failure of the machinations of Chrysostom's enemies was an apparently complete reconciliation between him and the Empress. But within two months, circumstances arose which proved the unreality of the friendship, and aggravated to still greater intensity the feud between them. Eudoxia aspired to semi-divine honors. A column of porphyry was erected in a public place near the church of St. Sophia, bearing the Queen's silver statue for an image of worship. The revelry that accompanied this occasion disturbed the sacred services until Chrysostom became righteously indignant. He mounted the ambo and thundered forth a homily, embracing in its fierce invective all who had any share in these idolatrous desecrations. His fulminations were most severe against the arrogant woman whose ambition was the cause of them. He is reported to have said:

"Again Herodias raves, again she is troubled; she dances again; and again desires to receive John's head in a charger."²

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1. Theodoret, op. cit., Bk. 5, Chapter 35, p. 154.
2. Socrates, op. cit., Bk. 6, Chapter 18, p. 150.
See also Migne Edition - "Patrologia Graecia",
Vol. 54, p. 485.

All the former hatred of the Empress revived at this open denunciation, and she demanded of the Emperor signal redress. Sacerdotal and imperial authority stood opposed and one or the other must yield. The disciple is not above his Master, and therefore Chrysostom could not expect justice before a bar of hateful enemies. Hence, he was confined to his palace until an edict by the Emperor ordered his exile.

The integrity of the undefeated saint, and the depth of his tenderness endured to the end. When he was about to go into exile, he left his palace, and entering into the church said to his bishops who were with him:

"Come, let us pray, and say farewell to the angel of the church." (Believing that his church was guarded by a veritable angel from heaven) "At my own fate I can rejoice; I only grieve for the sorrow of the people." Calling his deaconesses, he said, "Come hither, my daughters, and hearken to me: my career, I perceive, is coming to an end; I have finished my course, and perchance ye will see me no more. Now I exhort you to this: let not any of you break off her accustomed benevolence to the church."¹

When it was discovered that the archbishop had yielded to the imperial mandate and had left the city, a riot arose in which the great cathedral was reduced to ashes.² The hallowed temple was not to be dese-

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1. Palladius, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

Stephens, W.R.W., *op. cit.*, p. 354.

2. Sozomen, *op. cit.*, Bk. 8, Chapter 23, p. 413.

crated by some faithless successor following Chrysostom.

Chrysostom's life in exile was of brief duration. The hardships which he was forced to undergo in being transferred from one place to another finally exhausted him. In his last hour he was supported to the altar, and, clothed in baptismal robes, he distributed his own clothes to the bystanders, partook of the blessed Eucharist, and prayed a last prayer. After he had uttered his favorite doxology, "Glory be to God for all things, Amen", his spirit took its flight to Christ whom he had so faithfully served.¹

His death occurred in 407 A.D. in his 60th year. He was buried in the martyr's by the side of Basiliscus. Thirty-one years afterwards, when Theodosius II was emperor, Chrysostom's body was taken from its grave near Comana and translated with great pomp to his own episcopal city. He was laid under the altar of the Church of the Holy Apostles, the place of sepulture of the imperial family and of the bishops of Constantinople.² The emperor and his sister Pulcheria, assisting at the ceremony, asked pardon of Heaven for the griev-

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1. Palladius, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

2. Theodoret, *op. cit.*, Bk. 5, Chapter 36, p. 155.

ous wrong inflicted by their parents on the sainted bishop.¹

In summing up the elements of Chrysostom's contribution to Christian preaching in the office of Bishop and Reformer, an eminent authority calls attention to the following:

"His work with and for the people, his benevolent and missionary enterprises, and his administrative labors, so far from hindering his preaching, made it larger in mould, more popular in effect. He was no bookish recluse, but a man of the people. Their life and souls were his to know and direct."²

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1. Socrates, op. cit., Bk. 7, Chapter 45, p. 177.
2. Dargan, E.C., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 92.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, we shall briefly summarize the elements of Chrysostom's spiritual legacy to Christian preaching.

1. The advantage of a noble birth in an opportune age and locality.
2. The blessings of a pious home training and influential Christian friendships.
3. The privilege of the finest education available in that day.
4. The example of a consecrated and godly character.
5. A unique spiritual experience in preparation for the divinely ordained ministry of preaching.
6. A superior stewardship in presbyterial and pastoral relationships.
7. His preëminent talents as a preacher of the Gospel.
8. His splendid method of historical and exegetical interpretation.
9. His practical application of the moral principles of Biblical Doctrine.
10. His excellent homiletical exposition of the Scriptures.
11. His personal discipline and political reform in the episcopal office.
12. His heroic zeal and arduous promotion for spiritual enlightenment both at home and abroad.

We recognize at once the difficulty of ascertaining all the benefits which we derive from this eminent preacher. However, it is a certain fact that the above contributions all combine to witness the Gospel as the "power of God unto salvation", which is the main content and purpose of Christian preaching.

It has been the purpose of this thesis to show that Chrysostom's legacy to Christian preaching is an eternal endowment which does not cease with the end of a life. We believe that this research into his life and ministry has revealed the chief elements which he has left as a spiritual heritage to succeeding generations. These elements are summed up under the following heads: 1. The example of a saintly life; 2. The products of a sacred craftsmanship; 3. The genius of a spiritual discipline.

The opening chapter has amply justified our reason for selecting St. Chrysostom for this study, since he is recognized as the most famous preacher of his time, and indeed in some respects, of all time. We have reviewed, therefore, the characteristics and talents of a preacher, which are a contribution to Christian preaching in general.

The second and third chapters review the elements which enter into Chrysostom's preparation for the work in which he proved such a blessing. He had the good

fortune to be born of one of the best families of his city. His training at home was the purest and best. His education was the most favorable to fit him for future public speaking and the exposition of the Greek Scriptures. The experience as an advocate in the Forum had developed his oratorical powers. We observe the gracious influences which transformed his life in the persons of Basil, Meletius and Diodorus, who were empowered by the Holy Spirit to make the Bible a living force in fitting this pious youth for his divine calling. As a reader in the church, and during his quiet hours of prayer and meditation in the monastery, Chrysostom embraced a thorough knowledge and fervent love for the Sacred Book. To crown all, he ministered with a heart full of love and sympathy for five years to the poor and afflicted in the capitol of Syria. This was splendid training for the ministry of a man endowed with great natural powers.

Chapter four has dealt with Chrysostom as presbyter and preacher in Antioch. We have shown here the extensive use he made of his pastoral relationships in promoting righteousness and true doctrine among his congregation and in neighboring communities. The power of his civic influence in a time of calamity has been related to show how, through his preaching, he capital-

ized an unfortunate sedition, so that it became a solemn event by which he won many adherents to Christianity. In his sermons on the Statues, he castigated the follies and immoralities of the city, marshaled the proofs of the truth of Christianity, won a multitude of souls from the worship of false gods to Jesus Christ, and reclaimed to duty many Christians who, through the temptations and seductions of the Syrian capitol, had lapsed into worldliness. The chief contribution of this chapter is the study of the elements of Chrysostom's power as a preacher; since it is vastly important for all students of preaching to apprehend clearly these potent qualities. His great power over his hearers was due to the deep spirituality of the preacher and to the Gospel which he preached. Men listened because they sensed in the message of this Ambassador the voice of God. The impact of it was pre-eminently ethical and practical. He preached morals, as the Bible taught them, so forcefully that he not only impressed his own audience with the transcendent ethics of the Gospel, but also has stimulated all those who have perused his sermons. In the seventeenth century there were three great preachers of morals, Barrow in England, Bourdaloue in France, and Segneri in Italy, who drew their inspiration and very much of their

material, from Chrysostom.¹

Another element of his power was his boldness and perseverance. No opposition could daunt him. He had the holy audacity to proclaim the moral and spiritual supremacy of the Gospel to a degenerate, paganized people. Sickness, opposition, and turmoil would have overcome one of less enduring qualities, but Chrysostom, confronting these, gives this glowing testimony:

"It is the firm resolve of my soul, as long as I live, breathe, and as long as it pleaseth God to continue me in this present life, to perform this service, and whether I am listened to or not, to do that which the Lord hath commanded me."²

Still another element of Chrysostom's power is the excellence of his method. He prepared his homilies with the utmost care and used a simple but luminous style in delivering them. It is hard to find a more simple yet potent statement than the following which is typical of all his preaching.

"Scripture relates the sins of saints that we may fear, the conversion of sinners that we may hope."

Thus he exhibited a power of exposition which unfolded in lucid order, passage by passage, the meaning of the book in hand. He made rapid transitions from clear exposition: to keen logical argument, to fervid exhorta-

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1. Anderson, Galusha, op. cit., p. 56.
2. Neander, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 211.

tion, to pathetic appeal, to indignant denunciation. It is this rare union of powers which constitutes his superiority to almost all other Christian preachers with whom he might be compared. This is the judgment of an eminent authority who says:

"Judged by his character, by his sermons as we have them, and by his work and influence, John Chrysostom has been always, and with singular agreement among critics, esteemed one of the greatest preachers of all time."¹

But the crowning element in Chrysostom's power over men is found in his tender sympathy and burden for souls. He touched and moved men so mightily because he loved men so much. Preaching was not a performance with him but the whole soul impassioned with a divine entreaty of love to a perishing humanity.

Chapter five and six are closely related and reveal the ability of Chrysostom as a scholar and interpreter of the source of preaching. He is shown to be more free from arbitrary and absurd interpretations than almost any other patristic commentator. Moreover, he approaches very nearly the approved grammatico-historical exegesis of our present day.

In accordance with this distinction, we find that Chrysostom, in treating those practical questions with

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1. Dargan, E.C., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 91.

which, as a preacher and pastor, he was mainly concerned, namely: the nature and the work of Jesus Christ, providence, grace, the nature of man, sin, faith, repentance, and good works, casts his thoughts into the most free, natural and forcible language possible. In the homilies of Chrysostom, therefore, we have a rich storehouse which is worth consulting to this day for its exegetical as well as its practical theological value.

In his devotion to the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith, Chrysostom approaches the evangelical theology of the Reformation. The duty of every Christian to study the Bible and live according to it is his paramount theme. A Christian without the knowledge of the Scriptures is to him a workman without tools. To him the Bible purifies and consecrates the soul, it introduces it into the holy of holies and brings it into direct communion with God. Hence, one of Chrysostom's outstanding contributions is his unswerving faith in, and apt use of the Bible in Christian preaching.

The seventh chapter brings us to the zenith of Chrysostom's power and influence in his office as ruler of the imperial see at Constantinople. We view him chiefly as a reformer here in the midst of a demoralized clergy, a corrupt, frivolous laity, and a court of political intrigue. Against these defections he

preached with unrelenting severity for six eventful years, defeating sin in high places and regenerating the whole strata of society. The rigor with which Chrysostom pressed reformation among these different factions stirred such violent opposition that he was finally driven into exile and a martyr's death, but not until the noble influence of his elevating reforms had been felt throughout the Empire.

These, then, are the contributions to Christian preaching which we have found from the rich source of John Chrysostom's life and work. The full content of this spiritual legacy cannot be recorded on paper, but we may nevertheless embrace these higher values by adopting the foregoing principles of this great and godly preacher of the fourth century.

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