

TRACTS ON PAUPERISM

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Tracts on pauperism by Thomas Chalmers

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THOMAS CHALMERS

**TRACTS ON
PAUPERISM**

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ON
PAUPERISM.

BY
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II.—Statement in Regard to the Pauperism of Glasgow, from the Experience of the Last Eight Years.

III.—On the Parliamentary Means for the Abolition of Pauperism in England; being the substance of the Fifteenth Number of the Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns.

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PREFACE.

THE special interest which attaches at present to the question of Pauperism, induces me, not to prepare any new composition on the subject, but to present a compilation of certain Tracts published by me some years ago, and in the principles of which I still retain unabated confidence ; verified as they have been by a most decisive experience, in regard both to the evils of the compulsory system when persevered in, and to the perfect facility of its piece-meal or successive abolition.

I might have inserted, in this little collection, my "Evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons on the subject of a Poor-Law for Ireland." But as this has been recently published by another, in conjunction with that of Dr. Doyle's on the same topic, I satisfy myself with simply referring to that little work, and with the notice, that I have found the minutes of my examination, as there given, to have been very little curtailed, and to be substantially correct.

The first of the ensuing Tracts, relates to the commencement of an experiment made by myself in Glasgow ; and the second relates the conclusive success of it. I now take the opportunity of again

stating, at least for the hundredth time, and in opposition to the obstinate and endlessly repeated misconception of its being an ephemeral enterprise, which begun and terminated with my labours, as one of the ministers of Glasgow—that it still subsists in full vigour, on the inherent efficacy of the system itself, and independent either of extraordinary influence or extraordinary efforts on the part of any individual. Were it otherwise, the scheme would be altogether unworthy of public observation.

In regard to the pieces, which enter into this little collection, it may be right to observe, that my chief value is for the Appendix of the first, and for the whole of the second—whether as exhibiting the principles of the gratuitous system of charity, or the working of it among the families of the poor themselves, and in the experience of the parochial administrators. The third of these pieces is an extract from a work, entitled, “The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns,”—to which I refer for my views on the likeliest parochial means, by which Pauperism might be abolished in England.

T. C.

A

SPEECH,

DELIVERED ON THE 24TH OF MAY, 1822,

BEFORE THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,

EXPLANATORY OF THE MEASURES WHICH HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY
PURSUED IN ST. JOHN'S PARISH, GLASGOW,

FOR THE

EXTINCTION OF ITS COMPULSORY PAUPERISM:

WITH

AN APPENDIX.

BY THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D.

MINISTER OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, GLASGOW.

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1822.

PREFACE.

THE following is rather an awkward sort of publication, from the egotism pervading a narrative, all of which, at the same time, behooved to be delivered; and still more, from that egotism, reaching even to the borders of an indelicacy, that was at the same time unavoidable, in the work of managing a hostile argument, which behooved to be refuted. But there are times when one feels himself imperatively called upon to break loose from every common place restraint; and we trust that it may be deemed a sufficient apology for our authorship on this occasion, that we can plead for it, not the urgency of many friends, for the purpose of drawing out to an exhibition of himself an individual who was the object of their partiality,—but the urgency of many philanthropists, for the purpose of drawing out the attention of the community to a great public and political question, on

the right solution of which, the well-being of our empire is at present so critically and so momentarily suspended.

We have been engaged, for some time, in publishing a series of periodical Essays on the treatment of Pauperism, and to these alone, when completed, would we refer for the development of any such plans or principles as may have occurred to us. But, aware of the slow process of conviction, we gladly avail ourselves of any practical impulse by which it may be accelerated—nor do we know of any more fitted to arrest the notice, or secure the acquiescence of our Scottish population, than that which emanates upon them from the voice of their Supreme Ecclesiastical Judicatory—and especially when that voice, unbroken by partizanship, expresses the unanimous sense and feeling of the General Assembly of our Church. Any elucidation that can be bestowed upon Pauperism, within the compass of a spoken address, must be necessarily imperfect; and therefore it is chiefly because of the venerable sanction wherewith it is associated, that we have ventured to obtrude it at this moment on the public eye. Nor, apart from such topics as are exclusively Christian, do we know upon what occasion the wholesome ascendancy of our church over our population can be more fitly or more usefully interposed, than when she lends her testimony against the spread of that moral nuisance in our land, by which the habits,