

## STUDIES IN TEXTS.

Suggestions for Sermons from Current Literature.

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## I. ENEMIES OF THE CHRIST.

*Text.*—"Those Mine enemies, bring hither" (St. Luke xix. 27).  
[Book of the Month: THE PHARISEES AND JESUS\* = PJ. Other  
ref., *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* = HDB. *Hastings'  
Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* = DCG.]

Christ never lacked enemies from Bethlehem to Jerusalem.

The text is a plain reference to the Pharisees (see Luke xix. 14; and cf. Matt. xxi. 45; John xix. 39, 40). And the turmoil of Christ's life in the gospel pages, which began even when Herod hunted a new-born infant, is most of all due to the hostility of the Pharisees. "The short earthly ministry of our Lord . . . fairly bristles with the struggle made by the Pharisees to break the power of Christ's popularity with the people" (PJ. 1). "His work cannot be understood without a knowledge of them. The Pharisees and Scribes were the first to assume an attitude of hostility and criticism to Jesus" (HDB. III. 828). We may date their rise from Maccabean times. "The Pharisees were the successors of the Hasidim, the Puritans, who resisted Antiochus Epiphanes," a story "told with simple power in 1 Maccabees i.-ii." (PJ. 17).

The Sadducees represent the Jewish Church in alliance with the world. The Pharisees think of it more as theocratic and "separate," as their name implies. "These *Hasidim*, or Puritans of the century before Christ, became the Pharisees of N.T. times." "The name 'Pharisees' means *separated* because they withdrew from the Sadducee court party of the Maccabean rulers under John Hyrcanus" (DCG. II. 351). "The Pharisees wish the high priesthood to be separate from the civil government and are opposed to the union of Church and State" (PJ. 13). "In the ministry of Jesus the Sadducees control the high priesthood" (PJ. 17).

\* *The Pharisees and Jesus*, by Professor A. T. Robertson; published by Duckworth & Co. 5s. A wonderfully concise and illuminating book by this highly esteemed scholar, with mines of information about the greatest foes Christ had. There is a list of over three hundred reference books at the end.

But the Pharisees "had won the sympathy of the masses of the people" (P.J. 17).

I. THEY WERE A POWER IN THE NATION. "The Pharisees formed a fraternity with peculiar vows, which separated them from the heathen, the common people, and the Sadducees. The great majority of Jews were Pharisees in belief, but only about 6,000 or 7,000 were members of the brotherhood. Edersheim compares them with the Jesuits in the Roman Church (Sketches of Jew. Soc. Life, ch. xiv.)" (DCG. II. 352). "The small Sadducean aristocracy had great power, but the Pharisees had representatives in the Sanhedrin, and were able to exercise great power with the people" (P.J. 19). "The Pharisees largely created the atmosphere which the people breathed, and into which Jesus came" (P.J. 2-3). And up to a point our Lord recognized the wholesomeness of their sway. "Jesus recognizes the right of the Pharisees to sit upon their places of ecclesiastical eminence, see Matthew xxiii. 2" (P.J. 1).

II. THEY HAD A WELL-DEFINED DOGMATIC POSITION. "Pharisaic Judaism in the time of Christ included the best, as well as the worst, of the people. The Jewish Saints in the N.T., the parents of the Baptist and of our Lord, Simeon, Anna, and others, Hillel too, and Gamaliel, were noble types of Pharisaic Jews" (DCG. II. 352). The Pharisees (a) "held both to divine sovereignty and human free agency" (P.J. 37); "the standpoint about God and man that modern Calvinists maintain" (P.J. 37). (b) "They placed the oral law on a par with the Old Testament Scriptures" (P.J. 38). This became a serious objection. (c) "They believed in the future life" (P.J. 39), following "the main lines of Jewish doctrine, cf. Daniel xii. 2" (P.J. 40). (d) "They had Messianic expectations" (P.J. 40), "but it was a political Messiah" (P.J. 41), "not a suffering or dying Messiah" (P.J. 42). "The Gospels do not make a point of blackening the Pharisees *per se*" (P.J. 63). "Their aim was in daily life to be as ceremonially pure as the priests were in the Temple" (DCG. II. 351). "Hillel said 'Love men and lead them to the Law'; and the international Synagogue, inspired from Jerusalem, compassed sea and land in making proselytes. The Sadducees had no such interest" (DCG. II. 352).

III. BUT THEIR SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE BROKE DOWN. It failed to understand or even to obey God's real will. "It is the dis-

crepancy between conduct and creed" (P.J. 2). And they failed to help the weak, while over-praising the strong. "From the Pharisaic standpoint there were two great classes of society, the righteous and the sinners" (P.J. 22). "Jesus is the incarnation of the spirit of love, pity, sympathy, help. The Pharisees stand for the regulated order of things as they are, constituted authority even at the expense of life and love" (P.J. 72). "Religion was not a fellowship with God, but a strictly legal walk before God" (HDB. III. 828).

"This high plea for Pharisaic puritanism did not always imply moral cleanness, but did demand religious purity, a very different matter" (P.J. 76). "They paid no attention to the ethical content of a law. Ethically indifferent precepts were as important as those bearing on really moral duties, simply because they were contained in the law or tradition" (HDB. III. 829). "The Pharisees, though made finally an aggressive political party from necessity, were at bottom a brotherhood with oath of initiation and rules for life that distinguished them from other Jews" (P.J. 19-20). They cultivated "the avoidance of the *'amha-'arets* ('the ignorant and careless boor' who disregarded the Levitical requirements, and see John vii. 49)" (P.J. 20). "One thinks at once of the caste system of India" (P.J. 22).

Christ's charge against them is sevenfold. "1. *Spiritual Blindness* (cf. Matt. ix. 13; xv. 14; John ix. 40)" (P.J. 111). "2. *Formalism* (Matt. v. 17 ff.)" (P.J. 120). "3. *Prejudice* (John v. 40; Matt. xi. 16-19, etc.)" (P.J. 126). "4. *Traditionalism* (Matt. xv. 1-20, etc.)" (P.J. 129). "5. *Hypocrisy* (Matt. vi. 2-7; xxiii. 13-39, etc.)" (P.J. 133). "6. *Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit* (Matt. xii. 31)" (P.J. 148). "7. *Rejecting of God in Rejecting Jesus* (John v. 42; Matt. xvii. 12, etc.)" (P.J. 151).

IV. THEY, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE ELEVEN CHARGES AGAINST CHRIST. "(1) *Assumption of Messianic Authority* (John ii. 13-22)" (P.J. 66). "(2) *Downright Blasphemy* (Luke v. 17-26; John v. 18; x. 22-42; Matt. xxvi. 65; Mark xiv. 64)" (P.J. 71). "(3) *Intolerable Association with Publicans and Sinners* (Matt. ix. 10 ff.; Mark ii. 15 ff.; Luke v. 29 ff.; vii. 29; xv. 1-32)" (P.J. 76). "(4) *Irreligious Neglect of Fasting* (Matt. ix. 14-17; Mark ii. 18-22; Luke v. 33-9)" (P.J. 81). "(5) *The Devil Incarnate or in league with Beelzebub* (Matt. ix. 34; xii. 22-37; Mark iii.

19-30 ; Luke xi. 14-36) " (P.J. 83). " (6) *A Regular Sabbath Breaker* (John v. ; Matt. xii. 1-14 ; Mark ii. 23 ; iii. 6 ; Luke vi. 1-11 ; John ix. ; Luke xiii. 10-21 ; xiv. 1-24) " (P.J. 85). " (7) *Utterly Inadequate Signs* (Matt. xii. 38-45 ; xvi. 1 ; Mark viii. 11 ; Luke xi. 16-32) " (P.J. 90). " (8) *Insolent Defiance of Tradition* (Matt. xv. 1-30 ; Mark vii. 1-23 ; Luke xi. 37-54) " (P.J. 93). " (9) *An Ignorant Impostor* (John vii. 14-30 ; Matt. xxvii. 63 f.) " (P.J. 97). " (10) *Plotting to Destroy the Temple* (John ii. 19-22 ; Matt. xxvi. 61 ; Mark xiv. 58 ; Matt. xxvii. 39 f. ; Mark xv. 29) " (P.J. 102). " (11) *High Treason against Cæsar* (Luke xxiii. 2 ; John xviii. 8-30 ; xix. 15 ; Luke xxiii. ; Matt. xxvii. 17-25 ; Mark xv. 9-14) " (P.J. 104).\*

V. BUT THE GREATEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE PHARISEES IS HIS UNIVERSALITY. " 'It was never so seen in Israel' (Matt. ix. 34). This itself was a reflection on the Pharisees, and placed the crown on the head of Jesus as the supreme teacher who acted as well as spoke " (P.J. 83). " Real goodness does rebuke sin, but it is attractive to the sinner " (P.J. 80). " The Pharisees had no gospel to the lost," " Jesus not only allowed them access, but He actually welcomed them " (P.J. 80). " The Pharisees had a perfect horror of contamination from association with the masses of the people," " Jesus not merely associated with the masses . . . but went among the diseased and the immoral in His efforts to heal body and soul " (P.J. 76). " The term 'sinner' (*ἁμαρτωλός*) had a wide application as an expression of Jewish scorn, not only to the openly immoral (Luke vii. 37), but to Gentiles as a class (Gal. ii. 15), to heretics (John ix. 16, 31), to publicans (custom-house officers) as a class (Luke xix. 7), and even to Jesus Himself (John ix. 24) " (P.J. 77). " Jesus came to glory in the taunt flung at Him by the Pharisees, . . . though they probably gave a sinister meaning to 'friend,' as boon-companion and sharer in their vices " (P.J. 79). " Luke (xv. 1) pointedly says 'they were continually drawing near' " (P.J. 80). " It was now a custom on the part of all, of both classes, when Jesus was around. They were no longer afraid of Him as they were of the other rabbis " (P.J. 80). And ultimately this is the uniting point for the best of the Pharisees as it is the dividing line for the worst.

\* The preacher will of course be unable to quote all these references, but it seems a pity not to embody them here.