

And it was only after being assured that Chrysostom had yielded to the wishes of his spiritual Fathers that Basil submitted and received the yoke of Christ. He then sought for John, who had been lying in concealment, who, instead of receiving him with sympathy, burst into merriment, and glorified God for the success of his device.

'There is an honourable deceit,' S. Chrysostom says in his writings, 'such as many have been deceived by, which one ought not even to call a deceit at all'; and the fraud with which Jacob outwitted his brother Esau he terms an 'economy.' By a similar reasoning he would persuade himself that it was right for him to impose upon Basil.

But S. Chrysostom's character was in reality above such questionable actions as this. If he could be betrayed into a momentary weakness, he could also rise to high and noble deeds. A riot at Antioch served to bring out his sterling qualities. He had already been ordained to the Priesthood in the year 386, and his Lenten sermons had attracted general attention, when the people of Antioch, groaning under the weight of a tribute, broke out into rebellion against the Emperor. The public baths were ransacked, the Governor's house was assailed, and the mob were with difficulty repulsed. The statues of the Emperor and Empress were thrown down and dragged ignominiously through the city. Their portraits were pelted and defiled with mud.

Upon hearing of these proceedings, the Emperor, as might have been expected, was exceedingly angry, and gave an order for the destruction of both people and buildings. When this news reached Antioch the people were terror-stricken. They knew not what to do. And in the absence of the Bishop, who had gone to endeavour to appease the Emperor, Chrysostom rose, and endeavoured to turn their fears to good account. Each day in the church he addressed large auditories on the dangers that were hanging over their heads. He pointed out how these perils were but the just punishment of their sins; he commended them for having temporarily changed for the better; he consoled them by Christian ex-

hortations. He exhorted them to forget their injuries, and was the first to announce to them the free pardon that had been granted the city on the earnest intercession of its Bishop.

For ten years Chrysostom continued to labour and preach at Antioch. And it was during this period that most of his commentaries on Holy Scripture were written.

But there was yet a higher work awaiting him and a larger sphere of influence. The Archbishopric of Constantinople, then one of the first cities in the world, was vacant, and Chrysostom was chosen to fill it. To this lofty post he brought with him the same simple manner of living, and the same single-hearted devotion as had marked his career at Antioch. Constantinople was the seat of most of the sins which darken the life of modern London or Paris. It is true the age was a Christian one, but the Christianity of the many was nominal only. Civilisation had outrun Christianity. Vice was not banished from among men; it was merely dressed up to pass for virtue. Society, though refined, was rotten at the heart.

Chrysostom was the man for the place and the times, and he now entered upon his work as called by God. In an unrighteous age he shines out at Constantinople as a fearless preacher of righteousness. Nowadays it is customary to attack vice with gloved hands and veiled faces. We are anxious to wound the sensibilities of none. Phrases are pruned and shaped until they have lost their meaning. Sins we soften down and call weaknesses. They must be tenderly dealt with, for are they not common to the greater number of people? Unconsciously we put aside God's standard of right and wrong, and substitute our own.

In such circumstances it is wholesome to turn to the outspoken words of the 'golden-mouthed' preacher. He will call a spade a spade. He will tell the people of their sins, cost what it may to himself. He will have no respect of persons. The extravagance of all classes in his time called down his just censure. 'Nay,' he says on one occasion, 'I will not call it extravagance, it is senselessness. Nay, nor yet this, but